

July 18
★

STREET & SMITH'S
★ LOVE STORY MAGAZINE

15¢

STREET & SMITH'S LOVE STORY★

EVERY WEEK **MAGAZINE** JULY 18, 1931

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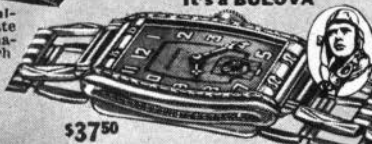
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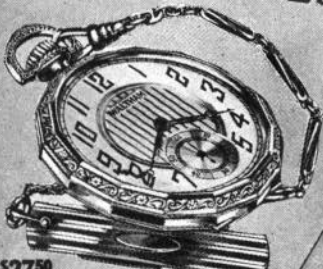
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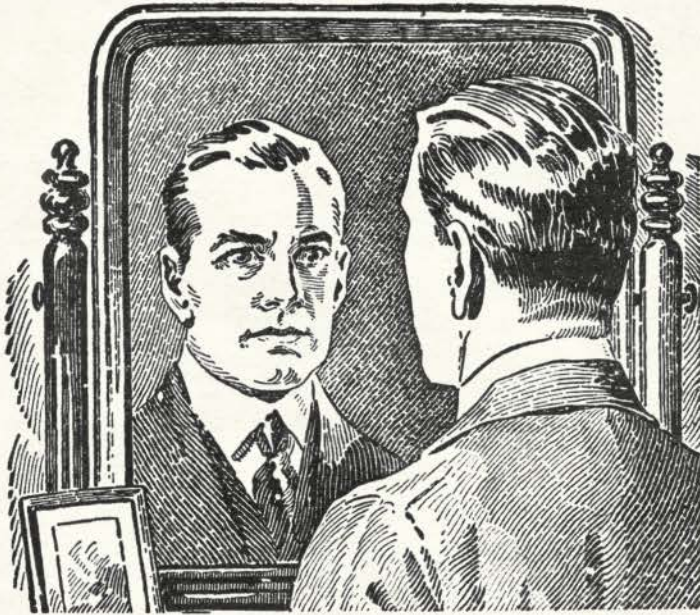
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Vol. LXXXII

EVERY WEEK

Number 5

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Selma Baxter, the well-known Love Story favorite, has a new novelette—"Forever"—in next week's issue. Don't miss it!

Publication Issued every week by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y. Ormond G. Smith, President; George C. Smith, Vice President and Treasurer; George C. Smith, Jr., Vice President; Ormond V. Gould, Secretary. Copyright, 1931, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., New York. Copyright, 1931, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., Great Britain. Entered as Second-class Matter, April 21, 1921, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Canadian Subscription, \$7.50. Foreign, \$8.50.

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* Based on the combined experiences of F. B. Englehardt, Chattanooga, Tenn.; M. Barichievitch, San Francisco, Calif., L. Van Houten, Grand Rapids, Mich., and many others.



Caught in a Rut

I wonder I put up with it as long as I did! Every day was filled with nothing but deady routine and monotonous detail. No freedom or independence. No chance to get out and meet people, travel, nor have interesting experiences. I was just like a cog in a big machine with poor prospects of ever being anything more.



Long, Tiresome Hours

Every hour of the day I was under somebody's supervision. The TIME-CLOCK constantly laid in wait for me—a monument to unfulfilled hopes and dying ambition. Four times a day, promptly on the dot, it hurled its silent challenge at my self-respect, reminding me how unimportant I was and how little I really COUNTED in the business and social world!



Low Pay

Paid just enough to keep going—but never enough to enjoy any of the OOOD things of life every man DESERVES for his family and himself. Always economizing and pinching pennies. Always wondering what I would do if I were laid off or lost my job. Always uncertain and apprehensive of the future.



Desperate

Happened to get a look at the payroll one day and was astonished to see what big salaries went to the sales force. Found that salesman Brown made \$200 a week—and Jenkins \$275! Would have given my right arm to make money that fast, but never dreamed I had any "gift" for salesmanship.



A Ray of Light

Stumbled across an article on salesmanship in a magazine that evening. Was surprised to discover that salesmen were made and not "born" as I had foolishly believed. Read about a former cowpuncher, Wm. Shore of California, making \$325 in one week after learning the ins-and-outs of scientific salesmanship. Decided that if HE could do it, so could I!



The Turning Point

My first step was to write for a certain little book which a famous business genius has called "THE MOST AMAZING BOOK EVER PRINTED!" It wasn't a very big book, but it certainly opened my eyes to things I had never dreamed of—and proved the turning point of my entire career!



What I Discovered

Between the pages of this remarkable volume, I discovered hundreds of little known facts and secrets that revealed the REAL TRUTH about the science of selling! It wasn't a bit as I had imagined. I found out that it was governed by simple rules and laws that almost ANY man can master as easily as he learned the alphabet. I even learned how to go about getting into this "highest paid of all professions". I found out exactly how Mark Barichievitch of San Francisco was enabled to quit his \$8 a week job as a restaurant-worker and start making \$125 a week as a salesman; and how C. W. Birmingham of Dayton, Ohio, jumped from \$15 a week to \$7500 a year—these and hundreds of others! It certainly was a revelation!

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FREE Employment Service

Furthermore, I discovered that the National Salesmen's Training Association, which published the book, also operates a most effective employment service! Last year they received requests from all over the U. S. and Canada for more than 50,000 salesmen trained by their method. This service is FREE to both members and employers and thousands have secured positions this way!



Making Good At Last!

It didn't take me long to decide to cast my lot with N. S. T. A.—and after a few weeks I had mastered the secrets of Modern Salesmanship during spare time, without losing a day or a dollar from my old job. When I was ready, the Employment Manager found me over a dozen good openings to choose from—and I selected one which paid me over \$70 a week to start!



Was It Worth It?

Today my salary is \$4800 greater than ever before! No more punching time-clocks or worrying over dimes and quarters! NOW my services are in REAL DEMAND with bigger prospects for the future than I ever dared HOPE for back in those days when I was just another "name" on a pay-roll!



Get Your Copy FREE

Right now the book—"The Key To Master Salesmanship"—which banished all my fears and troubles and showed me how to get started on the road to success and independence—will be mailed as a gift to any ambitious man, absolutely FREE. And since there is no obligation, why not see for yourself what amazing facts it contains! Just mail the coupon now—for there is no better way in the world to invest a 2-cent stamp! I KNOW! NATIONAL SALESMEN'S TRAINING ASSOCIATION Dept. H-584 N. S. T. A. Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

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32x4 1/2	3.20 1.45	29x5.25	2.95 1.35
34x4 1/2	3.45 1.45	30x5.25	2.95 1.35
30x5 1/2	3.60 1.75	31x5.25	3.10 1.35
32x5	3.60 1.75	30x5.77	3.20 1.40
30x5	4.45 1.75	30x6.00	3.20 1.40
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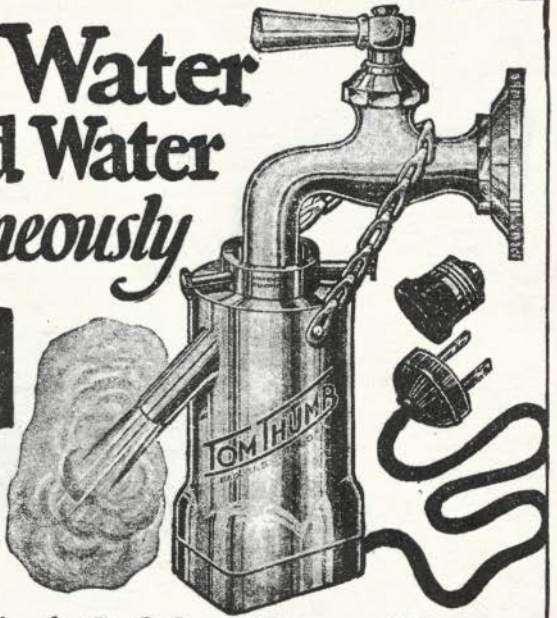
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28x4-75	2.45	1.10	32x4	2.95	1.00
30x4-75	2.45	1.10	32x4	2.95	1.00
30x4-95	2.90	1.25	34x4	2.95	1.00
28x5-00	2.85	1.15	32x4 1/2	3.20	1.25
30x5-00	2.85	1.15	32x4 1/2	3.25	1.25
30x5-25	2.85	1.15	34x4 1/2	3.25	1.25
30x5-25	2.95	1.25	30x5	3.55	1.25
30x5-25	3.10	1.25	32x5	3.55	1.25
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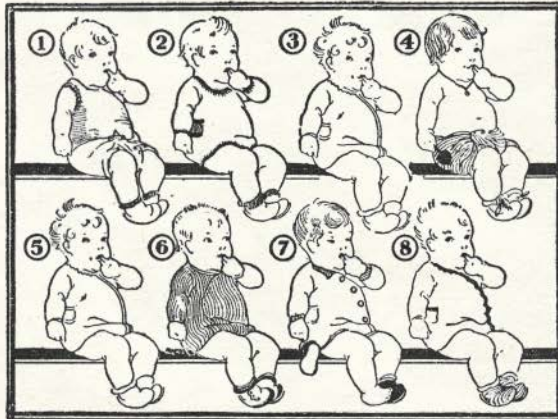
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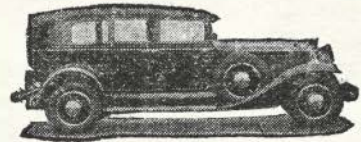
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In Two Parts—
Part I.

Beautiful But Dumb

By Lydia Tracy

CHAPTER I.

MAYBE I shouldn't have," murmured Betty Carroll demurely, with a tiny pang at the sudden result of her unaccustomed boldness.

"Oh, that's all right," the strange young man with the smooth black hair assured her easily, settling himself in the vacant parlor-car seat on her side of the aisle. "It just couldn't be helped, anyway, so why worry?"

"What do you mean?" inquired Betty, opening her eyes to their widest stretch of innocence. "Who couldn't help it?"

"Oh, speaking for myself only, of

course," he chuckled. "I'm human and susceptible, and you're irresistible and alone. I've been watching you for the last hundred miles."

"Why?" Betty asked in bewilderment.

"Well, if you're deliberately asking for it, I'll hand it to you," he said with smiling audacity. "Don't you know you're simply beautiful——"

"—but dumb," Betty interrupted meekly. "Like I've just proved."

He stared.

"Why, by letting a handsome young stranger pick me up—— No," she cor-

rected herself with naïve frankness, "by picking up a handsome young stranger on the train. One of the things I was specially warned against," she confessed, raising a pair of marvelous and duly contrite eyebrows.

"Call that dumb?" he asked in pretended amazement. "But it was me!"

"Just the way I figured it," the girl told him with devastating naïveté. "You did look so perfectly harmless and so painfully lonely, glancing around in every direction once in a while as if you were just crazy for some one to speak to."

"Good heavens!" he breathed with a sharp, quick look at her.

"And so," she continued in her throaty Southern drawl, "since every body else had his nose buried in a paper or a compact—her nose in that case, of course—I—well, little Betty took a chance. I just had to ask a whole lot of questions of somebody!"

"Questions?" invited the young man.

"About New York, of course. Everything! You're from New York, aren't you?" she interrupted herself anxiously. "Heavens, have I got to try again?"

"That's the old home town," replied the strange young man with a faintly superior smile, "so you needn't go any farther, beautiful lady."

"Good news!" said Betty. "Then tell me——"

And for ten minutes she bombarded him with question after question, plainly indicating that Manhattan was as completely unknown to her as the interior of Africa. Beautiful but dumb was right, he thought to himself in scornful amazement, realizing for the first time in his life that maybe there were backwoods in the country where New York actually didn't count. But that a girl like this one could come out of them!

"This your first trip to the big town?" he inquired quite unnecessarily when she had to stop for breath.

"First?" said Betty with a little moue that created two delicious dimples. "It's the first time I ever did anything! The first time I was ever outside of Virginia. The first time, almost, I was ever even away from Railville. It's the first time I ever rode on a real train, if you want to know it, and the first time," she chuckled, "that I ever spoke to a strange man in all my life! Beautiful but dumb, you see, like ol' Mr. Walling told me I was, and to look out for it."

"Beautiful but not so dumb," he countered. "Whoever that idiot was, he was all wrong," lied the strange young man. "If you ask me."

"Well, not so dumb as I was, maybe," grinned Betty. "I have asked you, and I've learned a lot. I guess the only question I haven't asked you is what's your name."

"Oh," he started. "De Witt Clinton. De Witt van Rensellaer Clinton. You may have heard the name," he suggested smoothly. "I'm down in Wall Street."

"Gee!" gasped Betty, her eyes a little wider than ever. "I may be dumb, but I studied history when I was in school. Your name almost spells New York, doesn't it, Mr. Clinton?"

"I suppose it's pretty well known," admitted the owner of the historic combination with becoming modesty. "But you were telling me about your charming little self."

"Oh, was I?" twinkled the girl. "I didn't know it. But there's really nothing to tell. My stepmother died recently. Dad died a long time ago. Being all alone, I just sold out everything there was, Stanton Court and the land and everything, and packed up and ran away to make my fortune."

"Ah, in New York?"

"You should ask!" chuckled Betty. "With your name! Is there any other place to do it?"

"Sold everything, you say?" inquired Mr. Clinton with polite interest.

"Right down to the last antique, and for cash," she nodded proudly, with a betraying glance at the big old-fashioned bag in her lap.

Mr. Clinton also glanced at the bag on hearing that pleasing word.

"You mean——" he began in evident surprise.

"That's why ol' Mr. Walling told me I was dumb," confessed Betty with a humorous twinkle. "One reason. And you ought to have heard him! He just flapped his hands in the air and washed me right off of them," she giggled. "Ol' Mr. Walling's our village banker, you know. But what was I goin' to do? Couldn't leave it behind me, could I, when I knew I'd need every cent of it in New York? Of course, I'm going to put it in some bank just as soon as I get there."

Again Mr. Clinton could hardly restrain his surprise, but he made no immediate mention of it. He changed the subject.

"Seems to me your face looks quite familiar," he ventured. "Unless, of course, I'm remembering one of those Venuses or Cupids or something up at the Metropolitan Museum," he smiled. "What am I going to call you?"

"You never saw me before in all your life, and you know it," retorted the girl with a laugh of liquid honey. "So never mind the sugar and molasses. But they all call me Betty—Elizabeth Stanton Carroll for short, and I come from down——"

"What!" broke in Mr. Clinton with an exaggerated start. "You're not little Betty Carroll, from Railville?"

"What? Why, yes," gasped Betty, opening her big brown eyes to their very widest width. "But how could you know that! I've never been away from home in all my life before, like I told you—nor even any of us! Except dad. He did come to New York on his second wedding trip"—she flushed—"but that was just ages and ages ago. When

I was only eight years old, so how did you know me?"

"Aha!" exclaimed Mr. Clinton, brightening electrically. "Didn't I tell you I knew you? Of course, that's how! I met—I mean, my father met your father and got quite chummy with him. Often I've heard him tell about it. And how your father used to boast of that perfect little peach of a daughter he had back home and—and all the rest of it. Didn't he have some sort of a picture of you?"

"Oh, he did!" gasped Betty. "In his watch! He always carried it! Well, for crying out loud!" she exclaimed in her fascinating mixture of Northern slang and Southern slur. "Why, of all the wonderful coincidences! Oh," she burst out impulsively, "how I'll just love to meet your father, Mr. Clinton, an' have him tell me about it!"

Mr. Clinton shook his head and smiled with the proper degree of melancholy regret.

"Too bad, but that's impossible, you see," he sighed, "because he—he's dead, too."

"Oh!"

"But leave it to me," he assured Betty tenderly. "And to—to my sister. I'll look out for you, little girl—Betty, I mean. May I? Because we're really old friends now, aren't we?"

"Take me right by the handle," consented the girl, coloring with vivid charm. "Why not? This thing surely does seem to date back to the old childhood days of long ago, so maybe I wasn't quite so modern and so fresh as I thought I was when—when I handed you the glad eye across the aisle. Isn't it just too weird for anything? Maybe it was fate, or unconscious wireless, or something."

"Whatever it was, I call it a lightning stroke of luck," agreed Mr. Clinton neatly and heartily, with a lightning glance at the bag. "You'll come to us, of course, just as soon as I can see my

sister and fix it. And—and you must let me help you in every way, Betty, my dear. About the money, too, I mean, if you'll let me. I'll introduce you at my bank to-morrow. Too late to-day, of course."

"How awfully sweet of you," purred Betty.

"Not at all," rejoined Mr. Clinton blandly and truthfully. "So just don't do anything till I see you, then. I'll give you some good advice about planting it, see?"

"What a lovely word," tinkled Betty. "Plant it so's to make it grow, you mean? Down in Wall Street? Suits me right down to the ground. You bet I won't do anything till you tell me to!"

"But the old hick—I mean your banker friend, was quite right, Betty dear," went on Mr. Clinton paternally, with a thoughtful glance at the bag. "That's no way to carry about a lot of money. Stealing it from under your nose would be as easy as taking milk from a baby, dear child. Are you sure it's still there?"

Betty looked at him sharply and paled a little. She opened the bag and thrust a hand down into it. Then her hand and her color came back.

"It's perfectly safe," she nodded. "It's there, buried down at the bottom under the lining where the cardboard used to be, all in the nice little flat packages ol' Mr. Walling made up for me."

"Just the same," frowned Mr. Clinton, "it's risky if any one should suspect it. New York isn't Railville, Betty. This burg's full of all kinds of crooks who could swipe the pants—I mean, steal the coat off your back, almost, without your knowing it. No place for a lovely little girl like you alone, and with a wad like yours. I'd suggest—maybe you'd like me to take care of it for you?"

"There's no need now," smiled Betty sweetly. "You're going to help me to-

morrow, you said. And anyway, who'd ever dream that just a girl like me from the country was totin' around a house and barn an' all the chickens in a fierce old bag like this? Would you have?"

"I wouldn't have," admitted Mr. Clinton dryly. "That's where you had me fooled. I mean, my dear," he hastily elaborated, "you look like a million dollars as far as your own looks go."

"I know," she colored meekly. "Just you wait, though, till I've been in New York about three days and get a chance to doll up. Maybe," said Betty with a shy look, "your—your sister would help me spend some of it? Of course, I don't know the right places to go to."

"Would she!" asked Mr. Clinton with flashing teeth. "Nothing she'd like better, my dear. Listen, you're going to stay with us, you know. We simply won't take no for an answer!"

"Oh!" gasped the girl, staring. "Oh, I—I couldn't! Why, you don't even know—"

"Cut out the objections," Mr. Clinton broke in calmly. "Where else should you go except to people who know you and care for you? Only for just a day or so," he remembered. "It—well, Draga's just back from abroad, and she'll have to open the apartment, you understand."

"Of course," said Betty, still astonished and doubtful. "Draga? Is that her name? I'm sure I shall just love her! Is she married?"

"No, she lives with me when—when we're both in town. Er—tell me, Betty, had you planned on any place to stop in New York? I'll see you to wherever it is, of course, in the meantime."

"How dear of you," glowed Betty. "Yes, I was going to the Hotel Warner on Fourteenth Street, wherever that is. It's where dad stayed ten years ago, so I know it's all right."

"Oh, quite," said Mr. Clinton with the slightest lift of his aristocratic eyebrows.



"It's the first time," she said, "that I ever spoke to a strange man in all my life! Beautiful but dumb, you see."

The outside world suddenly began to roar angrily, and Betty glanced out of the window.

"We're getting in!" she exclaimed excitedly. "Look, we're going down under the ground! Wait, I've got to powder my nose!"

Tossing the precious bag into her chair, she hurried down the aisle. As she did so, there appeared at the other end of the car another upright passenger, a young man who might have got on at Manhattan Junction. For the all-observant Mr. Clinton didn't remember

having seen him in any of the cars an hour earlier. The newcomer, strolling down the aisle with his steel-blue eyes seemingly resting on nothing but taking in everything, including Mr. Clinton, halted for a second beside the latter's chair.

"Thought you might be on board this train, Slim," he said out of the side of his mouth.

Mr. Clinton stiffened and said nothing. It was one thing for a De Witt van Rensselaer Clinton of New York to show friendly courtesy to a lovely foundling on a train, especially one so clearly in need of advice and assistance; but it was quite another thing to welcome with open arms an acquaintance of plainly different social status, whose clothes looked slightly rumpled, and whose hair had a reddish tinge under the brim of his hat.

"Oh, all right," said the other man amusedly. "See you later, then, soon as the other passengers get out of the way. Don't forget it." And he ambled on down the aisle.

Mr. Clinton watched him disappear toward the forward vestibule, and frowned fiercely. Then he leaned swiftly toward Betty's chair and fumbled for two seconds under cover of her wrap. When the girl returned he was leaning lazily back in his own chair, though still with a new anxiety on his handsome features.

"Betty, dear," he confessed, to account for it, "I'd quite forgotten that a friend was to be waiting for me at the train. Important business, so I can't see you to your hotel. Do you mind?"

"Gracious, why should I mind?" pattered Betty lightly, trying to conceal her disappointment. "Well, I mean, I'll try to stagger along by myself till I see you to-morrow or the next day. That still on?" she asked as carelessly as she could.

"It certainly is, dear little Betty," Mr. Clinton most earnestly assured her.

"You belong to me—to us. And I mean it! And besides, about that money of yours——"

"Oh, yes," said the girl, diving into her handbag. "Please! If—if you're not going with me, take it now."

He put out a quick hand, stopping and astonishing her.

"No, no, baby. Leave it alone. Leave it right where it is!"

"But," admitted Betty, "you've actually got me scared about those crooks and thieves you spoke of. Mr. Walling told me a lot about the ogres and gangsters and things all over a place like New York," she laughed nervously, "but I believe you. You certainly ought to know what you're talking about!"

Mr. Clinton stiffened with a faint suspicion. Then he, too, laughed lightly.

"You said something, sweetness, and so did Mr. Walling. Just the same, I—I don't know yet exactly what I'm going to do or where I'm going to be to-night," he explained with a flicker of his eyes toward the exit end of the car, where the porter was already collecting hand baggage. "The stuff's probably safer with you under the circumstances. That is, if you'll do just what I tell you." He frowned at the bag in her lap.

"Of course," said Betty. "I see what you mean. Being who you are, they might naturally think you had lots of money on you, while with me they wouldn't."

"Just that," nodded her companion. "Nobody could suspect you, that is, if you play the game. Don't take it out, don't even look at it, don't even feel for it as long as it's in your possession, understand? Just pretend it isn't there at all, Betty darling! Will you do that? Can I trust you? Until I see you again, I mean."

"I trust you," said Betty solemnly. "I'll do just what you say. I'll treat it like it was a poor relation, keep it under cover, and forget its existence, even."

"That's the idea," assented Mr. Clinton. "And I'll get to you just as soon as I can, I promise you! Deuce take it," he said, rising as the train slowed down at the entrance to the station, "I hate to leave you like this, little Betty. Almost rather cut a leg off!"

There was no mistaking the sincerity in his voice. Betty got up, her eyes a little more velvety, and her cheeks quite red. She hesitated only a moment.

"You're a perfect darling, Van!" said Betty impulsively and huskily. "Mind if I call you 'Van'? I just can't say 'De Witt' and sound even friendly, not to say familiar. But, oh, it has made everything so different, running into you in this marvelous way, Van! To be honest, I was just plain scared like a rabbit, coming to New York all alone like this. But now—well, it begins to seem almost like coming home, if you know what I mean. Thanks to you! You and that darling Draga! I'm dying to meet her."

There was a catch in her throaty voice and a look in her guileless eyes that were too much even for Mr. Clinton's sophisticated appreciation of his whereabouts. Besides, his experience in the world of men and money had taught him that audacity was usually a successful card to play. Also, that if one ran across anything valuable lying around loose and unclaimed, like a little Betty Carroll, for instance, it didn't do any harm to put one's mark on it. Likewise, thought Mr. Clinton to himself all in a flash, the charm attached to this little Betty Carroll wasn't all contained in her bag, by any means!

Mr. Clinton drew a deep breath. Then, with a recklessness equalled only by the warmth and spontaneity of his action, he suddenly seized the girl's soft and slender little figure in his arms. Before Betty knew what was happening, a kiss, first planted just at the lobe of her ear, had found its way across her cheek to her mouth and rested there.

A kiss that would have made the movie censors take out their watches.

Then he was gone.

Piloted by a masterful redcap through the stunning turmoil of the big station, Betty was still in a daze as she was slammed into a taxi on the dark ramp. She couldn't quite make out whether she felt insulted and indignant, or merely startled and amused at the warmth of her reception into the city of her dreams. But her heart was thumping so that she was unable to make out the meaning for the commotion.

Never before had she been kissed that way, certainly! What did it mean? The few male kisses Betty had received in Railville since her father died had mostly all had whiskers on them. But Van's kiss still prickled on her lips, and it wasn't from whiskers, either! And in a day or two she was to see him again—actually go to live with him and his sister. The question that immediately forced itself into Betty's mind caused her to crimson hotly again in the dark interior of the car.

Cinderella, thought Betty hectically, had nothing on her! *Cinderella* rode to the ball in a pumpkin, and didn't find the prince until after she got there, whereas she, Betty Carroll, had started out in a gorgeous Pullman and had picked up the prince as a fellow traveler. And the immediate future looked like a whirligig of a palace, and the social register and lots of money and—and everything. That is, if one predicated the future on a kiss, as was customary in Railville. But Betty had no time to consider it at length.

Just as her taxi emerged from the sloping canyon into the street, its door opened and slammed again. To Betty's blank astonishment, for the second time within an hour a young man sat beside her. Another strange and good-looking young man, who smiled at her with all the assurance of a De Witt Clinton,

though this one wasn't so perfect a fashion plate, and had reddish hair.

Heavens, flashed Betty's mind across the cloud of her confusion, it certainly did seem as if a girl coming to New York needn't expect to be lonesome for more than a few minutes at a time!

"Pardon me," she said icily as soon as she could gather breath. "You're intruding, aren't-you?"

"I don't think so," said her new seat mate easily, regarding her. "But don't get frightened. This is just a little formality."

"A great big informality, I call it!" exclaimed the girl with more indignation than alarm, since the street was thronged and it was still broad daylight. "This is my taxi, and will you please get out of it!"

"When a pretty girl arrives in town in such unusual company as you did," said the stranger dryly, "she must expect to have unusual attention paid to her."

"What?" asked Betty, taken somewhat aback. "Meaning Mr. Clinton?"

"I suppose," said the man with a sharp look at her. "Meaning Mr. Clinton."

His tone was almost contemptuous, and Betty bridled.

"What's the matter with Mr. Clinton? And what business is it of yours, anyway?"

"Didn't he tell you to look out for me?" asked the stranger with a peculiar smile.

"He did not!" snapped Betty.

"How careless of him! The name is Hawkes—John Hawkes. Ever hear of it?"

"Never! But how appropriate!"

Mr. Hawkes stared at her.

"Just the way you pounced in on me," shrugged Betty. "I almost fluttered. And now, will you please pounce right out again, Mr. Hawkes?"

"As soon as you turn over to me what your boy friend Clinton gave you," said

Mr. Hawkes blandly. "He hasn't got it, so——"

"Gave me?" broke in Betty in astonishment. "He didn't give me anything! What do you mean?"

Mr. Hawkes seemed to lose his temper.

"Well, he gave you a red-hot kiss, for one thing," he asserted with a very hard look. "I saw it!"

Betty gasped, her cheeks flooding with crimson fury and embarrassment.

"That's worse than telling about one of your own!" she exploded in angry confusion. "It's, absolutely low! Because how could I help it? How did I even know he was going to, until—until—why, I'd never even met him half an hour before!"

"Quick work," smiled Mr. Hawkes nastily. "Not that I blame him. But I'll do you the honor of calling you one sweet little liar."

"I'm not!" she stormed. "I—I mean, he had known me a long time!"

"I see," said Mr. Hawkes very dryly. "Half an hour on the train, you said? So you were practically brought up together, weren't you! Well, I've known you fifteen minutes myself."

"You're an insulting beast!" Betty cried out at him. "It was my father that knew him—knew his father, I mean! And he—Mr. Clinton—knew me from a picture! He told me so!"

"And Clinton's the name we're going under, is it?" sneered Mr. Hawkes, pointing down at her suitcase with its painted E. S. C. staring blackly up at them. "Wonderful how much can happen in half an hour on the train!"

"That's my name. Carroll, not Clinton!" choked Betty desperately. "I'm Betty—I'm Elizabeth Stanton Carroll, and I can prove it!"

"I'll prove it!" said Mr. Hawkes suddenly, bending over and seizing the suitcase, to open and explore it with all the skill and speed of a customs inspector.

At the sight of her most intimate

things passing pinkly and whitely through his hands, held out and shaken into their dainty shapes, Betty screamed and made a grab for them. The case and its contents were abandoned to her, and the bag, temporarily released from her clutch, leaped magically from her lap into the fingers of Mr. Hawkes.

For an instant Betty was half paralyzed with terror. It wasn't possible that such a thing could happen right in a taxi in a crowded street, and in broad daylight! Despite his looks and his language, this man was just an ordinary thug, nevertheless, one of those daring city criminals that old Mr. Walling and Van himself had warned her against. A gangster! A gentleman thief? Somehow he had learned that she had all her money with her, and was going to take it away from her! A friend of Van's indeed! Why, he'd never seen or heard of Van, of course, until she had so stupidly fallen into the trap and told him the name. And yet he must have been on the train. He had seen Van kiss her!

She leaped all at once upon Mr. Hawkes like a little wild cat. He was still fumbling with the clasp of the bag.

"My money!" she cried furiously. "Give it back to me!"

Mr. Hawkes's left arm whipped about her like the tentacle of an octopus. Betty was mastered in a moment, clasped in the tightest of embraces with the bandit's cheek pressed hard and hot against her own, while his right hand held the bag beyond her reach.

"Police!" screamed Betty in a strangled voice. "Help! Police!"

Nobody outside paid the least attention to her, and the taxi driver just glanced over his shoulder with a grin on his face. Then he whirled the car into some side street, stepping harder on the gas. Just as if he were in league with her captor!

Despite Betty's natural courage and her gallant attempt to fight for her

rights, a tear of helpless terror rolled down her cheek and stopped at the conjunction of their faces, where it clung to each. And where her body was pressed so closely to that of Mr. Hawkes, Betty could feel her heart jump into high and pound like a disconnected engine.

Or was it only her own heart?

The man's face seemed to grow even warmer, while against her wet cheek she began to sense the beating of a pulse that was distinctly not her own. Then Mr. Hawkes slowly drew his head back until he was gazing intently into her eyes at a distance of inches.

Never before had Betty looked into any man's eyes at such close and intimate range, or into any eyes at all that had ever affected her so strangely. She found herself looking rather into than at those of the gangster, at a mysterious crew of flitting shadows far beneath their surface. They, on their part, seemed to be penetrating deep into her own interior, mental, moral and physical. They burned her, they thrilled her, they weakened her. They held her and half hypnotized her, until, for very fear of succumbing like a silly crystal gazer to the spell that was so strangely taking possession of her, Betty closed her own eyes, though with some difficulty.

Dizzily she felt this singular gangster's grasp of her begin to relax. Then it tightened again, suddenly and fiercely, and upon her lips she felt a reimpresion of Mr. Clinton's parting gift, only more so. A kiss that throbbed like a deep harpstring!

Then, after a moment that she couldn't measure, Betty found herself back in her own corner of the taxi again, free of all restraint, her bag unopened in her lap. Mr. Hawkes was fixing her with a new look, no less disturbing, however, than the cat-and-mouse stuff he had brought into the cab with him.

Betty roused herself to some pretense of rage and loathing.



She felt his grasp of her begin to relax. Then it tightened again, suddenly and fiercely, and upon her lips she felt a kiss that throbbed like a deep harpstring!

"I hate you!" she gritted, scrubbing at her mouth.

Her captor visibly relaxed from a visible nervousness.

"Then that's all right," he breathed. "I was afraid you might be just plain angry."

Further words failed the girl in the face of such supreme effrontery.

"Listen," went on Mr. Hawkes gently. "I've got to play this out, because I can't afford to take any chances. But it's only a gesture that you can forgive me when—if—well, I'm sure that your Mr. Clinton couldn't have taken any chances, either. He's no fool."

"What are you talking about?" asked Betty suspiciously.

"I'm saying," explained Mr. Hawkes steadily, though even his ears turned red, "that you're as easy to look into as you are to look at, and——"

"Oh, yes, beautiful but dumb!" Betty broke in. "He practically said that, too!"

"He did?" said Mr. Hawkes in a tone of apparent gratification. "I knew he couldn't have kissed you without sensing at once how straight and unsophisticated you are. Let me tell you, Betty, it's a revelation, and don't I know?"

"Oh!" gasped Betty, her eyes shooting bright-brown lightnings at him. "You can tell by the taste, I suppose, if a lady's honest and stupid! That what you mean?"

Mr. John Hawkes burst into a hearty laugh which might almost have been called musical. It certainly wasn't the kind of a laugh Betty would have expected from a cold, sardonic city gangster.

"Well, if you want to put it that way," he responded. "But to get back to business for a minute, there's the matter of your money, my dear. Prove it's yours and you can keep it, of course."

"Of course it's mine!" she choked angrily. "Do you think I'm a—a thief? Didn't you just say I—that you could tell——"

"And how!" said this amazing gangster with conviction. But he held his hand out.

"All right," breathed Betty hopelessly. "Here it is."

Opening the bag, she fumbled down under for the two packages and handed them over to him.

"That's everything," she said with a lump of terror in her throat. "Fifteen hundred dollars in cash and two thousand dollars in Liberty bonds. I haven't any jewelry. Mr. Walling's list will prove these are mine. He sold all my house and things for me. He's our banker in Railville."

"Hm-m-m!" commented Mr. Hawkes, frowning at the list and flipping the edges of the packages. "And that's all?"

"Don't you believe me?"

The gangster nodded slowly as he handed her back her fortune.

"You need a guardian!" he said with sudden determination. "And here's your hotel."

The taxi was indeed drawing up to the curb in front of the Hotel Warner with remarkable timeliness. A great wave of relief swept over Betty. She had her money and she was safe!

"One's enough," she said with an ir-repressible little stab into dark. "Mr. Clinton is going to watch out for me."

Mr. Hawkes stiffened and bent forward from his corner.

"What?" he barked. "You going to see him again?"

"Of course," laughed Betty a little lightly. "But I'll tell him about your kind offer, Mr. John Hawkes, and— and maybe about some other things!"

"Oh, the kiss, you mean?" he flashed at her.

"You stole it," blazed Betty. "You stole it, if—if you didn't steal anything else!"

"If you feel that way about it, I'll give it back to you, Betty."

"Never mind," she crimsoned, slipping through the open door. "You can keep it as a souvenir. Thanks for the buggy ride!"

But she stood on the curb, still looking at him through the open door of the taxi. His clear gray eyes were fastened on her as once before. Under that steady, penetrating gaze, Betty began to feel less and less sure of herself. Finally her own eyes wavered, and she dropped them.

"Perhaps the less you say about me to Mr. Clinton the more you'll see of him," came the gangster's calm voice from the interior of the taxi. "Au revoir, Betty!"

When Betty raised her eyes again he was gone. That is, the taxi containing Mr. Hawkes was drawing away from the curbstone.

Once within the room assigned to her, Betty locked the door and flopped into its only comfortable chair, her limbs trembling in reaction to all the excitement that had been packed into her first hour in and near New York.

What an adventure, or what a pair of them! First to meet De Witt Clinton so miraculously on the train, with all the promise of ease and comfort and friendship that the meeting meant, and then to fall at once into the hands of his absolute opposite! Into the power of one of those terribly exciting desperadoes who prey on respectable people, like herself and Van. Why, she'd actually been "taken for a ride," though, inexplicably enough, she hadn't been either killed or robbed.

Also, for a simple little stranger who didn't know a soul in all New York, Betty decided that she had certainly received a warm welcome-to-our-city. From both of them! Betty's lips still tingled, and her cheeks still burned at the recollection of those kisses. What would Van say, she wondered vaguely, if he knew about the second kiss she had received? Nothing, nodded Betty to herself; because what was the use of telling him? None at all!

At last Betty got up and stared out of the window at Fourteenth Street. Then she gave her quarters a long once-over. Both hotel and room were somewhat disappointing to her, even if they did put it all over Railville. They didn't quite correspond to her conceptions of New York grandeur. The carpet of the room was worn and scuffed, and the furniture, consisting of a heavy brass bedstead, an ornately turned walnut bureau, a small, flat table and two chairs, was of two generations before. The brass knob on one of the bed-

posts, Betty noticed, leaned over drunkenly, half unscrewed.

Oh, well, in a day or two she'd be a guest in what she instinctively felt would be New York at its best and grandest.

Betty unpacked her suitcase, hanging up her few dresses and stowing away her lingerie, still crumpled from their mishandling by the gangster. Then she started to straighten out her bag, into which she had merely stuffed things back after being forced to exhibit her wealth to Mr. Hawkes. The two packages of bonds and cash were at the bottom, underneath her nightwear and toilet articles and loose nothings. And she remembered vaguely that even on the train, too, when she had started to give them to Van and he had refused them, she had done no more than stuff them back down into the bag instead of carefully concealing them in the hiding place under the lining. Well, that was all right, luckily. They hadn't been stolen, and she'd put them back and forget them, as she had promised Van.

As Betty's fingers, holding the two small packages, reached the bottom again and began to fumble for the slit opening of the lining, she froze to a frightened statue. There was something already in there! She could feel it! Hastily putting the money and bonds on the bed, she stared into the bag. Then she tremulously slipped her fingers into the slit and felt two flat packages!

Gingerly she drew them forth. Two flat packages they were, of money or the like, done up almost exactly like her own, with rubber bands around them. But two and two made four! She touched her own pair on the bed just to see if they were real. Then she bent the end of one of the new ones so she could see an inch or more of its contents, and nearly passed out. The figure on the upper corner of the top one read 1000! Blinking, Betty removed

the rubber band and fanned the sheaf. It consisted of twenty one-thousand-dollar bills. Things she didn't know existed. And the second alien package held the same.

Forty thousand dollars!

A cold chill crept over her as she stared at this prodigious and incredible treasure trove. She racked her brain, trying to imagine how it could possibly have found its way into her bag. Could Mr. Walling—but no mistake there! She had tucked her money away with her own hands at home after receiving it from him at the bank.

On the train, though she had told Van about it, she hadn't even shown it to him. He had particularly asked her not to give it to him then. He hadn't touched it. As for the gangster, it was true that John Hawkes had snatched the bag from her and had held it for perhaps two minutes. But all that time it had remained unopened in his extended right hand, where she could see it. And he had returned it still unopened.

Besides, though a robber might take pity on a girl and refuse to rob her, he wouldn't turn around and slip her a dozen times as much as she had, instead. That sort of thing just wasn't done in gangster circles, Betty was sure!

For one crazy moment Betty even suspected her bag. Had some one switched with her? But this one was hers, and it had contained her own things and her own money. She had just taken them out.

Footsteps out in the corridor turned Betty's chilly fright into a glacial panic. Somebody had planted forty thousand dollars on her! If the money were found in her possession she'd be accused of stealing it! She'd have to go to prison! Indeed, could there be any other possible reason for anybody's doing such a thing? She must get rid of it!

Betty's first mad impulse was to rush to the window and throw the alien

money out. But even her distracted mind could guess that a rain of thousand-dollar bills on Fourteenth Street might start more of an investigation than she cared to face.

Holding to the big brass bedstead, she stared wildly around the room in search of a hiding place. The loose knob came off in her hand. Catching herself, Betty instinctively glanced at the sudden dislocation to perceive that the bedpost was now merely a thick hollow tube, and that she had but accidentally completed the unscrewing of the knob. It dawned upon her that here was a clever place of concealment. Picking up the perilous packets of big bills, Betty folded them lengthwise until she could stuff them into the open bedpost, one upon the other. Then she frantically poked at them until they were far down in the tube. And finally she screwed the knob back into place, straining at it until it was so tight she could no longer twist it either way.

Then Betty made up her mind that she wasn't going to stay any longer in that room with anybody's forty thousand dollars! Owner, thief or treacherous enemy, somebody knew she had it, and would be after it or her! She couldn't very well leave the hotel, since Van wouldn't know where to find her, but——

Repacking her things in her suitcase and carefully stowing her own money and bonds back in their private compartment of the bag, Betty boldly went down to the desk and asked to be changed.

"Let's see," said the shabby clerk, scratching his head. "I gave you No. 14 on the second, didn't I? How about No. 142, top floor back, miss. Will that do?"

"That'll do beautifully," Betty thanked him.

The clerk casually added the figure 2 to her original room number, and Betty started toward the elevator. But

upon arriving in her new chamber, she decided to transfer her own personal wealth to the First National Bank, one package to each stocking just above the knee. Because anybody looking for forty thousand and not finding it, might decide to make the best of three thousand five hundred.

Oh, if Van would only hurry!

CHAPTER II.

"Some dump!" conceded the glittering blonde, finding herself once again in the gorgeous thirty-foot living room after a tour of the Park Avenue skyscraper apartment. "Only they should have got one of those real decorators who isn't blind to throw a little jazz into it. Too much like a church, what? Just watch me brighten it up!"

Her escort, leaning languidly on a malacca stick, frowned beneath the brim of his glossy silk topper.

"Nix! Listen, now, Draga, instead of trying to turn this joint into a block of the Big White Way, you just tone yourself down to it! This place is highbrow, and you've got to be refined."

"Who's talking?" asked Draga haughtily. "Didn't they use to hand me all the swell-dame rôles not only on account of my looks but because they wasn't a girl there that could put on dog like me? I guess I can act just as ritzy as you can, little boy! And then some!"

"You sound like a song out of Tin Pan Alley, the way you're talking now," the man said freezingly. "And look like the cover of one, by the way. You're sporting twice too much ice. You watch your step, Draga. I'm not paying a thousand a month for this hot stage setting to have you make a break and queer things."

"Leave it to me," sniffed Draga. "I'll have you looking like a poor relation. By the way, Slim, what do I call you for a pet name?"

"Make it Van," he grinned dryly. "That was her choice."

"Oh, it was," said Draga softly. "And so soon? I thought this was a business proposition, Mr. De Witt Clinton. Tell me some more about her!"

"Nothing to tell," he said shortly, "except that she's just a little hick from the backwoods and as dumb as the fly leaf in a dictionary. So don't be a fool."

"Is she good looking?"

"Some people might think so," shrugged Mr. Clinton. "I suppose her face wouldn't exactly stop a clock."

"Tell me another one," jeered Draga. "Don't tell me you're setting up all this front just to take chicken feed off a poor little hick from the sticks. What are you trying to put over on me?"

"I told you she was packing a big wad along with her right out in a bag, didn't I?"

"And you couldn't make it when it was wide open, right there on the train? That's a hot one!"

"Listen," snapped Mr. Clinton. "What do you mean I couldn't make it when she even offered to hand it over to me!"

Draga stared, her lovely mouth half open. Then she shut it tightly.

"Seems to me you've got something still to explain, darling. Somebody fell butter-side down for somebody, I see. Which was which, and why, and how come, anyway?"

"Well, the fact is, kid," said Mr. Clinton, slightly embarrassed, "I was under the eye. That guy Hawkes was on the train, and had me spotted."

"Hawkes!" whispered Draga. "I never saw that bird, but I've heard of him!"

"Yeah!" said Mr. Clinton darkly. "Tougher than a bootlegger's guns. He had me cold, or thought he did, and frisked me to the skin before I got off. So where would I have fitted with all that extra jack?"

"Yes, but how about the other stuff?" demanded Draga breathlessly. "Slim!" Mr. Clinton frowned.

"Worried about the meal ticket, are you? Ever know me to get caught with the goods yet? Say, listen, Draga, who do you suppose is carrying around that load of greens for me right now? The little dame from Virginia!"

"Oh, you fool!" exploded Draga. "You mean you planted it on your pick-up cutie? Have you gone nuts? And then you plant us up here, where we stick out like the Empire State Building? What's she going to do!" demanded the girl almost hysterically. "The poor boob will go to the cops the second she finds it! Slim, we got to beat it!"

"Lose your head and you flop around like a chopped-off hen," said Mr. Clinton disgustedly. "Stop stripping your gears! What I pulled on that skirt will hold her like a Scotchman hangs onto a nickel, I'm telling you! I filled her up with dope about the dangers of the big town till you could see it running over. Me, De Witt van Rensselaer Clinton, I'm the one and only fair-haired boy in all New York for that baby, believe me! I'll bet everything she's got on her that she's glued to a chair this minute, with her door locked, just waiting for dear Van to show up."

"She must be dumb!" smiled Draga dryly and incredulously.

"Well, maybe," smirked Mr. Clinton. "But when I sneak up on their little heartbeats they usually stick right to the fly paper. You ought to know that," he added impudently.

"Your opinion of yourself is easily one of the ten leading industries," said Draga, narrowing her eyes. "But don't you forget that there's a panic on, and anything's liable to blow up."

"It had better not be you, my dear," retorted Mr. Clinton through very thin lips. "You keep your shirt on, because you're going to need it. Come, Draga,

cut out the jealous stuff. This is big business, and you've got to ladle out the mush just as thick as I have. She's rotten with money of her own, actually wants me to invest it for her! Get an earful of that! Must be fifty or sixty grand. She spoke of selling a place called Stanton Court. Sounds like one of those old Virginian estates."

"Well, for Pete's sake," inquired the puzzled Draga, "what's the matter with just going down and letting her give it to you? Why all the fancy scenery and the crazy play-acting?"

"You're just as dumb as she is! Get this, you little bonehead. The girl cuts some ice down where she comes from—got a pedigree like a prize pup, to judge from the names they hung on her. I've heard 'em before somewhere. And if she was trimmed clean and raised a holler, all the papers from here to Honolulu would give her the front page. Besides, there isn't a jury in the world that wouldn't send John D. Vanderbilt to the poorhouse if she told 'em she owned the oil wells. And she wouldn't even have to vamp 'em, either."

"I see," said Draga slowly.

"You'd better," growled Mr. Clinton. "First, we take her right into the Clinton family for old time's sake, like I told you. Then I invest her money for her, along with all of mine, in something good. Then we go broke together. Absolutely cleaned out, so that you and I even have to give up the old family apartment and join the breadline. Get it? Instead of putting up a squawk she'll be sorry for me, see? She's that kind. But that can't be done all in a minute, Draga. That's why the scenery, and why we take her in for a few weeks. Big-time money. Isn't it worth it?"

Draga nodded. "Sometimes you show brains like a chorine shows her shape, Slim. It sounds good, only——"

"Only what?" he asked as she hesitated.

"Only don't you fall for anything besides her money, that's all!"

"Listen," said Mr. Clinton ominously. "As far as that goes, I could marry that baby to-morrow and cop the money legally if I wanted to. And I wouldn't need any sister to help me do it, either! So if you can add two and two, you know where you stand with me, as long as you behave! Otherwise——" He broke off, giving her a meaning look.

"Oh, all right, sweetie," Draga broke in hastily and meekly. "I'll behave. Aren't I your ever-loving doll?"

"See that you stay so!" threatened Mr. Clinton. "And now get a hustle on. If I can grab off a swell furnished apartment like this at half a day's notice, you can dig up a couple maids and a man for it without wasting any extra time. Get busy. The sooner that kid comes home with all the jack the better."

"I'll say!" agreed Draga. "Leave it to me. I'll show you some old family retainers that'll date us Clintons back to when Columbus settled New York! Let's go!"

TO BE CONCLUDED.



LOVE'S FAITH

THOUGH I hear folks saying
That they pity me,
Lad, my heart is knowing
You will quit the sea,
And across the darkness
Ghostly candles burn,
Making bright the pathway
For your safe return.

Lad, you will grow hungry
For my clinging lips,
And you will be stumbling
From the luring ships;
So, despite their sighing
And what folks have said,
Trembling in the shadows,
I await your tread.

EDGAR DANIEL KRAMER.



Worth Waiting For

By W. Carey Wonderly

CAROLA planned and built the roadside stand by herself, and when it was finished, she had to admit that it was the most attractive thing of its kind she had ever seen. Daphne said nothing. She was too busy posing in a sun-backed bathing suit off the White Rocks to bother her sunny head over such a tiresome matter as business.

Suddenly one day the Woodward girls had found themselves faced with the necessity of making their own living, and Carola had jumped in and tackled the job. She consulted Daphne, but never dreamed of asking her sister to

help. Daphne was the beauty, all gold and pink and white, like a fairy-tale princess, and it was a foregone conclusion that she would make a brilliant marriage.

Carola didn't insist upon Daphne's helping with the roadside stand, where hot dogs and cold drinks were dispensed to passing motorists. The location was ideal, situated on the speedway, and just a stone's throw from the fashionable bathing beach. It all looked so dainty and tempting, and Carola appeared so eager and willing that many parties parked for refreshments.

If business kept up, Carola decided, she would have to engage an assistant, for of course she couldn't expect Daphne to help behind the counter. Somehow, one didn't expect too much of Daphne. She seemed to have been created specially to decorate the landscape, as she was doing to-day out on the rocks. She detested hot dogs, and thought ice-cream cones were messy. But Daphne, of course, was the pretty Woodward girl, a fact which she had taken advantage of from the cradle days. Always it was Daphne who had the new dress, the biggest slice of cake, the chair nearest the fire in winter, the least work to do. Not that Carola rebelled; Daphne had a way of getting around even her sister.

On that particular gold-and-turquoise morning, almost breath-taking in its exquisite beauty, Carola was busy preparing the succulent frankfurters, when a man drove up. Instead of calling, he jumped out of his car and walked up to the stand. He was a stranger; Carola had never seen him before, though she knew most of the men in the summer colony at least by sight.

This man was big, rugged, and handsome in an outdoor fashion. She felt that his tan was permanent, and that his muscles hadn't been acquired in a private gymnasium. Nor were his clothes the accepted masculine sports costume of the neighborhood. Lovely Daphne would have snickered and dubbed him a total loss, but there was something about Garret Walker which instantly commanded Carola's attention and respect. Perhaps it was just his coming to her instead of shouting his questions from the car.

"I'm trying to discover how to get down to the ocean," he confessed with a friendly smile. "That big fellow at the gate down the road won't let me come in."

"But that's a private bathing beach," Carola explained, as he paused, waiting hopefully for her answer. "I mean, you

must be a member of the club in order to use that particular stretch of beach."

"Just like that, eh?" he grinned. "Well, I was invited down by a member, but for the life of me I can't remember what I did with the card he gave me. That places me on the outside looking in, I suppose. And the water looks good to-day."

"The beach club doesn't own the entire Atlantic Ocean," Carola ventured with a merry twinkle. "If it's the swimming you crave and not just the society trimmings—"

"Who, me?"

"It's not unheard of along this shore."

"I suppose not." His brief flare-up vanished, and he looked solemnly serious. "I don't want you to get me wrong," he said after a moment. "I'm not a society bird nor do I hanker to be. The fact is, I just got in from the West a couple of days ago, and met this chap who invited me down to Bayswater in a business deal. He gave me a card to this club, which I thought very nice of him. But now I've lost the card."

"Did you explain to the gateman?" asked Carola.

"I guess he listens to a hundred explanations like mine every week," Garret admitted ruefully. "It's my fault entirely. Since the club doesn't own the whole Atlantic, just where can I take a dip?"

Carola came from behind the counter to direct him more clearly. Her brown little face was flushed and eager, and for the moment it seemed the most important thing in the world that this stranger from the West should have his swim.

"You go down this way," she said. "The public beach and bathhouses are down there. I don't think you see where I mean at all," she broke off plaintively.

For Garret was looking at her, not following her directions. He was thinking that she wasn't so skinny, as most girls he had met in the East were, and

he liked the brownness of her—brown hair, brown eyes, and golden-tan complexion. Besides, for the sake of the sylvan setting, Carola wore the quaintest and most becoming Arcadian shepherdess costume. She looked so rustically attractive that the big man began to wonder if he really wanted to go swimming so badly, after all. He had a perfectly good car, and the roads were both excellent and picturesque. Garret seriously commenced to consider a change of plan.

And then a party of three drove up to the stand, and Carola sprang to serve them. Just his luck! For of course she couldn't leave; she had her business to attend to.

Garret asked for a soft drink and a hot dog. There seemed no other excuse for lingering, since the party of three had driven away.

"Wonderful view you have from here," he observed politely.

"We adore it," Carola said, including Daphne, as she always did, in her reply. "But you said you were a Westerner, I believe. Does the ocean take the place of your mountains?"

"I'm familiar with both ocean and mountains," he answered. "I'm from Oregon. We have the Pacific out there—and your ocean here makes me sort of homesick. Except for the water, the country isn't very similar, though. We don't have bathing beaches fenced off, for instance. That's a new idea. When Carlton gave me that card, I was kind of stumped for a minute. Now—my name is Garret Walker."

He introduced himself rather lamely, and looked at Carola so hopefully that she smiled to herself and handed him one of the cards which were piled neatly on the gay cretonne-covered counter. Over the cretonne was a glass slab which Carola kept spotless and shining.

"D. and C. Woodward," he read aloud, and raised questioning eyes to the girl's amused face.

"D. is my partner," she told him.

"Yes?"

"Yes. My sister."

"Oh! And you are C. I guess it's—Clara. And yet you don't look like a Clara. Maybe it's Charlotte?"

"It's—Woodward," Carola said with just the proper dignity. She liked this big, friendly, virile man, but because she liked him, she sensibly refused to indulge in personalities. He was from the other end of the country; he was here as a rich man's guest, and she was just the girl at the hot-dog stand. There must be no mistake to be apologized for later.

Carola was immensely popular with the people who patronized her little business. When motorists stopped, she was friendly and interested in what they had to say. Men and girls from the beach club dashed over to her stand between dips or after a swim, and proclaimed her a darling. Women liked Carola, one reason being that she didn't try to steal their men. She was efficient, light-hearted, and intelligent. She had seen better days, but she didn't complain against the fate which made it necessary for her to earn her own living.

"And her sister's living as well," Mrs. Marsh-Towers always added. "Heaven knows the other Woodward girl would starve without Carola."

"Oh, no, she wouldn't," put in Mrs. Marsh-Towers's daughter. "Not with so many fool men around."

Daphne, on her rock, was a lure and a challenge to any man. Garret Walker, after having said good-by to Carola, decided that if he couldn't go driving with Carola, he might do considerably worse than disport himself in the green and rolling ocean. C. Woodward had promised to look out for his car for him. Garret changed to a bathing suit, and started to swim out to the White Rocks without a suspicion that this golden-crowned mermaid was the sister of the girl behind the hot-dog counter.

Garret was strong and handsome, Daphne readily perceived out of the corners of her baby-blue eyes. When he had almost reached the rocks, she dived overboard, remaining so long under water that the man became uneasy and went to her aid. The difference, of course, was that Garret was lonesome, while Daphne was flirtatious. Not inclined to pick up a man casually, without excuse, which would have hurt her reputation in the summer colony, Daphne resorted to a rescue.

When Garret had assisted her to safety on the rocks, she thanked him prettily, explaining that the undercurrent was so swift and strong that for a moment she had lost her head. It was such a lovely head that the young Westerner glanced unconsciously at the bright-golden halo, for Daphne had removed her bathing cap.

From her hot-dog stand up on the shore, Carola saw the second figure on the White Rocks and with a little sigh of disappointment, realized that it was Garret Walker. She was sorry, but it was always like that. Daphne was the charmer, the siren who drew men to her like a magnet, and the pity of it was that Carola had taken a distinct fancy to Garret, whom she had seen first.

But she was soon too busy to give more than a passing thought to Garret and her sister, frolicking in the pleasant waters of the sea. Yes, she'd like to have gone swimming herself, but there was too much work to do. Men and girls came running and skipping across from the beach club and stood chatting gayly while they consumed countless frankfurters and bottles of pop. There was an excellent restaurant at the club, but somehow it had become the thing to go over to the Woodward stand and get a hot dog after the morning dip. Nothing else tasted quite so good, her fashionable patronage assured Carola.

She was pleased, of course, and filled the orders just as quickly as possible, but there was too much work for one person at the stand. Young Jimmy Scarlett, seeing Carola trying to do a dozen things at once, gayly vaulted the counter, taking up his position on the other side, where he turned his attention to opening the soft drinks. Jimmy was the only son and heir of one of the richest men on Long Island, but he worked with an enthusiasm which amused and interested the crowd.

"You'll want to get a cash register, Miss Woodward," cried Jane Marsh-Towers, "if you're going to let Jimmy Scarlett make change for you."

"Never could count," grinned Jimmy. "It's a good thing everything costs a dime."

Carola, well liked and respected in the community for the way she had rolled up her sleeves and gone to work when it became necessary, was friendly with all the young people in the colony without being one of them. The fact that Jimmy remained behind when the others returned to the beach club troubled her not at all. Jimmy was a kid. He was a whole year Carola's senior, but to her he was a kid just the same.

She smiled as she saw him jump in to help her clean up the stand after her rush hour.

"Please don't," she said. "You'll only get yourself wet and sticky."

"In which case I'll go jump in the ocean and let it wash me clean again," Jimmy smiled, glancing down at his swimming suit. "Say, that's an idea," he added more seriously. "Come on over to the beach club this afternoon and take a dip with me. Come on—it'll do you good."

"Business before pleasure," Carola told him, shaking her nut-brown head.

"Let your sister take care of the stand for once," Jimmy Scarlett blurted.

Carola felt the blood rising in her cheeks. "Of course, Daphne would if

I asked her, but just the same I feel that I ought to be here, too. Besides, I never do, you know."

"Never do—what?"

"Go in swimming at the beach club."

"Well, there's no earthly reason why you shouldn't. It's your own fault.

"You work like a slave," he grumbled.

The smile deepened. "A happy, rather successful slave then, Mr. Scarlett. Thanks a lot for your invitation, but——"

"Oh, all right if you don't want to



"My name is Garret Walker." He introduced himself rather lamely, and looked at Carola so hopefully that she smiled to herself.

Everybody's crazy about you. You're ritzing us."

A little ghost of a smile crossed Carola's pretty face as she answered gently: "Everybody's very kind to me. But, you see, I happen to take my daily dips early in the morning or late in the afternoon, when there's no one about and I feel I can safely leave my stand."

be seen with me," Jimmy muttered, betraying his youth. "But when you start calling me Mr. Scarlett——"

"You say 'Miss Woodward,'" Carola reminded him, and instantly sensed her mistake.

But Jimmy always seemed so immature, so boyish, always laughing and joking, and—yes, jumping in and help-

ing with the soft drinks. It was hard to take him seriously, to remember that he was a man.

"You know mighty well I'm crazy about you, don't you, Carola?" he cried, suddenly seizing her hand. "Well, I am. I love you, Carola. I want to take you away from this place and give you all the beautiful things you ought to have. I want to take you to Europe; I want to show you California and the coast—our other ocean, the Pacific. Oh, I'll do anything for you!"

Carola's brown eyes turned seaward, and she was no longer listening to Jimmy. When he spoke of the Pacific, he stepped right out of the picture, and another man took his place. She looked for the powerful, athletic shoulders of Garret Walker in the water, and noticed for the first time that the White Rocks were deserted. The next instant Garret came up from the public beach in search of his automobile.

"Thanks for keeping an eye on it," he said to Carola.

Beside Jimmy, he looked like a giant as he bent over the car and commenced to tinker with it. Apparently there was much to be done before driving away. Jimmy glared, but Garret refused to budge. Finally, in a childish rage at the interruption, the boy took himself off in the direction of the club. Immediately Garret lowered the hood and faced Carola, smiling.

"How about coming for a ride now?" he asked. "Everybody seems to have gone home, and there's sure to be a lull of a couple of hours."

"I know everything's quiet at the beach club," Carola answered, "but suppose a party of hungry motorists comes along."

"They won't starve until they reach the next stand on the road."

"No, but if people begin to wait until they reach the next stand, I may—starve, you know," Carola smiled quietly.

"Say, you can think up more weak excuses!"

"Are they weak?"

Garret thought for a moment. "No," he admitted with a frank and winning smile. "I admire your stick-to-itiveness. If you've got a job to do, do it. I was watching you from out on the rocks. You've been pretty busy."

"Yes, thank goodness," Carola answered. "The people around here are wonderfully loyal, and they neglect the chef at the beach club scandalously."

"Does that young fellow work for you?"

"I should say! He's Judge Scarlett's son, and he was just being sweet and kind and helpful."

"That's no hardship," sniffed Garret. "By the way," he added, "I know your name. It's Carola. I asked a young lady I met out on the rocks, and she told me."

"What else did she tell you?" Carola asked curiously.

"Just that you're called Carola—and a lot about herself. I like your name. I keep saying it over and over and thinking how much it suits you. I never heard it before, but I think it's fine."

Carola absently smiled her appreciation, but she was thinking about Daphne, who hadn't told Garret Walker that she was the sister of the girl at the hot-dog stand. The truth saddened Carola, yet didn't surprise her. Daphne, of course, had tried to impress this stranger with her social standing and importance in the colony. That was why she wasn't with him now, no doubt. Daphne had permitted the Westerner to go alone to the public beach, lingering behind and pretending that she belonged to the exclusive club. Poor, foolish little Daphne. She exasperated Carola and yet evoked pity.

"I'll tell you what I'll do if you really want me to," Carola said suddenly, as she caught a glimpse of her sister's golden head coming up from the beach.

"I'll be off duty at seven o'clock, and I'll go for a ride with you then—for an hour——"

"Have dinner with me?" the man interrupted hopefully.

"I didn't promise that. Besides, I've got dinner to get at home."

"I see. Well, I'll wander over to the hotel and wait for seven o'clock. You bet I want to take you for a drive. I need you—as a guide. Otherwise, I'd go away without half appreciating your country."

She liked the twinkle in his gray eyes and the deep note in his voice.

Daphne kept out of sight, on the other side of the road, until his car had disappeared in a cloud of dust. Then she came hurrying over to the stand.

"I went swimming with that man," Daphne told her sister with a contemptuous little laugh. "He may look like a Greek god in a bathing suit, but his clothes sure are all wrong. Make him buy a decent tie, won't you, Cara? Was he trying to date you up?"

"I'm going driving with him after supper," Carola answered quietly.

"In that cheap car of his? You must be hard up. When we were in the water, he asked me if I'd go, but I couldn't be bothered. Too many fish in the sea."

"Interesting," murmured Carola, without adding, "If true." Daphne was like that. For instance, she hadn't told Carola that Garret Walker had asked about her while they were swimming together. Daphne would never tell when a man showed interest in another girl.

As Carola closed up the stand for the night, she was reminded of how hard she had worked that day, while Daphne, who shared equally in the profits, had enjoyed herself in the water and on the beach.

"I've been terribly rushed," she confessed, frowning. "To-morrow you'll have to stay here and help me, Daphne."

"The frankfurters make me ill—you know that."

"Then handle the drinks and the cones."

"Cara dear, I'm like a fifth wheel to a wagon around this stand."

"But I must have help," Carola insisted firmly. "If you won't work, then I'll have to get an assistant, and the wages will come out of our profits. Come down to earth, Daphne. We're poor, and we've got our living to make. Stop imposing upon good nature, hanging around and waiting for some one to invite you into the club—out of pity, too. Get on your job."

Daphne's blue eyes filled with tears. "All right," she sobbed. "Go on and nag! I never have any pleasure like other girls of my age. I'm a social pariah, according to my sister. I'm not good enough to associate with girls who apparently like me in spite of my frightful poverty. I must be denied everything. Oh, why was I ever born?"

In spite of herself, the tears moved Carola. "What's the use of going on like that?" she asked more gently.

"In a few years I'll be old and ugly and ready for the rubbish heap," whimpered Daphne, without believing in the least what she said.

"And I suppose my job is a beauty tonic," Carola ventured mildly. "You'll lose your good looks faster by crying."

"I don't care if I look like a hag if all I can look forward to are frankfurters!"

The last shutter was in place at last. Daphne hadn't moved or offered to help. And Carola had a nasty splinter in her thumb.

"Come on," she said wearily, tired of the argument. "If I'm going riding after supper, I have plenty to do first."

"I'll wash the dishes," cooed Daphne, feeling that she had gained her point about working at the roadside stand.

"You'll ruin your hands putting them in dish water," Carola reminded her.

"That's so," sighed the lovely blonde. "You spoil me, honey. You won't let me help. O Cara, don't be cross with me. I feel so helpless and alone."

Daphne didn't look helpless, and her sister couldn't remember seeing her alone for more than five minutes at a time, except from choice. But she couldn't wrangle with Daphne. It was much simpler for Carola to shoulder their burden alone. She sighed as she turned up the hill to their tiny bungalow to prepare dinner.

While she was busy in the spotless white-and-blue kitchen, Daphne lounged in a hammock on the porch, absorbed in a magazine. If closely pressed, Daphne would admit that she felt awfully sorry for Cara, but it really wasn't her fault if she didn't have her sister's talent for housework. Besides, if she made the wealthy marriage which she hoped for, she'd soon yank Carola away from the pots and pans. That was Daphne Woodward's great ambition—money by marriage. She forgot that she played around with too many men ever to win the honest affections of one.

After supper, she hurried to her highly perfumed, souvenir-strewn bedroom, leaving Carola to clean up.

"I'm in an awful hurry," ventured Carola, glancing at the Dutch clock on the wall. "I'll never be ready by seven."

"Leave the dishes until morning, darling," Daphne called from behind her door.

But somehow Carola was ready when Garret drove up in his battered old roadster, which had provoked Daphne to laughter. Daphne's preference was a foreign limousine. But then, of course, even a dilapidated roadster was a treat to Cara. Behind her dainty curtains, the work of her sister's hands, Daphne watched Carola go down the walk to Garret's car which was parked at the gate. It was just too bad that Cara was so domesticated and lacked the beauty and charm to attract the spending

boys from the beach club, Daphne mused.

Never for a moment did Carola suspect that she was an object of pity to any one, least of all to her sister. She looked as fresh and wholesome as ripe strawberries to the man who helped her into the saucy little car. Perhaps it was daring of her to go driving with Garret Walker, whom she had known so short a time, she meditated, but on the other hand, she would have refused an invitation from Jimmy Scarlett, and she had known Jimmy all summer. Garret, she confessed blushing to herself, was different.

The sun was just setting, a red-gold ball of fiery glory, as the roadster spun noiselessly along the boulevard, with the sea on their right. For a mile or two they were happily silent, drinking in the beauties of the evening and somehow feeling that life was good. But Garret soon showed himself to be full of fun, reminding Carola of a schoolboy on a holiday. Sometimes he even made her feel old, and she was only twenty. But he wanted to know so many things; he possessed a lively imagination and a healthy interest in each and everything they saw. Carola found herself taking a certain pride in pointing out the beauty spots of the neighborhood.

"You mustn't go back to Oregon with the impression that the Pacific has it all over my beloved Atlantic," she said. "The ocean thrills and awes me, but I adore it. Even my stand seems less hot and tiresome when I can stand beside it, gazing out at the surf."

Under her directions Garret drove down to Herring Point and there, above the sandy beach, he parked his car. Before them spread the vast, rolling ocean, the same sea that touched England, France, all the foreign countries she longed to visit. Eagerly she breathed the clean, salt air. She pulled the scarlet béret from her dark curls and stood there facing the sea like a golden-brown

nymph. Her sheer happiness checked the words which trembled on Garret's lips, and for several moments he stood there beside her without speaking, lost in silent admiration.

For Carola wasn't plain. A girl with such eyes, such wind-tossed hair and tremulous lips would never be called plain. She was more than pretty; she was even beautiful, Garret thought. She was modern to her finger tips, the owner of a successful little business, yet she breathed the sweetness of a fragrant old-fashioned garden, and the man felt strangely humble in her presence.

"A penny for your thoughts," he ventured at last, striving to speak lightly because he was deeply moved.

"I was thinking," returned Carola quite seriously, "that it must be a long swim to Europe."

They both laughed. Garret was somewhat relieved. Oh, yes, there was nothing dull or antiquated or even awe-inspiring about Carola. She was intensely human, and therefore to be loved and won.

"Do you know, I've decided not to return to Oregon at the end of the week?" Garret said, as they walked back to the parked car. "I was going home on Friday, but I've changed my mind."

His words were fraught with meaning. Carola never dreamed of questioning this sudden decision of his to remain longer in the East. But somehow she felt happier than she had been in months. She knew this man found her charming and desirable, and the very thought of love made the whole world brighter. How big and strong and capable he seemed, sitting there beside her in the car, homeward bound. She adored the pungent odor of tobacco that clung to his tweed suit. She thought his tie, which Daphne had dismissed with a contemptuous shrug, very becoming. Peace and contentment infolded her, and she was blissfully at rest as she sat and dreamed at Garret's side.

"When am I going to see you again?" he asked when they arrived at the bungalow.

"I'm usually on duty ten hours at the refreshment stand," Carola observed with a smile.

"I know that. But I mean like this—just you and me. Carola, you understand that I want you to know me better—much better—don't you?"

She paled a little there in the moonlight under the honeysuckle.

"What about your knowing—me?" she dared at last. "Or—don't you care to know me—better?"

"Care?" he cried in a voice which thrilled her. "Yes, I care, Carola. But I feel it wouldn't be fair to you for me to say the things I want to tell you, until you know me longer and better. To you I'm just a stranger, a man who appears suddenly from nowhere, explaining that his home is in Oregon. I might be—anybody."

She shook her head gently. "You're—you," she said in a low voice. "And I can't feel at all that you're a stranger."

Something stirred on the bungalow porch, and they glanced around in time to see Daphne vanishing into the house. It was very early; her sister was never home at such an hour. Carola, vaguely alarmed, turned to say good night.

Before the engine of Garret's car was silenced by distance, Daphne was out of the door and had drawn Carola none too gently into the house. Her blue eyes were dark with excitement, her cheeks flushed, her speech crisp.

"Do you know who that man is?" she asked breathlessly.

"Yes," Carola replied with a shy little smile.

"You do? Then that's the reason you've tried to steal him away from me! This morning on the rocks he was all devotion, the most charming and thoughtful man I ever met. I swear it was a case of love at first sight. Then



XW

"Don't make me laugh. Just because he took you for a drive when I refused him you imagine he's in love with you. As if Garret Walker could love you!"

he came ashore and you stopped him at the stand and told him—well, they must have been lies! You turned him against me and grabbed him for yourself. I

won't stand for it, Cara. Garret Walker belongs to me!"

A new and determined look crept into Carola's brown eyes.

"What's happened, Daphne?" she asked coldly. "What have you heard about Mr. Walker to make you change your tune?"

"He's worth—millions!" the excited

girl almost screamed. "Over at the beach club to-night I heard Dick Carlton telling some one that Walker was here for a business conference, and that he could buy and sell any man in the club. I tell you, he fell hard for me this morning——"

"But you didn't know about his millions then, and so you couldn't be bothered," interposed Carola, white to the lips. "You poked fun at his car and laughed at his clothes. I think he's handsome and charming. And I thought so before I knew whether he was a millionaire or a—penniless nobody, though he could never be a nobody."

"Don't make me laugh. Just because he took you for a drive when I refused him you imagine he's in love with you. Don't be silly. Have you looked in the mirror lately? As if Garret Walker could love you!"

"But he does," Carola said calmly.

"What?"

"Garret loves me and I love him."

"Has he asked you to marry him?"

"No, but he will," Carola said, with the knowledge there in her heart.

"That's sheer nonsense," Daphne pointed out patronizingly. "You're my sister and I'll always love you and take care of your future. You'll have trips abroad and a car of your own and—and everything, Cara. But don't—don't daydream, darling. I hate to hurt you, but I'm the one Garret Walker loves. He asked you to drive with him to-night after I had refused because I had a previous date with one of the boys at the club. I wanted to go with Garret; I tried to break the engagement with Phil. As it was, I hurried home as soon as I could——"

"You mean as soon as you learned from Mr. Carlton that Garret is rich," Carola interrupted quietly.

"Why, Cara! What's the matter with you? You never talked this way! I know; you've been working too hard recently. You need a rest—a vacation.

Now I insist upon your going down to Atlantic City for a week or ten days, and leaving me in complete charge of the stand. I mean it, Cara. A change of scene will do you good."

"Only—I'm not going," Carola returned smilingly. "I'm going to stay here with Garret, and you can't chase me away. I understand your scheme perfectly, Daphne, and I refuse to clear out and give you a fair field with the man I love and who loves me."

Daphne's white teeth bit into her scarlet lips, and her eyes blazed with a mad light.

"You've got to do as I say—got to!" she stormed.

"No, Daphne!"

"I want him!"

"And I love him. You force me to say these things. For once you've gone too far—you ask too much of me. All our lives, Daphne, I've given up things and done without them and surrendered to you. I've let you play around and tell every one that I'm the elder, the plain one, the little old maid, while all the time you're my senior by nearly two years. When we both needed dresses and could afford only one, you got that one. It's been the same with hats, coats, shoes. The biggest apple, the largest slice of cake, the choicest pieces of chicken—these have been yours from childhood. I've worked for you while you've dressed up and rushed away to parties. Why, even this morning you didn't tell Garret that I was your sister. You were ashamed of my working at the hot-dog stand. And you laughed at him—until you learned who he was. Maybe some day I'll give you a car of your own and send you to Europe, but I'll never stand aside and give you a chance to marry the man I love. I mean it—tears, a scene will avail you nothing. No, you're not going to kill yourself unless I do as you say. In the end you'll only help yourself to my best stockings and go and dance holes in them

with some good-looking playboy. You see, I know you—I've known you all our lives together."

There was something *fi*cal both in her voice and manner. After she had recovered from the shock of Carola's rebellion, Daphne was left speechless, without an argument. But she wasn't resigned—far from it. Long after her sister's regular breathing proclaimed that she was asleep, Daphne tossed upon her pillow, scheming wild schemes.

The next morning Daphne appeared for breakfast, something unusual in itself, but Carola also observed that she was wearing a dress similar to the one she wore at the roadside stand.

"I'm sorry for what happened last night," Daphne said unexpectedly, "and I'm in earnest about working at the counter."

"All right," returned Carola cheerfully. "There's plenty for both of us to do."

But the day was overcast with clouds, and there was little tourist trade and few bathers from the beach club. The members played bridge and had lunch in the grill. No one seemed interested in hot dogs and soft drinks. Carola, as the morning wore away, felt a bit guilty, for there wasn't business enough even for one girl at the stand.

When Garret drove by to say that he was running into New York for the day, Carola decided that she might as well go home and give the bungalow a thorough house cleaning while Daphne was in the mood for work. Daphne was really behaving very well; she scooped the ice cream into the few cones they sold without once rolling her eyes with repugnance for her job. She was pleasant to Garret, too, just friendly without trying to vamp him. Garret promised to telephone Carola as soon as he got back; then he jumped into his roadster and disappeared in a cloud of dust.

After lunch, Jimmy Scarlett came over to the stand in his red bathing suit

and hovered around, looking bored to death. He didn't know what to do with himself. Were the girls going to stay here all afternoon? Why not come out in his motor boat with him?

"You go, Daphne," urged Carola, knowing how her sister detested the work she was doing.

"No, thanks," laughed Daphne. "In the first place, Jimmy hasn't asked me, and in the second I've no intentions of standing a second raking over the coals to-night from you. If you're as sorry as all that for Jimmy Scarlett, go with him yourself."

"Come on, Carola," pleaded the boy.

Carola hesitated. "I don't see how I can."

"Are you engaged to some man, perhaps, that you can't go out with Jimmy?" mocked her sister.

The blood rushed to Carola's face. Without a word she picked up a white sweater and went with Scarlett across the road to the beach club, where she was welcome as Jimmy's guest.

As she seated herself in his motor boat, Carola said: "Don't tip me over, please. You're in your bathing suit, but remember I'm not dressed for swimming."

"The sea's as calm as a mill pond," Jimmy pointed out. "Listen, Carola, I was serious about what I said yesterday. I'm crazy about you. Let's elope."

"Let's be sensible people," Carola told him, not too seriously. "Jimmy Scarlett, your mother would expire if you married me, and your father would stop your allowance. It would serve you right, too."

"I guess I can work," he blustered.

"Yes, Jimmy, of course, you can. But it happens that I don't love you. I'm fond of you and you've been sweet and generous, but—you wouldn't want me if I didn't care, would you?"

"Yes, I would," he said promptly. "Come on, Carola, take a chance."



"I'll tell you one thing, Carola Woodward, and that is if you don't marry me, you'll never live to marry any one else!"

Smiling, she shook her head. "I'm not good at taking chances, Jimmy. Please be sensible. You're missing all this gorgeous trip."

"I'm not interested when you treat me so shabbily."

"But I'm being honest with you," Carola declared. "You're a rich man's

son, Jimmy. Suppose I accepted your proposal, decided to take a chance. I don't love you. I'd be marrying you for your money only—taking a chance that your father would come across."

"Well, I'm game."

"Then I'm not. Turn around, Jimmy; it's time to go back."

Instead, he shot the boat forward, increasing her speed until looking back, Carola was unable to see the shore. She realized that with every second they were rushing farther away from the land. Carola was a strong swimmer, but she couldn't quite swim back from Europe, she reflected grimly. Just how far they had traveled, she didn't know, but it was decidedly time they turned around and started home.

"Come along, Jimmy, I'll be late for supper, even if Daphne decides to get it to-night," she smilingly roused him. "Can you make it? There's a bit more breeze out here. And the whitecaps are rising. I know you've got the best boat on the shore, but don't you think it's a little risky——"

"Never mind the blarney," he cut in. "I'll tell you one thing, Carola Woodward, and that is if you don't marry me, you'll never live to marry any one else! I'll keep on sailing until the fuel's gone and then we'll drift, and with night coming on, it won't be any picnic. I mean it. I'm crazy about you. If you marry that fellow Walker, then I don't care to go on living."

A lump rose in Carola's throat, and just for a second fear gripped her. For Carola cared very much to live. Into her life had come the new wonder of love, the feeling that some one cared for her even as she cared for him. Whether Jimmy was simply bluffing or in earnest, she had no desire to take chances in a motor boat dashing crazily out to sea with night coming on.

"Jimmy Scarlett," she said sternly, "either you'll turn the boat around this minute or I'll take matters into my own hands!"

"That's sheer nonsense," the young man retorted, and there was something about the words as well as the way in which they were spoken that reminded Carola of Daphne!

She turned blazing eyes upon Jimmy. "My sister put you up to this," she de-

clared. "It's all a put-up job. The moment Daphne learned that Garret Walker was going to New York, she sent for you and unfolded her scheme. So you're going to make me marry you, are you? And that will leave Garret free to be trapped by Daphne. Never! I mean it, Jimmy. The modern girl fights for the things she loves, and I'm going to fight to get back to Garret!"

There were a number of leather cushions in the bow of the boat, and without warning, Carola seized one of these and struck Scarlett smartly over the head with it. Taken by surprise, he tumbled forward and struck his forehead a resounding blow which momentarily stunned him. But it was long enough for Carola to get control of the wheel. She knew absolutely nothing about the compass, but if Jimmy had been heading out to sea, then land was directly behind them. Carola swung the boat around and started back.

Having recovered from the attack, Jimmy Scarlett sat up and watched the girl with sullen eyes. His head hurt; he felt slightly giddy, but that was as nothing compared to the blow to his pride. To have a mere girl take away his own boat! He began to wish something terrible would happen.

And then, sooner than he thought, he got his wish. Not understanding navigation, Carola didn't know how to breast the waves, head-on. In spite of herself, the giant whitecaps frightened her, and when she tried to take them, side on, the sea rushed into the boat, threatening to swamp it. It staggered like a tipsy man, water-logged and helpless, and Carola was half drowned where she sat. Just in time, Jimmy brushed her aside and regained control. They were both wet to the skin, and Carola clung to the rail to keep from being swept overboard. "You little fool!" he exclaimed through chattering teeth.

She didn't answer, watching him anxiously as he battled with the waves. To

her it seemed that the boat must sink every minute. Jimmy found himself fighting something beyond his strength. Panic seized him.

"We're done for!" he told Carola hysterically.

But she knew better. She couldn't die now, with Garret and his great love waiting for her on the shore. She remembered every word he had uttered last night; he wasn't returning to Oregon because he wanted her to know him better. As if she didn't know him well enough! Just because she had never had a sweetheart before didn't signify that she wouldn't know love when she met it. She had known it almost at first sight.

While those thoughts flashed through her mind, Carola pulled off her shoes, her sweater, and her hat. Without waiting for Jimmy, she plunged into the sea and struck out with bold, strong strokes. She felt safer now than she had in the foundering motor boat.

All she needed was a sense of direction, for she could keep swimming for a couple of hours. Surely, when they didn't return, Daphne would send some one out to look for them. Daphne might be a schemer, but she wasn't a murderess. Once

Carola glanced around and saw Jimmy Scarlett swimming just behind her, but the boat had vanished beneath the waves.

How far she swam, how long it took, she never knew. But she was very

tired. If she could only reach the White Rocks, but they seemed to have disappeared, too, like Jimmy's motor boat. She dared not cry out, for she needed every breath, and she had sense enough to know that if she struggled, she was gone. Gone where? Some place where she'd never see Garret again! Carola closed her eyes and silently prayed for strength.

And then, as if in answer to her prayer, out of the night a friendly little boat poked its gray nose. A lantern illuminated the half-exhausted figure in the water, and the next thing she knew, Carola was being drawn into the rescue ship. Jimmy was rescued after her.

She was not surprised to look into Garret's gray eyes, filled with tears of relief at having found her at last.

"I knew you'd come and get me," Carola said simply.

"My darling, my own precious darling!" was Garret's cry as he clasped her in his arms.

How warm and strong they seemed, how safe! For a moment, Carola closed her eyes and reveled in the luxury of his caress. The dear aroma of tobacco on his coat after the tang of the salt sea! She caught the little break in his voice and loved him the better for it. He was so tender, so strong, so human.

Had any girl ever won such a man before?—she wondered. Daphne had laughed at her as an old maid. But this moment of love—surely it was worth waiting for!



"What are you thinking about, Carola darling?" he asked.

"You," she told him truly.

"You blessed angel!"

"I came near being a real one, Garret," Carola said.

"Don't even joke about it," he answered. "I've been half crazy, dear. I returned from New York earlier than I expected, and hurried to the stand to find you—and you weren't there! Daphne said you had gone out in Scarlett's boat. At first she was quite nonchalant about it, but when night fell and you didn't return, she grew conscience-stricken and confessed everything. But if I hadn't found you——"

"You've found me, Garret dear," Carola whispered, her face upon his broad chest. "You've found me, and I think you'll have a hard time losing me again."

"As if I wanted to, darling. Does this mean you're going to—to marry me, Carola?"

"Yes, Garret dear, that is, if all your money won't make a difference. I want happiness, not wealth. I want love, your love. Oh, love me, Garret, hold me close, and please don't ever leave me again!"

He gave her his answer upon her tremulous lips, holding her safe and warm against his heart.



DARK MAGIC

I KNOW so well there's only one day gone,
From off the dial of time a single stroke—
And yet I've lost the road we walked upon,
The dearness of your hand, the dreams we spoke.

I've lost the whispers of that April world,
The mood for singing and the idle hours
Within the garden where a moonvine curled
And where the sun came like a thousand flowers!

The moon still wears her patch of silver shawl,
And like small lullabies the stars appear;
Still rest the young winds on the ivy wall
And night is sweet—except you are not here.

Except I call—and only echoes stir—
And in the gloom there's silence where you were.

BERT COOKSLEY.

LS-2E



The Right Hand Of Cupid

By Knight Jessee

TAKING off the Agnès wrap-around and the Chanel coat, Shayne Murray handed them to Celebria, the maid. Hurriedly she ran the comb through her lovely golden hair. Then she hastened out to display the black satin evening gown by Vionnet. Twice she paraded up and down the long runway, while every one said "Oh" and "Ah" in great admiration.

That was the last dress of the afternoon fashion show which she had to model. When the Vionnet gown was safe in its case, Shayne carefully removed the French hand-made "foundation garments," as the Elegante Store called them. She got into her own pink teddies, bought in one of the cheapest of the cheap shops which abound on Fourteenth Street. After which she

slipped on the wine-colored dress, which must have felt lonesome being separated from its pal. For it was one of those most popular twins around

New York—the two-for-fifteen-dollar inseparables.

Shayne hadn't been able to buy two dresses, so she had had to pay eight dollars for the wine-colored dress. The black felt hat looked a lot more than its dollar-fifty-nine origin. And the black summer-weight coat had been charming for the last three seasons. Of course the coat didn't have the proper flare in the skirt, but one can't have everything.

"Got a date, Shayne?" asked March Argent, tilting her imported straw over her left eyebrow.

"No," said Shayne shortly, putting on

her two-eighty-seven black kid slippers. She always left her shoes to the last, because her feet were so tired after walking up and down all afternoon.

"You never do have a date, do you, Shayne?" went on March, slipping into a dream of a light-tan coat with a big collar of tan summer ermine.

"I went out last night!" flared Shayne.

March's soft laughter filled the room. "To the movies with that newspaper chap, I suppose. A wild evening, I must say. Why don't you capture a rich date once in a while? Just to see how it seems!"

Shayne's hand trembled a trifle as she dabbed powder on her tiptilted nose. "I'm satisfied," she said briefly.

"Oh, well!" March shrugged her shoulders carelessly. "I'm going to the Purple Box to-night. They say it's the ritziest, craziest, wildest night club in New York. San Hederan is taking me." She surveyed her reflection complacently.

"I don't like South Americans!" Shayne was putting some provocative ruby red on her lovely, curved lips.

"Oh, San isn't foreign. He was born right here in New York. And has he money!" March wet her slim forefinger on her pink tongue and ran the finger carefully over her eyebrows. "Well, so long! Don't take any wooden nickels!" She went out, leaving a lingering fragrance of heavy perfume behind her.

Shayne's velvety-blue eyes looked miserable. March Argent always had that effect on Shayne. In spite of the fact that she was the prettiest of all the girls who modeled at the Elegante, Shayne was the only one who didn't have dates galore. She wasn't quite sure what was the matter. Maybe it was because she was just a tiny bit high-hat, she thought to herself. Perhaps it was because she was a trifle afraid. Most probably it was because,

despite her gorgeous exterior, Shayne Murray had a little-girl soul that was timid and shy.

Fifth Avenue was cold. Despite the fact that the calendar said May, Shayne wondered if she hadn't looked at the wrong page. She hugged her coat about her slender figure and was glad there was black rabbit fur on the collar. She walked along briskly, thinking about March Argent and the rest of the girls. Life wasn't a bit like the books and the movies. Why, only last night she and Bill had seen the grandest movie. All about a beautiful model who met a rich and handsome young man at a fashion show. He fell in love with her at first sight, and took her to his incredibly sumptuous home on Long Island as his bride—amid a fade-out of love and kisses and yachts and high-powered cars!

Shayne had been at the Elegante for two years. There wasn't a man who came into the place who wasn't already married. And add to that the fact that the richest ones were fat and oldish, you had the sum total of the romance. Shayne sighed.

She wanted to get married to the man of her dreams. She didn't want an affair. That, in her little-girl, clear, blue eyes, was sordid. So that was the reason she had the reputation of being high-hat. The fattish old men soon learned to leave her alone, and there didn't seem to be any of the other kind.

A brisk breeze came from a cross street. A gust of wind came sweeping up Fifth Avenue. Some newspapers were huddled on the sidewalk in a forlorn, abandoned heap. The wind caught them and swirled them about as Shayne decided to cross the Avenue. The cross-street breeze collided with the Fifth Avenue wind, and a pretty little whirlwind ensued. The newspapers, unfolded and wide-spread now, sailed through the air and then milled around. One went over Shayne's face. Another

wrapped about her body. The third caught her across the legs. Shayne clawed at the newspaper which covered her face. Her feeling was one of fastidious disgust that the newspaper which had been on the dirty sidewalk should be against her clean skin. She never thought of the fact that she was crossing the street. She was deafened by the flapping of the papers and the noise of the wind. She didn't hear the policeman's whistle, releasing impatient, roaring, racing traffic. She wasn't aware that she was in danger until she heard a woman's shrill scream and a man's curses. Then, before she could stir, strong arms caught her up bodily and plunged to the sidewalk.

"You might have been killed," said a nice voice furiously. "Have you no sense at all? What do you mean by trying to commit suicide right in front of me? Why did you pick out Forty-fifth Street, anyway? Why not some other street?"

The newspapers blew away, their mischief done. Shayne drew a deep breath. She looked up into the best-looking face she had seen for a long time. Sea-blue eyes, intense and burning. As unlike her own violent orbs as night is unlike day. Blond hair, she was sure, under that gray felt hat worn at exactly the right angle. A strong face with a chin that betokened stubbornness. A sweet, whimsical mouth that gave the lie to the chin. And he was tall. Miles tall.

"You might let me down," suggested Shayne, her heart thundering. "People are laughing and giggling."

"They aren't either! They're applauding me for saving your silly life!" He glared at her. "Aren't you going to thank me?"

"Yes," gasped Shayne. "Yes, of course. After you've put me down."

"I like to hold you," said the young man. "I like it a lot! Why should I deprive myself of pleasure when I've just acted the part of a hero and res-

cued you from being crushed under the wheels of that wild taxi?"

Shayne wriggled free. But when she stood on her own feet she found that she was totally unnerved. So unnerved that she had to cling to the tall young man. To cover her confusion, she said: "Why didn't you save me by taking me to the other side of the Avenue? Now I'm right back where I started from. I'll have to cross all over again."

The young man took her arm quite firmly. "That being the case, I'll see you across—when the light changes. Not before. Gosh, you're an ungrateful female! But that's the way all pretty girls are. Spoiled things! I wish I'd picked me an ugly girl to save. Then she would have been tickled to pieces. But you—I suppose you're one of these society creatures who thinks the world is your oyster, and just chock-full of pearls to boot!"

"Don't you like pretty girls?" Shayne looked up at him. Her breath was catching in her throat in the oddest manner, and when she tried to talk, her voice sounded as if it came from a long way off.

"No!" he growled. "I like to look at them, of course. What man doesn't. But I despise 'em. Useless dolls!"

"Thank you for saving my life," said Shayne primly. "And now I guess I'll be going along." She tried to free her arm from his clutch, but she might as well have tried to pry an abalone off the rocks.

"No, you don't!" said the young man sternly. "I saved your life. Now you've got to do something for me. I demand my pound of flesh—with interest. I was in a quandary. I was puzzled. I was at my wit's end. Now everything is solved. You have solved everything."

"I?" gasped Shayne.

"Yes. By the way, you're not married, are you?" Shayne shook her head, bewildered by the turn the conversation

was taking. "Or engaged?" he persisted.

"No." Shayne was intrigued and a little frightened.

"Then that's all settled. You'll be engaged to me. Just for this evening, you understand. That's how you can pay me back for saving your life."

"I couldn't!" Shayne exclaimed in exactly the tone she used to those fat-tish rich men. It was a tone which had always been highly effective. But it didn't work at all with this young man.

"I'll take you to one of those specialty shops on Forty-second Street. They're still open, I guess. And you can get an evening gown. I don't dare let you go home, you see, or you'd run away. Women have no sense of honor. Not your society type of woman, anyhow. Even if you promised to come back, you wouldn't keep your word. So I'll buy you a dress and——"

"I think you must be crazy!" Shayne interrupted flatly. "Of course I'll do no such thing. Let you buy me a dress, indeed!"

The young man set his jaw. "Don't act like the first act of some new movie," he said impatiently. "Can't you get it through your foolish, golden head that I despise women? All of them! And your rich, parasitic type worst of all. I don't want anything of you, except to help me out of an impossible situation. I want you to pretend to be my fiancée to-night, so my mother and father won't know that I've been turned down. Have you got that through your stupid little brain?"

"Your mother and father?"

"Yes," he nodded. "They came clear from the coast to meet Priscilla. Ye gods, what a name for that girl! Priscilla! It should have been Narcissus! She was so fond of her precious self! But I thought she was gorgeous. I thought she was wonderful. I thought—— Gosh, I sound like an inane popular song, don't I? Well, she wasn't

any of the things I imagined her. She was engaged to two of us at the same time. She liked me because she thought I was so uncouth and virile—coming from the West as I did. I give you my word, those were her actual expressions.

"And I—I found out that she'd decided to marry the other chap—just as mother and dad came on from San Francisco to meet Priscilla. They got in this morning. They were so delighted to know that I was going to get married. I'd never cared so much for girls, you see. I hadn't the heart to tell them that Priscilla had turned their blue-eyed baby boy down cold."

"The traffic lights have changed three times," cut in Shayne irrelevantly. "And I'm freezing to death. I don't believe a word you're saying. I imagine it's all part of your line, and the same thing you tell every girl. But I'm going to pretend to believe it. Because I'm tired of living a life where nothing happens. I'm going to take a chance for once. But——"

"Taxi!" He raised his hand and a cab slithered to a stop. He handed Shayne into the car and sat down beside her. "Drive slowly along Forty-second," he commanded.

"But I'm not a——" began Shayne. She was going to explain that she wasn't a society person as he evidently believed. But he stopped her.

"I don't care what you are or anything about you," he said with a finality that roused Shayne's Irish blood. "You mean nothing to me. Less than nothing."

"You said you liked to hold me in your arms!" said Shayne, laughing up into his face.

"A mistake!" said the young man firmly. "I must have been just trying to seem polite."

"You said I was pretty!" Shayne's eyes were dancing. "Have you taken that back, too?"

"You are pretty. Horribly pretty. Dangerously so." He moved over a little—away from Shayne!

Shayne began to have a heady sense of power. Her heart kept on pounding madly, and there still didn't seem to be enough air in the world for her to breathe. She felt the same way she had when she was a child on Christmas morning.

"There's a store," announced the young man suddenly. "It seems to be open. Is that all right?"

"Yes," said Shayne.

He paid the driver and they got out. The young man said earnestly: "I'll be no end grateful, if you'll go through with this to-night. My people— Well, I'm pretty fond of them. And now—"

"How much shall I pay for the dress?" Shayne broke in practically.

"Oh, anything you like. Get something simple. My folks like simple dresses. A hundred dollars or so would do, wouldn't it?" Shayne gasped. "And better get a velvet wrap of some sort." He crammed two one-hundred-dollar bills into her hand. And suddenly Shayne found that she couldn't go through with this. She shoved the money back at him.

"I can't." She shook her head. "I've got plenty of money with me. You wait here. I won't be long." In her purse



Shayne looked up into the best-looking face she had seen for a long time. "You might let me down," she suggested.

was her week's wages. A check for fifty dollars. Modeling paid well. If she hadn't had to pay the rent because her father was habitually out of work, Shayne might have had pretty clothes like the rest of the girls. Now she had made the lightning decision to spend all her check and the ten dollars extra she had in her purse. The rent could go, and so could the grocery bill at Donovan's. For once in her life she was going to have romance and adventure, no matter what the cost.

She bought a black satin evening gown as near like the stately Vionnet

model as she could find—for twenty-five dollars! She got a velvet wrap with a white fur collar for another twenty-five, and a pair of sheer cobweb stockings that made her black kid slippers look much better. She dressed in all her finery and gasped when she saw by her reflection that she looked almost as gorgeous as when she paraded before the nabobs of fashion at the Elegante.

"I want one of those big chiffon handkerchiefs," she told the girl. "Turquoise blue, if you have that shade."

The girl did have exactly what Shayne wanted. Shayne tucked the handkerchief into the plain gold bracelet she always wore. The one that used to be her Grandmother Shayne's.

"Gee, that looks great!" said the salesgirl admiringly. "I'd never thought o' that!"

Shayne nodded to her reflection. "You'll do," she said. After arranging to have her old clothes kept for her until the morrow, Shayne went out of the store.

The tall young man was standing humped against the corner of the shop window. At her approach he straightened and blinked.

"I thought maybe there was a back door to the store and you'd slipped out that way," he greeted her. Not a word as to how gorgeous she looked. Shayne felt a distinct sense of let-down. Also, she felt rather foolish—out among the Forty-second Street going-home crowd at six o'clock in evening dress.

"You're a trusting soul!" cried Shayne, furious at herself for being disappointed. "I hurried just as fast as I could. Do you like the final result?" She couldn't resist asking that.

He hardly glanced at her. "Quite adequate."

Shayne felt like slapping him. Had the man no eyes! "Thanks!" she snapped. "And now what do we do? You surely can't expect to dine at this early hour?"

"Why not? I told mom and dad that I'd be bringing you—Priscilla, that is—along as early as I could get her—you."

"Where are we having dinner?" asked Shayne suspiciously.

"In my apartment. That is, Frank Carlyle's apartment. I'm living there while Frank's away. There's an extra room, so I was able to put mother and dad up, too."

Shayne was a long time answering. "Do you give me your word of honor that your mother and father are there?" she asked finally, staring up at him with enormous eyes.

"Good heavens, yes!" He was manifestly impatient. "Let's grab a cab and be on our way."

But Shayne hung back. "I forgot," she said. "I have to call up pop. I—I mean, my father'll be worrying if I don't telephone him."

"Humph!" He blinked. "Thought you society people never paid the slightest attention to parents. Priscilla doesn't, I'm sure. I doubt if she'd recognize her father if she met him on the street. By the way, you don't happen to know Priscilla, do you?" he asked with sudden suspicion.

"No." Shayne shook her head. "Maybe she—she doesn't move in my set."

"I see." He pursed his lips. "Snooty lot, aren't you?"

"Horribly so!" snapped Shayne, to balance the smile which persisted in quirked the corners of her mouth.

"I think there's a phone booth somewhere along here." They were strolling along the street as they talked. Now he stopped and indicated one of the larger buildings.

"You know your New York, don't you?" commented Shayne as she went in. "I thought you said you were from the wild and woolly West?"

"We do get around occasionally," he smiled. "And I've been here two

months, this trip. Been working on plans for a big engineering project."

"Oh," said Shayne. "Wait here a minute, will you." She hesitated. "Where did you say this apartment was?"

He gave a Park Avenue address readily enough. Shayne went into the telephone booth and carefully shut the door. First she conscientiously called her father. "Pop, I'm eating out to-night," she said hastily. "Tell Mary to get your supper. I may be late. Don't worry." She hung up before he could begin to object. Then she dropped in another nickel, and presently a man's voice said: "Sure I'm here. Are you?"

Shayne laughed a little. That was so typical of Bill. "It's Shayne," she said.

"Grand," said Bill. "But I can't take you to the movies to-night. I took you out last night, and a poor newspaper guy's pay can't stand two dents in succession. I'm working, anyhow."

"I've got a date already, Bill," said Shayne. "That's what I called you about. Say, listen, do this for me, will you? Call Frank Carlyle's apartment on Park Avenue in about an hour; that's a dear. I'm going there."

"One of those kind of dates, huh?" Bill's voice sounded dubious. "I don't know whether I'd go or not, Shayne. What sort of a guy is he?"

"I don't know," answered Shayne honestly. "I never saw him. It's just his apartment."

"Oh, I see!" said Bill grintily. "Shayne Murray, don't you dare go! You're too fine a girl to——"

"It's all right, Bill. Truly it is. Only, do telephone. Won't you?" Again Shayne repeated the number, then she replaced the receiver gently on the hook, thus automatically terminating Bill's wild sputterings.

"All set?" asked her escort as she emerged from the booth.

She drew a deep breath. "All set!" she echoed resolutely. They walked out

of the building and stood at the curb. "What's your name?" she inquired suddenly. "I never thought to ask."

He took out his wallet and fished about until he found a bit of correct pasteboard. "John Armitage!" read Shayne. Her laughter rippled out. "Why, that doesn't suit you a bit. You should have been named——"

"As my fiancée, you'll call me Jack," he cut in. "I judge you find my name too stiff. Does that help?"

"Lots—Jack," said Shayne shyly, fearful lest she had been rude. "My name is Shayne—Shayne Murray."

"Pretty!" commented Jack as they got into a cab. "Awful pretty. And rather unexpected."

"I was named after my grandmother. Her name was Janet Shayne."

"I hate to have to call you Priscilla," said Jack ruminatively. "It seems a shame."

"I hate to have you, too!" Shayne was beginning to hate the unknown Priscilla fervently.

They stopped at a florist's shop, and Jack bought Shayne a corsage purple with orchids and dripping with lilies-of-the-valley. Shayne was so excited that she almost cried. She started to pin the corsage on upside down. "You've got it wrong, haven't you?" asked Jack. "Here. Let me do that."

As he fastened the corsage at her shoulder, his hand brushed her soft neck. A queer little trembly feeling went clear down to Shayne's toes. They didn't speak for a while, neither of them. The crosstown lights went green, and the cab darted ahead with a suddenness that sent Shayne careening against Jack. Jack put his arm about her. "I hope this taxi goes smoothly hereafter," said Jack jerkily, taking away his arm. Shayne's shoulders felt lonely, though his touch had been but momentary. "If I'm going to keep on hating women, you've got to stop being so darned sweet!" Shayne's heart sang.

All too soon they drew up in front of an imposing apartment house. The doorman helped Shayne out and touched his cap to Jack. As they went up in the elevator, Shayne said fearfully: "You haven't told me a single thing about—about Priscilla, or—or anything. What am I to do?"

He smiled at her. "Let me do the talking," he said, and then he touched the quivering flowers on her shoulder lightly. Shayne wondered why he did that.

After they left the elevator, it was a long way down the hall to the apartment. There was plenty of time for Shayne's heart to thunder and her mouth to get dry and parched. Suppose she had made a mistake. Suppose Jack Armitage was a miserable flirt, who just went about, intriguing girls with his story of a missing fiancée. Oh, he couldn't be like that. He just couldn't! She breathed a little wordless prayer that Jack be worthy; that everything was just as he had represented it to her.

He rang the bell, and a trim maid came to the door and took his hat and topcoat. "Good evening, Mr. Armitage," she said.

Almost as she spoke, a lovely lady, charmingly gowned, hurried out. "I couldn't wait to see my John's sweet Priscilla!" she cried, drawing Shayne into her embrace. "My dear, I know I'm going to love you." Shayne's heart leaped with a fierce joy. Jack's fantastic story was true!

His father was a stalwart man with keen gray eyes and snow-white hair. He, too, greeted her with charming courtesy. "We made this trip across the continent purposely to meet you, my dear," he said, taking her hand. "And I feel that we are amply repaid for the journey."

Shayne's cheeks were rosy-red. "Thank you," she murmured. She began to feel like an interloper and a

sneak. But Jack was beaming at the tableau. He evidently found nothing to cavil at.

"I'll leave you to get acquainted with—with Priscilla," he said, "while I duck into my evening togs. I won't be a minute!"

Shayne gave him a wild glance of terror, but he was oblivious.

"Won't you take off your wrap?" asked Mr. Armitage gallantly. Mrs. Armitage took Shayne's cloak and drew her to a chair.

"Now, we want to know all about everything!" she smiled. "You'll have to forgive the curiosity of two old people, but Jack is our only son, you see, and anything which concerns him concerns us. We love Jack, and I know we're going to love you exactly as well."

"My, you're sweet!" said Shayne wonderingly. She was thinking of the battles which were waged almost under her nose every day at the *Elegante* shop. Mother-in-laws instructing very sullen daughters-in-law in the correct mode of dressing. Daughters making cruel remarks about the older women's clothes. Evidently this delightful person was different. "Hasn't Jack written you about—about everything?" she asked, wondering what to say.

Mr. Armitage chuckled. "That boy never wrote a letter in his life! If he's got anything to say, he telegraphs. That's what he did about you. 'Met wonderful girl!' he wired a month ago. A week later. 'Congratulate me, parents, I am engaged.' Now if you can get much romance out of that, I'll eat my hat. So we're all agog, as the papers say, to hear the details."

"Oh, I see." Shayne wet her lips. "Well, well— It was this way." She took a deep breath and plunged into the actual story of their meeting.

"So some newspapers brought you together! That is rich. And you turned out to be a girl right out of the social register. He wired us that."

"Oh, did he?" Shayne had been just on the verge of revealing her true status.

Mrs. Armitage leaned forward. She looked straight into Shayne's eyes. "Do you love my boy?" she questioned.

Swift color shot into Shayne's cheeks, then faded out, leaving them very pale. Slowly she nodded. "I adore him!" she said almost in a whisper. And knew, even as she spoke the words, that they were true. Love had come to her, swift as summer lightning. One instant the world had been a drab, uninteresting place because she hadn't known that John Armitage existed. The next instant he came like a bolt out of the blue, transfiguring everything.

"I'm so glad!" breathed Jack's mother. "So very, very glad!"

Jack came out, immaculately attired, except for his dress tie, which hung dejectedly. "Fast time, eh, wot?" He grinned. "How are all you people getting on with your mutual-admiration society?"

"Splendidly, my boy!" boomed Mr. Armitage. "We more than approve your choice. And to think that you met because a couple of newspapers blinded the young lady for a moment. Well, well!"

Jack shot Shayne a quick glance.

"I was telling your people about our first meeting," she said demurely.

"Oh—er. I see." He went over to his mother. "I say, mumsy, would you mind fixing this infernal tie for me? The dog-goned thing's bewitched, I think."

Mrs. Armitage laughed. "The same old Jack!" She turned to Shayne. "He never could tie a dress tie. I've been fixing them for him ever since he got his very first dinner coat. No, Jack, Priscilla must tie this for you! She'll have plenty of 'em to tie hereafter. She might as well get used to it now."

"Oh—er——" Hesitatingly, Jack went over to Shayne. "I—I wonder if you'd mind?" he asked apologetically.

Shayne got to her feet, realizing anew how tall Jack was. She took the ends of the tie in her trembling fingers and tried to arrange them, but her hands shook so that she made a botch of it, and had to begin all over again. This time she took a firm grip on her nerves and achieved a creditable bow.

"Thank you," said Jack. His voice sounded strange.

Mr. Armitage chuckled. "In my day I'd have given my sweetheart something besides a cold 'thank you.' Eh, mother?"

Gently Jack took Shayne into his arms. Gently he laid his lips on hers in a kiss that made the world go round and round for Shayne. "Thank you, my sweet," he said gravely.

Tears came into Shayne's eyes. Tears of happiness. How wonderful he was! How sweet and kind and—and dear. If only he had meant that kiss! But he hadn't. The kiss had been given just to make his father and mother happy. That was all. She had to tell herself that over and over. For her silly heart persisted in thudding at a tremendous rate.

"Get your things on, parents!" commanded Jack in the affectionate way he had. "We're stepping out. All of us. We'll toddle over to the Purple Box." He consulted his watch. "Just seven. It'll be a bit early, but we can go along, just the same. You'll like the Purple Box. It's quite a place."

As they drove over, Shayne had to pinch herself to be sure she was awake. At last, after waiting so long, the things she had dreamed about had come to her. All of them—on a single night. Adventure, mystery, romance, love. All these were hers for one magical evening. To-morrow there would be unpaid rent, unpaid grocery bills, Mary's dentist bill, pop's anger. But she quickly brushed the thought of those things aside.

"Happy, dear?" asked Jack suddenly, leaning forward and touching her hand.



Over the marble face of Cupid seemed to dart a sudden satisfied smile—the smile of one whose work is well done.

"Oh, yes," she gasped. The way he said "dear" made chills of delight go down her spine.

The Purple Box was gorgeous. It was literally a purple box. A purple satin box. Ceiling and walls and even

floor were the same shade. The floor was of tile, and shone like glass, and mirrors were hung on the satin walls. Hundreds of mirrors that winked and blinked and reflected the light dozens of times.

They had a table on the very edge of the dance floor, and the tablecloth was of purple silk. Shayne was entranced. There weren't very many people at this early hour, so when the music began a haunting waltz, Jack said: "Don't let's miss this, Priscilla! Dad, you order for us. Anything you say will be all right with

us!" He took Shayne into his arms, and they began to dance. For a space they did not speak, being too busy adjusting their steps. Then, presently Jack said: "Ye gods, what a dancer you turned out! Perfection. I suppose you dance all the time, though."

Shayne's eyes twinkled. "Practically every day," she returned truthfully.

"Yes, you would be awfully popular—of course," he returned slowly. "I keep forgetting. Did you ever dance here before?"

"No." Shayne was thinking of her daily dances. She always fox-trotted into her clothes every morning to the music of the radio. And every night, as she did the accumulated dishes and Mary dried them, her feet kept right on dancing. How different was Jack's mental picture of her and the truth! Shayne's heart gave a little throb of pain.

"I hate to deceive your people," she said abruptly. "I think they're marvelous!"

"Then do you blame me for going out on the highways and byways to kidnap a girl to act as my fiancée so they wouldn't be disappointed?"

"I certainly do blame you!" said Shayne with spirit. "I think it was just despicable! Have you thought ahead at all? What will you tell them to-morrow?"

"That you're busy!"

"And the next day?" persisted Shayne relentlessly.

"They have to leave then. Dad grabbed the time to make this trip, as it was."

"Well, what will they think when you don't get married?" asked Shayne with a little catch in her voice.

"That's too far ahead to worry about!" Jack shrugged. "Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof!"

"And I'm the evil, I judge?"

"Oh, good heavens, no! I hate to keep reminding myself that you're just

another of these beautiful dolls with sawdust stuffing; or, rather, dollar-bill stuffing. You seem so—so different, somehow."

The words were trembling on Shayne's lips to tell him that she was different. That she was just a model, working for a living, and supporting her father and her sister. But the music stopped just then, and Jack led her back to their table before she had a chance to speak.

"You surely show that you're used to dancing together," boomed Mr. Armitage. "You certainly do dance beautifully. It's a delight to watch you."

"Practice will tell!" Jack grinned wickedly at Shayne, and she had to smile in return. But the smile froze on her lips as she watched a noisy party entering the Purple Box. March Argent, sumptuous in ermine; San Hederan, slim and Latin; two overdressed girls and two of the fattish-rich type of men that Shayne knew so well. All evening she had been racking her brains to think where she had heard of the Purple Box before this. Now she remembered that it was March who had mentioned it.

March had hardly seated herself before she saw Shayne. Her mouth gaped open, and she frankly stared. Shayne bowed and smiled. Combined with a natural sense of triumph at being seen in such a fashionable spot as the Purple Box was fear lest March disclose her real name and occupation to these kindly people.

Jack followed the line of her gaze, and his face hardened. "Friends of yours?" he asked politely.

"Yes. No. One girl is," stammered Shayne. To her great relief, the waiter came just then with the lobster appetizer. She discovered that she was hungry. Jack didn't eat much. He kept watching Shayne with the same puzzled expression in the depths of his blue eyes.

March's curiosity got the better of her before long. She made her excuses to her own crowd and came over to Shayne's table. Mr. Armitage and Jack stood, and Jack pulled out a chair for March while Shayne managed confused introductions.

"No, can't sit down," said March, her bright eyes taking in every detail of Shayne's costume. "I just breezed over to pass the time of day. Night, that is." She paused to laugh at her own joke. Shayne realized suddenly, with a sinking of her heart, that March had had too many cocktails before coming to the Purple Box. "Thought you said you didn't have a date to-night!" she said abruptly to Shayne. "Had this up your sleeve all the time. Huh? That is, if you had any sleeves on. He-he! But you were too foxy to let me in on your secret, huh? Afraid I might cop off your man. Well, I wouldn't take him, Shayne. I got my own man. San's all right. Even if he hasn't got as much money as old Armitage. No offense." As Mr. Armitage stiffened abruptly. "Just my little way of talking, Mr. Armitage. You just mustn't mind little March. By, Shayne. See you later!" She made her slightly unsteady way back to her own table, leaving havoc behind her.

"What did that girl call you?" asked Mr. Armitage. His eyes weren't so friendly now.

"Shayne. That's Priscilla's middle name," put in Jack hastily. "She really likes it better than Priscilla, and so do I."

"I—I want to apologize for Miss Argent," said Shayne miserably. "She—she isn't like this, usually."

"Please don't feel so badly, dear. It's all right." Jack's mother smiled kindly at her, and Shayne felt a rush of gratitude. How sweet Mrs. Armitage was!

The music started again, and Jack asked her to dance, his manner quite formal. "It's a good thing that girl

came along," he said shortly as they swung about the room. "I'd almost begun to make a fool of myself over you. I thought you were different."

Shayne's heart twisted cruelly. She felt as if he had struck her. "That's not fair!" she cried. "To judge me by March."

"Birds of a feather!" countered Jack. "An old and trite saying; but true, none the less."

Shayne summoned her pride. "You may think what you like," she said with dignity, though her heart felt as if it were breaking. "And just remember that I don't think very much of you, either. I think you're shallow and—and flippant—and—and you lie too easily!"

"What?" Jack was so furious that he missed a step. "How dare you say such a thing?"

"I don't like men who lie so fluently," went on Shayne, intent on wounding him as he had hurt her. "Like that matter of my name, for instance. 'Shayne is her middle name,' she quoted mincingly."

He made no reply. In silence they circled the floor. All the joy was gone from the poetry of motion. They danced stiffly. Each furious and hurt.

The dance came to an end finally. Shayne was glad. She felt tired and hungry. The food tasted good.

"Do you live on Park Avenue, too? Or is your home on Long Island?" questioned Mr. Armitage idly.

Shayne hesitated. "I spend most of my time at the Fifth Avenue place," she said carelessly rattling off the number of the Elegante Shop. She was certain that neither Mr. or Mrs. Armitage would be the wiser. "That isn't my real home, however," she qualified the statement. She was determined not to tell any lies.

An hour dragged by. They lingered over coffee and dessert. Mrs. Armitage and Shayne chatted like old friends,

making up for Jack's comparative silence. He talked, but it seemed to be with an effort. He didn't ask Shayne to dance again. Shayne's heart felt like a lump of ice. It was silly to care so much for a man she had just met. A man who cared for another girl. Silly! Silly! But Shayne couldn't seem to help it.

There was a disturbance at the door. Some one was demanding to be let in. Above the high-pitched chatter of many voices and the throbbing of the drums and the moaning of the saxophones, came the sound of an argument. Bottles on the tables hastily went on the floor. People looked perturbed.

The next instant a man brushed by the waiters who would bar his way, and came into the room. He looked around as if in quest of some one. He was thin and red-haired, and he wore a sack suit, not too well pressed, instead of the evening attire the Purple Box demanded. Across the room his eyes encountered Shayne's startled gaze. Shayne gasped.

Immediately the red-haired chap began to push his way through the crowd which thronged the dance floor. He disdained to walk around the edge. Shayne drew a quick little breath as he made straight for their table. She thought of flight, but it was too late for that.

"Hello, Shayne," he said, arriving at length, still more disheveled, but quite unconscious of the havoc his appearance was creating in the correct environs of the Purple Box. "How's everything? Coming along all right?"

"Bill! How—how did you find me here?" That was all Shayne could think of at the moment.

"I called up this Carlyle's apartment like you asked me to, and couldn't get a thing out of the maid. So I breezed around there and flashed my press button on her, and she changed her mind about talking; especially after I told her

I was on a tabloid! She thought maybe I'd get her picture spread all over the front page or something." He paused to laugh. "Well, after I found out where you were I grabbed me a taxi, and here I am. Had a little fuss with the head waiter about my not being in soup and fish, but I flashed the good old press button again. Everything all jake, Shayne?"

Shayne tried to smile. "Sure, Bill." She wet her dry lips. "Mrs. Armitage, this is a friend of mine, Bill Barnes."

Mrs. Armitage smiled at him. "I'm wondering why you had to go to all that trouble to find Priscilla," she said. "Did you have a message for her?"

"Priscilla?" echoed Bill, dumfounded.

"And this is Mr. Armitage and his son, Jack," cut in Shayne hastily. The men shook hands in a wary fashion.

Jack said: "May I ask when Miss—er—er—Shayne called you on the telephone?"

Bill grinned. "She wasn't so sure about this party, so she called to have me check up on her a bit. Shayne's careful that way. Eh, Shayne?"

Shayne looked at him, stricken and horrified.

"Well, I see she's in good hands. I've heard of you, of course, Mr. Armitage!" He nodded toward Jack's father.

"Indeed?" Mr. Armitage looked his sternest.

"Won't you join us, Mr. Barnes?" asked Mrs. Armitage kindly. "This is such a happy occasion! Our first evening with our dear son's fiancée!"

Bill's face paled. "You—you mean Shayne?" he gasped incredulously.

Shayne made a queer little choked noise in her throat, but no one heard.

"Of course. Only we prefer to call her by her first name—Priscilla."

"Oh!" Bill still looked dazed. "Well—congratulations! I—I guess I'm not needed here. I—I better be breezing on. Engaged? My Land of Goshen!" He made his way out of the Purple Box

without a backward glance, but he went like a sleepwalker.

There was a little silence, then Jack said: "Every one through eating? Then what do you say we go somewhere else?"

"I'm sorry," said Shayne. "But—but I—I must be getting home. My—my father doesn't like me to stay out very late."

"We must meet your father very soon, Priscilla. How about to-morrow?" boomed Mr. Armitage at his most expansive.

"All right," said Shayne. "That—that would be—be just fine."

"Is that young man an old friend of yours?" Jack's mother didn't seem at all conscious that their table had been the cynosure of all eyes, and that various rumors were floating about the room concerning Bill's unceremonious entrance into the Purple Box.

"I—I've known Bill Barnes always." Shayne's cheeks were crimson with shame, but she rallied to the defense of her friend. "He's awfully clever, Bill is. But he—he doesn't care so much about clothes."

"That's evident!" said Jack. There was a queer expression on his face. He helped Shayne on with her cloak. The accidental touch of his hand on hers burned like fire.

"I'm sure Mr. Barnes is a most interesting young man," soothed Mrs. Armitage as they walked across the floor.

"Oh, absolutely!" agreed Jack. But his tone had a sarcastic edge that made Shayne wince. Of course, Jack knew that it was Bill she had called up from the phone booth. What a silly thing to do!

At the Park Avenue apartment Mr. and Mrs. Armitage bade an affectionate farewell to Shayne. Mrs. Armitage kissed her fondly. "Don't forget that we will see you to-morrow!" she said. "You are exactly the sort of daughter-in-law I should have selected out of all

New York City. See that Jack is worthy of you!"

Shayne felt like dying.

"I—I'll wait in the cab," Shayne said to Jack. "You go up and see your father and mother to the apartment. I'll be perfectly all right."

"Are you sure, dearest?"

Shayne's heart turned upside down. Her hands trembled. She knotted her fingers together to keep them still. What a lovely word "dearest" was when it was spoken by one you loved.

She could only nod mutely in reply. It was her silent farewell to him.

She waited until they were out of sight, then she leaned forward and gave her home address to the driver. It took every cent of money in her bag to pay the bill when she arrived at her own doorstep. Wearily she went into the house to meet the tumult of her father's anger.

Instead of commenting on her clothes and thundering Irish curses about where she had been, Mr. Murray took his daughter into his arms fondly.

"You should have told your old dad," he said, wiping his eyes sentimentally. "But it's always the parents who are the last to hear the good news in this day and age. Now, 'twas different when I was a boy. When I was courtin' your dear mother I——"

"Pop, what are you talking about?" Shayne interrupted.

"And to think that my little girl is to be marrying with the son of the Armitage millions! Oh, well, it just goes to show that if you raise a girl right and——"

"Father!" Shayne was shaking from head to foot. An awful fear was gnawing at her consciousness. A fear she was afraid to put a name to. "Father, how did you know about——"

"About young John Armitage? Faith, it was Bill that rang up and told me the news not ten minutes ago. He——"

But Mr. Murray was talking to thin

air. Shayne had dashed to the telephone. With fumbling hands she jerked down the receiver. Her voice shook as she gave the familiar number of Bill's newspaper. After a maddening delay his voice came to her.

"Bill," she almost shrieked into the telephone. "Bill, you haven't—" She stopped and swallowed. "You haven't put anything in your paper about—about my—my engagement, have you?"

"What's that? I can't hear you. The boys are just yelling the papers on the street, and the noise drifts up here. What did you say?"

Frantically Shayne repeated her question.

"Print anything!" parroted Bill. "Not much! Only a front-page spread in letters a foot high. That's all. 'Beautiful Model to Wed. Scion of Millionaire House.' That sort of thing, you know. With pictures, and plenty of 'em. We didn't have to fake 'em, either. Found three of him in polo costume in the 'morgue,' and a couple of you taken in costumes when you modeled for that charity ball."

"Oh!" Shayne swayed. "Stop that story, Bill. It's a matter of life and death to me. Only stop it!" Tears were streaming down her face.

"Sorry, kid." Bill's voice sounded crestfallen. "I got your signals mixed. I thought you had me call you up on purpose. I thought you wanted me to spill the glad tidings to the world so his nibs couldn't change his mind and back out on this marriage stuff."

Shayne moaned.

"Stop the story!" she repeated monotonously.

"I'd kill the story if I could," said Bill. "But it's too late. I just made the midnight edition. That's the paper the boys are calling on the street now."

"Oh." Dully Shayne replaced the receiver on the hook. She turned to face her father. "I wish I were dead!" she said. "I wish I were dead!" She

brushed by the astonished old man and went into her room and locked the door.

But life went on just the same the next morning. Shayne had bluish rings around her eyes from sleeplessness, and a sad little curve to her mouth, but that was all the difference. She got the breakfast as usual, and hurried Mary off to school. She settled her puzzled father in his chair with his pipe and a stack of newspapers. She averted her eyes when she gave him the papers. She could not look at them. It gave her a sick feeling even to touch them.

On the jolting subway she clung to a strap, wedged in against scores of other workers on their way to business. She couldn't move when she kept catching horrifying glimpses of the tabloids held by those about her. She was crowded in too tightly. And besides, what was the use? Wherever she went, that horrible story would pursue her. What did Jack think of her? He despised her, of course. And Mr. Armitage, with his steel-blue eyes that looked right through a person. And dear Mrs. Armitage, who had been so kind. Shayne bit down hard on her lower lip. She mustn't start to cry again. She mustn't.

Crosstown traffic held her up for a longer time than usual, and she reached the *Elegante* ten minutes late. But madame was all smiles instead of her customary frown.

"And why did you not tell me ze gr-rand news?" she exclaimed in the exaggerated accent she kept only for her customers. "I am so thrill'. We are all so thrill'. Et is marvelous." She beamed ingratiatingly. "And after you are married, you will buy all your clothes at the *Elegante*? Yes?"

"Yes," promised Shayne, her face on fire. Anything to stop this. She hurried to her dressing cubicle. But she hadn't reckoned with the girls. They surrounded her in a chattering group.

"You sly fox!"

"You darling!"

"Shayne, I'm so happy for you!"

"Such a grand catch, too. I hear he's got millions, and is good-looking to boot. What more could a woman want?"

March elbowed them all aside. She kissed Shayne on the cheek. "I hope I didn't gum up the works last night," she apologized. "I have a dim remembrance of saying lots of things. Were they out of order?"

"No," said Shayne. Her eyes looked hunted. She yearned to deny all this. But what could she say?

After a while she slipped away to a telephone and put in a call to Frank Carlyle's apartment. "That line is temporarily disconnected," said central in an impersonal singsong. Shayne hung up the receiver. There was no use to try again. She had been calling since six o'clock. She always got the same answer. She pushed back her hair. Her forehead was hot, and her head throbbed miserably.

In love. In love for the first time in her life! It would have been bad enough to have this awful, gnawing ache in her heart that seemed to be tearing her to bits with longing to see Jack again. That would have been terrible enough. But to know that Jack imagined that she had deliberately led him into this ambush. That was intolerable.

She sought out madame. "I wonder if I could have the morning off?" she asked in a weak voice.

"But of course!" said madame warmly. "I appreciate very much your coming at all. Go, by all means, and don't bother to return to-day."

"Thank you." Shayne slipped into her dingy second-best coat. She thought of going to the shop on Forty-second Street, where she had left her things, but she decided against it. She was too tired.

As she stepped out of the store a group of men jostled each other to reach her first.

"Grant an interview to the *Star*, miss?"

"*Evening Circle* wants to know if you like to cook; and if you're good to your mother?"

"Pose for the *Leader*, miss! There. That's fine."

Shayne stood still, bewildered by this sudden onslaught.

"Where are you going now?" questioned the nearest reporter.

Shayne said the first thing that popped into her head. "To the Metropolitan Museum!" she cried desperately.

"Lovely!" exclaimed one of the reporters. "So sensational!"

"Pretty model spends all spare time in Metropolitan Museum!" quoted another reported with a knowing grin.

Shayne battled her way to the curb and hailed a taxi. "To the Metropolitan Museum!" bellowed three of the reporters in unison.

"I get you!" said the driver, and was off.

Shayne thought of telling him to go somewhere else, but it seemed too great an effort. And after all, the museum might prove a sanctuary. She leaned back and closed her eyes.

She was glad that her father had insisted on her taking five dollars with her. He had got the five dollars from a private cache of his own that Shayne hadn't known anything about. Poor pop!

For a while Shayne wandered about aimlessly in the museum, gazing at gorgeous relics taken from King Tut's tomb. Suddenly she felt faint. Perhaps a cup of tea might help. She sought out an attendant and asked him if there was a restaurant in the building. "There's a cafeteria downstairs," he told her.

She made her way there. Just at the door, two giggling girls went up to

a statue and put something in the up-turned palm of a marble figure. Whereat a third girl sighed exasperatedly and said:

"Fer cryin' out loud, Mame, what you doing? Putting ten cents in that statue's hand! Have you gone dippy?"

Mame giggled consciously. "I had a fight with my boy friend last night. I want him to make up. This isn't just a statue, you goof! It's Cupid. See? Lotsa folks put something in his hand 'cause it's stretched out this way, I guess."

"Well, if you ask me, I think it's crazy! The janitor'll get the money, that's all!"

They went into the cafeteria, still bickering and laughing over the incident.

Shayne stood quite still and gazed at the marble figure. It was a Cupid, with cape and quiver. His left hand held his bow; his right hand was outstretched in mute supplication. In the hand was a strange conglomeration of objects. Matches, hairpins, paper clips, sticks of gum, pennies, and a few dimes.

Shayne looked around furtively. The place was momentarily deserted. She fumbled in her purse until she found a quarter. Hastily she slipped it into Cupid's hand, under the welter of objects already there. "Send Jack to me, Cupid!" she whispered. Then she went into the cafeteria quickly, feeling exceedingly foolish.

She got some tea and a sandwich and sat down at a table in the far corner of the room and tried to eat. But the food stuck in her throat. Near by, some one was saying: "Did you see in the paper this morning about the model that's going to marry that millionaire from the West? Gosh, those gold diggers have all the luck!"

Shayne clenched her hands. Did all the world ring with her miserable story? The story that was all a fabrication from start to finish!

She stared at her cup of rapidly cooling tea as if she could read the answer to her problem there. What could she do so that Jack would learn the truth? How could she make him realize that Bill's coming was all a mistake?

To adore some one who despised you! What greater misfortune could befall a person? To want to help that person and only succeed in humiliating him. That was still more horrible. Despite her valiant efforts, Shayne began to cry. She put up her hands, but the tears slipped through her fingers and ran down the outsides of her hands in misty little streaks of woe.

"My goodness gracious!" said a voice so close that she started nervously. "Why all the misery? That's no way for a newly engaged girl to act. It—it's humiliating. For the prospective bridegroom, I mean."

Shayne looked up—and up. Tears misted her eyes, so she saw as through a dense fog. But it was Jack standing there. Of course it was. Or else she had thought about him so much that she was seeing a vision. She wasn't quite sure about that. She whispered his name through a constricted throat.

He pulled out the empty chair opposite her and sat down. He reached over and wiped away the tears from her cheeks with a tender care. "Don't," he said unsteadily. "Don't, my dear!"

Shayne came to life at that. "There—there isn't any one around to—pretend before. Not now," she said unsteadily. "You—you don't have to be nice to me. I—I wouldn't blame you if you hit me. But Jack—Mr. Armitage, I mean. It—it wasn't my fault. I never dreamed that Bill would do that. I tried to stop him putting that in the paper, but it was too late. Oh, I know you hate me!"

"Little lady," said Jack debonairly. "You've been misinformed. I don't hate you. Not at all." He took his neat white square of a handkerchief out

of his hip pocket and passed it over to her. Shayne mechanically dabbed at her eyes and nose.

"You might put on some powder and a little rouge, and maybe a dab of lipstick," suggested Jack, smiling at her. "Because I just managed to dodge a flock of reporters, and they may be in here at any moment." Like an automaton, Shayne did as he bade her. But she kept powdering her nose over and over, mechanically, as he went on:

"That's how I knew you were here. The museum, of all places! I went to the store, but all the reporters told me that my fiancée was in search of her morning culture, so I——"

"Don't," Shayne interrupted. "Don't make fun of me!"

"I wouldn't. Not for the world. I love you too much for that."

Shayne was so startled that she let her lipstick fall to the floor. It bounced and then rolled away. Jack had quite a time finding it. But finally he came back to the table triumphantly and laid the lipstick on the table. "There!"

"You—you were saying," prompted Shayne, her heart thudding so that it sounded like rushing water in her ears.

"I was furious at you for not telling me that you weren't a society girl! I hate all of 'em! But a girl who works and supports her father and sister! Ah, that's different." He leaned across the table and caught her cold little fingers in his warm grasp.

"You—your father and mother?" gasped Shayne.

"They think you're a peach! Both of them are all for you. I told 'em the whole story this morning from start to finish. And mother said that you had told her you loved me. That's what gave me the courage to come and find you. Mater said a girl as fine as you couldn't lie. And I believe in the ma-

ter's judgment, so—— Do you love me, Shayne Murray?"

Shayne trembled. Her hand tightened against his. "I—love you," she said, her voice a mere echo of sound.

"And I love you!" Jack's face was like a window with a lighted candle behind it. "I fell in love with you when I saved your life last night and held you close in my arms. Such a sweet little girl, with glorious, clean eyes!"

"Oh," said Shayne. "Oh." A glorious ecstasy swept over her, stripping her of words.

"We'll get married on a yacht," said Jack dreamily. "And we'll sail away to the ends of the earth. Would you like that, dear little golden-haired girl of mine?"

"Anywhere!" said Shayne. "Anywhere with you!"

She had forgotten that Jack was rich. She had forgotten all her anguish and sorrow of a short half hour before. She remembered only that Jack had the look in his eyes that men have when they adore. And she liked the way his hair grew down on his forehead in a hint of a widow's peak.

Arm in arm, they left the cafeteria, passing so close to Cupid that Shayne's sleeve brushed his hand. But she was oblivious. She had eyes only for her beloved.

"And our courtship will come after marriage instead of before," Jack was saying. "Won't it be fun getting acquainted? Gosh! And that courtship will last forever and ever, too!"

"Forever," echoed Shayne ecstatically. She had forgotten poor Cupid despite his supplicating hand.

"I love you!" whispered Jack in her ear. "I love you, my sweet!"

Over the marble face of Cupid seemed to dart a sudden satisfied smile—the smile of one whose work is well done.





Under Desert Skies

By Leta Zoe Adams

AS Sibyl came out of the shabby apartment house into the warm southern California sunshine, she gave a start of dismay at the sight of the long gray sports roadster standing at the curb.

Lyle Collins again! She would have passed on up the street, but the man at the wheel leaped to the sidewalk and halted her.

"You're going somewhere. Let me take you."

Sibyl looked up into his face, and gave an involuntary little shiver. Did

ever a man have such cold, hard eyes? They reminded Sibyl of agate.

"Thank you," she said shortly. "I'm taking the street car."

"Job hunting again?" He lifted his brows. "How long is this going to last?"

"I don't know."

Sibyl glanced down at the toes of her pumps. Poor things! They wouldn't hold out much longer.

His glance followed hers to the scuffed toes.

"How long are you going to be stubborn? You know your father wouldn't have made me executor of his estate if he hadn't wanted you to marry me. He knew that he was bankrupt, and that I was well off. Making me his executor was only his way of trusting you in my care for life. Sibyl, if you'll only say the word, you can forget all about this poverty of yours and this silly job hunting. You can have all the pretty things in the world to adorn your beauty—not that you need a thing; you'd look beautiful in rags."

Sibyl lifted her large wide-open eyes. "But I don't love you," she said simply.

In the weeks since her father's death Sibyl had uttered those same words so often that now they fell from her lips mechanically.

The whole thing was like a nightmare to Sibyl Tansey, beginning from the day her dear daddy had fallen dead in their lovely apartment out on Wilshire Boulevard.

Before that, life had been pleasant enough. She had lived in exclusive boarding schools, visiting her father during her vacations. She had never given a thought to money. She had always understood that they had plenty of it.

But when her father died, all that was changed. For Lyle Collins, his partner, had informed Sibyl that her father had died bankrupt and that she was penniless.

That was a shock, of course, on top of her father's death. But it wouldn't have been quite so bad if Lyle Collins hadn't begun making love to her and following her about, begging her to marry him.

In vain she had told him that she didn't love him, but still he argued with her, just as he was doing now.

"I'll teach you to love me."

Sibyl sighed. "Love isn't taught," she said with a naïve wisdom. "Love just comes of its own accord."

"Nonsense!" he scoffed. "I can teach any girl to love me."

"How?" Sibyl asked wearily.

"By giving her things," Lyle Collins replied confidently. "Sibyl, what are you going to do when your savings are all gone?"

"I'll get something to do—before that," she said, but her voice broke a little.

She hugged her bag. The clipping was still there. But she must hurry. There would be so many applying for such a position.

Lyle Collins stood by the door of the roadster while she hurried up the street and boarded a car.

Once seated Sibyl took out the clipping and read it again.

WANTED: Young woman secretary to scenario writer. Must be expert stenographer and in position to leave city. References required.

It was probably a wild-goose chase. Yet, she wanted to find out for sure.

Half an hour later Sibyl was entering a sunny den filled with books. She had a little thrill of pleasure as she met the eyes of the man who came toward her. How different they were from Lyle Collins's eyes! For these eyes were warm and deeply blue.

"Miss Tansey? I am Roger Howe," he greeted her pleasantly.

Sibyl sat down stiffly in the chair he offered her.

"Your qualifications?"

"I haven't had—any experience," Sibyl said truthfully. "I learned shorthand in school, and I'm—I'm really very speedy, but I haven't any business references."

"You're more honest than most of them," he said, smiling across at her. "I like that."

He asked her a number of questions. She told him only that she had recently lost her father. Then he had her take a little dictation. He seemed very pleased.

"I am working on a desert story, 'West of the Sunrise,'" he explained to her. "I sold the scenario, and the company has given me the script to write, too. I'm going down to Palm Springs to work it out. My aunt, Ruby Penbrook, who lives here with me, will go along. Could you be ready in two days?"

If he had asked her to be ready in an hour Sibyl would have said, "Yes." A job at last! Now she could get away from Lyle Collins's importune pleadings!

Roger Howe was going on: "Then if you'll report to-morrow morning we can work a couple of days here. I'm going to call Aunt Ruby in and have her meet you now."

A motherly-looking woman with a crown of snow-white hair entered. Roger Howe introduced her as Mrs. Penbrook.

Sibyl left soon after that. As she went out, Roger Howe turned to his aunt Ruby, smiling like a tickled boy.

"Don't you think she's a gold mine of a find?"

"I do, Roger. She's so gentle, so modest. One doesn't see that type often in this day of bold-faced girls."

"That was the main reason I was so attracted to her, Aunt Ruby. You know how fed up I am on these girls with nothing under their hats except a mop of hennaed hair and a gnawing appetite for jazz music and rich men. They have no stability, no ideals. Now this Miss Tansey looks as though she had a few sensible ideas, not to mention the fact that she's extremely pretty."

"The most important shall come last," chided Aunt Ruby Penbrook. "But I noticed myself that she was pretty."

"Pretty, yes, but not in the enameled way of so many girls in this day. Her eyes——" Roger Howe groped for an adequate expression. "They're like violets in a mist, like sunset shadows in the desert."

Aunt Ruby smiled indulgently at his extravagances.

"You idealist! You seem to be quite carried away with her. Remember, though, that the proof of the pudding is in the eating!"

"If you weren't so nice I'd call you a killjoy, Aunt Ruby," Roger teased, and they laughed together.

Meanwhile Sibyl was going down the winding steps to the street. As she reached the bottom she received an unpleasant shock. Lyle Collins was waiting in his car. He had followed her then!

"Get the job?"

Sibyl knew he expected a negative answer.

"Yes," she said.

There was disappointment in his face, for Lyle Collins had hoped Sibyl would be literally starved into accepting his offer of marriage. It was what he had counted on.

He tried to veil his disappointment under a cold little smile. "When do you start?"

She told him. "And I'm leaving the city indefinitely."

"Bound where?"

"A long way from here," Sibyl said evasively.

He glowered. "Don't worry. I'll find out whether you tell me or not. And I'll be there on the job!"

"Lyle!" Sibyl's voice rose appealingly. "You wouldn't do that! You wouldn't—try to make me lose my job or anything, would you?"

He said darkly: "You can't tell what a man will do when he's in love."

Then he roared away down the street.

Roger Howe had taken a four-room cottage at the Desert Inn at Palm Springs. Meals were taken in the hotel. In the mornings Sibyl and Roger worked diligently, but in the afternoons they rode horseback about the mountain trails.

Sibyl loved it. She didn't know at first whether it was the sweet desert air that made her spirits soar, or whether it was the admiration in Roger Howe's eyes when he turned to look at her sometimes.

But that afternoon, riding beside him bound for Palm Canyon, Sibyl knew.

They climbed the long grade and now stood upon the crest looking down at the oasis of native palms straggling picturesque down the long, winding, narrow canyon.

"When I look out over country like this I always want to go out over it—beyond—to see what I would find," Sibyl mused. "It seems to be trying to tell you that if you gave yourself up to it you would find peace."

"It's the old 'other-side-of-the-mountain' feeling," Roger answered, smiling a little. "We always want to find out what's there."

"Maybe that's it," Sibyl breathed. She slipped from her saddle and stood looking out at the canyon. She could not know that she was a captivating picture—eyes star bright, cheeks carnation pink—but Roger Howe knew. He was out of the saddle in an instant, sweeping her into his arms.

"You beautiful!"

Sibyl looked up into adoring eyes. "Mr. Howe—you mustn't."

"Mustn't what? Say I love you?" he cut off her breathless cry. "Oh, little Sibyl, I loved you the very first minute you stepped into my study!"

And at her sharp gasp he plunged on recklessly.

"Oh, I've seen hundreds of girls—actresses, artists, debs, coeds—but I've never seen one who picked up my heart and walked away with it as you've done! Maybe it's because you're so true blue, so honest, but whatever it is, the reason doesn't matter. I'm mad about you! I know you must think I'm terrible talking to you this way when I've known you only a week or so."

"Why should I?" Sibyl spoke softly.

"Then you guessed? But of course you would. It must have been plain enough."

"I didn't guess." Sibyl was at a loss how to go on. Her heart was beating with a wild, fierce joy. Love did come of its own accord. The sweetness of it, the wonder!

"Could you—care about me?" Roger was murmuring eagerly.

"But that's just it; I do." Sibyl's big eyes looked up into his. "I care for you now—Roger dear!"

Wordless, he bent to her lips, gathering her more tightly in his arms.

But as Sibyl's lips answered the ardor in his, something like remembered pain clatched at her heart. "I'll find out, whether you tell me or not. And I'll be there—on the job!"

Valiantly she thrust aside a strange feeling of foreboding. It was nothing. She must not spoil the most wonderful moment of her life thinking of Lyle Collins and his silly threat.

They made the ride back to Palm Springs in almost complete silence, for the discovery of their love had enveloped both of them in a dream mist of wonder.

When they left their horses at the stable and were walking across to the cottage, a man came down the gravel path. As she saw him, Sibyl could not keep back a cry of dismay.

"Lyle Collins!"

Then her foreboding had come true.

Lyle Collins looked at her searchingly with his cold eyes. "Thought I'd run down and look in on my ward."

Sibyl introduced Roger to him. Her voice shook.

"Miss Tansey is your ward, Mr. Collins?" Roger inquired politely.

"Something like that," Lyle Collins said, with a meaning look at Sibyl.

"I see," observed Roger, but it was plain that he didn't see at all.

"I'll hope to be with you a lot, Sibyl,"

Lyle Collins went on blandly, and made a little mock bow before going on.

As Sibyl and Roger walked to the cottage, Sibyl explained in a few hurried sentences about Lyle Collins's partnership with her father, and about her own defunct fortunes. But she didn't mention Lyle's personal interest in herself, because after all he was a rejected suitor, and it wouldn't be fair to humiliate him in Roger's eyes.

Roger was sympathetic.

"Poor little darling! Everything swept away at once—your father, your fortune! I'll have to make it up to you somehow. But Lyle Collins! Why, everybody knows he's a wealthy man!"

Sibyl didn't know that

Roger wondered just why Lyle had come to Palm Springs.

She hoped that Lyle would stay away from the cottage, but the very next afternoon he was there. She and Roger were just ready to go riding when he came.

"Mind if I horn in on your party?" he asked, and added jokingly: "Since



She had a little thrill of pleasure as she met the eyes of the man. How different they were from Lyle Collins's eyes! For these eyes were warm and deeply blue.

Sibyl's a sort of ward, you know, it's my duty to look after her."

Sibyl saw that Roger didn't want his company, but there seemed no way to refuse it.

Lyle talked all the way up to the canyon and back. His conversation gave the impression that he and the Tansey family were on the most intimate of terms. He even referred to Sibyl's father as Uncle Ted, and insinuated that Sibyl had been left solely in his charge.

Roger, Sibyl knew, was at a loss to understand. But how was she to know that Lyle's wealth made Roger uneasy? In Hollywood Roger had seen more than one girl turn from a poor man to a rich one.

Lyle kept coming to the cottage and Sibyl knew that his watchful eyes missed nothing—neither the soft glances that passed between herself and Roger so often, nor the little endearing names they called each other. He knew Roger loved her. Was he trying to make Roger jealous?—she wondered miserably. If that was his purpose he was succeeding.

For Roger was becoming moody. Sometimes he would stop in the middle of his dictation to stare vacantly before him, and Sibyl knew his mind was far from "West of the Sunrise."

One day when she attempted to recall him to the script, he turned troubled eyes upon her and burst out the truth.

"I don't like to be a jealous cad, but when you love a person as I love you—" he halted as he saw the hurt look in her face. "Oh, darling, I didn't mean to hurt you! I'm sorry. I know you love me. I know you're the truest girl in the world!"

And as he kissed her Sibyl vowed that she would put an end to Lyle's interference. She'd send him away somehow before he had torn the wonderful fabric of her happiness to bits.

The next afternoon while Roger rode

Sibyl remained at the cottage and sent for Lyle.

She met him on the little veranda. "I'd like to talk to you."

"Fine!" His eyes lighted. "How would a little ride down in the Coachella Valley do?"

"I don't care," said Sibyl recklessly. "Anywhere—just so we can talk."

They had driven slowly down the Coachella between the ranges of sun-washed mountains before Sibyl broached her errand. Then, characteristically, she came at once to the point.

"Lyle, you must stop coming to the cottage."

The car swerved a little. Sibyl could see his eyes narrowing under his cap. "Is that what you wanted to tell me?"

Sibyl swallowed and went on bravely. "Of course, this isn't for publication yet, but you see—well, Roger Howe and I are engaged. You understand—"

"I suspected that. Did he put you up to this?"

"Certainly not!" Sibyl flashed, instantly on the defensive in Roger's behalf. "But the fact of the matter is that you're—you're—"

"In the way—is that it?" Lyle gritted out between clamped teeth.

"Lyle, if you really love me as you say you do, you want to see me happy, don't you?" Sibyl appealed to him suddenly.

"Are you trying to make me look like a martyr?" he bristled. "I'm not one of those fellows who leave a deal flat before the parties sign on the dotted line. If I were that kind I wouldn't be riding around in foreign cars and writing my name in seven figures. You've got your lines mixed, Sibyl. You're thinking of poetic fellows like your Roger Howe."

"Roger has ideals," Sibyl began hotly.

"And I've got sense."

Sibyl's anger, not easily aroused, was flashing in her eyes.

"I don't know why you're pretending

you love me, because you don't! There isn't room for anything else in your heart except money! Well, I don't want it. If you had ten times ten million I wouldn't want it!"

"So you're going to marry the one-cylinder, moony Roger?"

"Yes!" Sibyl flashed. "And if you come to the cottage any more I'll take care not to be in!"

Sibyl could see pin points of fire in his eyes and a sinister twist on his lips, but he didn't say anything more about the matter on the way back to the hotel. Had he given up at last? Sibyl prayed that he had.

A number of guests were on the hotel veranda as Lyle's car swung into the drive. If Sibyl had scanned the faces carefully, she would have seen a strange woman guest turn and stare after them with more than a casual interest. And that evening when Sibyl drifted out on the veranda to get a breath of air while Roger played her hand of bridge, that same woman rose from a chair in the deep shadows and came toward her.

"I've been waiting to see you—alone," she said in a low, throaty voice.

Sibyl looked her surprise at the strange request. The woman, she saw in the semidarkness, was not young, although there was an echo of grace and beauty about her.

"You want to see me?" Sibyl repeated wonderingly. "But I—I don't even know you. I never saw you before."

The woman nodded. "I know that. Shall we walk about the grounds a bit?"

Sibyl glanced toward the lounge. "I have only a minute."

"That will be sufficient I hope," said the woman, and Sibyl looked at her quickly.

But she was already moving down the wide steps. Sibyl followed.

"It's about Lyle Collins. I followed him here," the woman began as soon as they had reached the lawn. "Perhaps you didn't know that he was my fiancé?"

"Why, I——" Sibyl began stiffly. "I'm sure I don't know anything about Mr. Collins's affairs. If you'll please——"

"Perhaps I'd best introduce myself," the woman went on with a suggestion of pride in her voice. "My name is Nadine Comstock."

Nadine Comstock! Why, she had once been a luminary in the film world. Now she was a has-been!

"And you are Sibyl Tansey," she continued, "the girl whose estate Lyle has charge of."

"Only there is—no estate."

"I have reason to believe," the woman halted and fixed Sibyl with her eyes—"that he wishes to marry you. No, he hasn't exactly told me that. He'd hardly dare under the circumstances. But I don't need to be told. I know Lyle rather well. I know pretty much how his mind works."

"But why have you come to me?" Sibyl demanded.

"Of course you won't tell me, but I must ask it anyhow," Nadine Comstock answered smoothly. "Are you seriously considering marrying him?"

Sibyl in turn was proud. "No!"

Nadine Comstock was silent for a moment. "I wonder," she said at last, as though speaking to herself, "if you're telling the truth, or are you just saying that to be rid of me?"

For the second time that day Sibyl's anger flared.

"Suit yourself as to whether you believe me or not, Miss Comstock!"

"Wait——"

But Sibyl had whirled about and was walking angrily away.

She and Roger worked hard that next morning trying to finish a sequence, and in the afternoon they rode up to Palm Canyon. Descending into the canyon they left their horses to nibble the grass while they rambled downstream. Roger had brought his camera, as he wanted to get several good snapshots of Sibyl.

As they searched for desirable back-

grounds their voices and laughter rang against the canyon walls. Sibyl was prettily posed on a granite boulder beside a fan palm when they heard the sound of a horse's swift hoofs.

"Those confounded horses!" Roger exclaimed.

Forgetting the picture, Sibyl slid from the rock and together they scrambled back the way they had come, arriving just in time to see both horses disappearing up the canyon trail.

In a moment Roger had vanished up the trail after them.

Sibyl was so intent on watching him that she hadn't noticed the horseman coming down from the rim. Now she turned, startled, to see Lyle Collins only a few feet away.

"Horses stampede? They often do that, you know."

He swung from the saddle and sauntered toward her.

"You hit one of them with a stone," Sibyl accused him bluntly.

He shrugged. "Maybe. What does it matter? They're gone now, Roger after them, and I have an idea he'll have quite a nice little time catching them."

"You followed us," Sibyl went on.

"You banned the cottage, and I wanted to see you. What could I do but follow?"

He had stepped near enough to touch her. Sibyl drew back.

"I talked to Miss Comstock last night," she said evenly. "Haven't you any sense of honor?"

"Yes," He looked at her from leveled eyes. "I came to tell you good-by."

"Oh!"

"I couldn't very well go away without saying good-by to my ward, could I?"

Sibyl did not answer.

"So——" He lingered, looking at her.

"Good-by." Sibyl held out her hand with impulsive friendliness.

And then, before she knew what was happening she was crushed in his arms. A kind of sick horror passed through her as his lips found hers. She shut her eyes and a long shiver shook her.

She didn't see or hear Roger come down the trail leading the two horses. She didn't see him pause and take in the scene before him, then quietly mount his horse and start up the trail to the rim without a glance behind.

If he had looked back he would have seen quite a different scene. He would have seen Sibyl wrench herself free from Lyle's embrace with a shudder of dismay.

"Oh—I didn't suppose you'd—do that!"

Lyle chuckled confidently. "No? Didn't I tell you I wasn't one of those fellows who leave a deal flat before the parties sign on the dotted line? And if I'm not mistaken this one is coming to a climax. Did you see Roger?"

Following his glance Sibyl saw Roger about to disappear at the rim of the canyon, and she realized that he must have seen her in Lyle's arms. She turned upon Lyle.

"You did this on purpose!" she cried. "You wanted him to see you kissing me! You deliberately planned to make him misunderstand!"

"Sure I did," Lyle admitted. "I had to keep you from marrying him, didn't I? A one-cylinder fellow like that! Listen, Sibyl, let's talk turkey."

But Sibyl's eyes were blazing. "Talk! Do you think that after this I'd listen to anything you had to say? Oh, I hate you! Let me by!"

With a little sob Sibyl ran to her horse which Roger had left a few paces away. Mounting swiftly she started up to the rim.

She saw Roger racing down the long grade on the other side as though he were fleeing from a place of pestilence. She urged her horse to a run, shouting to Roger to stop, but there was no



Why should we wait any longer? Won't you marry me as soon as we can reach Palm Springs and get a license?"

slackening of his pace. It wasn't until they were again on the level ground of the valley that she caught up with him. Then, panting, she reined in beside him.

"Roger, you don't understand!"

"I think I do—only too well"

He looked straight ahead as he spoke, and his voice was as cold as steel.

"But you don't! And Roger, I want to explain!"

"I don't believe that is necessary."

Suddenly he turned in the saddle to gaze at her with reproachful eyes. "I thought you were different from the others, but I see now you've just been making a fool out of me. You've been playing with love. It's money you really want, after all."

"Roger, I can explain if you'll only listen."

"I don't want to listen."

His words stung Sibyl like a raw-hide whip.

"Oh, you're cruel!"

"You kiss him when you think I'm not looking on. What is there to explain?"

Sibyl's eyes flashed fire. "It's too late now! I'll never explain! You can think what you will of me, Roger Howe!"

With that she wheeled her horse and sped back toward the canyon.

It was not until she had gone some distance that she realized she was heading directly for Lyle Collins. At any moment now he might appear on the long grade leading from the canyon. Now of all times she wished to avoid meeting him.

At her left a faint trail zigzagged away through the sagebrush. Sibyl guided her horse along the path until she came to a little shade cast by a steep bank. She halted there and buried her face in her hands.

How had it really happened? Oh, he was cruel! He had let her go without a word! If he loved her he would have followed her, begged her to forgive him!

She couldn't face him again, not after this! If he didn't love her any more, she didn't care what happened to her. Nothing mattered.

For a long time she sat there with her face hidden in her hands, but presently her horse became restless and she roused herself to find that the shadows were growing long.

She looked back at the winding road which led to Palm Springs. A few short hours before, she had known happiness there, but now it was only a graveyard of dead rapture. A cool little breeze from Palm Canyon caressed her feverish face, and she turned back to gaze at the purple-shadowed mountains. And as she looked a little chord of consolation was struck somewhere

within her. The mountains! Perhaps they could lend their strength to her. Perhaps somewhere among them one could find a kind of peace. As though in a trance, Sibyl turned back to the road and set her horse toward Palm Canyon and the unknown lands beyond.

Dawn comes swiftly in the California deserts. There is a pale-saffron flush along the eastern horizon, then the sun rolls up from behind the mountains to send long beams of gold down the arid, empty canyons. Jack rabbits begin to forage; quail whirl up from the brush, and the deadly sidewinders drag their repulsive bodies to a bit of shade and coil up to wait.

Sibyl had traveled steadily all night without any notion of where she was going nor how she expected to return. Her horse was so exhausted now that he could hardly travel.

She hadn't found the peace she had sought. As she approached the mountains they seemed to draw away from her, and now in the dawn they looked menacing.

But Sibyl was too miserable to care what they looked like. She would go until her horse refused to go any farther; then she would continue on foot until she fell with exhaustion. Only that way could she conquer the bitterness in her heart.

And now her horse stopped in the shade of a little draw which opened onto a flat, and all her gentle urging would not move him an inch.

She dismounted, stiff and sore from the long hours in the saddle. Which way should she go? She blinked at the dazzling sun on the blanched drifts of sand below. It would be stifling down there in an hour or so. There was no water, no shelter.

She staggered forward, then jumped back screaming with terror. A snake! She had almost stepped on one of those

deadly sidewinders. The sudden alarm put new strength into her blood. Sobbing wildly she stumbled back up the draw, her only thought to escape from the poisonous reptile in her path.

Abruptly, out of the silence around her, came a deep-toned call:

"Sibyl! Sibyl!"

At first Sibyl thought it must be the echo of a voice in her own heart, and she stumbled on. Then the call came again, closer. She halted, peering about. Up there on the ridge something was moving. It was a horseman waving to her!

He was coming down. Sibyl could see him more plainly now. It was Roger! The color drained from her cheeks.

He leaped from his horse.

"Sibyl, can you ever forgive me?"

She took a step backward, struggling to control the desire to fling herself into his

arms. Then she said in a husky voice:

"You mean you didn't intend to do—what you did?"

"I mean for being so insanely jealous that I couldn't listen to you, for I knew all the time that you didn't care for any one but me. And when she said you'd gone away with Lyle Collins I saw red. I wanted to shout at her that I knew differently."

"She! Whom do you mean?" Sibyl breathed.

"Nadine Comstock. She said she was his fiancée. Last night she came to the cottage looking for him, and she told me." Roger paused. "Sibyl you're

rich, as rich as Lyle Collins himself. That's why he was so determined to marry you, Nadine Comstock said."

"But Lyle always told me my father died bankrupt."

"He told you that for his own purposes. Oh, he's been clever! He's managed to keep your estate hung up all this time—telling you that you were penniless until he got you to marry him. His own money wasn't enough.

He wanted yours, too. Nadine Comstock told me all about it, Sibyl. She was angry with him because she thought

he had eloped with you—double-crossed her, as she put it."

"But—why didn't she tell me?"

"Because she loved Lyle Collins and she knew that if she told what she knew he'd turn against her. Poor Nadine, she's had so much hard luck in her life, as Hollywood knows."

"And Lyle—hasn't returned to Palm Springs either?"

"Not up until the time I'd left last night, but he'll show up. He probably rode over to some mountain resort to spend the night, ashamed to show his face around the hotel for a while—the unscrupulous money grabber!"

"And you came—just to find me and tell me all this?"

Roger nodded miserably. "Yes, I remembered you once said you thought the mountains looked like peace, and I felt you'd gone—to find it. I wanted to tell you about your fortune and to ask your forgiveness. There couldn't be anything between us now, of course."



"I—don't—understand," said Sibyl slowly.

"You're an heiress." He looked off across the mountains. "And I'm a poor man. That's what I mean."

There was a little silence while Sibyl stood as still as stone. When she spoke there was an odd, tremulous note in her voice.

"You don't think it matters to me what either of us has or hasn't got, do you, Roger? It's with people like Lyle that money matters so much, but you and me—O Roger darling!"

With an inarticulate murmur of gladness Roger's arms went out to her, swept her close to him.

"My sweetheart! Of course you'd feel like that. Of course you'd put love above everything else in the world! I don't deserve you! I don't deserve such loyalty!"

"You mustn't say that, Roger dear! I don't deserve you!" she whispered.

"It was a nightmare, but it's over now. Why should we wait any longer? Won't you marry me as soon as we can reach Palm Springs and get a license? We're not so far away. You've been riding in a circle. The canyon is just back of us."

Sibyl's violet eyes, dewy with tears, looked into his, and he knew her answer was: "Yes!"



THE PROMISE

THEN hold me in your arms again,
And let me know the bliss
Of tender, clinging lips that tell
Your love in one long kiss.

Your kisses tell of love to be,
Of ecstasy divine;
They fill me with a deep desire
To keep you always mine.

No need of words have we, my dear,
Your heart can speak to me
In kisses sweet, I know you're mine
Through all eternity.

RUBY WOODARD.



Miracles For Janice

By Phyllis Lee

YOU'RE too pretty for this job," objected the man. "It might be dangerous for you."

"I'm not really pretty—not very pretty, anyway—and I don't mind a little danger," protested Janice Saunders, knowing that she could do things to her hair and skin to make herself look less pretty. She needed that job as badly as any stenographer could when she'd been out of work for a month and her savings account had gotten down to three dollars and forty-six cents.

"Well," said the man grudgingly, "you may as well have it, I guess. A

man will bring in a typewriter this morning, and you can run downstairs to the stationery store and order the other things you need. There isn't any telephone in yet."

Janice had noticed that, just as she had noticed the bareness of the big office and the absence of any papers on the desk and any name on the door.

The first hours passed swiftly enough, what with ordering supplies and taking dictation. But she couldn't figure out what business the man was in, and he didn't seem anxious to tell her. When he talked about shipments he didn't

mention whether they were shipments of ivory or bootleg whisky, and when he said: "Take a letter, Miss Saunders," he always added: "No need for carbons. Don't need a name, either. I'll fill in the names and addresses later. All you need to do is to type the letters and give them to me with blank envelopes."

The envelopes certainly were blank. The paper was plain without the sign of a letterhead.

All in all, Janice told herself, she had a mysterious sort of job. She didn't even think the man's name was Mr. Smith as he had told her. Of course there were Smiths in town, but this man didn't look like a Smith.

She knew that there was something wrong. Every stenographer knows that an office should have a telephone on the desk and a name on the door.

The silly wave in Mr. Smith's shiny black hair and the aura of the cheap perfume he used warned her that she wasn't going to like this job very much. But she wanted to keep it anyway. Jobs were scarce, and she needed this one very badly.

But when the woman came to see Mr. Smith, she knew that he wasn't the sort of person she should be knowing. The woman was big and blond, good-looking, too, in a cheap full-blown way. She came in and smiled at Janice.

"The boy friend's expecting me. You needn't do any announcing at all." Then she opened the door of the inner office and walked in.

She had remained in the office for an hour and Janice had heard quarrel-ling going on, although she couldn't hear the words that were said. Finally Mr. Smith came out of the office, and told her to go to lunch and be back by two o'clock.

Just as she was going out of the office, she met a man going in. He looked strikingly like Mr. Smith himself, almost like a twin brother.

"Are you the pretty secretary? I was told Smith was falling for one. He's expecting me. I just talked to him on the phone."

That was a lie, Janice knew. Smith didn't have a phone. But she couldn't very well say so, so she just nodded and went on.

She was back promptly. Window shopping wasn't much fun when her bank account had dwi dled so distress-ingly. And she couldn't afford more than a sandwich and a glass of milk for lunch.

The door of the office was open. Janice had walked in and closed it behind her before she knew something was wrong.

A man was lying on the floor, face downward, his back hunched up queerly. She felt instinctively that it was Mr. Smith. One glimpse of his livid cheek made her gasp. She wanted to faint, and then to shriek, and then to cry and laugh all at the same time.

She didn't have any job, after all. Mr. Smith was dead. There wasn't any doubt of it, even to Janice's inexperienced eyes. She'd better call a doctor, though, she decided. Sometimes doctors knew things to do that would cause almost magical things to happen. She remembered that there wasn't any telephone in the office, but there was a booth downstairs in the building. She dashed toward the door, had her hand outstretched toward the knob, when the door swung open and several men came in.

"So there you are!" boomed the biggest of them. "You didn't get away after all."

"Please let me go," she begged. "I've got to go telephone for a doctor. Mr. Smith is sick or dead or something."

"I'm a doctor," said one of the men. "Why do you think I'm here? Of course he's dead. Why do you think we were called?"

"Were you called?" asked Janice.

"Who called you? And who are you?" She looked bewildered.

"She doesn't know who we are. She doesn't know a policeman when she sees one. Sweet little innocent, isn't she, Brown?" boomed the first man in a big voice.

The doctor was bending over the body on the floor. "Dead, all right," he said, straightening up. "Prussic acid, probably—some cyanide, at any rate. Smell it? Look at that face and those eyes. A newsboy would know that."

"Then you'd better come along with us, sister," said the big man, not unkindly. "If he was half as bad as he looks now, you had a real reason for doing it."

"Me," said Janice, startled into calmness. "Why—I never saw Mr. Smith before this morning when I came hunting for the job and he gave it to me."

"Really?" said the big man. "Come along, sister, and we'll talk it over. You'd better come clean."

"Come clean? You mean—tell you that I killed him? But I didn't kill him! I tell you, I never saw him before to-day."

"Who was he?"

"Mr. Smith."

"Yes? Nice uncommon name. First name John, I suppose. What was his business?"

"I don't know what his first name was or even what his business was. I tell you I never saw him before this morning." Janice was almost in tears. She was trying to keep her eyes away from that terrible figure on the floor. In all her twenty years she had never seen anything like it.

Yesterday she had been in a dreadful plight, hunting for a job when her savings account was almost down to nothing. But now she was even worse off. She was just as poor—a little poorer, in fact, because she had bought lunch out of the small sum in her bag—and

with this dreadful charge of murder hanging over her.

"Won't you believe me?" she begged. "I don't know anything about this. I'm just a stenographer he hired to do some work. I was broke when I answered his ad this morning, and when he told me I could have the job and get to work right away I was too happy to ask any questions at all."

"I believe you," said a suddenly friendly voice from among the group of men.

The big man grunted. "Shut up, Riley," he said. "You don't know a thing about it. You're a reporter, not a policeman. Keep to your own game. I'll handle this."

"But can't you see she isn't the kind of girl to do anything like that, Black? I should think you could see that just by looking at her."

"Because she's pretty, I suppose. The worst murderer I ever knew won six beauty contests. She dies in the electric chair next week for her third murder. Cold-blooded, too. Prettier than this girl, I'd say. If I was looking at dames for their beauty, I'd still be walking a beat."

Janice didn't know where to turn. She wanted to speak to this friendly Riley and beg him to save her. She wanted to tell him that she knew nothing at all about the murder.

And suddenly she remembered. "I know," she cried. "It was that man. He came in just when I was leaving. He did it. I know he did it."

"I knew she'd remember somebody suddenly," said the big man with satisfaction. "They always remember a stranger who might have done it."

"Shut up, Black," said Riley. "Let her tell what she knows. It's only fair to give the girl a break."

Janice looked gratefully at the reporter. She wondered how he'd gotten there. Policemen and plain-clothes men didn't cart reporters around with them,

did they? At least he believed the truth she was telling.

She looked straight into his sympathetic blue eyes while she told her story. That time she told it straight through, from the time that morning when she'd come in to answer the ad to the moment when she'd found the body and had hastened to find a phone to reach a doctor. She even opened her bag and drew out the advertisement she'd clipped from the paper.

"There," said Riley. "That should show you, Black. Surely that's clear enough. You can't hold this girl in the face of that story. She's telling the truth. I'd bet my new hat on it." Janice tossed a grateful look to him.

"I don't know," said Black, thoughtfully rubbing his big blunt chin. "Let the boys come in. We'll go in the other room until they get through in here."

Silently Janice led the way into the big bare inner office while Riley and Black and a policeman in uniform followed, leaving the other men to mysterious devices in the outside office.

"Who told you to come here?" asked Janice suddenly. "If you find out who knew he was dead, wouldn't you find out who killed him?"



She had her hand outstretched toward the knob, when the door swung open and several men came in. "So there you are!" boomed the biggest of them. "You didn't get away after all."

"That's an idea!" cried Riley. "You know what's what. Find out who called, Black."

"No," said Black. "I can't. It was somebody who called from a pay booth and didn't leave a name. They couldn't call back."

"Man or woman?"

"Could have been either—husky voice."

"Don't you understand?" begged Janice. "Can't you understand? It



was either the man or the woman. Both of them were here. One of them did this thing. Don't you see that I couldn't have a motive for doing it if I'd never met the man before to-day?"

"Hm-m-m," said Black. "A lot can happen in one day."

"But how would I get the poison or whatever it was that killed him? I didn't go out of the office until he told me to go to lunch, and I didn't come back until after he was dead."

"Can you prove either of those statements? What time did you leave, Miss Saunders? That's your name, you say?"

She nodded.

"No-o, I've no definite proof. I didn't lunch at a restaurant. I just had a sandwich and a glass of milk at the drug store, and there was a crowd at the counter. Nobody would remember me. I didn't have my watch, so I didn't know what time it was. It was twelve thirty, perhaps."

"Too bad we just can't take your word for it, and let you go fluttering out as free as a little bird," said Black in a dry voice. He was standing beside the desk as he talked, and his quick eyes were examining a few papers scattered over the plain oak desk.

Janice saw him frown suddenly. "What is it?" she asked fearfully.

"Did you see this?" Black pointed to a paper on the desk. She shook her head. "This settles it," said Black. "If you only met Smith for the first time to-day, why did he leave you a million dollars in his will?"

"A million dollars?" repeated Janice. The room was starting to swing in alarming circles around her. She knew that she was going to faint. She managed to hang onto the remnants of her consciousness while she heard the voice of Black say as from a vast distance: "Sure, a million dollars. A man isn't so likely to make a will leaving a million dollars to a girl he's never met before, you know."

She managed to say a few words. "But I swear to you, I never saw him before to-day. I didn't know he had a million dollars. He had no reason to leave it to me if he had the money. I

don't want it, anyway. All I want is to go away and never come back."

"Have you so much money," she heard Black asking, "that you can afford to lose a legacy of a million dollars? Then why are you working as a stenographer?"

"So much money!" The room was quieter now. She could see the three men more clearly. Her faintness had gone. She managed a laugh. "I have exactly three dollars and forty-six cents in the world," she said, "besides about seventy-five cents in my bag."

She heard a pitying murmur from Riley, and looked up to meet his sympathetic gaze. "It's true," she answered Black's disbelieving grunt. "I needed this job worse than any one I ever got in my life. Do you think I'd have worked for a man who looked like Mr. Smith if I hadn't been so broke that I didn't know where my next week's board was coming from?"

"And you know all about next week's board now," said Black, with satisfaction. "We'll furnish it ourselves. Be glad to. The million is there, but it won't do you much good in jail, sister."

"I told you I don't want it. Let me go away."

"How would you live?" asked Riley pityingly.

"I don't know—somehow. Maybe I could get another job," she said without much hope.

"We'll give you a nice job as secretary to the warden," offered Black in his dry voice. Janice shuddered. Surely there was some way of making him believe her! Surely she didn't look like the kind of girl who could murder a man!

"If I murdered him," she said, "how did I do it? I don't even know how he was killed. You said it was poison. How did the man give it—or the woman, whoever it was?"

Black began to look a little dubious. He gave her a searching look, and then

said doubtfully: "That can't be true. Surely you know how it was. You saw the box on the table. You saw the doctor sniff at it. I saw it."

"What was in the box?" asked Janice. "I didn't see a box. Really I didn't. Can't you take my word for it? Can't you find finger prints or something? They always do in the movies."

Black laughed shortly. "You're another one of those fools who follow the movie mysteries, are you? And you thought you'd copy one—put your prussic acid or whatever it was in the candy on the table? It works quickly. But you almost had a chance to get away, had on your hat and coat."

"Poison in candy! Couldn't he smell it? The doctor did." Janice remembered seeing the doctor lift up a box on the table and smell at it.

"Almond paste," said Black briefly. "That smells the same way the poison does, only the poison is stronger, of course. Smart, weren't you?"

"I would be if I'd thought of it. But wouldn't I have sense enough to get away if I had sense enough to poison a man like that? What would be the point in staying?" suggested Janice eagerly.

In answer the plain-clothes man pointed to the paper on the table. "A girl would take a lot of risks for a million dollars," he answered.

The door to the outer office opened, and a policeman in uniform said a word or two. "They've taken him away," said Black. "It didn't take long—this whole business. Let's get going, sister. Got everything you need? Want us to telephone anybody for you?"

"There's nobody who needs to know," said Janice. "I live at the Y. W. I haven't any folks. My people are dead. I'm all alone and making my own way."

"Nice little sob story for your paper, Riley," said Black in his dry voice, leading the way into the outer office.

"Wait a minute, officer," begged

Janice. "I want to understand this better. How could that man leave me any money when he didn't know me at all? How do you even know he had any money to leave? Maybe he committed suicide, and——"

"With candy all prepared ahead of time? Nice time to commit suicide, too, right when he's starting out on a new business venture." Black's voice was smug.

"Don't you see," suggested Riley eagerly, "the business has something to do with it? He's probably a hijacker or a bootlegger or a narcotic man of some sort. That's why he was so mysterious and didn't tell his secretary about it. Then in comes this other man and gets him."

"Candy and poison aren't men's tools," said Black dryly.

"Then the blond woman, the one who looked like the burlesque show! The candy sounds like her. She had a box and offered him a piece. They had a fight. This girl says she heard them quarreling, and then Smith came out and told his secretary to go to lunch so she shouldn't hear one of his private fights."

"You seem pretty sure that there was a blond woman. Did anybody else see her? I had one of my men ask downstairs and in the elevators, and nobody seems to have seen her except this little girl here. Sorry, sister, it won't wash. You'll have to come along. The candy was yours, and you can't manufacture another woman to take your place. If the candy belonged to another woman and you're so innocent, explain the million-dollar will to me, won't you?"

"I—I can't—I can't understand it at all." Janice's voice was tearful. She remembered something else. The man had said that the job was likely to be dangerous. She told Black about it.

"Yes?"

"At first he said that he thought I was too pretty for the job, that it might

be dangerous for me. That sounds as if he were going to deal with bootleggers or people like that. Maybe he was a fence—isn't that what you call the men who take in the diamonds and hand out the money?" she asked eagerly.

"You're pretty enough. I'm not contradicting him on that. But it wasn't you the job was dangerous to. It was Smith himself."

"Am—am I arrested?" Janice felt that she was surprisingly cool under the circumstances. She tried not to show how very frightened she was at the whole procedure. She wanted Riley to know that she was brave. It was strange that a man she had just met could seem so important.

"Arrested? Not exactly. You'd better come and visit the station with us, though. We've a new entrance hall we'd like your opinion on," suggested Black in his ironic tone.

"You're not going to take her there unless you've more evidence to show than I've seen, Black," Riley protested. "Remember that Charlton case. You said you'd do me a favor some time if you could. This is the time. There's a lot we don't know about. We don't even know who brought us all here, who the call came from. We have no way of proving that this girl isn't telling the exact truth. There are a thousand ways of explaining this will. Maybe he never had a million dollars; maybe he didn't even write it; maybe the murderer wrote it to throw us off the scent. Is this the man's handwriting—Mr. Smith's?" He motioned toward the paper on the table, and looked inquiringly at Janice.

She peeped at it, and then shook her head. "I don't know. I don't believe I ever saw his handwriting. Remember, I just came here this morning. It could even be the woman's handwriting, for all I know."

"Is the will regular—signed, witnessed, and everything?" asked Riley.

Black shook his head. "No, but the form of it would make it hard to break. He says that he has no legal heirs and that he is using this as a will or deed of gift from this day, and that it is in his own handwriting and must stand whether witnessed or filed or neither. There are a few other gentle remarks like that. If he has the million, I guess she gets it all right, unless she's too busy sitting in the electric chair to claim it."

Janice shuddered. "I don't want any million. But I didn't kill him. Can't you tell I didn't kill him—finger prints or something? Surely there's a way. Find that woman. She knows. She's sure to know."

"We've found one woman," grunted Black, "and she's using up all her ammunition trying to prevent us from finding out what she does know."

As he finished speaking, there was a banging on the locked door of the outer office. A woman's voice shrieked: "Let me in! Let me in! Jack, let me in! Don't touch them, Jack! Don't touch them!"

Janice sank limply into the nearest chair. "There she is," she whispered. "Let her in. She'll tell you." She felt faintness creeping around her again, but that time it was the faintness of relief.

"I knew somebody'd come and prove that I was telling the truth," she said to Riley. "You believed me, didn't you?"

"Of course I believed you. Black will believe you now, too. He's opening the door for her now. Look." He helped her to rise and stood there in the doorway with her, his arm supporting her.

The blond woman entered, breathless with hurry and emotion. She was peering into the inner office, peering past Black and the one plain-clothes man who still remained.

Janice knew for what she was searching. But Mr. Smith's body had been

taken away. There was no sign of death in the room, no hint of what had happened except a suggestion of smoke. Somebody must have taken some flash-light pictures.

There was relief in the woman's face. "Who are you all?" she asked brazenly. "I'm looking for Mr. Smith." She turned to Janice. "You're his secretary, aren't you? Tell me where he is."

"Mr. Smith is dead," said Janice clearly. The woman's painted cheeks suddenly mottled to an unnatural pallor. The powder stood out in white patches on her suddenly haggard face. Her eyes seemed sunken in their sockets.

"Dead!" she whispered, as if to herself. "Dead. It—I—oh, I must go away!" She turned to run away. Her hand was on the doorknob when Black caught her by the arm.

"You don't run away like that," he said. "You'll let us have a word with you first. What do you know about his death?"

"I—I don't know anything. I didn't know he was dead."

Then she turned and suddenly pointed her finger at Janice, shrieking: "She did it! I know she did it! She was the only one who could have done it!"

"You know I didn't do it," Janice said to Riley. "You know it. She did it herself, and she's trying to get out of it by accusing me. Tell her you know she did it."

"Who are you?" asked Black, paying absolutely no attention to Janice's words.

"Mazie Garden." She spoke with pride, as if he should know the name. He nodded. Apparently he did know it.

"Burlesque beauty. You were right in your description," Riley whispered to Janice.

"I know she did it. She was here when I left," said Maizie Garden, "and he was all right then."

"It's your word against hers," suggested Black's mocking voice. "This

girl says you were still in the office when Smith came out and told her to leave for lunch."

"I can prove my statement. I met a friend downstairs here and went to lunch with her. That was at twelve.

I never saw any will, but he always said he was going to leave every cent to me," she finished, with an air of triumph.

"Is that so? Then what would you say if I told you that he says his estate is a million dollars——"



"Hands up, Malas—or is it Smith? No one can ever tell you two apart. Anyway, we've got you," snapped Black.

I can give you her name. She'll prove it. I have an alibi."

"What was Mr. Smith's real name?" asked Black.

"I never heard any name besides Smith—John Smith," answered Maizie.

"Really? I suppose you don't know where his money was and who he left it to."

"I know where his money was. He had a vault in the Western Trade Bank.

"I knew it was about that much." There was a smile on Maizie's face.

"And," continued Black, "that he left every cent of it to this girl, Janice Saunders."

In answer, Maizie stood in the middle of the floor and started to cry. Large tears rolled in pairs down her overrouged cheeks.

"I thought that would get you," said Black with some satisfaction. "Now

come across with all you know. How long has this girl known him, and what was their relationship?"

But Maizie was crying too much to answer. She was digging her knuckles into her eyes like a weeping child, and her sobs were loud and tempestuous.

"Look here, Black," Riley said suddenly, "let me handle this. I've got an idea. Listen, Maizie, we know all about the almond paste you bought and doctored with the poison."

"Oh!" Abruptly the woman stopped sobbing and began to whimper instead.

"We know all about it. What do you mean by accusing this girl? You know she didn't do it. You know he had never seen her before to-day. You know that the only reason why he made that will was to fool what's-his-name into doing the same thing for you."

Black was looking at Riley with respect. Janice was staring at him with admiration. He was wonderful, she thought.

She knew that he must be bluffing, but he sounded as if he knew for a fact every word he was saying.

Even Maizie's whimpering stopped. "How did you know that? Did Jack live long enough to tell you?"

Riley nodded. Maizie took a long sobbing breath, almost a breath of relief. "I may as well tell you," she said. "I was Jack's girl, and Malas came along. He wanted me; he had a boot-legger's million, too. He said he'd make a will leaving it all to me if I'd prove to him that I was through with Jack. I told Jack to go ahead and make a will leaving it all to some girl—any girl—just so I'd have proof to show Malas. Then after Malas made his will the other could be destroyed. I fixed the almond-paste candy. We were going to use it on Malas next week, but it disappeared yesterday. When I got back to my room after lunch, I got scared—Jack and I had quarreled—he wanted me to give up Malas altogether—and I was

afraid he might do something desperate. That was why I came back. I know what happened. Malas stole the candy, and found some way of giving it to Jack. This girl was just the goat. She doesn't know anything. She's not really going to get all that cash, is she? It's mine!"

The burden of fear was lifted from Janice's heart. She was free. They knew who had killed Smith. They'd find Malas. She could give them a description of the man who had entered the office. Maizie could tell them where to find him.

Riley had believed that she was innocent. Now she could really prove it to him. She dared to smile gratefully at him.

Maizie was sobbing again. Black had motioned the plain-clothes man to take her into the outer office. "We'll get this all down on paper so you can sign it," said Black, "and then I guess we'll have to let both of you go. You'll be watched, I warn you, both of you. I want some details on Malas, Maizie." She nodded, still crying.

Janice was huddled in her chair again, too tired to rise. Riley bent over her, saying pleasant things in that eager voice of his.

Suddenly her ears caught a new sound—a key in a lock.

"There's another door to the outside hall from here," she whispered. "Look. The door is opening."

With a word, Riley summoned Black. His gun cocked, the detective waited.

The door opened. The man who stood there was dark, with shiny, wavy hair and an aura of perfume.

"Hands up, Malas—or is it Smith? No one can ever tell you two apart. Anyway we've got you," snapped Black.

The man shrugged his shoulders. "Had to come sometime, I guess," he said, with a gesture of relief. "How did you know who it was?"

"Malas," began Black, "I——"

But he was interrupted. From the

next room came Maizie. She was running as fast as her high-heeled slippers would let her. "Jack!" she cried. "They told me you were dead! I knew you wouldn't go and die and leave your money to anybody but your own dear Maizie!"

Janice didn't know what happened after that. She fainted, and that time the faintness lasted more than a second. When she came to, only Riley was there with her. Her head was pillowed on his shoulder, and he was whispering in her ear the things that every girl wants to hear from the one man in her world.

She didn't know him, really. There were plenty of other men in the world. And yet she was very glad, somehow, to hear him say those things.

"It's all over," he said gently, as soon as she opened her eyes. "Smith, in a moment of jealous pride, displayed the candy to Malas this morning and told him Maizie made it for him. Malas got jealous, too, and said that Smith shouldn't have a piece of it. After Maizie left, and while you were out at lunch, he ate a few pieces, and he even destroyed some of it. We found it just now. There's still plenty left, but Malas ate enough to kill two men."

Janice shuddered. "They understand, don't they, that I didn't have anything to do with the whole business?"

She looked up anxiously at him, and saw that his eyes were strangely comforting. Somehow that friendly look made her forget that she was alone in the world, without a job, and that the contents of her bag was distressingly slight. Friendly? Not quite friendly. It was protective and devoted—and yet not just friendly. She blushed as she saw his approving smile.

"Of course they do, you foolish darling," he was saying. "Anyhow, do you think I'd have let them do anything to you?"

"I—I knew you'd help me," she faltered. Why was she blushing like that? She felt the hot tide of color sweep over her face. "I—how can I thank you?"

He didn't even try to answer that question. But somehow she found herself in his arms and nestled there, feeling strangely happy. This was no way to act with a man you were seeing for the first time; Janice knew that very well. But Riley was different from other men. Even at that early moment, Janice felt that he was different from any man in the world.

"Poor Maizie," she said suddenly. "Smith was going to let her suffer for his crime, wasn't he?"

"Don't waste too much pity on Maizie. They planned it together for next week, remember. Besides, she's a gold digger. She didn't want Smith's love. She only wanted his money," said Riley, drawing her back to his shoulder as she tried to sit up straight and tidy her hair. "You wouldn't do that, would you, even if you were Maizie?"

"And you were Smith?" She shuddered as she spoke. "You couldn't be anybody like him. You're—different."

"If I were Smith I couldn't do more for you than he's already done," said Riley.

"What do you mean?" That time she succeeded in sitting up straight to face him.

"Your million," he reminded her. "Of course they'll find him guilty of murder. He'll probably die in the chair. Now he says that he won't change the will for fear that Maizie'll get the money, even though she'll probably get life, too, for being mixed up in the crime, and that you may as well have it anyhow. How will it feel to be a millionaire? I've been wondering for the last five minutes whether I dared kiss a girl who was heir to a million."

"I wouldn't touch that money with a ten-foot pole," said Janice sturdily,

"and I have about three dollars in the world and no job. That's what I think of Mr. Smith's money. Let him give it to an orphan asylum or something. I don't want it."

"You're a game kid, Janice Saunders," he said, "and if I look at you for three minutes longer I'll be forgetting myself and asking you to marry me instead of taking on another job."

"If a cat may look at a king," said Janice, "as I seem to remember he did in one of my childhood books, surely a very nice man may look at a girl."

"For three minutes longer?" he asked, slipping his arm around her shoulders. She nodded.

"For at least three minutes longer."

The look lasted only a minute, and the kiss lasted longer. But Riley looked down anxiously at the girl in his arms after the second kiss.

"I know we're crazy," he said, "but you like being crazy with me, don't you? People don't fall in love at first sight

and get married the first day they meet. Things like that don't happen in a world like this. But you're going to do it, aren't you? Are you sure you wouldn't rather have the million dollars, darling? I'd hate to have you change your mind later. I'm only a poor reporter, you know, and I can't make million-dollar wills, you know. Will you have the million dollars, or will you—hesitate?"

She shook her head, smiling up at him. "I'd rather have lots of things than that million," she told him. "The three dollars and forty-six cents in my bank account, and the seventy-five cents in my bag, and——"

"And me?" suggested Riley. He was smiling, too, but somehow she knew that he was serious. Things were happening to Janice, miraculous things.

"And you!" she said, but that time she wasn't smiling, as she raised her lips to meet his kiss which held a promise of lasting love.



ON LIDO SANDS

ON Lido sands, where love commands,
 I held you in my arms.
 While starry light glowed through the night
 You thrilled me with your charms.
 On Lido sands your precious hands
 I kissed and then I knew
 Your love so deep was mine to keep.
 That night on Lido sands.

GEORGE A. WARD.



Playgirls In Love

By May Christie

CHAPTER III.

FOR an enchanted moment, screened off from the gay crowd that was gathered to inaugurate the formal opening of the little dress shop, Barry Deane held Judith's slender hand, his attractive face alight with pleasure at the unexpected sight of her.

"How do you do? Come in. Just leave the door ajar—for air, you know. I'm helping Zella to entertain. Zella's my girl friend, and in charge of the shop," Judith gasped.

The lacquered screen of black and gold made a delightful background for

A Serial—Part II.

THE STORY SO FAR:

JUDITH BRIAN, stenographer in a New York bank, is in love with Barry Deane, also employed by the bank. Zella, Judith's roommate, is made manager of a gown shop being opened by Loranda Tewson, a society girl, who is also in love with Barry. Judith is transferred to the uptown branch of the bank and fears she will never see Barry again. She goes to the opening of the new shop, and is helping Zella when Barry comes in.

her slim young figure in the rose-pink dress that represented weeks of saving, and that transformed Judith's pale and fragile prettiness into a glowing loveliness.

Barry Deane thought: "How beautiful she looks! And shy! Not many girls are that way these days." He said again: "I've missed you, Judith!" And the words were like the sweetest of music in Judith's ears.

"They transferred me to the uptown branch of the bank. I hated it at first, being so happy downtown and all——" But she got no further, for at that mo-

ment a dark-haired, rather stockily built girl in a fur coat, her arms filled with packages pushed in through the open door.

"Why, Barry Deane, so you got here ahead of me! I know this isn't in your line, but Loranda fairly insisted I drag you here even if I had to yank you by the back of the coat collar! Now, grab those bottles of bacardi, quick! And don't you dare forget the gang meets at my house for dinner after this show's over!"

"I'll be there, Betty," Barry said, with an indulgent smile, taking her parcels from her. He turned to Judith. "Because this young lady's father is head of the bank where I'm a humble slave, that makes her a kind of master over me. Cruel, isn't it? Betty, may I present Miss Judith Brian? Miss Brian, I assure you Miss Graves doesn't show me the slightest mercy."

"Oh, it isn't me, it's Loranda who's the precious little slave driver where you're concerned, Barry old thing," Betty Graves said, winking at Judith. "I'll admit I'd put in a good word for you with dad at a pinch, but it's Loranda who finds you so fascinating."

"I'm sure I'm honored," Barry laughed, but Judith saw he had reddened.

"You ought to be," Betty said bluntly, "for Loranda's not only one of New York's loveliest, but a darned good scout." She pushed the screen aside, and Judith and Barry followed her into the crowded shop.

Immediately Loranda swooped down on them. She looked like some rare orchid in a lavender chiffon gown with a great bouquet of the same exotic flowers on one shoulder.

She chirped into Barry's face: "Naughty! Naughty! To be so late, but I'll forgive you if you'll take off your coat and help me mix cocktails."

They disappeared into a little screened-off serving pantry with the

bottles of bacardi, and Judith recommenced her job of pouring tea for those who wanted it—by now a very small minority.

"Why the pensive air, pretty face? A shiny penny for your thoughts?" A little startled, Judith looked up into the darkly handsome countenance of Loranda's friend, Jack Ordway.

She forced herself to smile at him, although the black eyes that had stared at her through the shop window a week before had a challenging light in them that vaguely disconcerted her.

"I was thinking that tea's an outgrown commodity, here in New York. Indeed, anything without kick in it, whether it's a girl or a song or a beverage, is distinctly out of date," said Judith provocatively.

"And why not?" He sat down beside her at the little table. "But you surely don't put yourself in the old-fashioned class, with your charm and beauty, Miss Judith?"

"Oh, I don't know." She flushed under his admiring stare, but she had made up her mind that she would enter into the spirit of this gay younger set where Barry in his idle moments seemed to move; that she would cultivate the airy repartee that made Loranda and her kind so fascinating. "I was like the venturesome little duckling in the story when I swam away from home—very brave and all, you know, and thinking I was very clever—but now I flounder out of my depth a bit, sometimes."

"From the pond to the ocean? Ha! I see! There's nothing I'd love better than to flounder close to you if you'll permit me, Miss Judith."

"I don't know what you mean."

He took the teacup from her hand and as he did so he contrived to give her fingers a swift pressure. "I'd like to be your guide around this merry little burg—to be accorded the privilege of educating you!"

"In what?" Judith looked surprised.

"In what every pretty little girl should know. You'll see. I pride myself on being an A1 teacher."

"That still leaves me in the dark," Judith declared, a forced smile on her lips, her mind on Barry and Loranda and wondering what they were doing closeted together so long in the little pantry?

"As long as it doesn't leave you cold! Ha! Just in the nick of time! How excessively opportune!" And Jack swooped down on Loranda, who had emerged with a tray of cocktails.

"One for me, and one for my little duckling yonder!" He helped himself to a couple of glasses. "Loranda, imagine that beautiful child only just beginning to flap her little wings! Isn't it touching?"

Loranda barely lowered her voice as she said, impatiently: "Oh, quit your raving, Jack, about little birdies learning to fly in this sophisticated age and city! Sweet innocence is as dead as the dodo, and don't let anybody fool you to the contrary!"

He laughed, amused and a little flattered at what he considered a jealous outburst. He went back to Judith with the cocktail and made her drink every drop of it.

A warmth stole through her veins. Now, fortified, she could meet these bright, flippant girls on their own territory. She had not heard the whole of Loranda's catty little speech, but she decided then and there that she would be as bold as any of the gang, and not permit Loranda to annex Barry entirely.

"Excuse me a moment, Mr. Ordway," she said firmly, setting down her empty glass. She walked into the tiny pantry where Barry was cracking ice. "Can I help you, Mr. Deane?" she asked. "I'm a regular jill-of-all-trades around this place."

"Thank you. I'm through. I've earned a little chat with you, I think.

Let's grab that divan behind those palms—over in the corner where the people just left."

The orchestra was playing again, the models had started to parade, and the guests were all pushing forward toward the front part of the shop.

A glass in either hand, Barry led Judith to the corner. "This stuff won't harm you once in a while—at least, a little of it won't. Mr. Graves has the real thing in his cellar."

"The president of the bank, you mean? You go to his house quite often, don't you?" Despite the thrill of Barry wanting to chat to her alone, and deliberately leading her into a corner, Judith's heart twisted a little.

"Yes. Betty's a good kid. And James B. Graves is a prince of a man."

"That's fine for you. I expect they give grand parties?"

He saw the wistfulness in her lovely eyes and mistook the reason for it. This pretty child was lonely in New York. It was on the tip of his tongue to suggest that he might take her some evening to the Graveses' home, and then he hesitated, recollecting in time that it was scarcely his rôle to form a social bridge, however democratic all concerned might be, between the millionaire head of the bank and one of his stenographers.

"Here's to happiness," he said quickly, tilting his glass and clinking it against Judith's.

"And here's to Pan and his pipes," she said softly, holding her glass up to a bronze statuette of the little Piper of Dreams that peeped through the fronds of a palm at them.

"May he pipe you the rarest and best, and may they all come true." Barry smiled into her eyes, and that look was a magic link that reached down at the very soul of Judith.

"Thank heavens that's over!" Zella exclaimed when the door closed on the

last of Loranda's friends and customers at a quarter to eight. "I thought they'd never go! And heavens! The cock-tails they drank!"

"Here. Sit down. I've made you fresh tea." Judith disappeared and returned with a steaming cup in her hand. "And eat this sandwich, Zella, please. You must be dead. You were on your feet a straight twelve hours to-day, and more, but it was a grand opening!"

"I'll say it was! The way they drank, you'd think they were camels setting out on a long trek in the desert!"

"They had a fine time. And how many dresses did you say were ordered?"

"A round dozen or more. They were tight as ticks, but I dare say they'll stick to their word. They're sporting enough."

Judith bustled around the little shop, straightening things, while Zella leaned back with her feet propped up on a chair and sipped her tea and ate her sandwich. "The scrubwoman's coming to-morrow morning early to give the place a grand clean-up, so save your energy, Judith."

But Judith insisted on washing all the cups and saucers and rinsing the innumerable cocktail glasses before they left.

"I should have thought that Miss Tewson would have included you in the dinner party to-night, Zella," she said.

"She did. At least the Graves child did. But I told her I already had a date. Have you forgotten that Freddy and Chester are taking us to the Purple Paroquet for dinner?"

Judith said tonelessly: "Oh, I remember." Freddy and Chester were Flat-bush boys—hard-working clerks and the salt of the earth—but to go out with these very ordinary youths after her enchanted talk with Barry Deane seemed such an anticlimax!

Zella had perspicacity. She gave Judith a sharp look. "They may not be as thrilling as Mr. Jack Ordway and the other snappy sheiks who decorated this shop to-day, but——"

"Why, that's O. K." To head Zella off, Judith asked hastily: "Did you know that Miss Graves is the daughter of the president of our bank?"

"Is that so?"

"Yes. Barry Deane introduced me to her as they both came in this evening. I've mentioned Barry once or twice to you before, I think? He used to give me special work to do for him when I was downtown. He's one of the heads in the new business department of the bank. Barry's clever."

"So it would seem," Zella said grimly, "when he trots around with the boss's daughter."

Judith rinsed the last glass and set it on a tray to drain and wiped her hands on a clean towel. She felt tired now—tired and flat—she would have given anything not to have to trail down to the village for supper.

Zella put on her hat and coat, remarking that it would be a good thing if Judith—when she could—would cultivate the good will of Miss Betty Graves, for a girl like Betty was certainly not to be sneezed at.

"Why, she barely noticed me."

"I'm not so sure of that. You were in a class by yourself for looks, and the men buzzed around you like wasps after honey. Speaking of wasps, I saw Loranda watching you when the handsome Barry was making a fuss over you, and Loranda seemed annoyed. It's my belief she's got a crush on him."

"Barry's a mighty nice fellow but his mind's entirely on his work," Judith said brusquely.

"Well, don't let his cleverness carry you away. In the long run, men are all the same. Not one last Adam's son of 'em is to be trusted!"

The telephone rang sharply at this



"I'd like to be accorded the privilege of educating you in what every pretty little girl should know. I pride myself on being an AI teacher."

moment. Zella went over to her desk and took the receiver off its hook.

"Yes? Yes? What's that? Miss Brian? She's right here. Who shall I say wants her?"

craves a word with you!"

Judith listlessly said, "Hello." Then: "Oh, no. . . . Oh, thank you very much, but I already have a date. . . . No, that's out of the question!"

There was a pause, and a change came over Zella's face—a look that showed astonishment—a quizzical, amused, and somewhat dubious expression.

She put her hand over the mouthpiece as Judith came forward. "Your début has begun already, honey," she said. "Jack Ordway

There was a pause. Zella, tidying the papers on her desk and close to Judith who was holding the receiver, could hear Jack Ordway pleading.

"I can't. . . . Truly I can't. . . . Zella made the engagement for me several days ago. . . . We're going to a place called the Blue Parrot. . . . No, the Purple Parokeet. . . . It's a regular date!" Judith insisted.

There were regrets at the other end and the hope for another meeting soon. Embarrassed but somehow thrilled by the man's importunity—for wasn't he of the crowd that Barry knew?—Judith hung up.

"That was Mr. Ordway asking me to go out with him," Judith said apologetically. "I wouldn't go, of course. Even if I'd been free, I wouldn't go at such short notice."

"Atta girl! You'll do. You're not an easy mark. You've got their number."

Half an hour later, the two girls, with Freddy and Chester squashed into the little seats opposite them in a taxi, were hurrying from Fifty-sixth Street down to Greenwich Village.

But though Judith tried to join in their mood and be gay and laugh at their small jokes, she was thinking of Barry and Jack Ordway. They were at the Graveses' home now, those two. Jack had telephoned from there. She was sure she wouldn't have been strong enough to have said, "No," if the call had come from Barry.

The taxi finally stopped in a narrow dirty side street in the village and they all piled out. After Freddy had paid the driver they went down a couple of steps that led to an iron-grilled door. Above the door swung a signboard with a large bizarre-looking bird painted on it.

This was the famous Purple Parokeet. Freddy rang the bell, and in a few moments a small panel slid back in the door, and an eye peered out at them.

Freddy whispered his name in mysterious tones, the bolt shot back, and he swaggered in ahead of the others with the air of a young prince.

They went down a short hall into a large room where the bar was located. There were about thirty people, both men and women, standing drinking and eating sandwiches which were piled at each end of the bar. The room was filled with cigar and cigarette smoke, the incessant popping of corks, the clinking of ice and the noisy chatter and laughter of people having a good time. Beyond the bar lay the kitchens and restaurant.

The four passed through the large room into an oblong one that was cleverly laid out to represent a miniature jungle. Trellises hung with trick fruits and artificial leaves separated the tables, while the main lighting of the room came from illuminated cages where live birds chirped, and from a purplish-blue moon.

On a raised platform at one end, on banks of ferns with silver mosses trickling down from the branches of trees, a South Sea orchestra played and crooned romantically. Near by a parokeet swung on a hoop, its plumage dyed several shades of purple.

Freddy made his way to a group of three small tables that were set under a tree that fairly dripped with artificial smilax. At one of these they sat down, and Freddy ordered dinner for four. After the waiter had returned with ginger ale, Chester produced the inevitable bottle and mixed high balls.

Judith danced with Freddy first. She forced herself to a seeming careless gaiety that was attune to Freddy's mood, laughing at his fancy steps and exaggerated compliments.

"Full of dis, dem and doze, aren't you, honey? And eyes! Oh, boy! Turn off dem lamps, chile, yo' sho' make me dizzy!"

"And you're a great sheik yourself,

I hear? The original fast worker of Flatbush, Freddy?"

"And you're some little ankle shaker!"

They ate and drank and talked, and danced, and the room that had a garish woodland beauty was flooded with Hawaiian music.

It made Judith dream of hot sands. Coral reefs. Love songs. Barry.

Why couldn't *he* be here to continue their enchanted talk? Why must it be just Freddy?

Time slipped away. It was past eleven and Zella was about to make a move to go, saying that hard-working boys and girls ought to be heading for home sweet home and the downy pillow when there was a stir at the door of the restaurant, and necks were stretched as two white ermine coats and one magnificent chinchilla wrap entered.

Ermine coat number one had a high fox collar that framed Loranda Tewson's pretty face and golden hair, while coat number two—worn by a red-headed girl—was shabbier. The rather sallow Betty Graves wore the chinchilla wrap and immediately behind her was Jack Ordway.

"Oh, my sainted aunt, he's actually followed you here!" Zella whispered to Judith.

But Judith's heart had gone into a tail spin at the sight of Barry Deane among the group that—hesitating for a moment and then led by Ordway—was coming directly across the floor to their corner.

Judith turned pale. Now that her wish had come true, the very breath seemed to leave her body.

How handsome Barry looked in evening clothes! How splendidly they fitted his lithe, lean figure!

Loranda caught his arm possessively as though to radio: "Hands off! He's my man!" and before they reached the table, as the orchestra struck up the first bar of a throbbing waltz, she gave

an ecstatic: "Ah-h!" flung her other arm on Barry's shoulder and whirled him off before he could even greet Judith.

"Well, this is a pleasant surprise!" Jack Ordway, a white gardenia in the lapel of his coat, hailed the two girls, and shepherded the two parties together. "Betty, we'll take those tables here." With an air that was half amused and half in the grand manner, he effected the necessary introductions.

"May I present Mr. Lawton Clissold, my good friend?" An older, very blasé-looking, but extremely handsome man bowed to Zella and Judith. He had a high, aristocratic nose, a single eyeglass dangled by a ribbon from his vest, and a beautiful black pearl adorned his snowy shirt front.

"Be careful. The wicked hawk after the pretty little love-bird!" Freddy cried, to cover his own sudden lack of ease in the presence of so much swank.

But immediately Mr. Lawton Clissold was led off to the near-by table by the red-haired woman who had been introduced as Mrs. Genevieve Something-or-other.

"And take it from me she's jealous as a cat of anybody that gives the handsome hawk one look!" Freddy counseled Judith in a sepulchral whisper.

"I've sold dresses to her when I was at Braunwitz's store. That man often came in with her. She's an unhappy person," said Zella.

Meantime Betty Graves, who had apparently looked upon wine at her own dinner table that night—as indeed most of them had—was insisting upon ordering champagne for the entire party.

The music came to an end. Barry conducted Loranda to the second of the two tables.

Judith thought wretchedly: "She planned that. She wants to keep him to herself." She saw Barry help Loranda slip the ermine coat from shoulders that gleamed like polished

ivory. Loranda wore transparent orange velvet, beautifully cut and entirely backless. The dress had no shoulder straps,

the next dance, please. I brought the crowd down here because I specially wanted to see you, pretty face."



but was supported by a gleaming rhinestone necklace.

"She takes every bit of color out of me," thought Judith. The rose-pink dress that had seemed so beautiful before, seemed cheap now.

A few minutes later, Jack Ordway came over and filled all the glasses at Judith's table with champagne. "I want

"I've already got the next dance with some one." But he ignored her words and danced off with her, holding the slim figure tightly.

"Goodness! You're squeezing the breath out of me, Mr. Ordway! What are you? A boa constrictor, or an octopus?"

"I'm a judge of lovely girls, and

when I get hold of one I hold right onto her."

"Then loosen up." Judith forced herself to laugh, though there were two brilliant spots of embarrassment in her cheeks, and her breath was catching.

With a sixth sense she felt that Barry's eyes were on her and Jack Ordway—and that those eyes were disapproving.

"If you could know how tantalizing you look to-night—how terribly tempting—you'd be kinder!"



As Loranda came too near he gave her wrist so vicious a peck that she dropped the glass to the floor, crying hysterically: "Barry! Barry!"

"What! With the lovely girls you're with."

"You're different, I tell you."

Judith knew that only too well. He might flirt with her—Barry might flirt with her—but she wasn't really of their world, those girls of the imperious ways and exquisite clothes and background and family and money!

They had easy manners, too. One called it "poise." Nothing ever seemed to fuss them.

"Now what about a bite of food tomorrow night? And, while I think of it, what's the phone number of your apartment, Miss Brian?"

She forced herself to laugh up at him. "I should think the letter B would be crowded out by this time in that little black book of yours, Mr. Ordway!"

Before he could deny this, and tell her she was the one girl who mattered, a hand touched Judith's arm and she heard Barry Deane's voice saying very quietly: "Cut, please."

Barry swung Judith off to a beautiful Hawaiian rhythm before Jack Ordway had a chance to protest.

"It was a lucky break that we came here," Barry Deane said with a sort of forced politeness as they moved over the polished floor.

"Oh, no. Mr. Ordway knew. He telephoned me——" began Judith breathlessly, and then suddenly stopped short.

What a conceited fool he'd think her! As though her whereabouts mattered to any one of them! Barry had not even asked her where the new apartment was. He had not made the least attempt to see her again.

"Jack rushes in where more bashful people fear to tread," Barry said cryptically.

"What can he mean by that?" thought Judith. Barry and she seemed on dangerous ground, and Judith felt uneasy, conscious that both Jack Ordway and Loranda were watching her.

There was something odd about those two, Judith thought. Loranda was extremely chummy with Jack, yet it was Barry she wanted.

And, ever since he had stared at her through the window of the little dress shop, Jack Ordway had made no bones about wanting to become friends with Judith.

If only she could cope with them! She'd learn. She'd watch Loranda and Betty Graves and that languorous, tragic-looking Genevieve.

She saw Loranda, looking pale and worn out, rise with Jack.

But once on the dance floor Loranda came violently and vividly to life. She started an extraordinary sort of tango.

They pirouetted and dipped and snapped their fingers, Jack playing up to her.

"She wants every one to look at her. She's mad because Barry's dancing with me. She wants to break it up," thought Judith.

Indeed it did seem as if Loranda was doing everything possible to make herself conspicuous. Passing her table she snatched a glass of champagne and danced with it held up provocatively. She grabbed a bunch of grapes from Zella's plate and thrust it over one of her ears.

Presently all the couples on the floor, except Barry and Judith, stopped to watch her and Jack.

Loranda was doing intricate steps in front of the purple parokeet himself as he swung on his gold hoop, eying her disdainfully. She advanced and retreated—temptation incarnate—offering him the glass of champagne and then withdrawing it.

He became annoyed. The purple parokeet was thirsty—and his wings had been dyed a royal hue, and he wasn't going to be made a fool of, either publicly or privately.

As Loranda came too near he gave her wrist so vicious a peck that a little

spurt of red flew out and she dropped the glass to the floor, crying hysterically: "Barry! Barry!"

CHAPTER IV.

The little dress shop flourished. Loranda had transformed the small room at the rear into a cunning sitting room where friends and customers could have a cup of tea, and around five o'clock it was a favorite rendezvous. Loranda's men friends and her customers' men friends would drop in on their way home from their offices, for here they were sure of a cocktail, a comfortable chair, a glimpse of pretty girls and the latest bit of gossip.

The room was windowless, and dimly lighted by a couple of Japanese lanterns in yellow silk that shed a becoming golden glow. Black and gold Japanese drapes adorned the walls, there was a grass rug on the floor, and two large divans that were nothing but box mattresses set on blocks of wood and fairly smothered in bright cushions, invited weary youth to rest. One didn't even have to move to help oneself to a cigarette or drink, for there were well-stocked little bamboo tables all around the room.

A black-and-gold lacquer screen divided off this sweet retreat from the front of the shop and the little nook where Zella's desk was situated.

Zella was uncertain if she approved of Loranda's bright idea of thus mixing pleasure with business. Of course, no doubt it did bring trade to the little shop. And she didn't mind the cups of tea, but she was rather annoyed about the cocktails that were served around five thirty, and the incense Loranda declared was an essential adjunct to anything Japanese. "So atmospheric!" Loranda asserted.

Zella insisted on staying till the very last guest had gone, each night, then flinging the door open wide to give

the place a thorough airing and then herself locking everything up.

"I'm in charge. It's my job to stay to the last," she had told Loranda firmly when Loranda had tried to persuade her to leave.

"There'll be no scandals here while I'm boss," Zella had assured Judith, grimly. Judith was being a marvelous help to Zella these days, because of her expert knowledge of bookkeeping.

After the closing of the bank, at Zella's particular request, Judith would run in almost every day a little after five o'clock and seat herself at the desk halfway between the front and rear of the little shop and busy herself with the books.

Gay laughter would drift over the lacquer screen. Pencil in mid-air, Judith would often find herself listening eagerly for the sound of Barry's voice, then she would shake herself.

"Fool that you are! As though he'd waste his time! And you aren't anything to him anyway!"

Jack Ordway often came. He would bring a cup of tea and a little sugar cake or two to the big desk where Judith worked, and try to get a word with her. Often he insisted she come back to the Japanese room and meet some friend of his, and rest. He made no secret of his admiration for Judith.

As the latter gave her valuable services free, and really was most useful around closing time, it behooved Loranda—and for reasons of her own as well—to be nice to Judith.

Judith was particularly nice to Genevieve. Poor, infatuated Genevieve who was so insanely jealous of Lawton Clissold.

Loranda was idly attracted by the handsome, dissipated-looking Cliss, and rather thrillingly frightened, too. "When he screws that monocle in his eye and looks at me as if he could gobble me up, my spine fairly turns to wax and my legs wobble," she told Judith.

Judith had laughed a little scornfully—concerned for poor Genevieve. She had told Loranda it sounded rather like a python doing a hypnotic act with a rabbit.

Loranda wasn't annoyed at that. She said: "His eyes and the shiny flat top of his head and the way his hands move when he wants to touch you are rather snaky."

Loranda wished that Genevieve wouldn't drop in so often at the little shop. "She's on the track of Cliss, of course. She fell madly in love with him two years ago, and got a divorce from her husband so she could marry him. But when the decree became definite, they'd a quarrel of some sort, which was ultimately patched up, but Cliss doesn't talk any more of marrying her!"

"What a cad!" Judith flushed hotly.

"Oh, that kind of thing happens every day. If women are fools, and get what's coming to them, that's no affair of ours." Loranda shrugged carelessly.

But it did seem as though Loranda was trying to make the blasé, fascinating Cliss her affair, in lieu of Barry. Zella had said that Loranda had called Barry up half a dozen times, begging him to drop around, but that Barry had said he was too busy.

"He's a real man. He doesn't waste his time in a place like this," Zella had said approvingly.

How could she guess that at the very mention of his name, a stab had gone through the heart of Judith?

"Say, have you seen the new sheik that's just come in to the business department?" a little stenographer asked Judith the first day of her fourth week in the uptown branch of the bank as she sat before her typewriter.

"No. I'm not particularly interested in sheiks." Judith felt tired. She had worked two hours overtime at the shop the day before, and then got dinner,

and later cleaned the little apartment at West Fifty-sixth Street from top to bottom.

"Bosh! Wait till you see him! Boy, what a profile! Like a Greek god! And a smart dresser—he looks as though he'd just been poured into his clothes!"

"Good-looking men are nothing but trouble makers. Calm yourself, child."

But the "child" had grabbed Judith by the arm with a sibilant "*Sh-sh!* here he comes!" and a didn't-I-tell-you-so grin on her face.

With a sudden apprehension—for hadn't she Irish blood in her veins, and now the "sixth sense" worked?—Judith looked over her shoulder as Barry Deane walked into the office.

He came directly up to her. The "child" retreated. He smiled, nodded to Judith, drew up a chair and seated himself.

"I was dining with Mr. Graves a couple of nights ago, and we had a chat about the business department of this new branch, and the upshot was that I aired my views too freely, but instead of firing me he's moved me up here," Barry said, smiling in a friendly way at Judith. "I'll be a little bit at sea until I get the hang of things, and so—I do hope you won't mind—I've asked them to lend you to me for a while."

"You mean now?" So that he would not see how badly they were shaking, Judith clasped her hands tightly together.

"Starting to-morrow morning—for a week or two. Just till I get things going, you understand? Your boss says you're too valuable to lose."

She thought: "He sees me as a worker, not a human being, but we're going to work together! Oh, I'm lucky to have that much!"

Then came the blessed surprise. Barry said, lowering his voice a little, and hesitating as though he were uncertain of her answer: "I've got two tickets

for the opening of 'Glorious Moon' tonight, and I thought—if you're free, and would care to—we might have a sort of a celebration of our uptown move, you know. I was dining in the casino in the park the other night and

it was great fun. I thought we might eat there before the show."

Waves of joy shot through and through with golden light wafted Judith to enchanted lands. Oh, grab that happiness quick. Life didn't give one a second opportunity.

"I'd like to go, thanks." She dropped her eyes, so that he would not see the radiance there. Heaven be praised that the little apartment was so smart, and newly cleaned! She



"But, Zella—heavens!—a three-hundred-dollar ensemble! Suppose anything should happen to it?" cried Judith.

said: "Perhaps you would call for me at my apartment?"

"Certainly I will. What's the address?"

"West Fifty-sixth Street," and she added the number.

"I'll be there at seven, with bells on!" Barry Deane said gayly.

In the little apartment that was gay with flowers, and a real fire, Judith hastily put the last touches to her dressing. She wiggled into the exquisite silver-tissue dress that Zella had loaned her from the little shop—a dress so beautiful it fairly took one's breath away, with its long fluttery skirts and tightly swathed bodice in layers and layers of sweet-pea tinted chiffon.

Judith had rushed madly into the shop during her lunch hour to tell Zella of the great occasion. What should she wear? Dinner at the fashionable casino in Central Park—the opening of a new play—"and afterward he'll probably take you to a night club," said Zella.

"She's crazy about him," Zella told herself with a little pang of memory into her own buried past that had preceded the stoic days of her immunity-to-love credo. "She's fallen for him and she'll suffer for it." But to-night Zella made up her mind that she would help Judith look her best.

"You'll wear this gown and wrap," she said, taking out a silver-and-moonlight dress with a silver cloak that had an immense platinum fox collar.

"But, Zella—heavens!--a three-hundred-dollar ensemble! Suppose anything should happen to it?"

"It won't. You're careful. I'll slip it back into stock the first thing to-morrow, and nobody'll be the wiser."

"But Loranda? If she knew——"

"Loranda went off to Hot Springs this morning with her mother."

Zella arranged it all, even to the facial-and-finger-wave-and-manicure-appointment at five thirty for Judith.

It was Zella who bought the tulips and daffodils, so that the little apartment looked like a gay spring garden. It was Zella who extravagantly lit the fire that crackled on the hearth and drew out all the perfume of the flowers. It was Zella who loaned Judith her own silver slippers and her silver evening bag, and who sprayed jasmine—fifteen dollars an ounce—on Judith's exquisitely arranged coiffure at the last moment.

"What a charming little place you've got!" Barry Deane said when he arrived, but his eyes, with an amazed, incredulous and shiny light in them, were on the lovely apparition that was Judith.

"Not bad." Her pulses raced, but she contrived a nonchalant shrug in the Loranda manner. She swirled the silver wrap about her thin young body exactly as Zella had showed her she must do, and walked like a little princess down to the waiting cab with Barry.

As they entered the casino restaurant side by side, it almost seemed there was a sudden hush. Heads were craned as the head waiter led them across the polished floor to a table.

"They're wondering what new beauty has burst upon the scene!" Barry whispered to Judith when they were seated and he was helping her slip her wrap from her shoulders.

"It's glorious! It's just a dream!" she thought. "Myself—these heavenly clothes—Barry beside me."

She said aloud, forgetting the grand manner, and being just a young girl again: "What a gorgeous place! So many lights! Such smart people! I've never been anywhere like this in all my life before!" She leaned back in her chair a little dizzily as Barry ordered.

At least four waiters hovered about them. There was the maître d'hôtel with the menu card, and a waiter with hot plates, one at the little serving table, and another assisting him. The lights

glinted on the tablecloth that was like polished snow, and on Judith's silver dress and the silver cutlery and glassware.

They ate delicious food, and talked, and laughed, and always Barry's eyes had that look in them—that warm and shiny look that seemed to say, plainer than words: "You're beautiful."

After dinner they left for the opening of "Glorious Moon," a musical comedy. They went out to the lobby between the acts, because Barry wanted to smoke a cigarette, and Judith to see the celebrities.

She won many admiring glances. Even though everybody was dressed up in their most gorgeous best, she, in her silver wrap with the pastel tinting of the décolletage beneath, had a fragile and intriguing beauty—"like a moonflower," said Mr. Lawton Clissold, who had been staring at Judith with his monocle screwed in his right eye and wondering where he'd seen her before. He recognized the dress and cloak from Loranda Tewson's little shop, having seen it there. Then he saw Barry Deane and came boldly up and greeted the couple.

"Like a moonflower, Miss Judith," he repeated, bowing. "I just knew that outfit would suit you."

Judith flushed at his words. Barry looked puzzled.

Judith looked hastily over her shoulder. "Where's Genevieve?"

"I'm on my own to-night." Then, to Barry: "Where are you going after the show?"

Barry hesitated. He looked a little annoyed. "We haven't decided yet. Probably the Embassy."

They did go there, but they stopped for a moment at Barry's hotel and he disappeared and presently returned with a bottle of champagne—the real thing from Mr. Graves's cellar.

"We're celebrating our transfer to the uptown branch," said he when,

later, a waiter at the club lifted the precious bottle from its bucket of ice by their table and poured them each a glassful.

"Here's to success," said Judith.

"And here's to our—our friendship. May it flourish."

But the atmosphere of the luxurious club went to her head more than the champagne—that, and Barry's nearness.

It was heavenly to be fussed over, to be made to feel like a heroine of romance. She felt entirely right now, in this rich, luxurious life. The shabby, hard-worked Judith was gone, and a vivid beauty in exquisite clothes had taken her place.

Like the bubbles in her glass there was a sparkle in her eyes, a lilt in her voice, wit on her tongue. The saxophone laughed, the trombone brayed, the drummer beat frantically.

Bright streamers that some one had flung at her were around her white neck. Judith snatched a green balloon above her head, happy beyond words.

"This is a night of nights for me." She almost had to shout, so as to be heard above the music of the orchestra. "I want to laugh. I want to cry. I guess that's the mad Irish in me!"

They danced. They moved like one person. Effortlessly. Never in all her life had Judith been so thrilled. She seemed to float upon the polished floor, with Barry's arm about her.

The music came to an end amid loud applause, and the orchestra broke into a waltz. The lights were dimmed and a shaft from a colored arc turned the Embassy floor into a moonlit scene with wraithlike dancers. The pianist's fingers stopped careering up and down the keys as though they'd lost control, and broke instead into the stately rhythm of "Beautiful Blue Danube."

The saxophone sobbed. The trombone was muted. A boy who had set New York wild, crooned love words that were like petals blown by a sum-

mer breeze. Was it her fancy, or did Barry's cheek for the fraction of a second touch her own?—Judith wondered. Did his lips brush against her hair, or was it just moon magic?

"I feel as if I weren't on the earth at all," Judith said, as Barry filled her glass a second time and in the dim, ethereal light looked into her face that had the pale beauty of a moonflower. "What toast shall we drink? Let's make it something I can remember all my life—something beautiful."

He leaned toward her, and his fingers that held the stem of his glass touched hers for a breath-taking moment. "I drink to what I see in your eyes, and what you see in mine."

"What do you see?"

"I see a lovely dream. A promise—Judith."

It was the first time he had called her by her given name, but she was so keyed up she didn't notice it.

"A promise? Of what?" Judith's heart raced, and the little hand his fingers touched was shaking.

"Of—of friendship. Our friendship. 'Steel true, and blade straight.' It's written on your face, in your eyes, Judith."

Friendship? Did he mean only that? Why, there was more, more, to that poem.

Steel true, and blade straight,
The Great Artificer made my mate—

She said, in a choked little voice: "I know. That was written by Robert Louis Stevenson."

The celebration was over and Judith and Barry stood at the downstairs door of the apartment house. Judith fitted her key in the lock, and Barry went up the three flights of stairs with her.

"Good night. I had a gorgeous time. I'll never forget it as long as I live." Outside her own door, a hand on the

knob, she turned her starry eyes on Barry.

"Nor I." Then—it happened all in an instant—she was in his arms. His kisses were on her lips, her neck, her hair with its maddening perfume. His voice was saying, over and over again, chokingly, "Judith! Judith!"

For one sane moment she tried to draw away from him, but his hands—she had woven foolish dreams about those hands of his—had uttermost magic in them, so that her slim sweet body yielded like a tired child against his heart as he crushed her to him, crushed her mouth that was like a bright flower under the burning ardor of his kisses.

"Barry—don't!"

"I must—you're so beautiful."

"You said—just friends."

He was so close, so close he had to whisper, breathlessly: "I love you, Judith! Judith mine!"

CHAPTER V.

Betty Graves burst into the little shop at noon time on a bright day in February.

"Clothes! Skiing clothes! The very latest thing! Where are you, Zella?"

Zella was having lunch in the exotic little Japanese room with Judith. Judith had run over from the bank with a couple of sandwiches and Zella had made some tea, and they were having a little powwow over the light noon meal together.

Zella got up at once. Betty was a good customer.

"You've come just at the right moment. A boat docked yesterday, and brought me some heavenly winter-sports models."

Betty selected two smart suits. She had been educated in Paris, and she preferred imports to American-designed clothes, not for any reasons of swank, but because she was of the stocky,

rather short-legged build that is so much more French than American.

"They'll do O. K. Now don't forget, you two"—she was twisting before the mirror in a long-trousered suit of cinnamon brown—"my party will leave Grand Central Station at nine forty-five for Montreal on Friday night. Dad's engaged the coach and there'll be ten of us."

"You want me too?" Judith asked hesitantly.

"Good grief! Of course!" Betty swung around. "Monday's Washington's birthday, and Saturday's mine! Haven't I a perfect right to my little week-end jamboree at the old home-stead in Sainte Marguerite?"

"It's sweet of you, Betty. I'd just love to come——" Judith hesitated.

"But about me? I don't know. I ought to keep the shop open Saturday morning," Zella broke in.

"Nonsense. You've done miracles in the past few weeks. You've made money hand over fist. Loranda won't mind if you close down the extra half day. I've already fixed things with her," Betty announced loftily.

She paid cash for her two smart suits and breezed away. Zella stared speculatively at Judith.

"So we're going, and that's that! Betty has a way with her like a little grand duchess!"

"Zella, I haven't got a thing to wear. And I couldn't afford the necessary rig." Winter-sports clothes, as Judith knew, were prohibitively expensive.

"But you certainly can ski, my dear. When you lived at Lunerville, up State, I heard you were a kind of prize snow-queen performer!"

"Maybe. But this crowd's different. I'd rather stay home than not fit. I mean, be the scarecrow in the party."

Zella bit her lip. She stood perfectly still for a minute, then she dived into the back of a drawer and pulled out a perfectly exquisite little sports suit.

"Call me a rotten saleswoman, but I deliberately kept this back from Betty Graves! It's a little model that was absolutely made for you, Judith!"

Long loose trousers smartly caught in at the ankles were topped by an orange sweater in Angora wool, and piped with Chinese blue. A bright blue tam with an orange pompon brought out every copper gleam in Judith's hair! A beautifully cut leather windbreaker completed the outfit.

"Zella, it's just perfect, but I simply can't afford the price!" groaned Judith.

"*Sh-h!* I told you I kept it back for you. Not a word to anybody, but I've an idiot of a customer who's coming Tuesday morning to select an outfit for the sports at Lake Placid. I'll wish this onto her among other things. If she says it's been worn before—which she won't, being blind as a bat—I'll tell her of course it's been modeled in the shop. She'll fall for it."

Judith fell, too. Wasn't Barry to be in the Sainte Marguerite week-end party!

And there was nothing that she wouldn't do to make herself attractive in his eyes! The one thing in the world that mattered nowadays was to be desirable—for Barry.

Judith loved him so. Judith had been living in a dream—a blissful and breath-catching dream—ever since that wonderful evening in the casino, and the theater, and the Embassy Club.

The crowd met at the Grand Central Station at the appointed time. Loranda was in a sports coat of handsome fitch. Genevieve in worn mink. Betty in raccoon. Judith had on a twenty-five-dollar tweed, but was buoyed up with the thought of the sports suit that, as Zella said, would "put every one's eye out."

Barry was there, and gravitated at once to Judith's side. There was Jack Ordway, and Lawton Clissold, and a couple of extra men who were pals of Betty's.

"And a couple of married kids from Toronto are already there to welcome us and be our chaperons!" giggled the young hostess.

They had supper on the train, and champagne on the quiet, "because after midnight my birthday begins," declared Betty hilariously.

Around one a. m. they retired for the night, Judith sharing a drawing room with Zella.

At ten minutes of eight, the train drew into Windsor Station in Montreal. They breakfasted in the restaurant, and then the party transferred itself, per



On the snowy slopes, Judith was a queen among them all. Not even Barry could do those final wild turns on the skis better than she could!

taxicabs, to the Canadian National Depot.

After a two-hour trip, they reached Sainte Marguerite, where two big sleighs met them.

The landscape was beautiful in its dress of snowy white. "Like an enormous cream puff!" exclaimed Judith.

With Barry beside her under the fur robe, she leaned back happily in the sleigh, while the horses' bells jangled a gay tune. And the sun and the wind and her own delirious excitement whipped a lovely color into her cheeks.

The Graveses' Canadian home was a sprawling bungalow set on a hill, with a great raftered living room that had half a dozen windows looking out over the snowy landscape. Pine logs cracked cheerily in a brick fireplace and there were chairs and sofas one almost drowned in, they were so deeply and softly padded.

When Judith appeared in her new suit there were excited "Ah's" from every one. Was it her imagination, or did Loranda's eyes narrow suspiciously?—she wondered.

Loranda looked beautiful herself in a pale blue woolen suit, but all the color and vivacity seemed centered in Judith.

On the snowy slopes, Judith was a queen among them all. Not even Barry could do the "Christiania" and those final wild turns on the skis better than she could!

In the bright sunshine they lunched out of doors, and it was half past four when the hungry, merry party trooped back into the house.

Tea and cocktails followed. There

was a whispered word with Barry, then a hot bath, and into a soft knitted suit. They were all going over to the Cochon Inn for Betty's birthday dinner.

It was a three-mile ride by sleigh. Betty dared Barry to ski-jor on a twenty-foot rope behind them. And he took her up on that. Suddenly, however, around a curve, the rope was jerked out of his hands, and he shot merrily down into a ravine. They stopped and picked him up and soon were on their way again.

Loranda, in her sports clothes, looked like a slender, beautiful boy—"a winged Mercury with those blond curls of yours," Lawton Clissold told her, making no secret of his admiration.

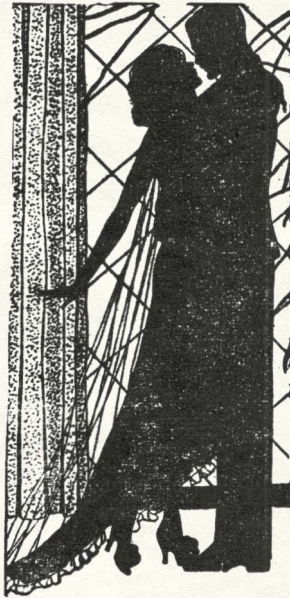
The red-headed Genevieve was jealous. She was thirty-eight years old, and the night journey, and the long, strenuous day, and her uncertainty of Cliss had exhausted her.

But from the beginning of the trip, it had been evident to all—except to Barry himself, and the self-absorbed, troubled Genevieve—that

Loranda's eyes, her smiles, her most sparkling repartee were directed to Barry Deane alone, that she was bent on fascinating him.

It had been like the twist of a knife in Judith's heart to watch Loranda. But the agony had gone as swiftly as it had come, and Judith had breathed freely again, when it had been clearly seen that Barry had responded in no way to Loranda's wiles, beyond a sort of laughing, detached camaraderie.

He loved her—Judith—no one else! A man's heart couldn't hold two girls in it at the same time, she told herself.



But the fluttering anxiety, like the dark wings of some bird of prey, hovered again when the Cochon Inn was reached, and Loranda jumped out of the sleigh and ran to Barry's side. In the white light from the snow and the faint pale gleam from the moon, they saw her stoop down and help Barry with a refractory buckle on his ski, her head so close to his that her hair brushed his cheek for a moment.

"Delilah on the job again!" Jack Ordway grinned, with a chuckle of amusement that openly belied the general idea among the gang that he was in love with Loranda.

"Some fast little worker, I'll say!" Betty Graves giggled.

"Your 'winged Mercury' is all wrong—she's Diana, the original huntress," said Genevieve with twisted lips, taking the arm of Clissold.

At that, they all trooped into the Cochon Inn, Barry and Loranda coming last. Loranda's birdlike laugh rang merrily over the snow, her hand flung with a studied carelessness on Barry's shoulder.

She contrived, with Betty's aid, to wedge him between herself and the young hostess at the dinner table.

They were all gay, or seemed to be. The waiters buzzed about the table, bringing rare wines, and excellent beer, and everything one couldn't or shouldn't obtain in "dry" New York. It was a marvelous party and every one was quite gay.

In her boyish garb, Loranda never had looked lovelier. Under cover of the noise, she seemed to be getting in a great deal of intimate talk with Barry. By leaning forward with her left elbow on the table, and sitting as close to him as though they were sweethearts, she contrived to cut off most of the gang, and as, under the influence of the wines, the babel grew noisier, her head was so close to his, he had to look directly in her eyes to answer her.

When the toasts were drunk, and it came to her turn, she tilted her glass of sparkling red Burgundy, and trilled a line or two of a little French song about "Amour," in a low, soft voice.

The little Toronto bride who was supposed to be chaperoning them all, and who was very much in love with the six-foot husband at her side, sprang up with a glass of champagne in her hand, calling out loudly: "Yes, yes! Let's drink to love's young dream—to us—to Barry and Loranda!"

Judith contrived to laugh as gayly as any of the rest, though her heart was a raw anguish.

When dinner was over, Barry came directly to her.

"Those kids get a bit raw when they've had a drink or two! It's only their fun," he said awkwardly.

"Why, of course! Aren't we all out for a good time? I'm enjoying myself tremendously!" declared Judith.

And, so that he would not see the misery of her hurt, just as the music of the orchestra struck up, she grabbed Jack Ordway by the arm, exclaiming: "Come on! Let's dance! Let's show 'em how! I've some new steps up my sleeve, big boy! Let's at it!"

"Nothing'll suit me better, my dear!" He whirled her off, pleased at the turn of events, holding Judith very close to him.

Not only the first dance, but the second dance was his. Driven by her disappointment, and a bitterness that Barry should be made a fool, Judith determined to be as gay and flirtatious as the rest of them.

She overdid her part, as amateurs usually do, and permitted Jack to lead her to a corner that was screened off by a bank of ferns at the far end of the entrance hall, and sat talking with him there for a good quarter of an hour.

Loranda did not permit this fact to go unmarked. She stressed it lightly, laughingly, to Barry, when he suggested

going in search of Judith. "Why, don't be a poor sport, and intrude on pretty little Judith's flirtation. Barry, I'm surprised at you."

She added a word or two to the effect that she did hope the little country girl who had been transported from the back of beyond into a social atmosphere she was quite unaccustomed to, would have sense enough not to have her head turned by the half-amused flattery of men about town.

"And now I dare you," she challenged Barry laughingly before he had time to

comment on what she had said. "I dare you to come out and race with me on skis on the practice slopes outside the inn. I'll bet I'm the faster!" And away they went, those two, into the magic moonlit night, while Judith danced, and her heart awaited Barry's coming.

An hour slipped by. Then another hour. Judith was heartsick and worn out. She had lost Barry and nothing else seemed to matter. Where could the two of them possibly be?—she kept asking herself, but found no answer to her question.

TO BE CONTINUED.



HERE IN THE GARDEN

HERE in the garden where the tall pine trees are sighing,
Turn your still face to the ultimate need of my kiss.
Resist me no longer—the moon, and the violins crying,
The night, and the hour, and my hunger, are waiting on this.

What does it matter that yesterday I was a stranger?
The flame in my heart, which you kindled, has spread to your own.
Though you tremble to flight as a fawn at the shadow of danger,
My love would pursue and reclaim you, and you, dear, alone.

Here in the garden where the tall pine trees are sighing
Turn your still face to the ultimate need of my kiss.
Resist me no longer—the moon, and the violins crying,
The night, and the hour, and my hunger, are waiting on this.

ELEANOR HALBROOK ZIMMERMAN.



Living A Lie

By Jane Young

DORIS sat on the end of the pier, and glumly watched the dancing blue waves of the lake. It was a beautiful morning, and the sunlight, striking the rolling surface of the lake, flashed like myriads of diamonds. It was a day on which even the poorest of girls would have been happy, much less Doris Treanor, whose father owned the big island on which she was spending the summer.

But Doris, because she had almost everything a girl could wish, was both bored and angry. All her life she had had only to ask, and it had been given her. Everything had been made easy for her. She had no idea of the hardships of life, for she had never suffered in the slightest degree.

Even love had been handed to her on a silver platter. As a child she had been permitted to play with Claude Faxon, and as she began to grow up, she was given to understand that he was the man she would some day marry. It was all so easy, so simple. There was none of the mad thrill she had heard the other girls tell about, none of the sweet, stolen rapture that made one breathe deep with happiness. No, there had been none of that for her.

Instead, very calmly, very indifferently, she and Claude had become engaged. In three weeks, they would be married. Doris glanced down at the beautiful engagement ring on her finger. It was so beautiful, so pure and innocent that it could foretell of nothing

but happiness. Oh, she hoped so, for life had been such a dull matter until now. How wonderful it would be to go with Claude on his business trips, to help him with his work, to be mistress of her own home.

In a way, she loved Claude, not with the passion which every woman hopes may come to her life and which really comes to so few, but with a sisterly compassion and sincerity. There had never been any one else, and so, innocently, Doris believed her affection for him to be love.

While she sat there meditating, there was the *put-put* of a motor boat, and suddenly around the corner of the island came Claude, waving a cheery good morning to her. She answered unconcernedly, and watched him swing the boat about without even rising to greet him.

"Why so glum, sweetheart?" he asked. He was attractively dressed in white flannels, and his black, neatly brushed hair shone in the sunlight.

"I've just had another argument with father," she replied irritably.

Claude laughed, showing a perfect line of white teeth.

"Won't father give you another car?" he asked, teasing her with a smile.

"No, it's a sea sled. He's promised me one, you know. Oh, Claude, I'm so bored on this island. There's absolutely nothing to do. With a fast, zippy sea sled I could have a wonderful time. I'd do almost anything to get one."

"Would you, really? Well, then, if you'll do me just the smallest of favors, I'll buy you one myself."

Doris sprang to her feet, overjoyed.

"Oh, will you, Claude? I think you're a perfect dear. And you can call it a premature wedding gift or anything you like, just so I can have it right away."

"As soon as you do this little favor for me you shall have one," Claude promised.

"But what am I to do?" Doris asked, excited and happy.

"To-night I'm having a guest for the week-end, Thomas McComas, who owns a thousand-acre tract of timber down in Kentucky. I want to get him to give me a deed to the place. I've offered him a fair price for it, but he won't sell. If I can just get that land I can sell the timber at a huge profit, so I want you to help me induce him to part with the land. And if you're a good salesman and succeed, I'll buy you a sea sled and anything else you wish with the profit I make."

"Splendid!" Doris cried. "That sounds like oodles of fun. And just think—I'm already helping you with business deals, even before we're married. I should help my fiancé with his business, shouldn't I?"

"It's the very thing to do," Claude agreed.

"But what am I to do?" Doris asked.

"Oh, you must vamp him, dazzle him with your beauty so that he'll do anything you ask him to."

Doris blushed.

"Oh, Claude, you're teasing me. My beauty—nonsense! I'm not beautiful."

Claude glanced at her slender face, her blue eyes and scarlet, pouting lips.

"Now, my dear, you're teasing me."

"Do you really think I could do such a thing?"

"I'm positive of it. Any man in the world would fall in love with you on sight. I'm just lucky because your parents have kept you hidden from the world."

"But what shall I do?" she asked, so excited that she could hardly keep still. "Stroke his bald head and say: 'Old ducky-wucky, sign deed like nice little snooky-ookums!' Oh, Claude, I never heard of anything so thrilling. And if I succeed, I'm to have my sea sled?"

"It's a bargain. Shake."

Overjoyed at the prospect of finding something to break the monotony of

her island estate, and thrilled at the thought of playing the part of siren, Doris held out her hand to close the bargain. As she did so, Claude caught sight of the engagement ring on her left hand.

"But you'll have to hide your ring while he's here," he said.

"Why, Claude," she protested, "are you ashamed that I am to be your wife?"

He frowned.

"It's not that," he explained. "But we mustn't let McComas know it. We'll never succeed if he knows you already belong to some one else. How can you hope to be a siren if your victim knows he can never hope to win you?"

She laughed.

"I guess you're right, Claude. Besides, I want that sea sled."

Claude sprang into his boat.

"We'll be over for dinner if you don't mind," he said.

"Of course, you're always invited, and your friend Mr. McComas, too. I'll be waiting for him!" she cried gleefully.

Doris had never been so thrilled before in all her life as she was while dressing for dinner. The prospect of playing the part of siren thrilled her beyond words, for like every girl she had read of the great sirens of history, and secretly in her dreams had wished that she might have countless men at her feet, ready to do her slightest wish, even if it meant death to them.

Now, with her fiancé's consent and approval, she was to play the part, and she had never been so happy before. She wore her white lace gown that contrasted so sharply with her dusky, sun-burned shoulders and made her seem almost foreign in appearance.

She stood before the mirror and surveyed herself. Her shoulder bouquet of scarlet roses matched her lips, and beneath their dark lashes her eyes were like two glowing sapphires.

"Old Mr. McComas had better look out," she said, throwing herself a kiss in the glass.

She had started to leave when she remembered about her engagement ring. She straightened out her arm and watched the light play on the beautiful square stone. Pin points of brilliant lights shot forth in every direction at the slightest movement of her hand.

It was so beautiful that it did not seem possible that she could remove it even for the barest moment, yet Claude had asked her, and for his sake she supposed she would have to do so.

Yet, somehow, it did not seem right; there was something sinister about hiding the fact of her engagement from Mr. McComas. Then, too, she would never have believed that Claude would place a piece of timberland before the fact of their engagement.

That was the first time that Claude had ever done anything to displease her. In fact, as she thought of it now, she realized that she knew very little of Claude. Since they had grown up she had seen him very rarely—mostly in public. Was this a side to Claude's character that she had not seen?

From downstairs came the sound of masculine voices. Claude and his guest were arriving. Her heart began to beat like a trip hammer. She felt like a tiger waiting for its prey. Without further thought, she slipped the ring from her finger and hurried out.

At the landing the voices became distinct. One was Claude's, and the deep baritone was her father's. The third was new to her, a throaty, laughing tone that sent a little thrill up and down her spine. So that was the voice of her victim! She hurried down the stairs.

"Hello, Doris," Claude said. "McComas, this is Doris."

The man, whose back was to Doris, turned around. She gasped. Instead of being an old, bald-headed man as she had somehow in her mind expected him

to be, he was as young as she, with brown curly hair and the kindest eyes she had ever seen.

"Claude told me I'd meet the most beautiful girl in the world," he said in that soft, laughing tone, "but I didn't believe him until now."

She gazed into his brown, sparkling eyes, and the queerest sensation came over her. It seemed as if she'd known him, as if they had been friends for ever so long.

"I'm so glad to know you, Mr. McComas," she said, her heart thumping against her ribs.

"Call me Tom, won't you?"

His hand was holding hers, so quietly, so calmly, so expectantly. Embarrassed, she gazed at Claude for assistance. But Claude only nodded in approval, a shrewd smile on his face.

Just then, to her relief, the butler announced dinner, so she escaped answering him except for a nod.

All through the meal she felt his eyes upon her, and it gave her a wonderful, fluttering feeling of happiness. Would she call him Tom? Would she love to run her long white fingers through his curly hair? She trembled inwardly, not even daring to think the answer.

After dinner, forgetful of every one else, he slipped her arm beneath his own and led her out into the garden.

"How can any one be so beautiful?" he whispered, his voice strangely tense. "To think I've lived all my life—all these years—and never known you were alive."

She gave a little laugh of happiness.

"Flatterer," she chided.

"Really," he said, his face growing serious, "I've never been so happy in all my life."

"Nor have I," she breathed.

Then suddenly she remembered that she was only playing a part, that she was not rightfully entitled to the happiness that had so suddenly come to her. The bargain she had struck with Claude

came back to her with blinding reality. She gave a frightened little sob and rushed toward the house. Halfway, he caught up with her.

"Oh, come," he panted. "You mustn't run away."

"But we must go inside, I tell you," she cried frantically.

He gazed into her blue eyes and mistook the unhappiness he saw there for fright.

"Very well," he said quietly.

Later that evening Doris drew Claude aside.

"Claude," she said, "I think I've lost my nerve."

He smiled.

"You mustn't fail me now, my dear. Everything's working too well. I believe he's in love with you already."

"Oh, Claude, are you sure there's nothing wrong in what I'm doing? It's true I agreed to help you obtain this land, but Tom—I mean Mr. McComas—is such a nice person. I wouldn't want to harm him or cheat him in any way."

"Now, my dear," Claude said easily, "don't you worry. All you're doing is what any salesman would do—using every means to sell his article. When a salesman talks to you about a vacuum cleaner, for instance, he tries to make you like him by being very charming to you, doesn't he? And he does so because he reasons that if you like him a little bit, you're just that much nearer to liking the article which he is trying to sell."

"This is all you're doing—making McComas like you so well that anything you would want him to do would just be perfect. Besides, my dear, you're to be my wife. Do you think I'd ask you to do anything dishonest?"

"Of course you wouldn't, Claude, and I shall do everything to help you. I do love you."

Yet, that night, after they had gone, Doris lay in bed trying to get Tom out

of her mind, and found that she just couldn't do it. He was so fascinating, so handsome, so wonderful. She found herself thinking of what Claude had said—that he believed Tom was falling in love with her.

For one tiny moment she wished that Tom's strong arms were about her and that his lips were pressed to hers. Then she knew that she had done wrong, that she must not think such thoughts. She was engaged to Claude, and she must love only Claude. What kind of wife would she make if she permitted herself to become strongly attracted by every handsome man she met? No, she must not think of such things.

The thing to do, she planned, was to ask Tom the first thing in the morning to sign the deed, then have Claude take him away, thus removing temptation.

Yet it was late afternoon before she could bring herself to speak of it. She and Tom had had a glorious day of swimming and boating, and now were lying in the cool sand on the beach. Claude had given them free rein, and they had laughed and joked like two children.

"Claude said you were here on a business deal," she began hesitantly.

"Oh, yes," he replied. "I own quite a bit of timberland, and Claude wants to buy some of it."

"Don't you think it would be nice to sell some of it to him?"

He glanced at her.

"Oh, I don't know. You see, I haven't thought much of it. We Kentuckians don't do things in such a hurry, as you do up here."

"Oh, you're from Kentucky? I'd never guess it from your speech. Where's all the Southern accent?"

"I lost it long ago in England. My



parents sent me to school there when I was a kid. You know," he said abruptly, "you'd be wonderful in a Kentucky setting. There's something about you that reminds me of Kentucky."

"You're teasing again," she said.

He shook his head.

"No. Perhaps it's because you seem so sincere and honest. That makes you old-fashioned, you know. People aren't



She gazed into his brown, sparkling eyes, and the queerest sensation came over her. It seemed as if she'd known him for ever so long.

honest any more. And Kentucky's old-fashioned."

Sincere and honest! She felt the color flood her cheeks. Oh, what a disreputable cheat she was!

"Tell me," he said, with another lightning change of subject, "does Claude mean anything to you?"

Doris's heart skipped a beat. Should she tell him the truth? If she did, she could never hope to help Claude, for Tom would detest her. It was too late to change now.

"He's just a friend," she lied.

Suddenly she was in his arms.

"Then there's no one to stand in my way," he whispered. Then he kissed her, and Doris closed her eyes in the bliss of that embrace. His lips carried a caress that went straight to her heart, and she knew now, as she had never known before, what it was to love some one so utterly that nothing in the world mattered, that death paled by comparison. Tears came to her eyes.

There was a sound behind them.

"Two love birds!" Claude stood there watching them.

Tom swung around and laughed nervously.

"Say, old man, are you spying on us?"

Claude laughed.

"An accident," he said smoothly. "I shan't intrude any longer. Good afternoon."

He turned and walked down the path. Doris ran blindly toward the house. Once inside, she flung herself on the sofa and sobbed as if her heart would break. Claude entered.

"Splendid!" he cried.

"Claude," she cried, "I can't go on. Release me from my agreement, please."

"Not so loud, my dear, or he'll hear you. Everything's perfect. We can't stop now."

"But he kissed me, and you stood there and let him do it!"

"But don't you see? As far as he knew, I had no right to complain. Besides, dear, I knew you didn't mean it, knew you were only leading him on."

"Oh, Claude, I can't go on with this deception. I must tell him that I'm en-

gaged to you. He'll hate me, but I don't care. He must know the truth."

"It's too late now," Claude said firmly, his dark eyes angry. "On the strength of your promise, I have contracted to sell this lumber at a large profit. Now if I don't get the lumber I'll default my contract and lose everything. I have instructed my lawyer to keep his office open on the mainland until late to-night. It's our last opportunity, for McComas leaves in the morning. You must insist that he go to-night and sign the deed. My motor boat is waiting to take him over at any time."

Tears streamed down her cheeks. Never in her whole life had she been so unhappy. How could she live a lie, trick the only man she had ever really loved?

She must go to some one for advice. Her father had gone to the city. She was alone on the island except for the servants, Claude, and Tom. Then she remembered old Mammy Lucy who lived in the shanty behind the servants' quarters. Mammy Lucy foretold the future, cast spells, and acted as general soothsayer. Perhaps Mammy Lucy could help her.

The old woman was sitting in the doorway of her cottage, a corncob pipe in her toothless mouth.

"I've come for advice, Mammy Lucy," Doris said.

Mammy Lucy rose and beckoned her inside. In the half gloom Doris could see bones and queer bundles of hair hanging from the walls, and she shivered as she sat down on the three-legged stool the old woman pointed out to her.

"What yo' trouble, gal?"

"I'm engaged to marry one man, yet I love another. The one I am to marry depends on me to deceive the one I love so that he may become wealthy. What shall I do?"

Mammy Lucy gazed at the floor for a long time, muttering to herself. Then

she reached in her pocket and took a pinch of powder and threw it into the air. As it wafted toward Doris, it tickled her nostrils and almost made her sneeze.

"Yo' answer, chile. Stay by de man who is to be yo' husband. Dat is de best till de truff be known."

"What do you mean, Mammy Lucy—until the truth is known?"

"Time will take care ob dat. You stay by yo' man."

Disheartened by such poor counsel, Doris arose and went back to the house.

Stick by her man! There was only one thing to do then, and that was to carry out her agreement with Claude. After all, she had promised to be his wife, and she owed him unquestioned allegiance.

With tears streaming down her cheeks, knowing full well that it meant blotting out forever the only real love she had ever known, Doris vowed to carry on. She must close her heart forever. If only she might kiss Tom! She longed to feel his strong arms about her once again. Yet it could never be.

"I love you, Tom," she whispered.

That night she dressed automatically. Her hands were cold, and she scarcely knew or cared what she was wearing. Life meant nothing to her now.

"I wish I were dead," she sobbed.

At dinner she talked and smiled as best she could, for fear Tom might read what was in her heart. She dared not look at him.

The candles at the table flickered.

"There's a storm brewing," said Claude.

After the meal, Tom suggested that they walk in the garden.

"This is my last night," he said. "I'd like to be there with you once more before the storm comes."

"I'll be putting down the windows," Claude said quickly.

Tom and Doris stood together in the moonlight among the blooming roses,

and gazed out over the lake. Dark clouds were forming. Soon they would blot out the moonlight.

"It will be a bad storm," she said dully.

"No worse than the storm in my heart," Tom said. "Oh, Doris, I love you. I've never met any one so sweet, so lovely as you. Will you marry me?"

He bent to kiss her. His lips touched hers. They were as cold as stone.

"Doris, what's the matter? Don't you love me?"

Blindly she pushed him away.

"You mustn't," she said. "It cannot be."

"But why, Doris, why?" he pleaded.

She turned her face away.

"Oh, I'm so unhappy," she sobbed. "I wish I were dead!"

He caught her cold, white hands in his own and pressed them to his lips.

"Tell me," he said. "Your happiness means everything to me, for I love you. Let me make you happy, Doris! What can I do?"

The words choked in her throat. She must ask him to sign that deed, then send him away forever! The man she loved!

"Sign that deed to Claude," she said.

He stepped back.

"That deed to Claude? But why do you ask this, of all things?"

"Please do not ask," she cried. "Please!"

Slowly his shoulders drooped.

"I see now," he said dully. "You love Claude. It's strange I didn't realize it before." He sighed. "But I loved you so much that I was blind. Very well, Doris dear, I'll do as you ask. But how can I sign to-night?"

"The lawyer's waiting for you on the mainland. Take Claude's motor boat. Please go!"

For a moment he watched her, a dejected expression on his face.

"I had hoped," he said huskily, "that you might love me. But I see that I'm

mistaken. I won't trouble you any more. But if it means anything to you, I love you and I'm signing because it will mean happiness for you. I'll go now before the storm breaks—the one in my heart. Good-by, Doris."

He turned and hurried off.

Crying as though her heart would break, Doris stumbled back to the house. The wind had risen, and the trees were bending in the breeze. At the doorway, Claude stood waiting anxiously.

"Well?" he asked impatiently.

"He's gone to sign. Oh, I'm so unhappy."

"He has?" Claude cried, unmindful of her tears. "At last I've succeeded!" His eyes became bright with excitement, and he could not restrain himself. "I've put one over on him. I've made millions!"

Doris watched him in amazement.

"What do you mean—you've put one over on him?"

"I didn't tell you all, dear, because you're so soft-hearted, I was afraid you'd back out. Listen. Last year McComas asked me to examine that land for him. While I was doing so, I found coal deposits. But I didn't say a word to him about it. I just pretended I needed the timber. But now I've got it. Oh, we'll be worth millions!"

"You mean you lied to him and me?"

"Oh, forget it," he said easily. "That's just business."

"And he depended on you to tell him the truth about that land and you broke faith with him?"

"Don't become sentimental," he said roughly.

She backed away in horror.

"How—how could you be so contemptible!"

His face flushed.

"Here I've made a million for us, and you talk like a preacher."

Suddenly she turned and started for the boathouse.

"Where are you going?" he cried.

"I'm going to get a boat and go to the mainland and tell Tom the truth!"

"Oh, no, you're not. The boathouse is locked and I have the key."

"Open it immediately!"

"Don't be silly! Do you think I'll let you spoil the very thing I've tried to accomplish for over a year."

She gazed at him incredulously. Was this the man she was going to marry?

"I give you this last opportunity," she said. "If you don't give me the key to the boathouse, our engagement is broken."

"Don't be stupid. I see now," he cried suddenly. "You love him, don't you? Well, what good will it do you now, when he finds out that you were engaged to me all the time and helped get his land from him?" He laughed cruelly.

Slowly she turned and walked up the stairs to her room. She must get to the mainland in time to tell Tom before he signed. Regardless of what he might think of her, he must know the truth!

Suddenly she remembered the old leaky rowboat that had been abandoned the summer before, and was now lying at the water's edge on the far side of the boathouse. Would it float? There was the barest chance that it might!

Quickly she slipped down the back steps, across the lawn, keeping well in the shadows, until she was hidden behind the boathouse.

There, with the waves lapping its prow, was the old boat. Luckily, the servants' children had been playing in it, and had bailed out the rain water. And—oh, wonderful luck! there against the boathouse was a pair of oars!

Quickly she tossed them in and began pushing off. She must hurry, for the storm was almost upon her. It was a tremendous task, for the boat was old and heavy, but the waves, lifting its

prow, aided her in getting it off the beach.

The water soaked her shoes and stockings, but she did not care. All that mattered now was that Tom should know the truth—how Claude had cheated him.

Once the boat was clear, she placed the oars in the locks and began pulling for the mainland. Practically every summer of her life had been spent on the island, and she knew how to row as well as any man. If only the boat would stay afloat, and the storm didn't break before she got there!

On and on she pulled at the oars. A small amount of water was leaking into the boat, but it was not enough to sink it if she could only continue the pace.

By the time she had gone halfway, the wind had increased in velocity, kicking up the waves until they splashed over the prow.

"Don't sign, Tom, until I get there," she prayed.

Then suddenly the storm broke. The waves rose high above her, crashed down upon the old skiff, tossing it to and fro as if it were the smallest piece of driftwood. Try as she might, Doris could not keep the prow into the wind. Slowly the boat began to fill. Frantically she pulled at the oars, but her strength was going fast. At last she could pull no more. She felt the icy water envelop her. She knew it was the end.

"Good-by, Tom. I love you," she said, then closed her eyes, prepared to die.

Suddenly strong arms slipped under her, and she felt herself being lifted into a boat.

Then some one was talking, and the voice—oh, it was the most wonderful voice in the world!

"My dear, my darling Doris! The good fairies must have sent me out in this storm. I had to come back—to say good-by to you once more. Suppose I

hadn't—oh, I would have lost you, my darling."

"Tom—Tom," she cried, "did you sign that deed?"

"Of course, darling, just as you wished."

She burst into tears.

"Now you've lost everything. There was a fortune in coal beneath the surface."

"Coal?"

Then suddenly he burst out laughing.

"Why, there's no coal there. What made you think so?"

Then she confessed everything to him. He listened quietly until she had finished.

"But why in Heaven's name were you out here in that old tub in this terrible storm?"

"Be-cause I didn't want you to sign until you knew about that coal, and Claude had locked up all the other boats."

He gathered her in his arms.

"Listen, my sweet," he said softly, "there isn't one speck of coal beneath that land. I know, because years ago I had one of the finest mineralogists in the world examine it. The joke is on Claude. He's just a bad scientist. The only reason I haven't sold it before is that it's splendid hunting and I didn't want to lose it. And you—you were risking your life to warn me?"

"I couldn't go on, knowing you had been betrayed. Claude wouldn't let me have one of the good boats, so this was the only way I could tell you."

"What a wonderful, royal girl you are!" he exclaimed. "Now that you've broken with Claude—may I—have I a chance?"

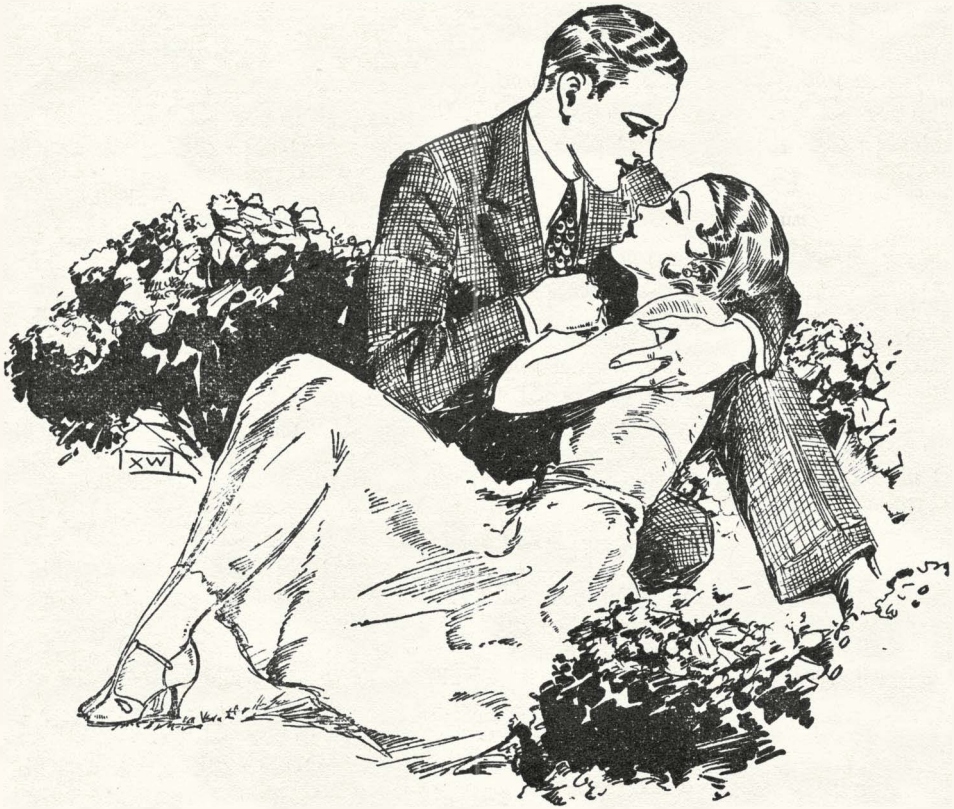
She crept in his arms.

"Will you marry me, dearest girl?" he asked.

"Oh, Tom, I do love you. Yes."

His lips met hers and she closed her eyes, surrendering completely to the happiest moment in her life.





One-time Girl

By Yvonne Yves

OH, baby, how I could love you if you'd let me!"

Clara and Ed were sitting in a sheltered nook in Central Park. It was a hot summer night, and when Ed had suggested leaving the path and sitting where it was cool, Clara hadn't thought that he was going to make love to her.

They were hardly seated on the cool grass when he put his arm around her, drew her close and started to kiss her hair, her cheeks, her hands, but when he tried to kiss her lips she pulled away.

He begged her again and again, but Clara was determined that she was not going to kiss a man she didn't love, and

she had known Ed only two days, so she could hardly love him yet!

They had met the night before and had a long walk together, and in the afternoon he had called her up and asked her to go to Coney Island with him. She had been glad to go, for she had liked him when she had been introduced to him by her girl friend, Helen.

Helen had been leaving on her vacation and Clara had gone down to the Grand Central Station to see her off. At the gate she found Helen, with her boy friends, Ralph and Ed. Clara had been introduced to the two men and then it had been time for Helen to leave

them. They waited until the gates had been shut and the red lights on the end of the train were tiny spots disappearing into the long tunnel under Park Avenue. Then Clara had turned to go.

"Good night," she had said. "I've got to go now."

Ed had looked at her intently. "Where you going? I mean, have you got a date?"

"No, I haven't! But it's such a nice night I thought I'd walk as far as the park and then take the sub from there."

"I'll walk that far with you," Ed eagerly broke in. "I've got nothing else to do."

It wasn't a very gallant speech, but Clara was pleased. She didn't know any boys in New York and Ed was nice-looking—sort of collegiate, but not too much so. Ralph left them, and they walked slowly up Fifth Avenue, looking in all the shop windows. They had become very good friends by the time Ed left her at her door. Then Ed had asked her for a date the next night and she complied gladly, for it was her vacation and it had been a pretty dull one so far!

They did everything at Coney Island that there was to do. They ate hot dogs and corn on the cob; walked along the board walk, nibbling at ice cream cones; gone on all the scenic railways; been through the Red Mill in Luna Park; the Caterpillar; the Whip; the Ferris Wheel. Clara liked the Ferris Wheel best of all; it was fun to be way up in the air and see the lights of the city in the distance. And Surf Avenue, below them, looked like a fairy land with its thousands of flashing lights. They had had a great time and Ed had not attempted any love-making at all. Therefore, Clara was surprised when he tried to kiss her in the park.

"Ed, you mustn't! Why, I—I hardly know you!"

"What difference does that make? Let me love you, honey, please!"

"Love! That isn't love! That's just—well, petting I guess!"

But he kept holding her close and murmuring:

"Such a sweet little girl! Please love me!"

"Love! You keep saying love!" Clara found it hard to ward him off long enough to let her speak. "This isn't love! You couldn't love me so soon!"

And yet all the time she really wanted to be caressed. She was starved for affection, away from home and every one she cared for. There were a loving father and mother and three little sisters in Kansas City and they had made a great sacrifice in letting her come so far away. She had meant to return after completing her librarian's course, but last year the chance of a good job in a small library had seemed too good to miss, so she had stayed on. It was hard work, exacting work, and the hours were long, but she loved it, and felt that for a girl of only nineteen she had done pretty well!

But she had been lonely. What a temptation it was to accept any kind of affection, real or superficial! But not so easily!

She pushed Ed away and looked at him earnestly.

"Ed, you don't love me! It's just—well, any girl, and a summer night and—and everything. No, you don't love me! Why, I probably like you a lot more than you do me! I do like you, Ed, a lot, and maybe, after a while we might—"

But Ed interrupted her, rather crossly, "After a while! What good is that?"

Clara became a little angry at his persistence. This was not love, the beautiful thing to which she had looked forward all her life, a something beyond mere hugs and kisses! This! This was sordid, hidden away in the Park letting a strange man kiss her all

he wanted and kissing him back. No, being lonely was better, and yet—being lonely was terrible! Couldn't they effect a compromise?

So she tried to cajole Ed, who had taken his arms away and was sitting looking away from her.

"Ed, you just don't understand! It isn't that I don't like you, for I do—a lot! It's just that it cheapens us both for you to make love to me like this—so sort of hidden away."

He didn't answer, nor even look at her. She sighed. He wouldn't understand. It was better to go! So she rose and he, impassively and never speaking, rose to his feet, too, and still preserving the same silence, they walked through the park and to the subway entrance.

Clara was a little afraid that he might let her go home alone, but he waited beside her until her train came along, then he guided her onto it with a loose clasp of her arm.

Silently he sat beside her all the way uptown. She brought up various subjects of conversation, but he only answered briefly. In the short walk to her room from the station she tried again to explain why she had acted as she had, but it was no use. He retained his stubborn silence as far as the door of her boarding house.

Before unlocking the door, she turned and held out her hand.

"Good night, Ed, and thank you for a nice time. If you ever want to be—a friend, call me up and tell me so."

"Thank you," he answered formally, barely touching her fingers. "Good night."

Then he turned away and went down the steps, never looking back, and Clara went up to her lonely little room with a sinking heart. Was it always to be like that? Was she never to have any fun like other girls?

She threw herself on the bed and clenched her fists in anger at herself.

Why had she been so prim? Did she want to be alone always? Didn't she ever expect a man to be like that? And then a revulsion of feeling came over her and she sat up and looked at herself in the mirror. Her blue eyes looked straight back at her, her flushed cheeks cooled a little as she gazed. Now she was glad; glad she had fought against him! Otherwise how would she be feeling now as she faced herself and remembered?

The next day was Sunday and it dragged by slowly. It was hot, but by five o'clock, Clara could stand the loneliness of her room no longer. The house was empty. The landlady, who had been a friend of Clara's mother, had gone to Brooklyn to spend the day with her married daughter and every one else was out, too.

She took an aimless walk, and when she could stand it no longer she turned into a movie and forgot her own troubles for a while in those of the heroine, which ended happily of course. She felt a little cheered as she came out, but was quickly depressed again.

There was a long line waiting to get into the theater and they were practically all young couples—chatting, laughing, not minding the wait a bit, for they were together! Every girl in New York, it seemed to Clara, had a boy friend except herself! Why should she be left out? She was young and gay and pretty, and she loved to dance and to swim and to walk, and she felt that she could always be both interesting and interested if she had a chance!

No young men worked in the library, consequently there was no way to get acquainted with anybody. Helen and Ralph always wanted to be alone, so she could not go out with them.

Clara had timidly suggested to Helen once that Ralph might know some nice man, but Helen had not welcomed the idea cordially.

"I couldn't ask him to bring some

one for you! He'd think you were very common, if I did, going with anybody!"

There were a few good answers to that, but Clara didn't make them. Helen's point of view was obvious, and there was nothing to be done!

a complete wardrobe from the exclusive windows and then went down into Lacey's basement and bought a pink sports dress, a rose-colored flannel coat, a pink panama and some sandals to match, all for thirteen dollars and ninety-three cents, including a string



*"You called me up!"
He looked at her
sharply. "And you
asked me to meet you
to-night, didn't you?"*

Monday came and passed: week days were not as bad as Sundays, for she could go shopping, which meant looking in the windows at all the things she couldn't buy and would not be able to wear if she could buy them! She window-shopped for an outfit that she would choose if she were going to Southampton or Newport, and that was absorbing and interesting. She chose

of beads and a handkerchief to complete the outfit.

When she got home she tried everything on and decided that she looked charming! Then she became discouraged again: she had no place to wear them and there was nobody to see her if she did wear them! She hung them up in her closet with a sigh for her impulsive extravagance.

Tuesday she took a sight-seeing ride to kill time, which had begun to hang heavy on her hands. There was a honeymoon couple sitting in front of her and they might have saved the money they had spent for their tickets for they never saw anything but each other! Clara found them very silly, but at the bottom of her heart she could hardly help envying the girl. It would be wonderful, she thought, to have some one feel that way about you, even though you had on cheap silk stockings and your hair was frizzy and your nose needed powder, like this girl! If that was love, concluded Clara, love was wonderful!

The man was always hugging the girl and kissing her whenever she would let him, which was quite often, and Clara reflected that probably all men were like that, and all alike. You had to feed them honey to keep them happy! That had been her mistake with Ed!

She had been hoping that he would call her up again, and she meant to be very nice to him if he did, but Wednesday came and went. She read all day and then in desperate loneliness took a long walk by herself, and as she passed the theater she saw all the girls and their dates again, waiting again, but happy together! She cried herself to sleep that night!

Thursday she determined to see Ed again, if she possibly could. She would call him up and ask him to meet her, and she would act as if nothing had happened. Maybe they would go to a show or something: she would see that they kept away from the park and after they got back she would let him kiss her good night if he wanted.

She knew that he worked in the office of Cloton & Crager and that he answered the telephone himself, but she felt nervous about calling him, and put it off all day. If he should refuse to come, what would she do? She was

passing a small hotel in her debate with herself and suddenly decided to get it over and done with and went in to look for a telephone booth. Her nervousness continued and it was hard finding the number as her shaking finger followed the C's. The booth was picturesquely but dimly lighted and she had some difficulty in distinguishing the number opposite the name. Clara really needed glasses for fine print but wouldn't get them because they were so unbecoming to her, but now she wished she had! She studied the number yes, that was it, Bla 6363. She dropped in her coin and waited with her heart beating fast. The operator repeated the number—yes, that was it—then there was a pause, and then a man's voice—young, deep, interesting, but rather bored:

"H'lo."

Clara did not stop to consider that some one else in the office might have been near the phone and answered it. She didn't stop to think that perhaps personal calls were not allowed in the office. She didn't think about anything except the message that she wanted to give.

"Hello, Ed!" she called quickly.

"Hello!" he replied, rather vaguely, but interested, "Who is this?"

Clara was disappointed; he hadn't known her at once! He must know other girls! She had been thinking of him as lonely as herself!

However, the only thing to do was to go on:

"This is Clara, Ed. Surely you haven't forgotten me so soon!"

"Oh, Clara! Of course, Clara! I didn't recognize your voice!"

"I didn't recognize yours, either! And it isn't so very long since I last heard it!"

"No?" he sounded puzzled, then quickly added, "No! Of course!"

A little silence followed: Ed didn't seem to want to break it, so Clara

thought she had better say what she had to.

"Ed—uh—Ed——" She didn't know how to begin.

"Yes?" he encouraged her; he did have a nice voice!

"Ed, are you doing anything to-night?"

"Well, I was, but I'm not—I mean—why?"

"Well, Ed, couldn't I meet you and we could take a walk or something?"

Clara held her breath for his answer; if he seemed to hesitate or if he said "No," she was going to apologize for her coldness of the other night. But he answered after a pause:

"Sure. Where? What time?"

"Any time that suits you; I'm on my vacation, you know!"

"How about six thirty? You come on down here and we'll have a bite to eat, together. Do you know where Anton's restaurant is? Yes, near Fifty-ninth. O. K. By the way, how will I know you?"

"How will you know me?" she repeated after him. What an extraordinary thing to say! "What do you mean? Didn't you look at me the last time?"

"I mean what color will you wear. You know girls look different every time you see them until you get up close and I want to be watching for you and spot you right away. What will you wear?"

That seemed funny. Surely he had looked at her closely enough to know her! But maybe he wanted to meet her on a street corner and then of course it would be easier for him if he knew. She considered quickly.

"The same dress and hat I wore Saturday, I guess! Then you will know me right away!"

There was a short silence on the other end of the wire, then:

"By the way, is that what you call beige? I used to hear my sister talking

about beige and I wondered if that was it! Is it?"

"No! I've changed my mind, anyway! I'll wear pink. Do you know pink when you see it?"

"I think so; roses are pink, aren't they? Now listen: I'll get there a little early and have the first table in the window and you come right there, will you? I—I've sprained my ankle and I can't walk around much, so I had better get there and wait there for you. The very front table, remember, and about six thirty. Anton's. Got it?"

As she hung up Clara decided that one never did know men! Ed had not seemed so efficient before! He had seemed easy-going and now he seemed snappy and very able to manage things. It was too bad about his ankle and that must have been the reason she hadn't heard from him until now! She wished that she had waited, and hadn't been the first to call up, for he would certainly have called her when he felt able to get around. He wasn't a bit angry with her and sounded so interested and nice. How she had misjudged him!

The new clothes were now a joy, and she had a happy feeling of anticipation on the ride downtown. Things were going to be all right! Ed was going to be nice and she would feel at ease with him and they were going to have such a wonderful time that he would want her to go out with him often—twice a week anyway.

She entered Anton's briskly—about five minutes late. It would never do to be the first to arrive! She couldn't see the first table until the head waitress had led her down the long aisle between the tables. They were in two rows on each side, reaching a point like the point of a triangle in the window where there was just room for one table. That, of course, was the one Ed had meant. Yes, he was there—why, no! That wasn't Ed! It was a young man she had never seen before!

He rose as she faltered and then stopped, and he came toward her smiling. It wasn't Ed, and whoever it was, he hadn't a sprained ankle, and anyway, it was some one she had never seen before!

He advanced toward her, holding out his hand:

"Clara, isn't it?"

Automatically, she put her hand in his, still staring at him, still trying to find Ed in this stranger; she felt as if she were going crazy.

Surely Ed had curly dark hair, and this man's was smooth and rather light, and he had brown eyes and Ed had blue ones! He answered her puzzled look with a smile, as he pulled out a chair for her opposite the one in which he had been sitting:

"Yes, it's Ed! Won't you sit down, Clara?"

She dropped into the seat, trying to think what it could mean. He said he was Ed. How could he be?

He picked up the menu and ordered two dinners rather briefly, raising an inquiring eye at Clara at every item he chose; she just nodded to him every time, feeling that she was acting very dumb but not knowing what to do. She wondered if she shouldn't just get up and leave, but this man who called himself Ed seemed to take it for granted that she was going to stay, and she couldn't summon up enough courage to go. Besides, she was curious. Who was he and how had it all come about?

As soon as the waitress left he quickly took a drink of water as if he was nervous under his easy manner, and then he leaned on the table and turned and looked directly at Clara:

"Well?" he questioned.

He obviously waited for her to say something and she began:

"I don't understand——" Then she paused; not knowing just how to say what was on her mind.

"What don't you understand?" He had a nice smile, and as she was beginning to get over her first confusion she found it reassuring.

"Why. I never saw you before!" She half laughed as she said it, for it seemed such a silly thing to say to a man you were having dinner with! They had already started on the soup.

"Yes, but you called me up!" He looked at her sharply. "And you asked me to meet you to-night, didn't you?"

"Why, no!" It seemed as if she should understand but as if the answer evaded her. "I didn't call you up! I called up Ed. What's your name?"

"Ed!" He was serious but there was a sort of twinkle in his eye. "Don't tell me it was another Ed!"

Clara decided that they had been formal long enough. She was going to be straight about it and she did hope he would be, too!

"I called up Edmund Hollins, who is a friend of mine, but I don't know him so terribly well, so I didn't notice that it was a different voice, and I don't see how I happened to get you by mistake! He works for Cloton & Crager. Do you, too?"

"No, I'm salesman for Stebbins & Co. Just happened to answer the phone because the girl was busy. I wonder how that happened!"

Clara knew! In a flash she knew! She had asked for the wrong number. It had been dark in the hotel and she had made a mistake! He got the phone book for her and here in the clear light of day she could see clearly, Cloton & Crager, Bla 6868. She had thought it was 6363!

"But you knew you didn't know me!" she reproached him. "Why did you act as if you did?"

"Because you have such a lovely voice, Clara. It made me think of cool waters and green trees; the temptation was too great to resist when you asked if it was Ed and then asked for a date.

Maybe I did know you, I said to myself, though it didn't seem possible that I could have forgotten you; maybe you were some one I just knew slightly, for you called me Ed, and most of my friends call me Ward—the last half of Edward, and it's my last name, too—Ward Ward seems to amuse people and so I usually give that name. But I was willing to be Ed to you, if you were as charming as your voice.

"If you weren't as nice as you have really proved to be, I could stand it for one evening and then disappear. Tell me, though, is this other Ed some one who matters a lot? You said you didn't know him very well!"

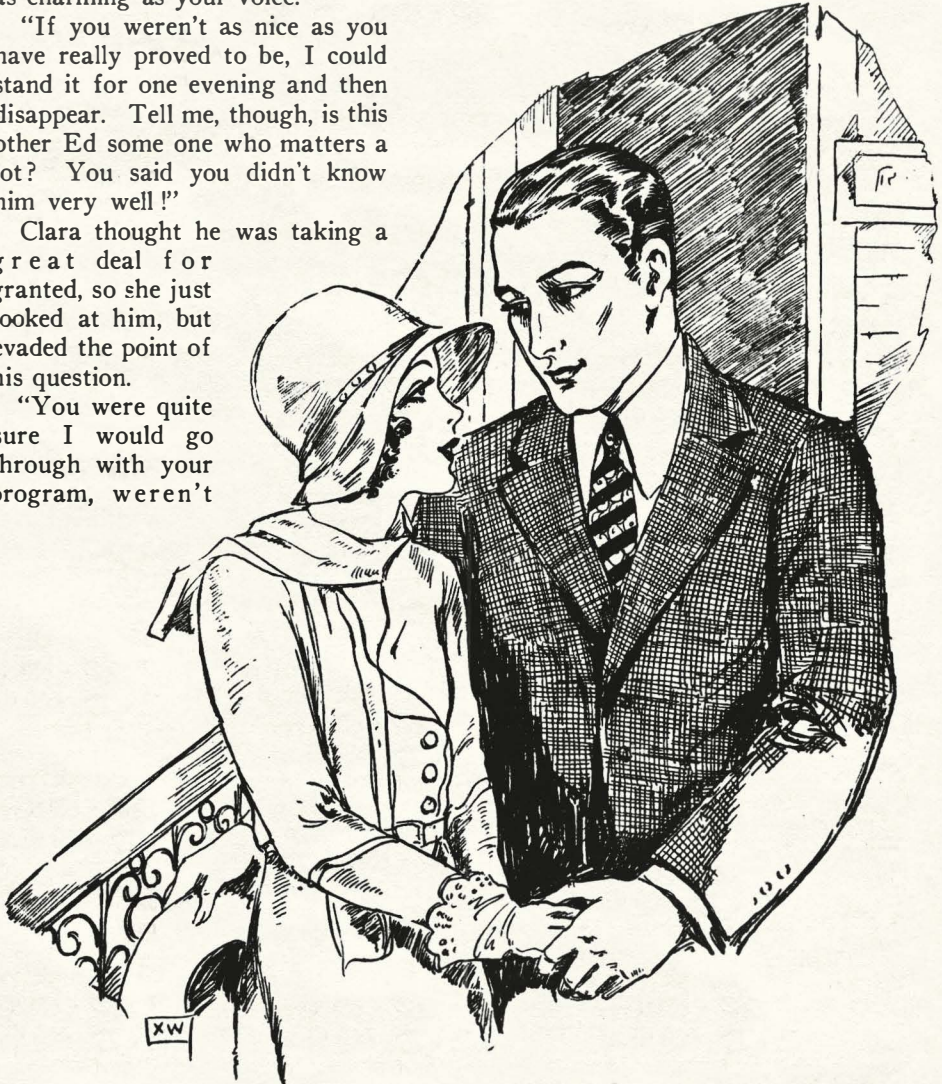
Clara thought he was taking a great deal for granted, so she just looked at him, but evaded the point of his question.

"You were quite sure I would go through with your program, weren't

you? I think I must go now!" and she started to rise.

"Oh, please!" He was genuinely sorry, she could see that. "Oh, I'm sorry I was so fresh! Please don't go! I'll be good if you will only stay for the rest of the evening! Please!" he begged, and Clara stayed.

As they went on with the dinner he told her that he hadn't been in New



Ward looked at her quickly as if he was seeing her in some new light. "I would like to see you Wednesday," he said. "You won't forget me by then?"

York many years himself, that it was rather a hard place to get acquainted and that he hadn't many friends there. They found some more things in common, such as a mutual hatred for most radio sopranos and that they both liked cats and the talkies.

They went to a near-by movie house and both enjoyed the show so much that Clara hardly noticed that Ward did not once try to hold her hand the way the boys at home always thought they were entitled to if they took you to a picture! She wondered whether he was like that with every one or was it just that he didn't like her very well. He was very chatty though, all the way home, and they both laughed like a couple of children over nothing.

She had no trouble saying good night to him! He held out a friendly hand, took hers in a firm grasp and smiled at her.

"Good night, Clara! Gee, you've turned out to be wonderful! When can I have another date—Saturday?"

"But maybe you're just being nice. You said, you know, that you would not ask this Clara out again if you didn't like her! Maybe you won't come again!"

"Oh, I'll come, all right! Don't you worry about that!"

"Sprained ankle and all?" she teased him, for of course he had just made it up about the ankle being sprained!

He grinned and went off, waving his hat reassuringly. She wondered if she would ever see him again or if he were bluffing about wanting to see her on Saturday. If he had really liked her, surely he would have been just a little bit loving, though! Wasn't he a man, and weren't they all like that?

Saturday morning she was awakened by a rap at her door; she was wanted on the telephone. Hastily she slipped on her coat over her night gown and rushed to the foot of the stairs and picked up the receiver. It must be

Ward! Oh, she hoped he wasn't going to break their date!

"Hello!" she called breathlessly.

"Hello!" No, *that* wasn't Ward. "Is that you, Clara?"

"Yes, this is Clara. Who is this?"

"Don't you know? But I didn't know your voice at first, either. This is Ed."

Ed! It was Ed, whom she thought had forgotten her as completely as she had forgotten him the last few days.

"Oh, yes, Ed, hello! How are you?"

"All right. Listen—got a date for to-night?"

"No," she answered at first, from force of habit, then she remembered that she had, but would Ward keep the date? Well, better to keep it for him and have him not come, than to have him come and not find her!

But Ed was talking:

"All right. I'll call for you about seven."

"Oh, Ed, I'm sorry! I forgot all about it! I have got a date! Won't to-morrow do instead?"

Clara felt that she had arranged that cleverly. No more lonely Sundays if things worked out right! How exciting to have two different dates. One boy for Sunday and the other for Saturday! It was wonderful!

"It can't be much of a date, or you wouldn't forget it so easily," Ed reminded her. "Won't you break it for me?"

Clara was almost tempted to agree, but then Sunday would be empty!

"No, I can't, really. I'm awfully sorry! But I would like to see you to-morrow!"

"O. K. then, about four in the afternoon? I thought we could take a bus ride some place. I wish I had a car, but I haven't! Will you take the ride with me, then?"

"Oh, I'd love to! About four? All right, Ed, that will be fine!"

However, Ward did not forget his

date with her; he was there promptly on time and they had a gorgeous evening again. They seemed to have so much to talk about that the evening just flew and before Clara could have believed it possible it was twelve o'clock. A little later, when she half-heartedly suggested that they stop dancing and go home, Ward rather disappointed her by agreeing with her. And again he gave his cordial good night, but without any display of affection.

"What do you do Sunday afternoons?" he demanded just before leaving her. "Would you like to go some place to-morrow?"

She remembered the date with Ed with a secret feeling of joy. Imagine being asked for a date for the same day by two attractive fellows! It would do Ward good not to be too sure of her. He was certainly slow about even saying he liked her, much less showing it. Perhaps she liked Ed better than she did him, too! She would see to-morrow!

She replied that she was busy the next day, but couldn't he come again the next week? She was starting back to work on Monday and in consequence would be very tired Monday and Tuesday nights, but how about Wednesday? He looked at her quickly as if he was seeing her in some new light, but he quietly agreed.

"Yes, I would like to see you Wednesday. You won't forget me by then?"

As that was the first thing Ward had ever said to Clara that showed that he cared a little for her, her heart beat fast. But their good night was just casual and friendly. She assured herself that certainly Ward wasn't even a little bit in love with her! What was the matter? Wasn't she charming enough? Was there some one else?

Ed was nicer than she had remembered him; he had a way of looking down at her as they walked along that was most interesting. It made him seem

so crazy about her, and after Ward's comparative indifference it was most soothing and flattering.

All during the bus ride he never looked at the scenery at all, but just kept watching Clara. He kept his arm around her the whole way, too, but as he didn't tighten it she felt that she would be silly to object; and hadn't she decided to make a few concessions?

Their conversation ran rapidly over many subjects, but they never once referred to the last time they had been together. Clara wondered if he had forgotten it or if he had taken her hint and was going to behave himself thereafter. Once in a while, in spite of Ed's devotion, her thoughts flew swiftly to Ward. What was he doing? And who was he with? She felt a little feeling of jealousy possess her. She couldn't bear to think of his being with another girl; though what right had she to object if he were?

They went to the movies in the evening after dinner, and after they had been there just a little while Clara felt one of Ed's hands steal over and possess one of hers. She felt that she should withdraw her own, for after that Ed paid no attention to the picture and she felt his arm going around her again. She shrugged an impatient shoulder. Did he think she was going to be made love to there before everybody? Apparently he did, for suddenly he bent his face to hers, but she pushed him away. What did he think she was?

The effect of her action was to make him angry. He withdrew his arm, dropped her hand, folded his arms and sat motionless during the rest of the picture.

After they left the theater he still persisted in his moody silence, and Clara knew that the evening was spoiled. Oh, why couldn't they effect some sort of a compromise? If he would only assure her that it was because he cared for her that he wanted to pet, and not

because he wanted to pet with every girl he knew!

This second long, silent ride almost finished Clara's good resolution. After they left the station she took hold of Ed's arm and rubbed her cheek against his shoulder:

"Honey." She felt a little deceitful as she did so, for did she love him, after all? "Honey, I'm sorry I was cross!"

He brightened at once.

"That's all right, Clara, but you don't want to go home right away, do you? Let's take a cab ride or something!"

"No, honey, not to-night! I have to work to-morrow and it's after twelve now."

"Aw, the evening is just starting! Come on!"

"I can't! They won't let me in the house any later, and I've lost my key, so I don't dare! The next time, Ed!"

By that time they were on the steps of her house and suddenly he grabbed her to him tightly and pressed his lips to hers.

As he did so, Clara heard footsteps inside the house coming down the stairs. Suppose some one should see her like this? Summoning all her strength she pushed him away.

"Don't, Ed! Some one is coming! Next time, really! That is, if—if you love me, Ed!"

The door opened and he quickly stepped away from her.

"To-morrow, then?" he demanded softly.

"No, not to-morrow or Tuesday. I will be too tired. I'm starting back to work, you know, but Wednesday?" Then she had the swift thought, "Oh, no! Not Wednesday, I've promised that to Ward! How exciting life has become!" Aloud she said, "How about Thursday, Ed?"

The landlady had been standing at the door all this time, waiting for Clara

to go in. Clara suspected that her mother had asked her to keep an eye on her, for she certainly had, though there had never been any need before.

Ed agreed to Thursday and hurried off.

Clara had little time to spend on love the next two days! How she worked, and when she got home at night she was too tired to do more than eat her supper and go to bed. By Wednesday, however, everything was running smoothly, she felt rested and fit again and very glad to see Ward when he came for her!

He was nice and thoughtful but sort of detached, and Clara began to wish that he would try to hold her hand, even, or something to show that he really liked her! She had begun to like him so much that she felt that all she needed was a word or a look of love from him and she would be in love with him.

What could be the reason? He should be at least a little in love if he was ever going to be! Perhaps he had a sweetheart in his home town that he was engaged to and just liked a little companionship from Clara! She hated thinking so, but she determined that if he did not show a little affection for her that there must be a reason, and a feminine reason at that! And how dreadful to start caring for him and then to have to give him up!

If he did not say something to-night it would be better to try to center all her affection on Ed, who certainly cared for her, for he showed it!

But Ward didn't, and so she believed that she was just a "one-time girl" to him; some one to pass a pleasant hour or two with occasionally. He had asked for another date the next week, and when she had hesitated, he had added quickly:

"Well, don't, if you don't want to!"

He had looked a little hurt, but it was probably just his vanity! He didn't

care, she decided; for he had just let it go then, and as he said, "Good night," had remarked that he would call her up some time soon. How final that sounded!

When Ed came the next night she acceded to everything he wanted. She was in sort of a rebellious mood. She had had a little trouble at the library and been blamed for some mistakes that she was sure some one else had made in her absence, and Mrs. Howard, the landlady, had been fussy because she was late for breakfast that morning and they had had to rush things for her, so all in all, she was feeling that the world was against her. Even the man she cared for didn't love her! Luckily some one else did, though! She was in her most reckless mood. If Ed had suggested jumping into the East River she thought she would have done it!

But he hadn't originality enough to suggest anything that didn't come under the head of eat, dance or pet. They ate—at least he did—it was too hot for her to have an appetite, then they danced and finally he suggested that they leave and take a walk around the park.

He didn't even look for an out-of-the-way spot as he had before. He just dropped down on the first empty bench they came to, which, however, was sheltered by a grove of bushes on one side, and grabbing her hand pulled her down beside him. Just as he encircled her in his fierce embrace a strong beam of light fell on them from a car on its way through the park. The angle was such that they were lighted up as if by a spotlight, and the light fell full in Ed's eyes and he dodged it instinctively, letting his grasp of Clara relax a little. They both sat perfectly still for a moment.

Footsteps approached them and suddenly stopped; they could see nothing because of the blinding glare, but presently the light shifted as the car started

again and the bystander was illumined by its glare.

Clara gave a little cry of horror. Oh, how could it be? But it was!

Standing there as white as a sheet and with the most dreadful look on his face as he twisted himself away from the circle of light, standing there like her guilty conscience come to confront her in person, was Ward!

Before Clara could say a word—anyway, what was there to say?—he had vanished in the darkness.

Her heart cried out in anguish after him; now she knew that she really did love him and that only he mattered! She felt she could never be happy again. The only man she could love had seen her accepting willingly the caresses of another!

She must do something; he must not go like that! Jumping from the bench she plunged into the night in the direction that he had taken.

"Ward!" she called softly. "Ward, come back! Please let me explain to you!"

Then she suddenly saw a shadow darker than the night pause, hesitate, and she ran up to Ward and caught his arm.

"Oh, Ward, please let me explain! Please don't think I'm like that. Ward, don't look at me like that!"

"Explain?" His voice was harsh and cutting. "I can't see anything to explain what you were evidently enjoying. I'm sorry. I thought you were different. My mistake. Don't let it bother you!"

She could hear Ed coming after her and knew that she must speak quickly.

"But, Ward, I didn't know you cared. You were always so cold. And I've been so lonely. I wanted some one to love me, to care for me!" she ended, trying to choke back the sobs that filled her throat.

"So!" he said in the same cutting voice, "that's it! You didn't think I

loved you because I didn't treat you like a silly flapper. So that's what you call love. It's just as well that all this happened to-night to show me what you're like, for you and I could never think alike!"

He looked so ugly as he stood facing them that Clara began to be afraid. She couldn't go with him while he was in that bad temper and yet Ward would have nothing to do with her! She began to cry softly.



"Ward, back there you told Ed that—that you loved me. Was it true? Did you love me before to-night? Did you really love me?"

At that moment, Ed came up and seeing her clinging to Ward's arm, became angrier than he was before.

"What's all this?" he sneered. "What you doing, Clara, holding onto another guy like that? Go on, big boy! On your way! That's my girl and she knows it or she's going to find it out pretty quick! On your way, stranger!"

She felt the arm under her hand tighten, felt Ward shake her hand off his arm and then she began to be afraid in a new way. What if they should fight, for Ed was bigger and heavier than Ward! How terrible if Ward should be hurt! And how pitiful for her, for then she would be completely in Ed's power! Should she scream for

help? Should she call the police? But then they might all be arrested and how could she explain?

Ed reached for her, pulled her roughly away and flung her to one side.

"Get out of the way, Clara, so you won't be hurt. I'll dispose of this guy and then I'll see about you!"

It seemed like a horrible nightmare to her as the two stood in the soft summer night facing each other like a pair of wild beasts, for Ward was angry now, too. He spoke through clenched teeth:

"She's not your girl, you brute, and you shan't have her! You don't know how to love a girl like her. I love her, even though I hate myself for doing it, and you shan't have her!"

Suddenly he rushed forward before Ed could guard against his impulsive attack and shoved one fist against the eye and the other against the jaw of his surprised opponent. In a moment Ed crumpled and fell, and Ward stood looking down on him with a dazed air.

"He's out!" He turned an astonished face to Clara. "I've knocked him cold! No, look! He's sitting up!"

He was, but as Clara glanced at him before turning to flee in terror, she saw that all the fight was knocked out of him. He sat limply on the grass, one eye was rapidly swelling and turning black and he was holding his jaw in both hands as if it hurt him.

"Take the dame!" he muttered. "You're welcome to her! Of all the cold, calculating little things she's the worst! Get out!" He turned to Clara. "Get out, the two of you!" He went on cursing so horribly that Clara hurried away so that she wouldn't hear him.

She could hear no footsteps following her, for the grass was soft and heavy; she did not dare to hope that Ward had come after her; it served her right if he had gone out of her life completely!

She felt as if her heart was broken as she stumbled along, blindly. How brave Ward was; how wonderful in every way! And he had loved her and she had lost him!

Walking as if in a daze she did not see a small stone that was in her way, her foot caught, she stumbled and fell flat. It seemed symbolic to her, for she was fallen indeed from happiness and through her own fault! She lay crying heart-brokenly, not even trying to get up, not caring whether she was hurt and almost wishing that she was.

A bitter moment passed and then a pair of strong hands gripped her elbows and lifted her to her feet. She dropped the arm which had been over her eyes and saw that her rescuer was Ward, looking sorry and undecided. Grasping one of his hands with both of hers she made a last desperate effort to make him understand.

"Ward, back there you told Ed that—that you loved me. Was it true? Did you love me before to-night? Did you really love me?"

"Yes, Clara, I did." His voice was choked and hurt and his eyes seemed to be filled with all the sorrow in the world.

"Oh, Ward, if you had only told me! If I had only known! You never let me know! If you had only given me a little hint I would never have seen Ed again, but I thought you—you didn't care!"

"Why? Because I loved you enough not to cheapen our love by handling you like a doll? I wanted to marry you, Clara! I wasn't looking for just a little amusement, but you wouldn't have it that way. I wasn't going to rush you into it for I wanted it to be a life job for us. I knew from the first that you were my girl but I wanted to give you time so you'd be sure. I know I'm not handsome like Ed, but I would have tried to make you happy. But you'd rather have a good time. Well,

I always heard that girls were like that!"

He turned to go and she knew that if she let him leave her she would never see him again.

"But, Ward, if you loved me as you say, you'd try to understand! You'd see that I was weak and silly but that I wasn't bad and that it was your coldness and indifference that drove me to it! Please, Ward, won't you see my side of it? I love you, too! Oh, Ward, don't go away and leave me!"

He seemed to feel her deep earnestness for his expression softened for the first time. He held her off from him and looked deep into her eyes. Finally he spoke:

"Clara, I do believe you. And perhaps I was expecting too much from a girl as young and pretty as you are. And now, poor child, you've had enough for one evening! Let me take

you home now and to-morrow I will come and we will talk it all over sensibly. Let's get a cab."

To-morrow? To-morrow was twenty-four hours off! As soon as they got into the cab Clara determined to make sure that she would not lose the man she loved again! Shyly she reached up and kissed his cheek, sweetly she spoke, gently she put her hand in his.

"But, Ward! I want to know! Am I engaged to you or not?"

He laughed and reached for her and held her tight while he murmured close to her lips:

"You rascal, there's no resisting you! Of course you're engaged to me, and remember, you're taking on a life job!"

Then, in his arms, his lips on hers, Clara knew that she was finding lasting and real happiness and knew that never again need she fear being only a one-time girl.





In Love With Vago

By Betty Bennett

THE insistent ringing of an alarm clock broke the silence. A blond, curly-headed girl, awakened rudely from sleep, sat up in bed. Her chubby roommate opened her eyes in bewilderment. It was three o'clock in the morning, and the room was black as jet.

Understanding came to the blond girl. She turned off the alarm and snapped on the light. A little figure in pink pajamas, she crawled out of bed. Her roommate did likewise. No word was spoken.

They circled the room three times in lockstep fashion, drank from a glass of pink liquid on the dresser, clapped their

hands once, and circled the room again. Then they crawled solemnly back into bed. The blond, curly-haired girl turned off the light.

The roommates chatted as they finished breakfast the next morning.

"All that I ask is that my fate be dark and handsome. I'll never marry unless he is," Joan of the fair curls maintained in her sweet, warm voice. "And his idea of marriage must be having a home to be proud of."

"I bet the man you marry won't be either dark or handsome or have a single idea about marriage that agrees with yours," the chubby roommate, Helen

Elizabeth, declared. "You're just the kind to love a man because of the cute way his ears stick out or——"

"Well, I bet you marry Harry Worcester," Joan answered spiritedly, as she spread marmalade on her last piece of toast.

"I certainly shall not," Helen Elizabeth replied. "If I were going to, do you suppose I would have done the mystic rites with you last night, and drunk the pink love potion you read about in a magazine?" She was putting on her hat now. "If the potion works, the third man I meet to-day will be my fate, just as the third man you meet will be yours."

"We'll have lots to tell to-night," Joan predicted. "Don't forget the rule—you must get acquainted with your third man no matter what he's like. I think I'll break my beads just as mine approaches, and make friends that way. If you should make up with Harry"—her roommate was leaving now—"and not want to come to our new cabin, remember I can get along without you!"

"I told you I was through with Harry, and when I'm through, I'm through!" Helen Elizabeth asserted positively. "So long."

A few minutes later Joan, too, put on her hat and coat and went out into San Francisco's usual morning fog. Her big brown eyes peered interestedly down California Street to see what young man she was destined to pass first. He turned out to be a vikinglike blond with the shoulders of a football player and the jaw of a prize fighter. She inspected him critically.

"He'd boss his wife all around the clock," she thought. "Goodness me, I'm glad he's not my fate!"

A second young man approached. He had shiny black hair, a dark little mustache, and was as well turned out as a matinée idol. His handsome brown eyes remained on Joan longer than was necessary.

"He'd be fickle," she decided. "Goodness me, I'm glad he's not my fate!"

Several women and an older man passed. These, of course, Joan scarcely noticed. The third young man was coming!

Glory of glories, the man was tall and—yes, she did believe he was dark. In a moment he would be near enough for her to see his face. Her heart began to thump.

She had a good view of him now. His eyes were mean-looking and close together, and his face was red and coarse. She caught her breath in horror. Oh, she must not let him pass and so be her fate!

Not noticing she was at a crossing, she turned around. There was a wild honking of a horn. Startled, she jumped back, turning her ankle, and took a nasty fall. A peculiar-looking vehicle swerved and just avoided hitting her.

"Good grief!" The driver of the strange contraption was rushing to her. "Are you hurt?" he asked with deep concern as he helped her rise.

"No, not at all," Joan replied, a little dazed.

"He's certainly a queer-looking man," she thought absently.

Then she remembered that he was her fate of the love potion. Her nose wrinkled up and her eyes twinkled. The idea was just too ridiculous.

"Why do you smile?" he asked.

She thought: "If you know how funny you looked, you wouldn't ask. Why, your mop of carrot-red hair doesn't even look real, and goodness me, don't you realize that brown suit is two sizes too small and your arms hang inches below your cuffs? Why do you wear such big green goggles, and add insult to injury by wearing a bright-red tie with your carrot hair? Any girl with a sense of humor would smile at the idea of your being her fate!"

But she said aloud politely: "I smile

because I was lucky enough not to have been hurt."

"I'm sorry I frightened you. You've no idea!" the man declared in a surprisingly pleasant voice. "I never dreamed you were going to turn around. Well, I'd better go now," he ended with a strange abruptness.

He moved jerkily toward his car, which was really a small brown house on wheels. The words: "Traveling Book Shop," were painted on its sides.

"Is that—you have a library?" Joan called after him.

"Yes, I cover the small towns between Sausalito and Fairfax," he stopped to inform her.

"Could you bring me some books in Mill Valley?" she inquired. "I'm going there now to a cabin my roommate and I have just rented." She had noticed that he had an attractive mouth and a boyish, crooked nose, and, anyway, she had vowed to become acquainted with the third man she met no matter what he was like. After all, this queer individual might prove interesting.

"Of course I could," he replied. "I'm on my way across the bay myself. I—I wonder if you would care to ride over with me. There's a big driver's seat, but—perhaps you—you wouldn't care to ride like that," he said hesitantly.

"Oh, but I would," she answered.

"How did you ever think of having a traveling library?" she asked interestedly a few minutes later. They were sitting side by side now, turning into Market Street—he, tall, lanky, and homely; she, little, and dainty, and lovely.

"My doctor ordered me to live outdoors after I had a breakdown, so I took up this work," he asserted. "I've grown to love nature. I consider the trees and birds and butterflies my friends, and I have several lizards for pets." He had an odd, jerky way of speaking, like one saying things rehearsed but no yet familiar. "Lizards

make very nice pets; you've no idea!" He turned his smile on her.

He had dimples! Joan caught her breath, she was so surprised. And they were attractive dimples. Oh, what a story she would have to tell Helen Elizabeth about a funny, boyish man with woolly red hair and green goggles and dimples. Probably the girl he married would have to go gypsying with him in his brown house of a car and supply the countryside with books, too.

Her roguish eyes smiled out at the docks they were approaching. Even if this man was not her fate, as he most decidedly was not, she was having fun!

That evening Joan's roommate did not arrive at the cabin as had been planned. Instead there came a telegram:

HAROLD AND I MADE UP STOP AM STAYING
IN CITY STOP CAN YOU FORGIVE ME

HELEN · ELIZABETH

Joan smiled a little I-told-you-so smile; then a sinking feeling came over her. She would be lonesome here.

After breakfast the next morning she heard a quick, jerky rapping at the side door. She opened it, and the traveling librarian stood before her.

"Oh, good morning!" she said warmly.

Goodness, she was glad to see him, glad to see his fuzzy red hair and his lanky form and his crooked, boyish nose. She was so lonesome that any one was welcome.

"Here are your books," he said in a businesslike tone.

"Do sit down while I look them over," she invited cordially.

Sitting in a wooden rocker on the porch, he took off his green goggles—he was much better-looking without them—and began to hum "The Jewel Song" from "Faust."

"How on earth do you happen to know grand opera?" she asked.

"I have a good friend who taught me many of the songs, some one who will be a famous singer some day, perhaps appear in New York."

"How marvelous!" Joan exclaimed, impressed. "The girl who was planning on coming out with me is studying music to go on the concert stage," she added proudly. "She's always quarreling about it with the man she's going to marry, but he's said now he'd let her."

"You said you were taking violin lessons in the city twice a week and practicing three hours a day here. Do you expect——"

Joan had told him about her ambitions the day before, while they drove in his little car.

"Oh, I only want to be good enough to teach," she replied.

"You should teach little children. You'd be good at that," he said decisively. "You've no idea! Well, I must run along," he announced abruptly. She had never known such an abrupt man. "It's eleven and I forgot to have breakfast."

"You forgot?" Joan exclaimed, shocked.

"Yes, I'm absent-minded," he explained matter-of-factly. "Also, I think it's a great nuisance to eat unless you're hungry. What a silly reason for taking food—just because it's eight o'clock or nine or ten, don't you think? Personally I hate time, I never carry a watch. What's the use of knowing what time it is? Well, I'll be running along."

Joan was too astounded at what the man had said to make any comments.

"By the way, you haven't told me your name," he remarked. "That's another nuisance. Why shouldn't I call you whatever fits—just Miss Curly, for instance? Never mind telling me your name," he said briskly. "I'll call you that."

"Mine is Vago Sands," he went on. "I was baptized that—Vago, short for

Vagabond. My father was a poet," he declared. "The name is his doing. I've no sisters or brothers. But I really must run along. I'll be back with more books, Miss Curly, in a few days." He turned and ran toward the road.

The girl leaned against the porch with gasping breath.

"If I hadn't seen him with my own eyes, I wouldn't believe he was real," she told an interested chickadee. "He's just like a character out of a book!"

Joan grew to depend upon Vago Sands in the next six weeks. That was, of course, because no other friends were at hand, she decided. One had to have some one for company. On the rare days when the traveling library did not come to the cabin, her thoughts were all of its owner, his funny clothes and his humorous mouth and his strange sayings.

She found him excellent company. His talk was delightful, and he was always singing. She laughed over his forgetfulness until the tears came. One day he showed up wearing socks that did not match. He admitted that he never wore a hat because keeping track of it was too difficult. He was forever getting stalled in his car because of having forgotten to give it gasoline. He was like a little boy who had never grown up.

He was, nevertheless, thoughtful and kind to Joan. Hiking with him one Sunday up Mount Tamalpais, Joan fell among the rocks. In his haste to reach her, he cut his right hand so badly that a scar resulted, but he was so concerned about her that he did not even notice that he was hurt.

He was always fussing about her being alone, saying: "Never leave your door unlocked," or: "You're in a forest-fire country. If a fire should come, don't wait to pack; get out." She could almost cry at the thought of how he worried over her—kind, tender, charming, funny Vago with his bright-red

ties and his long arms and his woolly red hair that looked like a rag doll's.

In spite of the fact that he saw Joan so often, he was very impersonal. He had known her more than a month before he told her:

She unlocked the library van a few minutes later. Reaching to turn on the light, she knocked over the contents of a top shelf.

"Goodness, I hope I haven't hurt anything," she thought.



"You were wonderful to-night!" Vago was saying. Vago, who only last night had said he loved her! An unendurable pain tore at her heart.

"You know, Curly, you look mighty sweet to-night."

"Are you sick?" she asked. Before he could answer she exclaimed chidingly: "Vago! You left the ice cream to melt in your car."

"Good grief! That's just what I did." He started for his van.

"Wait a minute," she called. "You wanted coffee made your special way to-night. You make it, and I'll go after the ice cream. I don't mind; I want to," she answered his look of protest.

She picked up some pencils and half a dozen letters that had fallen. The letters, she could not help noticing, had been sent to "Tom Meloney." It was strange that Vago had so many letters addressed to another man, she reflected as she picked up the package of ice cream.

She was about to turn away when her eyes fell upon something else—a photograph. It was the photograph of a woman, beautiful and majestic as a queen, wearing many strands of pearls,

sophisticated ear drops, and a coat of ermine. It bore the signature:

Lovingly,

MUSETTE.

Feeling guilty, Joan hurriedly turned off the light and walked toward the cabin. She was oddly disturbed. Who was the beautiful woman? Where had Vago met her? Did they know each other well?

How little she knew of him, she reflected; only the things that he had told her, and so often they had been contradictory. She recalled a dozen instances when he had been inconsistent. When she had first asked him about it, he had declared that the traveling library was the outcome of the doctor's orders to live outdoors. Later Vago had said that he had not been ill for years. One day he spoke of his father's law practice, and when she remarked that she thought his father had been a poet, Vago was plainly confused. This undependability always worried her. But, after all, what did it matter? Vago was Vago, having a hundred good qualities.

"You certainly do look sweet tonight," he told Joan again when they were rising from the table.

"What's come over you? You never were like this before!" She laughed.

"I've always thought such things," he maintained, meeting the glance of her soft brown eyes. "To-night my thoughts are merely breaking out."

They walked outside, sat on the porch swing, and looked upon a night throbbing with beauty. A thin crescent moon sailed softly among a thousand stars; a breeze played a tune on the rustling trees. There was a soft medley of insect chorus, with the louder note played by the crickets. In a nest near by a sleepy bird was chirping, and far off an owl sent forth its weird call.

The man looked at the girl sitting beside him, her face touched with moonlight. Softly in his melodious voice he

sang a line or two from a new popular song.

A little pulse began to beat in Joan's throat. There was something so warm, so tender, so personal in Vago's singing.

He went on singing for a moment, his eyes on her face.

And then she was in his arms.

"Joan, oh, Joan, do you care? You're everything to me, all the beauty in life, all the grace, all the sweetness fused in one! You know, don't you, that I want you for my own?"

Before she realized it, her arms had crept about his neck. "I never dreamed you cared," she whispered unsteadily. "O Vago, Vago!" His love had swept like a tide into the innermost recesses of her heart.

He drew her close and pressed his lips on hers. A sweetness, a conviction that she belonged to this man, wiped out every other sensation.

At last she drew away from him. "Oh, I shouldn't have let you kiss me," she said.

"Why do you say that?"

"Because I—oh, Vago, I can't marry you," she said unhappily. "My idea of marriage is—so different from yours."

"What is your idea of marriage?" he asked quietly.

"I always said it would be living in a modern city apartment or a house with a fireplace," she faltered, "a car for Saturday nights at a country club, and having—smart things. I—I've always wanted a nice home and some social life, Vago. I never had either as a little girl."

"I see, and I—I'm just a sort of gypsy with my traveling library. I offer you—only love," he declared somberly. "Ah, but, Joan, isn't that something?" he pleaded. "To know to the end of your life that some one will be thinking of you always first, wanting you to be happy, caring with the best of him for you to-day and to-morrow

and forever. I love you so much, dear, every bit of you, each little freckle on your face, every ringlet on your head, even your ten little finger tips. You seem to care, dear. Isn't love, after all, the greatest thing in life? Joan, say 'yes'!"

"Oh, I can't! I can't!" she cried.

She had never been so unhappy in her life. She loved Vago; she wanted to be his. But how could she take for a husband a man with woolly red hair and funny ties and gangling arms? Wouldn't Helen Elizabeth laugh at him, every one laugh at him, just as she had done? Who else would appreciate the charm and tenderness of him? How could she, who had dreamed from childhood of a real home, marry a man who thought a run-down van adequate covering for one's head?

Vago took his arms from about her. "I think it's best for me to go," he said sadly.

Go when she was unhappy and he was even more so?

"Don't! Why must you?"

He stood inside the cabin with the light from a lamp falling on his white face.

"I go because I can't stand looking at you, knowing that you will never be mine!" he declared tersely. "And if I'm strong enough to stay away, it's good-by!"

He opened the door and was gone from her sight. Joan went racing after him.

"Vago! Vago! Come back, come back!"

He stood on the path before her, silhouetted against the moonlit sky. Swiftly she flew into his arms.

"I love you! I love you too much to let you go," she choked. "I don't care about a home or anything but you. I just didn't realize what you meant to me. Your love is all I ask, all I want, my darling. It's more than enough. I'll marry you any time you

say. O Vago, Vago!" she ended huskily. "I adore you!"

They could scarcely tear themselves apart that night. Now that they had discovered how much they cared, separation for a single day seemed like that of a dozen years. Over and over they declared their love and said good night.

And after Vago was gone, Joan lay awake in her little bed in the starlight and thought of him. To-morrow evening he would be with her again, but how far away that seemed! Dreaming of their meeting, she went to sleep at last.

The following day was hot and close, typical of those that come at the end of the dry season. The countryside lay parched and yellow, just existing until life-giving moisture came again. Joan, in her little cabin, did not notice those things. All day she played love songs on her violin and dreamed of Vago with his whimsical smile, and happy-go-lucky ways, and beautiful tenderness. All her doubts about marrying him had vanished. If they loved each other, wouldn't even a ramshackle gypsy van be home? And why shouldn't her friends grow to admire him as she had?

Toward evening she wrote a letter to Helen Elizabeth, in answer to one the postman had brought early that morning. She began:

Since I haven't telephoned from the neighbor's, you must know I'm not coming in to-night for the opera, as you asked me to.

I don't want to leave for a single evening because all my heart is here. Helen Elizabeth, just as if the love potion worked, Vago Sands turned out to be my fate. I know now why the term "crazy in love" is used; that's just how I am. I'm mad about Vago.

In like vein she covered three sheets of paper.

At five o'clock she dressed for Vago's coming. He was going to take her to Manor's Leap or the popular, if informal, Dinah's Shack for dinner. She

brushed out each separate curl. They were suddenly precious to her, for Vago had said he loved them. She cleaned and shined her little finger nails; Vago loved them, too. She covered her delicate little face with fragrant cold cream, patting every freckle. Vago loved even them!

As she slipped into a dainty dress of flowered chiffon, she heard footsteps hurrying up the side path. Vago was here! He was early because he couldn't wait longer to see her! Lightning-fast, Joan flew to the door.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, taken aback.

Not Vago, but a stranger with a telegram stood on the porch. Her heart plunged as she thought: "Oh, what has happened?"

She tore open the yellow envelope and read the ten words:

CAN'T COME TO-NIGHT SORRY WILL BE WITH
YOU TO-MORROW MORNING VAGO

She could scarcely keep back tears of disappointment. She had looked forward to the evening so much, and now Vago wasn't coming! How could she live through the next hours?

"I'll telephone Helen Elizabeth," she decided impulsively, "and tell her I'll be in to-night for the opera."

"Traviata" was the opera. Its opening scene was spectacular, with its smart, gay evening party of long ago, its colorful costumes, its tinkling glasses and laughter.

The two girls had inexpensive seats in the balcony. Helen Elizabeth's eyes shone with enjoyment as she thought that she, too, might some day appear on the stage. Even Joan, for the moment, forgot her low spirits.

"Doesn't Cazetta's voice simply thrill you?" Helen Elizabeth asked in a whisper.

"It's like a flute," Joan whispered back. "And isn't she lovely? She reminds me of somebody I've seen before, but I don't know whom."

Cazetta was the star of the opera, which that year opened an early musical season. Just back from Europe, she had been ill when the company had started for the Pacific coast, and she had been left in New York. Then coming by airplane, even though she had not been expected to appear to-night, she had kept her original engagement in the city.

The curtain fell on the first act. A thousand hands clapped. With graceful bows the prima donna acknowledged the acclaim. Ushers bearing bouquets rushed to the platform.

Cazetta, her arms flower-laden, bowed again and again. She smiled, threw kisses, tossed several rosebuds into the audience. Joan wished she were in the orchestra and might catch one.

After lightly kissing a red rose, the beautiful singer flung it upward to a box at her right.

"Maybe she's in love with some one up there," Helen Elizabeth breathed.

The girls' interested eyes were on the box, which held four men in evening clothes. The youngest-appearing, black-haired and, judging by his back, which was all the girls could see, the handsomest of the four, cleverly caught the rose and pressed it to his lips.

The opera sped on. In spite of always having thought opera boring and highbrow, Joan was thoroughly enjoying herself. Toward the close of the last act, she referred to her program.

She caught her breath. A full-page portrait of the star stared up at her. Suddenly she knew why Cazetta had looked familiar. The portrait was that of a woman, beautiful and majestic as a queen, in a coat of ermine. It was identical with the picture she had seen in Vago's van!

Joan was overcome with astonishment. She remembered that several times Vago had referred to a gifted

friend who knew all the operas. That friend had evidently been Cazetta.

Then a sinking came into Joan's heart. What had Cazetta, who had signed her picture, "Lovingly, Musette," meant to Vago? Had he learned at the last moment that she was to appear to-night? Was that why he had broken his engagement and not come to Mill Valley?

Her eyes instinctively sought the box with the four men. The world dipped and swayed about her. She had a good view of the youngest, and she saw that he was the very image of Vago. This man in evening clothes was distinguished-looking, well-groomed, and he had black hair, but he also had Vago's boyish profile and—yes, his dimples. He was smiling down at Cazetta, the wondrous singer who was acknowledging the thunderous applause after the last act.

"Why don't you clap?" Helen Elizabeth asked disapprovingly. "Let's go out to the stage door and try to see Cazetta at close range."

Joan consented in a voice that did not sound like hers. Would the man in the box be with Cazetta? If he was not Vago, who was he?

At the back entrance a crowd had already collected. A bright-blue limousine with a liveried chauffeur waited at the curb.

"Here she comes! A man is with her," Cazetta's admirers murmured.

Joan, hidden by a fat woman, leaned forward a little to see better.

The star of the opera, in a white-fur-collared blue evening coat, sparkling with jewels, clung to the arm of her attractive escort, the young man of the box.

Joan thought for a moment she was going to faint. The man was Vago! She could even see the scar on his right hand, received that Sunday on Tamalpais. An unendurable pain tore at her heart.

The man looked neither to the right nor the left; he had eyes only for the woman at his side.

"You were wonderful to-night!" Vago was saying. Vago, who only last night had said he loved her!

"I did my best—for you," the woman replied. "O Tom, I'm so happy because you came. I had to send word so late, I was afraid you wouldn't come," she told him earnestly.

Joan closed her eyes in anguish.

"After not having seen you for three years, dear, do you think anything could keep me away?"

The two had passed now and were entering the limousine. Joan saw them settle themselves in the back seat, the woman laying her hand affectionately on Vago's. Then the blue limousine rolled away.

"They're aware only of each other," Helen Elizabeth said in an awed whisper.

Joan did not hear. She was staring down the street with unseeing eyes.

"Well, we'd better go now," Helen Elizabeth said. She turned and saw her friend's face. "Joan! What's wrong?" she cried out in fright. "You look as if you'd seen a ghost!"

"I have, the ghost of my love," Joan answered in a choked voice. "That man was Vago."

"Are you mad?" asked her friend, shocked, incredulous.

"Oh, why did he tell me he loved me? Why did he make me care? Only last night I found out how much I loved him. He's all that matters in life to me. Oh, I can't lose him like this!" Joan was sobbing hysterically. People in the street turned around to look.

"Don't cry like that." Her friend's arm went about her, tightened.

"I wish I could die!" Joan sobbed. "He broke a date with me because he wanted to be with—her. And what chance have I against a beautiful woman like that? Leave me alone; don't tell



"Do you think you can learn to love me, dear?" he asked earnestly, as he took her in his arms.

me not to mind," she cried in a low, tight voice. "Let me go off and die!"

It was a terrible night for Joan, a night she would remember all the rest of her life. She tossed on her bed on the upstairs porch while worried, kindly Helen Elizabeth, who had insisted on coming to Mill Valley with her, slept inside. Joan looked up at the mystery that was the star-set heavens, and wondered hopelessly about life. Why must people suffer so? Why had she

been made to love Vago, only to lose him? What had she done to deserve such punishment? Hour after hour she tossed.

She had no doubt but that the talented singer was more than a friend to Vago, an old sweetheart probably with whom he was again reunited. What agony her thoughts brought!

As the night dragged on, she grew bitter. She remembered the countless untruths he had told her. Cazetta, it

came to her now, had called him Tom. Tom Meloney was the name on the letters she had seen in the car, probably his right name. He had told her lies from beginning to end! Yes, even the color of his hair had been a lie. That carrotty niass had evidently not been his own. Unbelievable, impossible, she would have said a week before, but now she knew it was as true as the ache in her heart. Oh, what did it all mean? What had been his reason for deceiving her so? And yet what did the answers to those questions matter? There was no hope of happiness for her. Vago did not love her.

She must take her heart and kill its great love for him, forget his kisses, the feel of his arms about her, forget his whispered tendernesses.

To-morrow she would manage not to see him, put her cabin in order for leaving. Then the following day when she went into the city for her violin lesson, she would take her things along and stay with Helen Elizabeth, who was happily preparing to marry Harry Worster at Thanksgiving.

She could not go through the torture of seeing Vago again when she knew he loved some one else. Vago had said to another woman: "After not having seen you for three years, dear, do you think anything could keep me away?"

At the remembrance, Joan closed her eyes and gave a little moan.

It was eleven before she awakened the next morning. Helen Elizabeth had already gone back to San Francisco.

After dressing hurriedly, Joan took a piece of paper and scribbled:

Have gone away, visiting.

JOAN.

She tucked this into the doorknob so that Vago would see it when he came.

Presently she heard quick, jaunty steps coming up the uneven side path. They stopped before her door. She

heard the rattle of the doorknob as the note was taken. There was a long silence. Then footsteps, slower now, went down the path.

She peered from behind a curtain, saw Vago get into his ramshackle car. That brief sight of him was more than she could bear.

"Vago, O Vago, I love you so!" she cried out brokenly. She slumped into a chair. Her little face was convulsed with agony.

If she were busy, it would not be so hard to go on living, she told herself. She went to the kitchen and began to set it in order. A boy came with groceries ordered yesterday.

"Say, there's a big fire around Blythesdale Canyon," he said with the enjoyment of one with news to tell. "Some says if the wind gets strong, it may be a real forest fire."

"Is that so?" Joan's tone was so uninterested that he said no more.

She went into the living room, saw on her desk her only snapshot of Vago—Vago feeding two frisky squirrels. She took it in her hands and stared at it. Suddenly she flung it into the wastebasket.

Presently she went to the basket and picked up the picture. She laid it on a pile of music, and did not see it blown off the table by the wind.

"Any one here? Any one here?" called a voice early that afternoon. Some one was pounding madly on the cabin door.

Joan opened it to a stranger.

"There's a fire in the mountains, coming nearer. We're warning every one to get ready to leave," he informed her breathlessly, "in case it gets worse."

She thanked him for the information. With a sense of unreality, she saw him rush in the direction of her nearest neighbor. She went out into a clearing to look mountainward. She saw smoke, but she had seen as much several times before.

Leisurely she dragged her steamer trunk from a closet and began to fill it. She had been intending to leave tomorrow anyway, so she might as well pack as commanded, she supposed.

Then the wind began to blow in a fury. Joan could not remember its ever having been so strong. The windows rattled; the doors would not stay closed. In such a gale a fire would certainly spread swiftly, she thought. Something within her began to clamor:

"Hurry! Hurry!"

To an ever-increasing tempo she emptied bureau drawers, pulled clothes from hooks, tore pictures from the walls. She raced to the kitchen for her electric iron. She flew out the back door after a dress on the clothesline. Faster and faster she worked.

She was locking her trunk when she heard somebody outside.

"Things ready?" an agitated voice called.

A man opened the door. Without a word, he picked up the girl's steamer trunk and stumbled toward the road some distance away. Another man rushed off with her suitcase. They were volunteer firemen, she realized, and a truck was at the road. She hurried after them.

Flocks of birds were flying wildly, uttering shrill cries. The sun was no longer brilliant, but shining a pale blood-red as through an unearthly haze.

Suddenly she stopped short. She had forgotten the snapshot of Vago!

"It's all I'll have for remembrance all the rest of my life," she thought chokingly.

"I'm going back!" she shouted to a fireman.

"For Heaven's sake, hurry!" the man commanded.

She dashed into the cabin and upstairs. She searched in vain for the picture. She heard hurrying footsteps, some one pushing open a door below.

"Joan!" screamed a voice.

It was Vago's!

"Joan, Joan! Are you here?"

She plunged down the stairs as Vago bounded up to meet her.

When she saw his face, she knew that the fire was upon them.

They flung out of the house, leaving the door wide open. Her heart plunged in horror at the scene before her.

A dozen fires blazed around the cabin. Sparks carried by the gale filled the air like rain. The mountain was an on-rushing curtain of fire.

They dashed from out of the trees to the cleared mountainside, heading toward the road below. Joan's heart began to pound; her breath grew labored. In only a few minutes she was weary, as if she had been fleeing all day. On and on she and the man raced.

Suddenly they halted before a scene that made their breath catch in their throats. Beyond the trees, ahead of them, lay an avenue of shooting flame. Fire was in front as well as behind them!

"Good heavens!" gasped Vago.

"O dear Heaven, help us, help us get out!" Joan prayed in swift panic.

"We've only one chance—backfire," said Vago. His voice was calm, but there was something in his eyes that told her they might not come through alive.

He worked like a madman starting and banking a new fire to meet the other one. Joan tried desperately to help. Always their eyes were turned toward that brilliant, hideous mass of flame up on the mountain that was sweeping down upon them.

Nearer and nearer came the conflagration, roaring and crackling. It was a fire beyond human control, a fire having no heart, deaf to all human pain and suffering, like some mad soul bent on senseless destruction of the whole world.

It reached Joan's cabin. The structure burned like tinder with a white, in-

tense heat; then it sent up a spiral of black smoke.

As if she were in a strange world, Joan heard unfamiliar sounds—explosions in the tanks of abandoned automobiles and neighbors' oil stoves.

Life was a nightmare too awful to be borne. She pressed the back of her hand against her mouth to stifle a scream.

Burning embers rained upon her thin blue dress, her stockings, her fair curls. Frantically she beat at them. Then smoke, which could take more toll of human lives than fire, swirled about them, filling their eyes and throats, making them choke and gasp while the tears poured down their cheeks.

"Get down on the ground," Vago commanded hoarsely. "The smoke's less thick there."

He pulled the girl down beside him, and drew her head against his shoulder. He helped beat off the sparks. A wave of fiery heat as from the hottest tropic sun engulfed them. Vago drew her closer. Somehow in such peril it did not seem strange to have his arms about her.

Then the fire in all its horror was upon them. It was everywhere before them. It was as if the very air had burst into flame, as if the world had come to an end and they were in the heart of an inferno.

The strangling smoke, the scorching heat, the licking, creeping flames! Joan clenched her hands, and closed her eyes, and sent up a prayer in her anguish.

It was no longer: "Heaven save us!"

"O Heaven, end this!" she prayed hysterically. "Or let us die! Let us die!"

The demon fire did not touch them. It tore down the mountainside to meet the second fire which they had started.

It left devastation behind, charred tree trunks and blackened countryside. Where the sturdy cabin had stood, there were now only the bricks of the fire-

place. The destruction was unbelievable.

The man and girl gazed at each other with the solemn, aged look of those who have seen the tragic mysteries of life.

Then a tenderness came into Vago's eyes as he looked at Joan—her cheeks smudged and grimy, her brown eyes troubled, her golden curls disheveled. "I can never thank Heaven enough for saving you," he said.

It seemed a long time since last night when Joan had thought he did not care. Her reasoning of yesterday was as nothing beside that look of to-day in his eyes.

"Vago, you do love me?"

"What intuition do you think brought me back to-day but that of my love for you?" His hand sought hers in a strong grip.

"There is no other girl?" she queried.

"Why should I want another girl when I have you?"

His answer so moved her that she could not speak for a moment. He cradled her in his arms, as if she were the most precious thing on earth, and covered her face with kisses. It was a long time before she spoke.

"Do you know that you have often hurt me?" she inquired gently. "You have so often lied to me, Vago. I don't believe you've even told me your right name."

"Oh, I didn't mean to hurt you," he cried. "I didn't so much as realize that I had. You see, I wanted to finish my book, then tell you everything."

"Your book?" Brown eyes opened wide with surprise.

"When I was at college I won a prize for a first novel of college life," he explained. "I thought, of course, that the publishers would take my next books. They didn't. 'Your characters aren't real,' I was told. I was more than discouraged.

"One day I thought of a way of making them real," he explained briefly. "I'd

be the character; I vowed I'd act and look and live as he would until the last line was written. So I got myself a traveling book shop. Only a few days before I met you, I became the character about which I was writing—Vago Sands."

"O Vago!" she exclaimed softly.

"I've worked on the novel every day. When I had seven chapters finished, I sent them to the publishers. On the strength of them, they are taking the book."

"That explains many things. But, Vago," she whispered a little wistfully, "who is the beautiful prima donna?"

"Good grief! Do you mean to say you know about her?" Without waiting for an answer, he went on explaining: "She is some one of whom I am very fond and proud, my stepsister Musette whom my own father—he really was a lawyer—helped prepare for opera. I've

wanted to tell you about her—I hadn't seen her for a long time until last week—but how could I say she was my step-sister without giving myself away?"

"Curly," he asked pleadingly, "you don't care, do you, because I'm not Vago Sands?" Tearing off the carrot red wig from his own black and shining hair that waved so beautifully, he stood looking down at her—dark and handsome like the man of her dreams. "Do you think you can learn to love Tom Meloney, dear?" he asked earnestly as he took her tenderly in his arms and held her close.

The girl slipped her arms impulsively about his neck. "I'm mad about him already," she admitted tremulously, as she met the adoring look in his eyes.

He said huskily: "My own dearest Joan!"

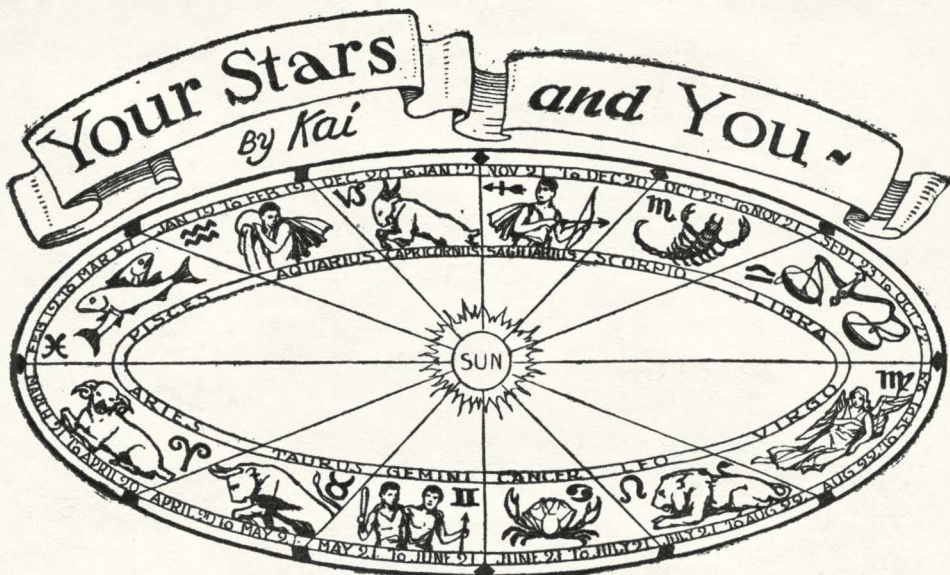
And he bent and kissed the soft, up-turned red lips she offered him.



CAMP FIRES

WHEN the embers are burning low
 And the others have gone to rest,
 When the silent birds whirl by above,
 That's the time I love the best.
 We sit and dream while the embers glow.
 In the dusk your hand finds mine.
 The moon like a golden disk rides high
 Beyond the farthest pine.
 No words are needed; I rest my head
 Where your heart beats, loving, true.
 The rest of the world is forgotten
 As I yield my lips to you.

H. BERTON COLE.



YOUR WEEK

Your astrologer can promise only a similar week to that which prevailed last week. There is a hopeful, optimistic trend to the planetary influences, with the predominant note centered on new ideas, plans, inventive methods of thinking, travel, and favorable changes for those who are under the benefic guidance of the planets.

July of 1931 is a changing period; a sort of semiclimax and a mid-point in our advancement for the current twelve months. You are being put to the ultimate test. Did you ever observe the process of "firing" a piece of china? The article—over which has been spent many hours of labor and detailed execution—is thrust into the kiln and the design and worth of the ingredients are purified by the hot flame and intense heat. This may be compared to our present conditions, both personally and generally. I may have said this before in these columns, but I repeat—the greatest test of character is in how much pressure we can bear.

Make no lasting decisions this week!

Sort your ideas and take inventory of your personal capacity. We are in the last quarter of a general readjustment in all conditions of life. Postpone definite action until a more favorable time. If you follow this department carefully, you may consider yourself well informed concerning the basic conditions with which you have to cope. There is a turn coming shortly, but acceptance and temporary resignation to your personal complications is the main point to be considered. Our wise King Solomon has

said, "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens."

DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time.

**Saturday,
July
18th.**

♄

The influences to-day are deceptive and tricky. The best part of the day is after seven p. m. Your imagination is liable to run riot in any matter that requires quick consideration. Use caution; do not expect everything to run according to the way you have planned it, and look for a changeable and uncertain trend in all affairs. It is an emotional and changeable day; control your emotions.

**Sunday,
July
19th.**

♃

This is a good day for steady work and contemplation of business matters. Deal in practical ideas and expect an enjoyable day. The morning hours are highly active; but be careful of temper and unexpected happenings. After four p. m. you may follow your own inclinations for pleasure and constructive effort.

**Monday,
July
20th.**

♂

To-day is a practical and important day. Do not start important ventures—wait until tomorrow. You will be able to accomplish more to-day with

courtesy and consideration of the other fellow than through opposition. The day is not favorable for anything but routine and ordinary enterprise.

**Tuesday,
July
21st.**

♂

There is a better set of influences in force to-day. The most important things should be taken care of after the noon hours. Do not expect results during the morning. Write, plan, seek interviews and organize your efforts for culmination in the afternoon hours. The evening is not much good for anything important, but the hours are not wholly unpleasant. Accomplish worth-while things during the afternoon.

**Wednesday,
July
22nd.**

♀

To-day is O. K., but changeable and uncertain. The best period is in the morning and around noon. The evening hours are expansive for ordinary endeavor. You should handle matters of importance to yourself before one p. m. to-day. Avoid emotional tangents.

**Thursday,
July
23rd.**

♁

The morning hours of to-day are more adaptable for friendly contact than for anything else. However, if you have urgent matters to handle, to-day is better than to-morrow. Any promotional venture or any contact with those about you where energetic effort is involved may be considered during the evening, prior to ten p. m. Clear away old duties during the morning, deal with older people and decide questions which have been hanging for some time.

**Friday,
July
24th.**

♀

The morning hours to-day are favorable for routine and unimportant details. The rest of the day is negative and unfavorable for anything but ordinary activity. This is an inauspicious time for love affairs, domestic problems and emotional feelings. It would be far better for you to ignore love interests at this time than trying to push them to a conclusion. Any matter dealing with emotions will carry unsatisfactory angles and will

necessitate a sacrifice on your part.

IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN—

March 21st and April 20th

(Aries ♈)

—you are in line for many changes, a new routine of living, and during the current week you may expect problems to arise which will demand immediate decisions for your future welfare. If born between April 6th and 12th do not expect life to move along without incident. Forget the idea that you have always been able to do the thing you want to do in spite of circumstances. You have had a bitter and hard lesson to learn and if you have anything important to put over this week, and you were born between April 6th and 12th, you will receive more benefit from your plans if you postpone them until later. It would be better for you to depend on the efforts of others during the next few weeks. There is light showing through the clouds for you if born during the last week in March. The pressure will be lifted, you will feel more expansive than you have for many months in the past, and you may begin to put your plans into motion for personal results in the near future.

April 20th and May 21st

(Taurus ♉)

—everything should be going along fairly well, whether you see actual results at hand or not. You Taurus folks have to hold a thing in the hand before you believe it actually exists, but that is not the case during these months. Your affairs are improving generally. The favored Taureans during this period were born between May 8th and May 18th—use all your opportunities to further your interest. Watch your health and avoid extravagance if born between May 21st and May 24th—do not overexert yourself at this time.

May 21st and June 21st

(Gemini ♊)

—this is a mixed period for you. There will be opportunities for financial gain, love interests, better health conditions, travel, and recognition of your abilities if born between May 21st and 25th; try to maintain stability in the emotions, and control nervous reactions. You will feel aggressive and restless if born between June 8th and 16th and should conserve your forces to the extent of keeping yourself in line in all directions; you may make changes and removals and pursue new fields

of activity if you do not work your nervous system and your mind to the limit.

June 21st and July 21st

(Cancer ☊)

—this is a mixed period for the Cancer folks and greatly improved over the past few weeks for some of you. There are partnership and domestic trials to be endured if born between July 9th and 15th and employment difficulties, but you should not attempt to straighten out the tangle during the coming week; try to bear the restraint. If born between June 22nd and 28th, the pressure is lifting and you may plan to carry through some of your ideas at this time; you will feel happier than you have for many months in the past.

July 21st and August 22nd

(Leo ♌)

—this is an active week for you and most of it is constructive action that will bring personal gratification. It is a time of opportunity if born between July 23rd and 26th—take advantage of it. Travel, make changes, seek new channels, and use all your efforts constructively and for material results if born between August 10th and 16th.

August 22nd and September 23rd

(Virgo ♍)

—most of you Virgo people have the planets with you during the coming seven days except for a tendency to nervousness, indigestion, and the probability of deception if born between August 26th and 30th. This is an active and constructive period if born between September 14th and 17th. Do not be afraid to strike out and take advantage of any angle upon which you may build for permanent results; this is a favorable time for you.

September 23rd and October 22nd

(Libra ♎)

—you Librans who were born during the first part of your sign period (from September 24th to October 1st) may breathe a sigh of relief and you may expect results to materialize in your favor for the first time since 1929; it is a favorable week for you—use it. The folks who have birthdays between October 10th and 15th must sit tight, make no decisions, be patient with the restraint, control the emotions, and make no move to break off existing ties. Much of your trouble is your own fault, and you will have to wait for better planetary conditions before making a drastic move, if you want to avoid disaster.

October 22nd and November 21st

(Scorpio ♏)

—this is a confusing and unsatisfactory period for you if born between October 24th and 28th; control your emotions and guard yourself against financial losses and unexpected expense. The current week is very favorable for Scorpio people born between November 9th and 16th; there is general activity in all departments of your life, an underlying stability and good judgment upon which you may depend. Use this period for adjusting matters which have been suspended.

November 21st and December 20th

(Sagittarius ♐)

—the current few weeks are highly favorable for some of you Sagittarians and not so favorable for others. It is an excellent time for you who were born between December 9th and 13th, when you may travel, expand your interests, make changes, follow new channels, and take on new responsibilities. You will have opportunities to make money if born between November 23rd and 26th, but you should protect your health, avoid speculative deals and emotional tangents, and investigate all possibilities for deceptive influences. Control your temper and act with forethought if born between December 13th and 19th.

December 20th and January 19th

(Capricorn ♑)

—most of you Capricornians are still under the cross-opposition of the planetary positions, and will have to act cautiously. Be patient with conditions and restraint, take no chances financially, and protect your personal interests if born between January 8th and 13th. The pressure is lifting and you will feel released from the strain of the past few months if born between December 25th and 29th.

January 19th and February 19th

(Aquarius ♒)

—the current week is not so important, but it is not an unfavorable time. The folks who are affected by the movement of the present planetary conditions were born between February 7th and 12th, and these people may take on new ventures, travel, adjust annoying conditions which have been unfavorable in the past, and plan for future accomplishment. Do not be extravagant with your money or your health if born between January 21st and 25th.

February 19th and March 21st

(Pisces ♋)

—this is a good period for you who were born between March 9th and 14th, and you may proceed with your plans in a constructive, energetic manner. Do not go off on a tangent or allow yourself to become involved in any action where deception or scandal will touch you if your birthday occurs between February 22nd and 26th. It is a pleasant time socially and emotionally if you were born during the first two weeks of March.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
 ★ **THE STAR QUESTION BOX** ★
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

That is a peculiar question you asked me, Miss D. J. G., born December 12, 1912, 5:00 a. m., Ohio; fiancé, born April 6, 1907. Evidently there is doubt in your mind concerning the advisability of marrying this man and giving up your chance of a career. Well, you are right. Your chart and the chart of this young man do not dictate that marriage would be the wise move just at this time. There is a strong attraction shown between the two charts, but your fiancé would not be very patient with your temperamental outbursts. Your personal chances for success are much better at this time than his are, and things are coming your way beginning in November, 1931, and the summer months of 1932 are excellent. Use the next two years for study; your chart indicates vocal talent, and I really think you can do something with your voice if you are willing to let nothing stand in your way and work toward your goal. You will not have the cooperation of your fiancé in this matter and there will be opposition from a woman member of your family, but if you will stand your ground and plug along in the direction you want to go, all this criticism will be forgotten when you have "arrived." Your fiancé is the type of man who will be very proud of you and your accomplishment and you will probably marry him eventually. Be sure and have a clear understanding with him about the work you want to do when you marry him, but try yourself out first with your voice and be sure of yourself before making a definite step. If I can be of further help to you, let me know. I like your chart, and I think you have a future, and I would like to help you all I can. Good luck to you.

Mrs. R. A. M., born in October. Thank you for your long letter and your frankness.

You are so fair and so magnanimous in your spirit that you have left me perplexed as to how to advise you. One of your strong traits is constancy and loyalty, and it would be hard for you to act according to my advice because of this. I want to tell you very definitely your past suffering demands loyalty to yourself, first, last, and always. You cannot help this attitude of fairness, because of your strong Libran qualities, and, as a regular reader of this department, you know the individuals born under Libra are suffering in their domestic ties and in their home lives. You have not finished with this strained condition and circumstances will not improve until you act definitely one way or the other. Put the past behind you and forget it. You were not to blame for the things that happened. Your youth, innocence, and lack of knowledge of the world was natural and forgivable. Forgive yourself first, and you may be sure all fair-minded people will stand by you. Those who do not understand are out of the picture, and you should ignore them. Concentrate on the future and try to extricate yourself from a difficult situation. You are young and there is a lifetime ahead of you. Do not let the past or the present obscure the promise the future holds for you. The present summer months will be almost unbearable and you must handle your situation diplomatically and delicately, but you may anticipate a release next year—live for that time, and act with discretion in the meantime. I certainly do not blame you for not wanting to continue your life with this man, and you will not do so. You should not be together. Use your head and abide your time. In every circumstance, remember this man's tendency to physical violence, and take no chance with this possibility. See that you have help and protection in case of an emergency. Your way will be hard until 1932, but you will come out of this. Write me again. I want to help you.

I see you are a new customer of mine, Mr. W. O. P., born June 13, 1899, Arkansas, at night. Glad to have heard from you. I should think your worst period was between 1927 and 1929. The present condition is an aftermath of the circumstances of that time. You will have minor delays and obstacles, but the winter months of 1931 are better, and 1932 holds promise of favorable conditions. You have a difficult set of planetary positions to handle, and you must always keep your goal in mind. Do not scatter your forces in wide circles; make a decision and stick to it. I do not like the indications of temper and lack of control in your chart. You will ham-

per your activity and delay your progress if you continue to be so self-centered. Vision is necessary in putting yourself across, and you have this quality strongly outlined in your character, but you will have to put these visionary ideas into practical application before you realize upon them materially. Remember, Mr. P.—your accomplishment is as great in proportion to the effort you put forth. There is no such thing as a “spell.” You have needed this Saturn influence in your life to bring out your practical qualities. That is why you have been through all this restraint and delay—use the knowledge you have acquired in obtaining future results.

This epileptic condition of your daughter, Mr. M. A. K., demanded an earlier answer, but I could not get to you before this. I am sorry to say this condition will continue for a few months longer. I know you are worried, but there is an improvement shown for your daughter in the spring of 1932. Continue with medical care, but the main idea is to keep your daughter quiet and leading a normal life. It pleases me to know you like the delineations in this department. It is gratifying to have your good wishes. Many thanks.

Mrs. L. D. A., born August 11, 1882, New Jersey, 2:00 a. m. Most of us who have tried to do our best conscientiously, wonder whether we have deserved the hard knocks we receive. This is sad especially to a woman looking backward over a period of years in relationship to family ties. The trend of the time, due to planetary conditions, is not conducive to appreciation from our sons and daughters to their parents—to mothers particularly. It inclines one to question, “What is wrong?”—whether yourself, the partner, or the family. One’s horoscope gives the key. You have been under disruptive and chaotic conditions because of the influence of the planet Uranus in your chart—call it Fate, if you wish. If I were you, I would depend upon myself and try it out alone. Find work for yourself and concentrate on doing something through your own efforts. Your natural pride and independence will be maintained and you will not have time to brood over the past. There will be developments in your favor in November, 1932, of particular importance. The present summer months are happier, too, but there are financial conditions which will not be pleasant. I do not think you will be able to effect a reconciliation with your husband, and your present influences for dealing with women is bad. Strike out for yourself and try to forget the past.

Sorry not to have been able to reach you before now, G. A. C., born June 3, 1876, about 9:00 a. m. Your influences for marriage partners is not favorable, and I can see only a repetition of past experiences in this respect. Your chart shows efficiency, but you will have to render service to others always, no matter how distasteful it is to you. By the time you read this you will have met some one who will give you companionship and affection, but I would think twice about marriage, if I were you. There is a beneficial change coming in September, 1931. You may travel at that time.

You have initiative and perseverance, Miss L. M. T., born February 14, 1899, about 11:00 p. m., Ohio, and your chart indicates more success in short-story writing than it does in writing poetry or in following a musical career. Your sense of the dramatic and the unusual quirks in your mental equipment, which is shown in your chart plainly, should be of great assistance to you in evolving creative material. There is success indicated in publishing your material. Nineteen thirty-two is a year when you will be able to work hard and derive benefit from your labors.

Mrs. L. S., born April 15, 1877, 3:00 a. m., in Alabama. Yes, I know it is hard to live your days, feeling life has been a continuation of self-sacrifice and repressed ambitions. You are due for a radical change, and I believe you will find yourself relieved of this responsibility ere long; especially in connection with your father. You were born under the sign Aries, and you Fire people live for the fulfillment of your ambitions. I am sorry I cannot offer you any immediate hope, but you will have to be as patient as possible under the present regime of your existing conditions, knowing there is hope for the future and a change is not far distant.

That was an interesting letter you wrote me, Miss K. C., born September 12, 1889, between 7 and 8 a. m., in Iowa. I still maintain you Virgo folks are practical and earthy, in spite of the excursions you take into the realms of speculation and the dreams you allow yourself in your less practical moments. Yes, there is a cruel streak in your nature, but I would not worry about it too much, if I were you. Convert your spiritual inclinations into creative products. You have writing ability, and the trip into Arizona is the thing for you to do, with writing as your goal. Try to control your analytical qualities except in so far as they deal with your work.

STUDENTS' CORNER

Mrs. E. L. P., born New York, January 30, 1895, 12:50 noon. Greetings to a new recruit to the fascinating study of astrology. Once started you will not be able to give it up, and your leaning in this direction is clearly shown in your chart. If you will write to the editor of *Love Story Magazine*, information about the Astrological Guild will be forwarded to you. You wish to know what your chances are in the astrological field. I hope you do not mind my frankness, but you should know your judgment cannot be depended upon consistently. There is no doubt but that you can master the mechanics of this science, but there will be times when you will doubt your own opinion on a chart and will be assailed by doubts whether or not there is anything in the stars. I assure you the fault will not be with the science—it will be in your interpretation. You are persistent and a plodder, and eventually the results will justify your efforts. You could make a good employee in this work, but you will operate more successfully in collaborating with an astrologer—some one to direct your efforts along astrological lines and check your judgment through the periods when your planetary positions are affected by unfavorable planetary conditions. I send my good wishes and offer my help whenever you need it. The most important phase in studying astrology is to have some one who can answer your questions about confusing points. Carry on, Mrs. P., and do not let the little imp Discouragement sidetrack you.

Mr. W. B. T. and wife.—Mr. T., born June 12, 1877, Illinois, 9:47 p. m. I do not think you are too lazy for honest study, it is just hard for you to stick to routine and specific paths of desire. If you really want to master those lessons, you will have to work on them an allotted time each day. Yes, times are hard, I know, and I do not blame you for being tired. The berry-farm venture

is O. K.; your influences for partnership are very good, and September, 1931, is a favorable period for you.

Mr. F. V. F., born April 29, 1899, 11:42 p. m., New York. It is certainly a relief to have your letter and see all the favorable indications in your chart for the future. If your time of birth is accurate, you will marry in your thirty-third year. I have based my opinion on more in your chart than the Moon progressing to a conjunction of Venus. Jupiter is more important in a man's chart when considering marriage, although this Venus influence will make it a real love match. Technically: Jupiter will be transiting your seventh house in 1931 and 1932—Jupiter will conjunct your natal Mars in summer of 1931 and your progressed Mars next winter. The date you gave in October, 1932, when your progressed Moon conjuncts Venus, includes the position of Jupiter sextile your natal Jupiter in the Midheaven in September, 1932, and the transiting Jupiter at that time, trines your Sun's position in the fourth house—representing your home. All this looks good, F. V. F. I would suggest you place your planets in a chart more carefully in considering the degrees of the planets in the signs. You have a good chart for astrological work and for expression. I receive so many letters from the customers who are being affected by critical positions of the planets, it is pleasant to see a chart such as yours which holds excellent indications. Here's hoping for success and good luck to you, if this is the thing you desire. You are going to be happy. By the way, your chart indicates an opportunity for marriage in your twenty-seventh year. If you had been married then there would have been a break, and if you were engaged there was an unexpected set of difficult complications and a broken engagement. Do write me again—always glad to hear from you students.

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.





The Friendliest Corner

By MARY MORRIS



Miss Morris will help you to
make friends



Miss Mary Morris, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Morris will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. Please sign your name and address when writing. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Friendliest Corner, so that mail can be forwarded.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.



ALL you girls crying for the modern and up-to-date, here's a Middle West version of it waiting at your door. Come on, girls!

Show a little Missourian just what friendship means.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would any of your Pals like to write to a fifteen-year-old very modern freckle-faced girl? I'm from the Show-me State, Missouri, and I'm crazy about reading, music, sports, and almost anything else. Girls, won't you add me to your list?
COMIC.

Find out about nursing from her.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's just one more girl to be included in your Corner. Like every one else, I'm fond of sports and fun. I'm a nurse, twenty years old, a curly-headed blonde out in Iowa. I'd like especially to hear from other nurses, so we can swap ideas about the profession.
SMILING IRENE.

Wives, get your glimpse of Carolina home life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Have you room for a lonesome mother? I'm thirty-eight years

old, and live with my husband and three children off the main road down here in North Carolina. I can't get away from home much, and don't see many people. Married women, let's get together for a good chat.

GRASSY CREEK WIFE.

A jazz girl's version of friendliness.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I join your circle of friends? I'm a girl of eighteen with chestnut hair and blue eyes, and have lived in Philadelphia all my life. I'm fond of swimming, tennis, and football; but best of all I like dancing. I'm a blues singer, full of pep, r'aring to go. Girls, don't keep me waiting.
CROONING POLLY.

Two followers of football history.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two boys who would like to hear from Pals interested in professional sports. We have met lots of football stars, and are going to start out on the road soon to see America. Who wants to hear about our experiences?

TWO BINGHAMTON BUDDIES.

Another lonesome city dweller.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman of twenty-five, live in the city, and have a

little girl eight years old. I get very lonesome, as I have no friends here. I'd love to hear from women in all walks of life, all the way from former wives to business girls.

FRIEND INEZ.

Pals, lasso two friends at a single throw.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are a brother and sister living in a small Texas town which never had any excitement until an oil boom broke loose. Bud is interested in mechanics and baseball, while Sis is crazy about outdoor sports and drawing. Her one ambition is to learn to dance. Who'll take a chance on a pair of wild-West longhorns?

BUD AND SIS.

A friend in bright or rainy weather.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Buffalo girl, twenty-one years old, and have blond hair and brown eyes. I'm interested in movies, dancing, and reading, and I'd like to write to every one needing a friend.

SUNNY M. F.

Get in touch with a great movement.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a twelve-year-old Girl Scout, and I'd like to hear from any one interested in Scouts or scouting. I'll help any one who needs help, and promise true friendship. Hurry up, girls, and give my lazy mailman something to do.

INDIANAPOLIS GIRL.

Sympathetic in two languages.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would you insert a few lines for me in your Friendliest Corner? I'm a girl of twenty-three, a graduate nurse, speak and write French and English, and love music, dancing, and my profession. I want to hear from every one, especially nurses abroad in France, Italy, and England.

NURSE MADELINE.

Boys, find out what goes on behind his painted face.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a boy in my early twenties, a circus clown, now living in Indiana. I can tell interesting things about circus life, and would like to hear from every one, everywhere.

CLOWNING TOM.

A little Western excitement lover.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please make room in your Corner for me. I'm a lonesome girl

way out West in a little smelting town. I'm very fond of exciting things like dancing. Please, girls, write and let me tell you about good old Arizona.

RIMA.

A Pal you can depend upon.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a jolly married woman of twenty-one, always full of fun and right there when it comes to answering letters. I'd like to hear from other married women, and single ones, too, from far and near.

TILLIE OF ILLINOIS.

Artists and idealists, here's a made-to-order Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please, won't you find me some Pals who'll be true friends? I'm a Georgia boy, twenty-one years old, and want every one to write to me. I'm artistic and temperamental, so, naturally, I'd like Pals of the same quiet nature.

E. D. R.

Out in Chicago, where life is exciting.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I, too, would like to make friends in your Corner. I'm a twenty-year-old married woman and have lived in Chicago all my life. I'm interested in just about everything, and have had many experiences. Who's looking for a true-blue Pal?

FAITHFUL AND LOYAL.

Talk about romance with an up-to-date romanticist.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who's going to fill my mail box? I want to hear from girls from six to sixty. I'd like to hear your ideas of love, and will tell interesting stories of our country if you'll only tell me what you want to hear about. I'm a blue-eyed, dark-haired girl, and my hobbies are dancing, riding, and singing. Every one write to

MODERN MONTE.

Just a little line from you will brighten up her day.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Brooklyn widow, thirty-eight years old, with two daughters, and I get very lonesome at times. Won't some one send me a word of cheer and comfort, as my lonely heart aches for worth-while friends.

MAE.

A native of the land of gypsy dances and wandering tribes.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of seventeen, interested in almost everything. I'd

especially like to hear from Polish girls, as that is my nationality.

GIRL OF THE WITCH CITY.

A dare worth taking up.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope to get a boxful of letters. I'm an Alabama boy of twenty-eight, single, and blond, with music and painting as my hobbies. I'll send all who answer a hand-painted picture. Now I dare you to write!
BIRMINGHAM JACK.

Talk about talkies with an enthusiast.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of eighteen, five feet five inches tall, with blond hair and blue eyes. I like dancing and swimming, but talking pictures are my weakness. Come on, girls, let me hear from you.

LITTLE NELL.

Brides, write to a bride of the far Northwest.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl with gray-green eyes and naturally wavy brown hair, rather stout but full of fun, living in Washington State. I was just married, and want some real Pals. I love sports and dancing, so won't you girls write to me?

NEWLYWED.

Swap stories over a Texas camp fire.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please let a Texas man into your circle? I've been so lonely since last December, when my wife and I separated, and I want some Pals to cheer me up. I left a town of half a million people to come to the farm of my childhood, and you can imagine all the loneliness I've gone through. Won't all you penmen write to me?

ALL-ALONE SAM.

Learn about Pittsburgh from a girl who knows it.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hail from the Smoky City, a girl just seventeen years old, and find almost everything interesting. I'd love to hear from any one who would be good enough to write me, especially those on the stage.

STAGE-STRUCK.

Race him to the float!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Can you find room for a lonely boy like me? I'm sixteen, five feet three inches tall, with dark-brown hair and gray eyes. I crave excitement. I enjoy

dancing, and am learning to swim. Pals, let's get acquainted.

MICKEY.

High-school girls, join up with Idaho.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are just two more high-school girls from the Gem State, wishing for a host of Pals. We like dancing, basket ball, music, and all types of sports. We are of medium height and have olive complexions. Girls, let us hear from you.

BILLY AND BOOTS.

A flashing return in tennis or correspondence.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of twenty-one, with dark wavy hair, and live in Illinois. I'm interested in tennis, golf, and swimming, and will enjoy hearing from young and old.

HOPEFUL.

Girls, bring a big-city thrill to a small-town girl.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonely girl of twenty-one, very fond of music and dancing. I live in a small town where there aren't many girls of my age, and have a new car which I drive back and forth to work. Pals, I'd sure love to hear from you.

BLUE-EYED BETTY.

Show your collection to another fan.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a high-school girl sixteen years old, with blue eyes and blond hair. My favorite hobby is collecting and trading pictures of movie stars. Come on, all you Pals, and drop me a line.

HIGH-SCHOOL LOUISE.

Straight from the Friendship City to you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Have you a little space for my appeal to Pals? I'm a boy living in Philadelphia, and have studied a great deal on musical instruments. I love sports, and have had a great many delightful experiences camping. Boys, let's get started.

B. F. S.

Tell her how you keep house.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman, fond of sports and movies, and have a six-year-old boy. My chief interest in life is making my home attractive, and I'd love to exchange ideas with Pals, married or single, especially those living in Iowa.

PEARL CITY MOTHER.

A Pal for lovers of youth and action.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm just one of several million girls who love outdoor sports and wholesome fun. I'm nearly fifteen years old, have blond hair and blue eyes, and live in Arkansas. If any of you want to know why we call this the Wonder State, just write to me. Station RSVP signing off. Girls, write and give me a chance to broadcast again.

SUNNY SOUTH.

Tell your troubles to a sympathetic audience.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd like to join your Corner because I'm very lonely. I'd like especially to hear from student nurses, girls who live far away, or those who are ill or crippled. I'm very sympathetic, and promise that all letters will be answered, as well as welcomed.

MARIETTE.

Boys, show him Western friendliness!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd like very much to have a space in your Corner, as I find it rather lonesome out here in Los Angeles. I've traveled all over the East coast, but this is my first trip out West. I'm a boy, six feet tall, and a male nurse by profession. Boys everywhere, I want you for my Pals.

GUSTY.

Take pity on her homesickness.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of nineteen, and, as this is the first time I've been away from home, I'm terribly lonesome. My pet sports are swimming and boating, but I like good books, too. I'd love to get letters from every one. Girls, how long will I have to wait?

EM OF DETROIT.

A girl from the land of blue rivers and pine-clad mountains.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonely business girl, twenty-eight years old, fond of reading, and not too old-fashioned for a good time. I'd love to hear from everybody, especially some gay, intelligent Scandinavians.

NORWEGIAN AMERICAN.

She'll make you an ideal correspondent.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl from the Pine Tree State, calling for friends from everywhere. I'm a high-school student almost sixteen years of age, and can write prompt,

readable, long, interesting letters to every one. Come on, girls; tune in on

SPIFFY.

Pick a Pal you may hear on the air.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a woman who'd like some Pals past thirty years of age. I live far away from my best friends, but I'm not lonesome. I'm interested in music, radio programs, golf, and reading. I have a charming little daughter of five, and am anxious to broadcast myself some time in the near future. Pals, write to

SUSIE SUNBEAM.

Why not write to a real farmer's daughter?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of sixteen with blond hair and sky-blue eyes. I love fishing, hiking, and letter writing, and would rather stack hay and saw wood than wash dishes and clean the house. Girls, you'll be sorry if you don't write to

FARMER GRACE.

Warm her heart with your friendship.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl twenty years old, and I have curly blond hair and blue eyes. I have been in love, and as grief came my way I feel that I have lost everything. Girls, please let me hear from you.

LONESOME LOVER.

Learn all about a hooper's life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a boy of twenty-two, used to be in vaudeville, but am home now on account of illness. The town I live in is small, and every one is more or less narrow-minded, so I'd sure like to hear from all you broad-minded young men, especially those in service in Hawaii. Come on, boys, write!

G. E. F.

A youthful observer of human nature.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a sixteen-year-old Toronto girl, and I want Pals. I go to high school, and work in a store after school hours. I could tell plenty of funny stories about the people who come into it, and would love to talk to you girls about movies and books.

PICKLES.

Hear about fishing in the colorful West.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Seattle girl of twenty-one, very anxious to have Pals. My

LS-9E

favorite sports are dancing, hiking, and fishing; a queer combination, but very exciting. You'll find me a faithful correspondent.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND.

Girls, share your historical backgrounds with her.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I live in a small town in central Michigan, a girl of fifteen with blue eyes and blond hair. I'd love to get letters from Pals telling of some historical event in their city or State. I'm fond of reading, sports, and writing, and hope my Pals will keep me busy.

MICHIGAN MURIEL.

Determinedly single young men, here's some one who agrees with you!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope you can find room in the Corner for a young bachelor. I'm thirty-eight years of age, five feet nine inches tall, and weigh one hundred and forty-five pounds. I'd be glad to hear from other young bachelors, so come on, fellows; let's get acquainted.

YOUNG BACHELOR.

Perhaps she's to-morrow's prima donna.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here I come, a sixteen-year-old girl who's interested in people of her own nationality. I'm a Ukranian girl, go to high school, play a mandolin, and dance. I take singing lessons, and expect to be a professional some day. Girls, don't forget me.

STELLA.

Make up your own crowd, married women, regardless of miles.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman living in Massachusetts, very lonely sometimes, as my husband works late. There isn't much neighborliness in this town, and no young married set, so I'd sure like Pals. I'm fond of sports, travel, and reading, and hope you girls will write.

WINNIE WINKLE.

For every one bitten by the collector's bug.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a modern girl of twenty, living in the Empire State. I'm especially interested in collecting post cards, postmarks, and college pennants, and I'd especially like to hear from college students. I promise faithfully to answer any letter from any one!

MODERN ARLENE.

Boys, help him through this time of trouble.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a boy of twenty-seven, usually very cheerful, but I recently had a great disappointment which took nearly all the starch out of me. I'm tall and thin and have black hair. Boys, write to me, and you'll surely get an answer.

NEW JERSEY TOM.

Send your letters to a lonely little nurse.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd like to join your group of Pals. I'm a nurse, and sometimes Father Time lags behind. I'm a girl twenty years old, with brown hair and eyes, have traveled a great deal, and can tell about it. Pals, write to an Ohio nurse and help her pass the time away.

DY OF CLEVELAND.

Boys, line up with a Leatherneck.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm one of Uncle Sam's marines, enjoy anything that has a thrill attached to it, and have been all over the world, seeing and doing many different things. I'll take my Pals from the Northern Lights of Alaska to the moonlight nights of the tropics, across the sands of the Sahara to sunny Italy and old Madrid. Boys, who wants to travel with me?

BOBBY MARINE.

Who'll write to a 1931 office girl?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young girl of nineteen, and have brown hair and brown eyes. I work in an office all day, and have only nights to myself. I'm fond of dancing, and love music. Please, won't some Pen Pals write to me?

F. H. OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Get in touch with next year's college girl.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm an eighteen-year-old girl, and intend to enter college in September. I live near New York, and would be able to tell my Pals a lot about that wonderful city. Who'll write to me?

HANS.

A smiling voice across the country.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of twenty-seven, and would like to hear from any one interested in telephone operating, reading, or movies, as these three are my special hobbies. Please, girls, hurry and answer my letter.

NUMBER PLEASE.

The Friend In Need

Department

CONDUCTED BY

Laura Alston Brown



A VERY difficult and perplexing phase of life is often experienced by the person who marries an ex-husband or an ex-wife; this is especially true if that person has not been married before.

Marriage, at its very best, requires patience and tolerance, trying to understand the other partner's side as much as possible, not to mention holding your tongue in your cheek many a time. We all know that, or we ought to. And in all things we must have the courage of our convictions to win the best marks, but we must first be sure our convictions are not all wet.

Here's Josephine. Her Edgar had been married before when something happened and now she is Mrs. Edgar. But, all isn't well in the family ménage because friend husband steps out to see his son and, incidentally, bumps into his former wife. This doesn't appeal to Josephine at all. In fact, she resents it, as she feels Edgar ought to stay put at *her* side.

How would *you* feel about it if you were in her shoes? Would you encourage Edgar's interest in his son's welfare, or would you object because he would not only see his son, but his former wife as well. What's your idea, readers?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: When I was eighteen I met Edgar, and before long we were going together steady. He was twenty-four at the time. I was terribly in love with him, and he with me, or so I believed. Six months later we became engaged and planned to get married within the next two months. Two weeks before we were to be married,

he told me that he had been married before, and that he had a son five years old, but that he and his wife couldn't get along and had been divorced. That happened when he was nineteen, and he said he never really knew what love was until he met me.

Well, Mrs. Brown, I figured that he was a kid when that happened and many young people make such mistakes, and so we were married.

We've been married a year and a half, and are expecting the stork to make a stop at our house soon. A month ago he told me that he wanted to go to see his son. I objected because I felt he ought to stay with me. His wife lives in another city and it would take him three days to make the trip there and back. We quarreled, and he went anyway.

He didn't find me home when he came back, because I went to my mother's. He came after me, though, and the upshot was that he begged me to forgive him, and I did. But it seems our happiness was gone. He was impatient with me, we quarreled often, and then he said that after the baby was born he wanted to live alone.

A month after that he said he was going out. He said he had a date with a girl, and that no matter what I said he was going to keep it. "And get this," he said, "you're not going to boss me around. I'm sick of the way everything is going, and I'm going out to forget a little."

When he left, I packed my things and went to my mother's again. I swore I would never go back to him. I'd show him he couldn't step out on me like that!

I stayed with my mother two weeks, and he came almost every night, begging me to forgive and come home with him.

Mrs. Brown, what would you do with a man like that? He doesn't have to run and see his boy, because the baby is well taken care of, and I think my husband ought to stay with me. And sometimes, when he's mad, he

says all women are alike, and that he'd made another mistake and goes on like that until I could scream.

Please tell me what to do.

JOSEPHINE.

You can do plenty, Josephine, to straighten out this marriage of yours which seems to be anything but a loving, square partnership. First of all, you've got to curb your unreasonable aspirations. By that, I mean, that if you encouraged his interest in his boy, you would win his good will and gratitude. Next, you've got to stop being jealous or hurt because he has been married before. Even if he does see his ex-wife, what of it? Don't you suppose if she had wanted him she would have found the means of keeping him? And if he had been so crazy about her, he wouldn't have married you. He has a right to see his boy, and you ought to be glad he is devoted to the child, for he will also make a good father to your baby.

And another thing, I'm not saying he had any business to take another girl out, but a man does queer things when he's unhappy or trying to forget. Seems to me some of them go "cuckoo" for a while. But you are asking too much when you ask that he doesn't go to see his son. Suppose it were just the other way around and you were married to some one who thought you oughtn't go to see your baby? There's the cause of the irritation, my dear; so wake up and try to act like a grown-up girl. For that matter, both of you are a little childish.

You two ought to talk this thing over. If he will play fair with you, tell him you have no objection to his seeing the boy. Have the child down to your home for a visit after the new stranger arrives and help them get acquainted. Marriage can be a wonderful thing in your life, if you just use your head as well as your heart. And as for ex-Mrs. Edgar, forget her. Don't be jealous

if they are friends, because you will wreck your marriage. Be as sweet as you can and try to understand things more clearly. Don't talk of separations or divorces, don't run home to mamma when your feelings have been jabbed. Of course, if he doesn't live up to his part of the bargain, that's another matter. But I think you have it in your hands to make or mar your marriage.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm nineteen years old and work as a typist in a large insurance company. There are other girls who do the same work as I. We are kept busy typing steadily all day long, and when I get home, I can tell you I'm pretty tired. But do I get some rest? I do not!

My mother expects me to run errands; wash the supper dishes; clean up the house, and one day a week, usually Saturday afternoons or some evening, she wants me to clean the four-room apartment thoroughly. In return, I get three dollars a week for car fare and whatever money I need for powder, et cetera. My salary is eighteen dollars a week, and I hand it all to her.

Now, I love my mother, but don't you think she is absolutely unreasonable demanding all that service after I put in a hard day's work? She has nothing more to do than take care of the house and cook for us two, as my dad travels and doesn't get home very often. She is healthy and strong, and I don't see why she should make me do all the work that is really her job to do during the day.

I seldom go out, and then she grumbles because she is left alone. Once in a while we go to a movie together. I don't have any boy friends who'd call on me steady, but I would like to go out with some of the girls from the office. Is it fair to be treated as I am? Should I pay board or give her all my money?
JUNE.

No, it isn't a bit fair that your mother should expect you to do all the housework after you've been pounding a typewriter all day long. I know just how dog-gone tired you can be, and I'm sure some of our readers are in the same predicament. You need rest and time; time for yourself and time to have a little fun with young friends. Why let her get away with it? I don't mean that you should argue and quarrel with

her, but talk it over quietly and as tactfully as you can.

Why not suggest that you will pay board—say, eight dollars a week—and keep the rest of the money for clothes and other expenses, if she will help you when you need to spend more than you have for some particularly higher-priced garment. Surely a girl can't buy much clothes on less than ten dollars a week—or can she?

Tell your mother that you are tired, have worked hard all day, and just simply can't put in another day's work in one evening by doing what is expected of her. Be friendly, but be firm. She may weep and say what an ungrateful daughter you are. Let that pass. Ask her how she would feel if she were in your place.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: At sixteen I thought I knew it all and would pay no attention to what any one said. I was going with a fellow who I thought that I could not live without. After I had been going with him some time I found that I was to become a mother. My mother discovered it and made my boy friend marry me, though he did not really love me.

My husband did not care what I did, where I went, or whom I went with. We lived with his mother and he would never take me anywhere. If I went out, I had to go with his sister or not at all. His mother and I did not get along, and finally we moved in with his sister. I liked her and we got along all right, though she kept telling me that I was a fool to love my husband, because he did not care about me and never would.

After my baby was born we went to live with my mother, who has been and still is wonderful to me. She has always bought all my clothes and she gave me a complete outfit for my little girl. We had been with my mother about a month when my husband started to stay out late at night. I found a piece of paper with a phone number on it in his coat pocket and called the number. It was the home of a girl my husband had been going with. She and her mother came over to see my mother and myself and told us that he had never told them that he was a married man.

My mother was so mad that she told him to get out and never come back. I begged her to let him stay, and finally she gave in.

That night he told me that while I had been in the hospital he had gone out with two other girls. After that he did not go out any more, but I kept nagging at him about the way he had acted, and finally he left me. I was so discouraged and blue that I went out with a fellow I had known quite some time. My husband saw us and beat the fellow up so badly that he had to go to the hospital. He told me he loved me and wanted to come back and live with me again. After much coaxing I gave in. However, things were not much better, and he left me again, taking the baby with him this time.

I went to the court about it, and just before our trial was to come up he came and asked me to settle the case outside of court and that I could have the baby. I agreed and now I have my baby and he comes to see it every now and then. I know that he is going out with other girls, but every time I see him he wants me to start over again with him. He does not work steadily and my mother supports myself and my baby. What would you advise me to do? I am only eighteen now and feel that I do not want to do something now that is going to ruin the rest of my life. Please help me. GOOD-TIME BABY.

Yes, take him back and give him another chance—but not when he wants you to take him back. From what you say, I judge he is a pretty easy-going young man and needs to be taught a lesson. If you take him back now, things will go on just as they had been before.

Why not have a talk with him. Tell him you are willing to take him back, live with him as his wife, and will be glad to give him another chance, *if* he proves to you that he is worthy of this consideration. Tell him to wait six months. In the meantime, he should find a job, save a little or as much as he can, and if by the end of that time you both feel that you still want to resume your life together where you left off, you will have a better chance to save your marriage and make of it something stanch and lovely upon which both of you can always depend.

Six months may seem like a long time, but I think living alone, going straight, and working ought to make a man of

him. Don't you think so? At the end of that time he may wake up to the fact that he loves and appreciates you, and that it isn't wise to play fast and loose just because you happen to be his wife. Many do not value their possessions until they are deprived of them.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: For many years I have been trying to locate a childhood friend. So many of us read your magazine, perhaps he also reads it, or some one who knows him. Would you help me locate him?

His name is Maurice Adler, Beck Street, Bronx, New York City. He used to visit Beacon, New York, many years ago; worked for a theatrical concern as booking agent years ago also.

Any one seeing this, who is acquainted with Maurice, please communicate with Mrs. Brown.
R. MONDOR.

Here's an S O S, readers. Any one of you know Maurice?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I feel that I am indeed a friend in need, and hope you will find space in your department for me.

I have been married five years, and am having my first real marital difficulty. I go home each summer for several months to visit my folks. Last summer, while I was gone, my husband moved all our furniture to his mother's. I was just heartbroken. He said he had to do it to save money. When I came back they had moved their beds and things into the attic and were using mine, even my rugs. They emptied out my dressers and dumped the contents into boxes and put them in the attic. I was frantic—all my personal belongings thrown into boxes, like so much junk!

Well, I was too upset to say a word, and for several days I lay in bed with a cold and felt very heartsick. The first thing I knew, my mother-in-law was complaining I hadn't helped her or tried to do anything. But, Mrs. Brown, while in my own home I never had to do things when I didn't feel well, except just what I wanted to do. Had they given me a chance to adjust myself, things might have been different. His mother just about has our marriage on the rocks. I used to eat here, but when we were at the table no one talked; each sat with a long face, and I could sense that it was because of my presence.

I eat all my meals out now, except my breakfast. His family do not talk to me at

all. We pass in the hallway or on the stairs without recognition. When I am in the house I keep to my room. I like to sew and paint and occupy my time that way. My husband blames me for the conditions. He used to tell me what a jealous, selfish woman his mother was, and when I offered to do things for them he would say, "Don't; they won't appreciate it."

I don't know what to do. I would like to have my own home again, but finances will not permit it. My husband is in business for himself. His mother's house is very large. They have everything they want, and live like they own the land, thanks to my husband. What they would like me to do is clear out and go back to my home in the East and never show up again. But don't you think I would be foolish to do that, just because they want to separate us? I can't seem to come to any understanding with my husband at all. We just drift along, and they are trying to freeze me out. I do care for my husband, though he has been mean enough to make me lose all the love I ever had for him.

I make all my own clothes and always have. I don't know what it is to go to a store and buy clothes. I do not get any allowance and have to beg for every penny. Shall I keep on as I am?

As far as I know, there is no woman in the case except his mother. He would not dare come in or go out without kissing her first. She is not an affectionate woman by any means. Her family have to do the kissing, while she has the attitude of a wax image.

I am independent enough in spirit, but that's all. I don't know what I would do if thrown on my own. I used to be in the theatrical profession, but haven't enough ability to ever go back to it after all these years.

Please advise me if you can, and thank you for any interest you may take in my problem.
A L NE WOLF.

Don't you just wish some mothers-in-law were as rare as hen's teeth? But what's the matter with that husband of yours? Evidently his mamma didn't raise him to be a married man. It beats everything why a girl should have to fight such a handicap. First he complains his mamma is a jealous, selfish woman, and then, when you take a vacation, she changes, in his opinion, to *it* personified.

You seem to hold a sort of glorified boarder's position in that household. Why not invite your husband to step into your room, turn the key in the lock, make him sit down, and have things out one way or another. Either he gives you a real home such as you are entitled to, and stops his family ruling him completely, or else do clear out and go back to your folks until he comes to his senses. Make it clear to him that you won't stand for this sort of thing, especially since you have done nothing to deserve it. You say he was mean enough to make you lose all the love you had for him. Then why hang on and be regarded by him and his family as a special brand of doormat? Life's too short to be wasted. If you talk turkey, and if he's any sort of man worthy of the name, he will stir to life. If he doesn't, and prefers his family to his wife, you will know just where you stand.

Don't be afraid to be independent in more than spirit, my dear. You are young; you haven't any children to worry about; you will find a job, even though it is one you've never tried before, if the worst comes to pass. So buck up! This is 1931, and women have some rights.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am writing your department on account of the letter from that lovely girl, Lolly. Her letter tells the story of hundreds of thousands of girls. So, girls, listen in, cut out my letter, and paste it where you can refer to it often.

I am not bragging, but telling facts, when I say I am one of those queens of hearts that all girls want to be. No matter where I went before my marriage, so many boys wanted to date me that I could take my pick and choose those I wanted to try out as future husbands. But remember this: the love-marriage business is a game, and, like all other games in life, you have to learn the rules.

First, take yourself in hand and study your type as to clothes. If you are a brunette, wear vivid, exotic colors that bring out your dark beauty. If you are a blonde, then wear black or navy blue in beautiful materials. Go

in for exercises that develop your health and beauty. Men like a healthy girl.

Next, study your voice; make it sweet, rhythmic, like music, with a pitch that varies with your words, emphasizing certain words more than others when speaking fast and describing action or lightness; slow when you express memory, meditation, thought. Your rhetorical phrases, those divisions of a sentence that unite in expressing one distinct idea, should be emphasized slightly; not too much, yet make your sentences, when you talk, sound unbroken. Study this voice culture by reading some selection over and over daily until you have mastered that wonderful "man-winning sweet voice" that differentiates you from all the other girls.

Now you are ready to look the land over to find the man whom you will want to sound out; if you have several of them, the better. Find out by adroit questioning, not only of the man himself but of every one who knows anything about him, just what he is.

If he is a playboy, sheik, or sport of any kind, turn thumbs down on him at once; they are positively no good as husbands. Next, see who his companions and friends are. If they have names of being sports, then he, too, is of the same order. Find out about his business or occupation. Is it such as to keep you in the style and manner in which you want to live? This is of great importance; don't overlook it. Has he any complexes? Mother complex, child complex, or family complex—too many men have these, and the modern girl does not want too much mother-in-law, or more than at least one or two children, or his busybody sisters and brothers lopping around your home to interfere and make trouble.

If he passes on all these points, he is worth getting on your line and hooking so secure he will not easily be shaken off by anything or anybody. How is that done?—you ask. Easy. Dead easy, if you go at it right. Here is how:

First, upon making his acquaintance, begin to draw him out, getting him to talk, preferably about himself, his ambitions, his likes and dislikes—anything, no matter what, just so he wants to talk to you about it. Say little yourself; only enough to continue to draw him out on the same subject. Then listen with breathless attention. That is, put that completely I'm-so-interested-absorbed look into your eyes, as if he was thrilling you beyond words by his brilliant conversation. Men eat this up! It gives them a sense of satisfaction that nothing else will; makes them feel big, great, important.

Next, adroitly, not too openly, begin talk-

ing to him about himself. He will be only too eager to tell you all you want to know, and usually very much more. Be sympathetic with him in what he is saying now. That is, appear to be of the very same opinions as he is. As you find out what subjects interest him, either get books from the public library or magazines having those subjects discussed, and read up on them, so you can talk intelligently with him on them. If you both enjoy the same things—dancing, swimming, rowing, tennis, golf—so much the better. If you are not interested, make yourself seem so. Remember, nowhere, except on the stage, do you want to be a better actress than in this love-marriage game.

What worth-while men want of a wife to-day is not a housekeeper, child nurse, or drudge; but a live, vital, jolly buddy-pal—a girl who is always ready to do the things he does, go where he goes, be amusing, humorous, witty, and make him, first and last and all the time, believe his is the center of the stage with the spotlight on. Of course, you must love this man or you do not want to marry him.

If you want real happiness in marriage, never marry a man who has had at any time another woman in his life. No widower, divorced man, or a man who has had affairs with other women. There is no harm if he has gone with other respectable girls, and found them not to his liking. Probably all they could talk about was housework, mother, and baby. No wonder he tired of them and ran like a fifty-six. Men—worth-while men—hate this commonplace talk.

There can be nothing more degrading to any clean-minded girl than to play second fiddle to some previous woman in a man's life. There are plenty of clean, first-grade men living to-day, so go out and hunt them up. As for widowers, divorced men, and damaged-goods young men, I have no quarrel with any of them. But let them marry their own kind—widows, divorced women, and damaged girls like themselves. I'm talking to first-grade girls, who have had sense enough to keep themselves A-1 gilt-edge.

To-day I'm a petted, worshiped wife of the best man in the world. How did I get him? By using my head, just the same as I'm telling you. I broke five engagements for things other girls would have completely overlooked, saying, "I love him; you can't find perfection in this world."

But not I. I knew my power over men. I was looking for perfection, and found it. I have been married for years, and am the happiest woman on earth to-day. We both have our business, our fine home, our car; we only

want each other, read, travel, and enjoy life. What I have done other girls can do. Get busy. There are plenty of good men to-day if you look for them in the right way and right places.

EXPERIENCED.

Well, don't all speak at once; but I guess the mailman had better be prepared for a sudden additional rush of business.

Your letter covers a good many points, Experienced; but there are some things you have left out. For instance, you do not tell us just at what places these desirable, upright young men are to be found. You say you have everything a woman could desire, yet you fail to mention a woman's greatest achievement, a child.

And as for your opinion of widowers, divorced men, and what-worth-while-men-want, we'll no doubt hear from them without much delay.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am very much in need of advice from you. I have no one to go to but you. Please do not advise me as you would a child, because I am not one. I am twenty-five years of age, and have seen a lot in those years.

Three years ago I met a young man a year younger than I. I became very much infatuated with him, and my infatuation turned into love. At that time I was alone in a large city, with no one to advise me as to right or wrong. I knew nothing about this young man, but was willing to trust him to the bitter end. He kept his life a secret from me, but when with me he lived for me alone.

As this young man did not believe in marriage, we decided to be happy without marriage. I realized I would not be able to have children under these circumstances, but did not consider that.

We lived together happily for a year and a half. We never quarreled nor had any disagreements until one day it dawned on me that I was missing something. I wanted children, as every woman does at some time in her life. We talked this over, but I didn't get any satisfaction out of him. Children were out of the question, he said.

Finally, after much discussion, I decided to go away on a vacation. While there I met another man, two years my senior. We became very good friends, but he wanted

more than friendship. He did not know of my past life, and I did not have the heart to tell him.

And now, Mrs. Brown, this is why I want your advice. Shall I go back to my past life and live with the one I love, or shall I marry this man? I know he will make me a happy home, and our children a good father. Please don't tell me I can forget my first and only love. I have been away from him a year and a half now, and the scar has not yet begun to heal. Am I doing right by marrying without telling him about my past life, which may be found out some day? I don't know what to do, so please advise me, remembering there is not much love in my heart for the one I marry. I have no way of taking care of myself whatsoever, and I must choose one or the other. Which would be for the better?

A WOMAN WITH A PAST.

Which would be for the best? Marriage, my dear, for marriage offers a woman the protection that is her right. You say you want children, a real home, and a husband. Your first and only love didn't offer any of these, except love. A selfish love at best, and certainly not real love, for the man who truly loves the woman of his heart would wish to protect her, to build a home with her, not take all she had to give and desire to remain free from matrimony.

Two people living together can become a habit to each other, and that is how you feel now, saying that the scar has not yet begun to heal. If you return to him, what will your life be five or ten years hence? If you marry this other man, you have a chance to learn to love him; you will have a home, children, and a husband who, you say, will make a good father. Surely your choice is clear? Marry the man, my dear; wipe out the memory, if you can, of this first and only lover who did not believe in marriage. Forget the past; forget him. Oh, yes, you can forget as others have done and are doing every day. But, of course, it will take time. Often a year is as a grain of sand. Forget it all and look only toward the fu-

ture. If you have not told this man about yourself, why destroy the happiness that can belong to both of you?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: In answer to the sap who signed himself Gyped:

I wonder if you have ever tried to make a fool out of the girl you were with. Most of the modern young men of to-day have a regular "line" they pour into the ear of every girl who will listen. If they believe it, they, too, usually get gyped. Then it's not entirely their fault if they begin to realize that life is a game of give and take, and girls usually play square if they get a square deal. Of, of course, some don't. There are bad ones in all walks of life; but there are as many frivolous, no-account men as there are gold-digging girls.

Gyped, maybe you haven't been meeting the right type of girl. Where did you meet all those money-grabbing, selfish baby dolls? At a wild night club or a Sunday-school picnic?

Anyway, you're all wet. There are plenty of us who aren't gold diggers. And we don't like your insinuations. Get that?

SHORTY.

You're quite right, Shorty. The modern young men certainly do have a line, and all modern girls are not money-grabbing, selfish baby dolls. How come men seldom fall for that sweet old-fashioned girl they're always raving about, and prefer to date the baby dolls?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have something to ask advice about, and it may be I'm to blame. I don't know. In telling you my story I will not spare myself. I will tell you the truth. So here goes.

I have been very happy, living with my wife, until we moved to live with her sister. But before I write any more I want you to know a few things.

I've been married for three years to a very fine girl, and I love her. I'm always working, never out of a job; in fact, I did not lose any time in eight years, and I earn a good salary. We would stay home nights and enjoy it, or take in a movie, and we got along fine.

About three times a month I would see the boys, and then I would play cards and have a few drinks; sometimes I'd come home in the morning feeling rather drunk. My wife would scold me, but we'd patch up, and everything would be O. K. until the next time.

About a year ago my wife's sister bought

a house, and wanted us to move in with them, as they did not have enough furniture to fill the place, and also needed some help to meet the payments.

I did not like that; but, after a time, I agreed to it, knowing that two couples cannot live under the same roof, also knowing how her sister likes company and good times.

Well, we moved in last March. After three months of it, my wife was sorry she did not take my advice about not moving in. The reason was that her sister had company every night, and we could not get proper sleep. Now, don't misunderstand me. We like a good time, but not every night in the week. I asked my wife again to move into our own apartment, but she promised to help her sister, always thinking more of her sister than of her own self and me. Things got bad. Her sister persuaded her to go places and meet her friends, and, slow but sure, my wife got to like company and going places. That made me try and forget this in drink; her sister was telling her things, I know, for my wife did not act right toward me.

I would come home from work thinking about a good rest that evening, and the first thing I'd hear is, "So-and-so is coming over," or, "We are going to see So-and-so." Always somewhere, and my rest for the night would be shot. Or I would stay home and let them go and then I'd sit up and wait for them until one or two in the morning. If I asked my wife to stay home with me and let her sister and husband go out every night if they wished, I would always hear some talk about growing old, and out she'd go. Another night at home alone for me.

Those nights, I would dress up and meet the boys feeling very blue, and start drinking, come home late, and then get a lot of talk from the wife. Well, I told her if she liked her sister's company and her friends, I would go out and seek my company, and things got very bad.

It was so bad that one night I asked her to move out with me, but she would not go. I said I would move myself. She said, "Go ahead, but I stay here."

Well, I moved. We've been parted now for the past four months. I beg her to move out when we sometimes meet, but with no success. She says she is having the time of her life.

She blames me for being parted, on account of my drinking, and I tell her if we had our own apartment we would still be happy. I admit, I like a drink; but if a sister-in-law is taking your wife out every

night, and you see your wife starting to like that kind of life, tell me who wouldn't drink and try to forget.

I'm still waiting for her to make up her mind if she cares to move out of her sister's home, but I fear it's time wasted.

Now, who is to blame—my wife, her sister, or I? That's my story, and the truth. I hope to hear from you soon. Thanking you for any advice on this,
WALTER.

Who is to blame? Life being the jigsaw puzzle it is, it isn't always possible to point one's finger and say, "You're to blame." However, you need not resort to drink to forget your trouble. Of course, I can understand how you feel, and it seems to me your wife should have more consideration for you, since you have been supporting her and she had no real reason to complain. Your wife blames you; you blame the sister-in-law; and she, no doubt, doesn't give a hoot as long as she can meet her payments.

Why not furnish a place of your own, if you think your own furniture is forfeited. Cut your wife's allowance, if you are sending her money; and if she objects, tell her you believe a wife's place is beside her husband and that not until then will you think of giving her more money. Don't quarrel when you meet; don't urge her to return to you; but do comment on how comfortably fixed you are, and be as pleasant as you can whenever you meet. I think that before long she will be fed up on the good times her sister supplies and begin to long for her own home again. Make yourself desirable in her eyes, and she will perhaps realize what she is losing. Be patient a little longer.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have just a few questions to ask you about marriage.

Would you advise a young couple to get married? We have been going together for about a year and have never had any arguments. About two months ago we became engaged. Since then we have been planning how we could get along on thirty dollars a week.

Maybe I am asking too much from you,

but we do need the advice of some one who really knows about problems like this. My girl never went out with anybody steady until she met me. Since we first met we have been together almost every evening and every Saturday afternoon and Sunday. We are sure we love each other, but I went with a lot of girls before I met her, and I know I love her.

She says she loves me and that I am the only person in the world for her. I have told her that she ought to go out with other fellows and find out if she really loves me before she marries me, but she won't do it.

I am glad she won't, but do you think she will get tired of me after a while? She is seventeen and I am nearly nineteen. Our folks agree to our marriage. She wants to get married right away, and she said she sees no reason why we should not get married. She says she is old enough to know what she is doing. Is she? Am I?

I love her, but if you think best that we should wait until we are older, I will try to make her see that it is right. We have both finished high school. Please tell me what to do, as I am going to take your wonderful advice.

W. C.

It is possible for two people to live on a thirty-dollar-a-week salary, if they are both very sure they understand that it would mean doing without many things. If the husband has a chance of advancement in the near future, all the better. However, in your case, my boy, I would suggest that you both wait a year or two. In that time, not only will you have something saved and be on the road to a better income, but both of you will have had a chance to make sure that you really love each other. I'm not saying you do not love now, but you've had little time to convince yourselves that this love is of the lasting sort that will be your rock of foundation in the building up of your marriage for years to come.

Think it over again, and go slow, both of you. No matter how high our ideals, how beautiful our dreams, it is still a material world after all.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: For a long time I have kept my troubles at home, telling no one, trying to solve them for myself, until

I feel that I must ask some one to help me. I have been married two years, and am just about ready to give up. For the first few months of our marriage we were happy. I was in heaven, for I loved my husband and the little apartment we called home. I did everything in my power to make it a home, too. And then the trouble began.

Before my marriage I taught school, and, naturally, I dressed becomingly. I am good-looking, and I don't say this just to flatter myself. But that's the beginning of my story. My husband was proud of me and always wanted to take me somewhere and introduce me to his friends, and I was glad he felt this way about me. Then some of his friends started to compliment him on my good looks, and, Mrs. Brown, instead of thanking them and taking it casually, he began to insinuate little things. Not so openly as he does now.

I used a little lipstick then; but, because he asked me not to, I quit. Then I also quit having my hair waved and managed it myself, just because he did not want me to go to the hairdresser's. But things did not stop there. Whenever I bought a new dress or a pair of shoes, I had to go through a great deal of explaining as to just why I had to have them. I very rarely went out of the house; but whenever I came back from shopping for groceries, I was blamed for talking to some one I shouldn't have spoken to. Whenever I wanted to go to town, it was like going through the third degree. It was nothing but who did I talk to, what did I say, what did they say, and did I talk to any other man, et cetera.

Mrs. Brown, he hurt my feelings so often, but still I tried to smile and forget. Then he started to neglect his work, saying he was afraid to work for fear of my going out instead of staying home. He went to his home and lied about me, but his mother did not believe him and told us both so. She has been a real friend, and I love her.

If I had not had my little savings tucked away, I don't know what we would have done. As it was, I had to draw for this bill and that bill, all the time begging him and pleading with him to start over. For a week he would be wonderful, but as soon as he had a little money again, then he would fall back the same way.

Finally, Mrs. Brown, everything was gone, and no prospects of anything. Oh, he had his work, but he just wouldn't get down to it. I saw the only thing to do was for me to go back to work. I did. He went to his home, and as I got work out of town, I stayed where I worked. He suggested that.

He did not want people to know his wife had to work. Well, I worked, and hard, too. Every penny I made I saved. I went without things I should have had just to see my little savings grow. Every penny meant a step nearer to the fulfillment of my dream. In the meantime, my husband was back at his work and saving his money, too, or so he said.

His mother wrote and said he had more work than he could handle. I really believed he was getting down to brass tacks and had at last realized his duty. Finally he wanted me to quit and come back. He built beautiful dreams, and, Mrs. Brown, I was happy again. Believing we would be happier in a home of our own, we went into debt to procure one. It's beautiful, and how I love every chair, every picture in it!

I drew some of my savings again and bought dishes, linen, curtains, lamps, and all the lovely little things that go far toward making a place a real home. When we were ready to move in, I stocked our cellar with coal. Oh, I'm not sorry; I don't begrudge a thing. But all this time I never saw one cent of the money he was supposed to be saving. But before long I realized that he hadn't saved a dollar, and he made anywhere from fifty to sixty dollars a week.

He never offered to explain, and I didn't ask, and I wouldn't have cared if that were all; but he has fallen back into the same old ways again—that "I don't care" attitude. I spend about six dollars a week for my table needs, and even then he doesn't see how I can get away with six dollars. He wants everything for himself and believes that no one but he deserves anything.

Now he doesn't insinuate; he accuses me point-blank of the most ridiculous things. I could never write or tell any one the names he calls me. You would be shocked. I can't go out with my girl friends, can't even talk to them, for fear he'll accuse me of some wrong. I have no money, for he handles it all, and I dare not ask for any.

Mrs. Brown, what shall I do? Sometimes I believe I'm losing my mind. I don't talk back when he nags. I try to silence him by keeping silent. But I'm getting dangerously near the end of my rope. I'm only twenty-one, and my life is ahead of me. Shall I strike out for myself or keep on like this? I still love him, Mrs. Brown; that's what hurts. Won't you please help me?

HEARTBROKEN.

In other words, you are almost as well off as a harem slave used to be some hundred years ago. Well, my

dear, it does look as though you've pulled a boner when you married that precious husband of yours, but why let him browbeat you like this? This is a free age, and a woman need not submit to a man's abuse unless she really likes it. You've been doing a lot of giving, and he did nothing more but take, and even that was done without any particular thanks.

Suppose you try to have some sort of an understanding with him. Tell him you would prefer to take a year's vacation and give him a chance to straighten out his ideas regarding marital obligations. Suppose you do return to teaching for that length of time, and when the period of probation is passed and he has learned that marriage means more than petty and mean accusations which are absolutely unfair, and that a one-sided partnership is almost as bad as none, your marriage may still have a chance. As it is now, it is growing worse every day. It is difficult to understand a viewpoint such as your husband's. It is worse than childish, for a child sometimes is able to use his reasoning ability, while some men do nothing of the sort.

Yes, at twenty-one you certainly have got your life ahead of you, and if you do not want to wreck it altogether you cannot keep on like this. Perhaps if you did talk back and try to stand up for your rights when he nags, he would pull in his head if you gave him a tongue lashing, and respect you more if he were shown that he cannot walk all over you and do as he likes.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Just finished reading your department, and I must say that ever since I started to read it, I don't have to buy comic magazines for my chuckles. The "grown-ups" of fifteen, sixteen, and more hand me a laugh.

So many of these babes aggravate their parents, instead of helping at home, and should think more of their schoolwork than boy friends. Maybe you won't believe me, but I never looked at a girl until I was

through school, and that probably is why I didn't have to spend five or six years in high school, as most youngsters do. Oh, I'm not a prig; I like to dance and I like to see others dance. I have no objection to young high-school girls attending dances; but as for love—applesauce! They're too young to know their own minds or to understand the real meaning of love.

I wish you kids of sixteen or seventeen would wake up and realize that young men in their late twenties are just using you to amuse themselves, and when you step out with married men you are playing with more than fire. They are not dating you just to see what fun you get out of good times.

The usual gag for the older boys is to tell you kids that they are mad about you and hand you a regular "line." And you kids haven't got enough experience and knowledge of men and swallow it all. You never can tell whether it's the truth you are listening to or not. Then you think you are in love with the man, and when he starts making improper suggestions you think, "So this is love!" And the boy friend plays until he is tired of the girl and then gives her the ha-ha.

Then the girl loses her trust in men and becomes very suspicious, and if another fellow really falls in love with her, he certainly has a hard time. Often it busts up just the same. But, take it from me, kids, a fellow who really loves a girl would never dream of making improper advances toward the girl of his heart. I would advise you to play around with boys of your own age. Go on hikes, dance, and play games; but don't take any love-making seriously until you are eighteen or more.

Most men divide the girls into three classes. There's the girl whom a fellow can take out, but she has to be in by eleven and never kisses him good night. Then there's the working girl who has a broader view of life. She comes in contact with all sorts of men and learns to judge them fairly well. You can take this kind of girl out on a party and never worry about the return ticket until one or two o'clock in the morning. Then there's the girl who'll meet you, but not on her own doorstep. She'll meet you on a corner on the other side of the town. She has a rep, is avoided mostly in public, and all her dates are on the q. t.

Well, I've rambled long enough. If any of you kids have a comeback, I'd like to hear it, and maybe Mrs. Brown won't mind, either.

CASPER.

Looks as though Casper had a bird's-eye viewpoint of the situation, eh? So

come ahead, girls, and you boys, too, if you've anything to spill for Casper's benefit.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: After reading some of these letters about girls who play fast and loose with some man and brag about it, then expect to marry some decent man and be happy, I am pretty much disgusted. It just can't be done. In my case, anyhow. Here's my story, so you can judge for yourself:

About eight years ago I was going with a fellow, and, believe me, I loved him! We were planning on getting married, but when he found out I was to become a mother he ran out and left me.

Well, I was pretty sick about it, and I don't mean perhaps. I loved him too much to set the law on him, so I let him go.

About four months before my baby came, I met another man, who wanted me to marry him. He knew my condition, too. I was just a kid and thought, of course, that he loved me and wanted to give the baby a name, so I married him. But after the baby was born he told me he didn't love me, but just felt sorry for me.

He is awfully good-looking and has a good income and education. He could have married almost any girl in town. He is liked everywhere he goes. But he married me. He won't talk about it, and he won't take his freedom. I have offered to set him free.

We have been married seven years, have three children, two girls and a boy. We never quarrel. He is the best of husbands to me, and I have been absolutely true to him and have been a good wife. He worships his children, but he still doesn't love me. I love him with all my heart. I have forgotten Frank, but not what he did to me.

Now, Mrs. Brown, please tell me what more I can do to make him love me.

The old saying, "Love will win love," is all so much bunk in my case, and I am awfully unhappy, but trying to make the best of things for the children's sake.

Believe me, if I had my life to live over again, I would certainly live it straight. That is also my advice to all girls. Then you will save yourselves.

ELSIE.

The only real course of action left for you, dear Elsie, is to keep on bravely as you have been doing—making yourself agreeable to your husband, showing him at all times that you love and respect him; remain a good mother to

your children, and—grin all the time. Be as cheerful and friendly as you can; never let this thing make you bitter or hopeless.

Your husband must be a good sort to have stood by you as he did and to refuse your offer to set him free. Take things as they are, dear, and let well enough alone. Oh, I know it's hard. But things might be worse. You have a thoughtful husband, the love of your splendid children, and that is more than many others have.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I hardly know how to begin, my trouble is so great. I am in love with a young man five years my senior. Before I started going with him I was very popular. After we started going together, he didn't like my going out so much, so I quit going with any one except him. But I was very happy, Mrs. Brown, as Bob was devoted to me. For ten months we went together and were blissfully happy. Then something happened.

There was a young man who worked next to me. This man was married to a woman much older than himself. Hal did not love his wife; but, as they have a little girl whom he adores, he cannot divorce her. Hal often talked to me. He told me many things that concerned Bob. He and Bob were great friends.

Oh, Mrs. Brown, Hal was only trying to be kind, and then people began to talk. At first, I simply paid no attention. Then some one told Bob I was having an affair with Hal. Oh, I can hardly bear to think of the night Bob told me we were through! I think something inside of me died when he said good-by. Nothing I could say would explain the matter, so we quit. When Hal learned of it, it hurt him, as he seemed to think it was his fault.

Is it strange that we two—one longing for love, the other for companionship—should drift into friendship? For a time Hal fought his growing love for me, and I tried to forget Bob. I went with the old gang. I danced and flirted, but the joy had gone from life. The sun had lost its brightness; the air was chilled, and in all the world only one understood. But I am getting away from my story. Hal asked me to meet him. I refused; but he begged and I was lonely, so I did. But as we parted I told him that I could not meet him again. However, I did, only one more time.

Now I don't know what to do. Did I do wrong to have met him those two times? I was happy then. You may guess how great it was to know that, in all the world, one understood. I shall never forget Bob, and I guess I'm doomed to love him always.

Tell me, Mrs. Brown, how I can win him back again. I love him more than life, and I have done everything in my power to make up with him.

DIANA.

Of course it wasn't right for you to go out with a married man, whether twice or a hundred times. However, as long as you realize that it isn't the thing to do, you might forget about it. Too bad friend Bob couldn't have been more generous or loved you more sincerely; loved you enough not to permit the wagging of a lying tongue to break up your friendship. Can it be real love on a man's side when the slightest suspicious word breaks it up so easily? To love is to trust; to love is to take the loved one's word against others. So if you loved Bob with all your heart, and his actions proved he wasn't worth such love, why let it mar your entire outlook upon life?

The hurt will not be easily healed, dear; but you would harm yourself more by moping in a dark corner than by going out to meet people, to make new friends, and remember to laugh and try to enjoy their society. Don't try to make up with Bob. Leave him alone. If his love is greater than his injured feelings, or whatever it is he thinks he is suffering from, he will come back to you. I don't think it would be wise to show him that you couldn't exist without him. That sort of knowledge is apt to make a man vain and chesty. Instead, you ought to show him that you can have a good time in the company of others, and that his smiles and frowns are not the most important things in your life.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Three cheers for A Society Miss. She has written down what I have been thinking for the past several years that I have been reading the stories of mis-

treated wives, heartbroken sweethearts, et cetera.

You will always notice, Mrs. Brown, that the girls who tell the hard-luck stories are the would-be flappers, who pet, smoke, drink, and yet expect fellows to treat them decently. Don't they know that after one fellow has taken them out, all his pals know how she is—whether you can be fresh with her or protect her?

I go with a crowd of fifteen fellows and girls. None of the fellows drink; they only smoke moderately and do not go in for petting. Instead, we revel in wholesome sports. None of the girls smokes, drinks, or acts rowdyish; and yet we are the life of every party and are invited to everything going.

One who hopes to reestablish the American girl as the ideal of the world.

SUNNY.

Any other girls feel as Sunny does? Your letter is the first expressing sympathy for A Society Miss. Hope she will enjoy it and know that she doesn't stand alone in her views.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have never really considered magazine columns as being very substantial. So many of the things I read seem impossible and, at times, absurd. But now I am beginning to believe that almost anything is possible in this world.

About five years ago I went to work in an institution and met a girl there. She was three years my junior. We dated and kept company for three weeks, and then we married. I had a fairly good job; but, like all married couples, we had to go through a period of readjustment which every newly married couple experiences.

I lavished all my love on my wife, and did all that I could to make her happy. However, very shortly after we were married, I discovered that my wife had been stepping out with another man. It made me terribly unhappy. We broke up and were apart for several months. Then we went together again, and for two years we managed to be fairly happy. I have taken her all over the country, trying to make her happy and satisfied with me.

It is now almost five years that we have been married. Everything had been going along apparently fine, when one day I accidentally ran into her. She was with a supposed friend. We quarreled over this, and she promised never to see him again; but I found out she kept on meeting him. So I

left; left her plenty of money, and, as she was also working, she was taken care of.

I went North, found a job, and, repenting my impulsiveness, wired her to come to me. I received no answer. So, after waiting a little longer, I went home. I discovered she had broken with the other man and taken up with another.

Again we patched it up. I still love her, although I can't feel the same toward her as I used to. I don't respect her, but I can't help pitying her. What shall I do? I hate to spoil both our lives. I am twenty-seven and my wife is younger. I feel as though I could forget after a while if she would only play fair with me. Do you think she could love me and behave as she does?

A READER.

I hardly think she loves you, my boy. I think she knows she can rely upon you to supply a home for her because you love her. If she loved you she could never have cheated. On the other hand, perhaps she has got some affection for you, but she may be weak and too easily persuaded by some man who comes along and whispers sweet nothings in her ear.

Why not give her another chance, with the understanding that if she steps out on you again, you will consider it a definite break. Tell her it will be up to her to see that your marriage is a success in a measure, even a very small measure.

You've done what mighty few men would have done in your position—forgiven and taken her back. I do hope she will play fair and make you happy, if you are big enough to push aside the past and consider only the future.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: You once helped me in solving a difficult problem, so I am coming to you again. This little plea is for a dear friend of mine. I haven't heard from her for five months, and I feel very badly about it. I know she reads your department every week, and I will be most grateful if you could give her my message:

"Porkie of Pedro, won't you write to me and let me know how you are? I am heartbroken over your seeming neglect. Remember the old days of Y. W. C. A.? Your ever-loving pal, Beanie."

At the time I wrote you, Mrs. Brown, you advised me to leave this community, but that was impossible because my husband was working here. So I joined the club and made my plea to the ladies. I read to them the letter I wrote you. And, do you know, it was all imaginary with me?

They all gathered around and kissed me and said they didn't call on me because I seemed to act so aloof. Before my baby was born, last January, they gave me some very lovely gifts. I am very happy now, in love with my husband, and happy in this little community of my young days.

So I'll sign myself not Trying To Rise, but
RISEN AND HAPPY.

I'm so glad for you, dear, and that now you no longer feel you stand alone. We get just as much out of life as we put into it, and if we skimp, we are skimped in turn. I hope from now on your life will be a joy and filled with sunshine.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am very much in need of your advice. I used to be a flirt; I would flirt with my boy friends and make them think I was crazy about them, and when they fell for me I threw them flat and started going out with some one else. My mother always said I would be sorry some day, because some one would give me a dose of my own medicine.

Well, things happened like mother said, and now I am broken-hearted.

About two years ago I started flirting with a handsome young man twenty-seven years of age. He was extremely neat and wore the nicest clothes. He was always polite and seemed to be crazy about me, but when it came time to throw him over I didn't find it so easy to do.

I kept going with him for about six months, and forgot my other boy friends immediately. I was wild about him and could see no one else but him. My head was in a whirl all of the time, I was so in love.

We were married, and I was the happiest girl you would ever want to meet. I settled down and quit going on wild parties and was a home-loving kid, head over heels in love.

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.

We were married about six months when he received a letter he would not let me read. That was O. K. with me, because I had lots of confidence in him.

My husband said his father was sick and wanted him to come home. He left immediately, and I would spend my time dreaming about him and counting the days until he would be back. But about six weeks after he had gone, one of his best friends told me that my husband had been married before and had gone to see his wife and babies.

He stayed away about nine months, and in the meantime I had employed a lawyer to find out whether he was divorced or not, and he isn't. When he came back, I told him what I had found out and said I was through. It hurt me terribly. He said he would get a divorce from his first wife, because he really loved me; but I have already sued for an annulment. He may be sent to prison, and it breaks my heart.

I am twenty years of age and considered very attractive. Other boys have tried to take me out, but I cannot get interested. What should I do?
Ex-FLIRT.

You've had a tough break, dear; but putting a man behind bars for bigamy is not going to help you any at all. His children will suffer most. Why not have the "marriage" annulled and forget him altogether. Surely that would be the easiest way out, not only for you, but for those poor children whose father seems to have no sense of duty, of right or wrong.

I think if you did that and went away for a while, you would get a new perspective on life. It will take time for the hurt to heal, but time mends all sorts of aches. Later on, try to interest yourself in some other nice man who would at least be trustworthy, and you will find that forgetting this whole affair, even though it did leave a bad taste in your mouth for a while, was not such a difficult job that you couldn't do it.

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TED ADAMS, Manager

906 Sycamore St. Dept. 1095-66 Cincinnati, Ohio

C O U P O N

TED ADAMS, Manager
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