

STREET & SMITH'S **LOVE STORY**★

EVERY WEEK

MAGAZINE

MAY 23, 1931

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SKIES

May 23



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SMITH'S
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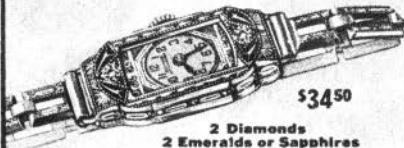
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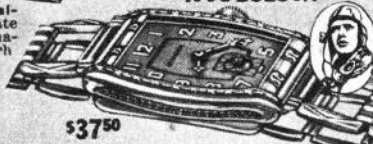
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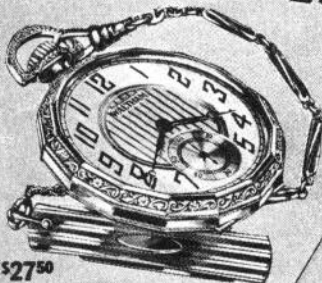
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salary runs well into the 5-figure class—actually exceeding \$10,000 a year!

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STREET & SMITH'S LOVE STORY MAGAZINE



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Vol. LXXXI

EVERY WEEK

Number 3

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Read Love Story Magazine every week. Order your copy early!

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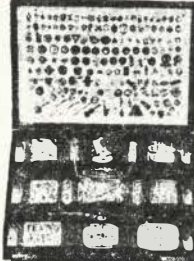
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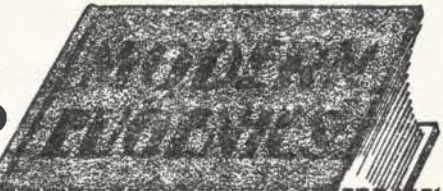
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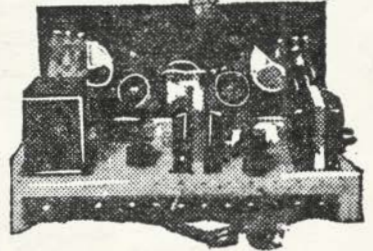
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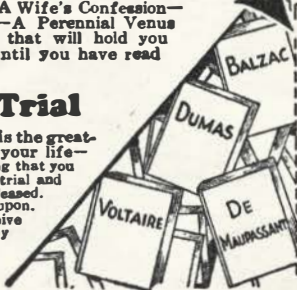
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'Neath Tropical Skies

By Mollie Donovan Maule

A Serial—Part I.

CHAPTER I.

CHLORIS! Open the door, will you? My hands are full, and I can't get at my key."

Laden with parcels after shopping on her way home from business, Glorine Barker paused on the landing outside the small two-room apartment she shared with Chloris Desmond.

It was seven o'clock on a wet April evening. The city streets were quite drenched, and Glorine felt tired and a little irritated at her employer's lack of consideration in giving her a lot of letters to type at the last moment, when she wanted to leave at five o'clock because Chloris and she had seats for a show.

LS-1C

With as much patience as possible she waited for her friend to open the door. Then, as no sound came from within, she shifted her parcels with a weary sigh and extracted her key.

Chloris was very selfish and seldom put herself out for anybody. It had been the same throughout the two years they had lived together, and this ignoring of her summons to open the door was typical.

As Glorine closed the front door and crossed the tiny hall to the living room, she felt cross and annoyed.

"Chloris, I think you might have let me in," she began, and stopped, staring in amazement at the scene confronting her.

The usually neat and tidy living room was in a state of chaos! Every drawer and cupboard was open and half the contents strewn on the floor! Cardboard boxes and tissue paper lay about everywhere. The lights were on full blaze, and the whole place looked as though it had been swept by a miniature tornado.

"Chloris!" Glorine exclaimed in alarm. "What on earth have you been doing? Chloris! Where are you?"

Flinging her packages down on the table, Glorine rushed into the bedroom, where the lights, also, had been left burning. On the threshold she paused.

The bedroom was in an even worse state of disorder. Discarded dress-hangers and tissue paper were scattered about everywhere. The wardrobe was wide open and had been stripped of its contents.

Burglars, was Glorine's immediate thought. Then, with a horrified start, she recognized her own clothes lying on the bed.

For a moment she was too stupefied to do anything but stare. Then she noticed an empty space at the foot of the bed. Chloris's trunk was missing!

She glanced up at the top of the wardrobe and saw that a hat box and two suitcases were gone also.

Too dazed to take in details, she returned quickly to the living room, and immediately caught sight of an envelope propped against the clock.

It was addressed to herself in Chloris's scribbled handwriting.

Swiftly she ripped it open, took out some dollar bills and a half sheet of paper on which was scribbled the following:

Here's my share of next month's rent. Forgive me, but I dare not face him. You must explain when he comes.

With an expression of utter bewilderment Glorine read and reread the words. What could they mean? Where had

Chloris gone? Why had she packed all her possessions and left so suddenly.

Although they had shared the apartment for some time, there was much about her friend that Glorine never had been able to understand. Chloris was mysterious and secretive, and resented any one questioning her as to her affairs.

How was it, for instance, that she had been able to afford to throw up her job and refuse to look for another? In spite of being out of work, Chloris always seemed to have plenty of money. Glorine was sure she had not saved it all. Yet she had gone in for a riot of spending lately, buying hats, dresses and slippers.

Suddenly Glorine noticed the half-burned remains of a cablegram lying by the open fireplace. She picked it up and saw that it was addressed to "Miss Desmond."

Instantly a thought flashed into her mind. Could Chloris's sudden flight be in some way connected with her mysterious boy friend in Brazil? Glorine didn't even know his name, but she knew that Chloris had been in constant communication with some one in South America whom she had never met personally.

Chloris had been put in touch with him through a mutual friend over a year ago, and letters had passed between them ever since; only Chloris was always so strange and secretive over her affairs that she had refused to tell Glorine anything more.

Glorine threw the envelope into the waste-paper basket, and looked helplessly about her. She would have to clear things up before she could get herself something to eat.

She glanced at the money still held in her hand. Chloris had left it as her share of next month's rent. Perhaps it was her way of saying that she did not intend to come back. Certainly she appeared to have taken everything with

her. In which case, Glorine realized, she could not possibly afford to keep the apartment alone. Either she would have to find another girl to share it with her, or else—

She gave a start as the abrupt whir of the doorbell cut in on her thoughts.

The man standing outside awaited with eager impatience for the door to be opened.

He was not handsome, but his broad shoulders were not out of proportion to his height, which must have been fully six feet two. The tan of his skin betokened the tropics, and his hair was crisp and dark brown, with streaks of gray at the temples.

When the door opened, he stood perfectly still for a moment gazing into the small, oval face upturned inquiringly. Then suddenly he stepped forward and took Glorine in his arms.

"You darling!" he exclaimed. "You're ten times more beautiful than your photograph, and that was enough to make me fall in love with you. You're sweeter and prettier than I ever imagined in my wildest dreams!"

Before Glorine realized what was happening, he had kissed her lips.

"Quick, darling!" he went on at once, walking with her into the living room, one arm around her. "I've a taxi waiting downstairs. We'll find a restaurant where we can get a quiet table to ourselves, and just talk and talk and talk! What heaps we have to tell one another! Oh, sweetheart, if only you knew how I've longed for this moment! Gracious! What a mess you're in! Been having a paper chase?" He glanced around at the topsy-turvy state of the room.

"You've been having a good turn out, I expect," he continued. "Weren't you thrilled and excited when you got my cable? I wanted it to be a surprise, so I waited until just before the ship docked this morning. It's short notice I know, dearest, considering there is only a week before you return with me

to Brazil. But I cabled and arranged everything so that we can be married to-morrow morning!"

He suddenly stopped and held Glorine at arm's length, looking at her in surprise as he saw the blank, bewildered expression on her face.

"Why, sweetheart! What's the matter?" he exclaimed.

It was the first time he had paused to look at her properly since the first moment he had seen her when she had opened the door. He had spoken so rapidly that he had given her no chance to say a word.

Now, as he regarded her with a puzzled expression, he saw at once that something was wrong.

Glorine was so stunned that her brain was numbed. Speech, thought even, was beyond her.

"What's the matter?" he asked again anxiously. "You were expecting me, weren't you? Surely you got my cable?"

"Your cable?" she managed to stammer, and stopped aghast as the almost incredible truth dawned on her. "Who—who are you?" she asked. "Who have you come to see?"

"You, of course!" he laughed. "Was the photograph I sent you so bad that you don't recognize me? I knew you at once from yours. I'm Stanton—Stanton Fraser. And to-morrow you're going to change your name from Chloris Desmond to Mrs. Fraser. Come, sweetheart! You haven't given me a proper kiss yet. If you only knew how I've longed to hold you in my arms!"

Glorine put out her hand and backed away as he advanced toward her, sitting down and clasping her hands in an access of bewilderment.

"Stop!" she cried. "There has been some terrible mistake! My name is not Chloris Desmond. I'm not the girl you've come to see at all!"

There was a tense silence, while the expression on Stanton Fraser's face

changed. He stared at her as though unable to understand her words.

"Not Chloris!" he stammered at last. "Are you mad? I have your photograph. I must believe the evidence of my own eyes!"

Glorine did not answer for a moment. Her brain flashed back, recalling a half-forgotten incident of many months before when she had gone to her drawer and discovered that one of her photographs was missing. She had spoken to Chloris about it at the time, asking if she had seen it anywhere as it was a particularly good picture and the only one she had left, but Chloris had denied knowing anything about it.

"You may have my photograph," she answered. "If so, I can only tell you that I didn't send it to you. And you have no right——"

He cut in on her words, anger smoldering in his eyes.

"Look here, Chloris," he said curtly.

"My name is Glorine Barker," she interrupted.

"I don't know what your game is," he went on, ignoring the interruption, "but it is evident that you're either trying to play a particularly foolish practical joke on me, or else you've got some scheme on that I haven't yet fathomed. Whatever it is, out with it! I warn you, I'm not the type of man to be played with!"

As he spoke his fingers tightened around her wrists until his grip began to hurt.

But she scarcely felt the pain. Her heart was beating wildly within her as she met his steadfast gaze. Her pulses raced, and a warm flush dyed her cheeks as she realized the full meaning of his words. She lowered her eyes as the full truth dawned upon her. This man had fallen in love with *her* photograph which Chloris had sent pretending it to be her own. Naturally he thought the letters had been written by her also—love letters in which Chloris had promised to be his wife!

Yet why should Chloris have done such a thing?

"Out with it!" he repeated sternly. "Look at me and tell me the truth."

His tone was harsh, and his eyes as hard as steel. For the moment all love had gone out of them.

"Please—please let go of my wrists! You're hurting me!" she cried.

Instantly he let her go, and there was a pleading note in his voice as he said:

"I'm sorry. I didn't realize. But you're hurting me, too. Be straight with me, Glorine! I'll call you that, since you say it's your name. Let me hear you tell me that you love me and that all this is a foolish joke."

"It—it is no joke," she answered. "It's a trick that has been played on me as well as on you. I never wrote those letters—— No, listen! You must let me explain," she went on quickly, as he was about to interrupt. "Chloris Desmond is the girl with whom I share this apartment. It was she who wrote to you, and she must have sent you my photograph, although I never knew it until just now, and I can't understand why she did it. She fled in a panic after receiving your cablegram. For some reason she was afraid to meet you. Look!"

She started to show him the note Chloris had left, but he brushed it aside impatiently and drew her to him, gripping her roughly by the shoulders so that she was forced to meet his gaze.

"I don't believe a word of what you are telling me!" he exclaimed. "You were ready enough to accept the money I've been sending you all these months, and kept writing asking for more, saying how hard up you were and how many debts you had. Now I mean to hold you to your side of the bargain. You shall marry me the first thing tomorrow morning and come with me to Brazil."

Glorine stared at him in terror, fear clutching at her heart.



Her heart was beating wildly within her as she met his steadfast gaze. Her pulses raced, and a warm flush dyed her cheeks as she realized the full meaning of his words.

"But I've told you," she gasped, "I've never written you a letter in my life. It was my friend who shares this apartment."

"Listen to me!" he cut in roughly. "You're the girl whose photograph was sent me and whose face has haunted me

all these months. Ever since you wrote saying that my friend Bob Dakers had told you about me and how I wanted to get in touch with some one back home, I've dreamed of you, longed for you every hour of the day until I thought I should go mad. Your first letters

gave me a new interest in life. I fell in love with the photograph you sent me; and from the day you promised to be my wife life for me has simply meant waiting until I could come and claim you—hold you in my arms as I am doing now—feel your kisses on my lips. Kiss me, Glorine! You shall kiss me! You shan't deny me now."

His mouth closed on hers, stifling her cry, as, slipping his arms quickly about her, he forced her to him and rained hot, passionate kisses on her throat, her lips, her hair.

"Mine!" he breathed. "My wonder girl! The girl I've dreamed about for months! Mine! My very own!"

"You brute!" Glorine exclaimed, and, wrenching her right hand free, struck with all the force of her clenched fist upon his face.

"A brute, am I?"

His eyes blazed, and his voice was low and tense as he regarded her through narrowed lids. Her sudden blow goaded him to fury, and, coupled with his months of longing for her and all he had endured in the climate of the Amazon, he had lost all self-control, so that he scarcely knew what he was saying.

"And what if I am a brute?" he cried. "It is you who have made me so. You're no more than a heartless adventuress out for all you can get. Do you think I believe a word of this story about another girl having sent me your photograph? I wonder how many other men you've tricked in the same way? Trading on your beauty and writing letters asking for money! But you've tried this game of yours once too often. You've met your match in me, and I'm going to make you keep your bargain!"

"You brute! You cad!"

She struggled to get free, but with a swift movement he caught her wrists in one hand and held them behind her back, then pressed the palm of his other hand firmly over her mouth.

"You're coming with me!" he exclaimed. "Now, at once. To be brutal with you is all you deserve. I came here to-day prepared to lay my love at your feet, and worship you as I have long worshiped you in my thoughts. But seeing the type of girl you are, I'm going to treat you as you would have treated me. It's no use struggling. I'm not going to let you go, or give you a chance to cry out. Get on your wraps. Come!"

In silence Glorine obeyed. She dare not do otherwise.

"Walk!" he commanded. "Unless you want me to carry you."

He forced her to accompany him down the stairs.

Outside it was raining hard and the headlights of the waiting taxi glimmered through the mist, and Glorine's last remembrance was of being forced to enter it.

She heard Stanton Fraser give an address to the driver as he got in beside her, but his voice sounded a long way off.

Then everything went black and she knew no more.

CHAPTER II.

A heavy frown creased Stanton Fraser's brow, and his face was set as he looked at Glorine's unconscious figure which he had just placed upon a couch in the richly furnished apartment of a private house near Gramercy Park.

Without turning his head, he addressed the slim, dark-complexioned man standing by his side.

"Have you any brandy in the house?" he asked. "If so, please bring it."

Don Castro, the Spaniard, who was Fraser's assistant and had returned with him for a brief stay in New York after their recent expedition in Brazil, made no attempt to move. His dark eyes were fixed on the face of the girl lying on the couch.

"Who is she?" he exclaimed, looking up. "Why have you brought her here?"

"I brought her here because it was the first place I could think of, and the nearest," Stanton replied. "I want you to look after her, Castro, until to-morrow, when I shall return for her. Your sister must have women servants here. Will you ask her to give orders to have this girl locked in a room somewhere, and see that she doesn't escape? But first we must rouse her. Tell me, where can I find some brandy?"

The Spaniard pointed to a richly carved sideboard at the far end of the room. Stanton Fraser slipped off his overcoat, and swiftly crossed toward it, but Don Castro remained, drinking in the fair beauty of the American girl.

As Fraser returned, bearing a stiff dose of brandy, the Spaniard made an expressive gesture with his hands and looked at the other man questioningly.

"But still I do not understand," he said. "Who is this girl? Why have you brought her here?"

"To-morrow I intend to make her my wife," the other replied shortly, and bent over the couch, gently putting his arm behind Glorine's shoulders so that her head was raised sufficiently to hold the glass to her lips.

A look of sudden understanding flashed into the Spaniard's eyes. He had known for some time that his chief had been communicating with a girl in New York. Once he had intercepted one of the letters that a native runner had brought from the mail boat after journeying days up the Amazon in his primitive canoe.

Don Castro's eyes gleamed, and he was swept by a wave of unreasoning jealousy as he watched a warm flush of color creep into Glorine's cheeks, and her eyelids flutter open.

"Where—where am I?" she murmured faintly. "What has happened?" But even as she spoke, remembrance came, and she shrank back on the couch,

pushing away the remainder of the brandy that was being held to her lips.

For a moment the look of stern determination relaxed from Stanton Fraser's face, and gave place to one of pity as he saw the terror in her eyes. But instantly his expression hardened, and his mouth became set once more in firm resolve.

"You fainted, but you are all right now," he said. "I am leaving you here in safe hands until to-morrow, when I shall return and make you my wife."

He rose, and took the brandy glass back to the sideboard, without giving her another glance. The finality of his tone indicated that he had no words to waste. He had told her what he intended to do, and there was no more to be said.

Glorine gazed about her, both fear and indignation in her heart. Whose house was this in which he dared to hold her prisoner?

She started to raise herself upon the couch, then suddenly stopped as she saw Don Castro standing by her side.

His dark eyes met and held hers, and as she was about to speak, he gave a sidelong glance at the man whose back was turned toward them, and swiftly placed his finger to his lips.

"Hush, señorita!" he whispered. "Say nothing now. Wait! I will help you. I am your friend."

Friend! For an instant Glorine's face lit up with hope. Then doubt came into her mind. Instinct warned her against this man who was looking at her so strangely. Dared she trust him?

She thrust her fears aside, telling herself that she must snatch at any help that offered. Perhaps this man really did wish to be her friend. She glanced gratefully up at him, thanking him with her eyes, and at that moment Stanton Fraser turned and intercepted her look.

"If you are sufficiently recovered," he said, addressing her coldly, "I will

ask Don Castro to leave us for a moment, so that I can speak with you alone. Perhaps he will see that a room is prepared for you at once."

It was an order rather than a request, and Glorine was surprised to see the almost subservient manner with

which the Spaniard obeyed. Had Stanton Fraser some hold over him?

The door closed, and Glorine waited for the man who had brought her there, to speak. But he merely regarded her in silence, his face firm and set.

She met his eyes boldly, although her



His dark eyes were fixed on the face of the girl lying on the couch. "Who is she?" he exclaimed, looking up. "Why have you brought her here?"

heart was beating wildly. His insolent manner toward her, his blatant rudeness, were intolerable. How dared he bring her to this house and treat her so?

He stepped nearer and bent over her, his eyes clouding with both pain and anger as he noticed how she shrank from his touch.

"Glorine! Why will you persist in your attitude toward me?" he exclaimed. "I saw that look between you and Castro, and I warn you it is useless to appeal to him. Why won't you marry me willingly, as you promised in your letters?"

"I've told you, I never wrote those letters!" she cried. "I've never written to you in my life! Oh, why won't you believe me and let me go?"

"Because I love you, and I shall never let you go!" His voice was vibrant with passionate intensity. "I love you, Glorine! Whether you wrote those letters or not, you can't refute your photograph. I have carried it about with me for months." His hand touched his pocket, then suddenly he seized her in his arms.

"My darling!" he whispered. "Stop this pretense. Don't shrink from my touch and look at me as though you loathed me, when all I ask is to be allowed to lay my love at your feet. You say that the whole thing is a mistake, that you are not the girl at all, yet how can that be true? Even if it were, I only know I love you as I never knew I had it in me to love any one! Say that you will marry me willingly, Glorine, and come with me to Brazil?"

There was a pleading note in his voice as he looked earnestly into her eyes, and for a moment Glorine's heart was touched with pity.

Then she remembered how callously he had treated her. His tone of a few moments before had been harsh and brutal. How dared he be insolent with her one moment, and make love to her the next?

"Please—please let go my hands!" she said, trying to draw them free.

Her repulse caused the anger to flash back into his eyes, and he held her more firmly.

"I warn you, whether you marry me willingly or not, you are coming with me to Brazil!" he exclaimed. "I am leaving you here to-night in Don Castro's charge, because I have many things to see to for the fitting out of the new expedition I am taking to the Amazon. I shall be in sole charge of that expedition, and my word will be law. I tell you this because I want you to realize that it will be useless for you to appeal to Castro or any one else. For the last time, Glorine, will you marry me willingly here in New York before we go? Think well before you answer. I will give you until the morning to decide."

"There is no need to wait until the morning," she replied, defiantly meeting his gaze. "My mind is made up and nothing will change my decision."

"You mean——" He stopped and waited for her to go on.

"I will never consent to be your wife!"

There was a tense pause while he regarded her steadily, then suddenly he took her in his arms and forced her lips to his.

"Very well, if that is your decision, and you refuse to give me your kisses willingly, I shall take them!" he exclaimed. "I shall not plead with you any longer, but take what is mine by right. Whether you wrote those letters yourself, or another girl was your accomplice, the fact remains that for months past you have been accepting my money, and I mean to hold you to your bargain. You are coming with me to Brazil! If not as my legal wife——"

The opening of the door broke in on his words.

Don Castro stood there, and with him, framed in the doorway, was a tall girl, her black hair cut short, a slim

figure in an afternoon frock of expensive cut, pleasure written on her face, as she regarded Stanton Fraser with sharply awakened interest burning in her dark eyes.

The arrival of the girl, whose likeness to Don Castro immediately proclaimed her his sister, was followed by a sharp, tense silence.

One glance was sufficient to tell Glorine that this girl and Stanton Fraser were old friends, and her intuition told her more.

In spite of the fact that the Spanish girl's lips were parted in surprise, and her delicately shaped brows were upraised inquiringly, the glint of jealousy that burned in her dark eyes warned Glorine that her astonishment was false.

Her brother had told her everything, and this girl had come at once to confront the man she secretly loved—loved with the uncurbed passion of her warm Southern nature.

Martita Castro gave a glad cry of welcome, and advanced with outstretched hands.

"So it is you!" she exclaimed. "I heard voices and came downstairs, but I could scarcely believe Juan when I met him in the hall and he told me!"

Her voice was low and vibrant, with a faint accent that was both subtle and alluring.

"I hoped it would not be necessary to disturb you, señorita, but since you are here, I had better explain. I have a favor to ask."

There was a coldness in Stanton Fraser's voice as he gently freed his hands from her clasp.

But Martita merely laughed as she moved toward the fire. Her movements were like those of some beautiful, graceful animal as she took up her position by the large open fireplace.

"Any favor you wish is already granted," she answered. "It happens that I also have a request to make." She broke off in astonishment as she

gazed at the figure lying on the couch. "Why, who is this?" she exclaimed. "Juan never told me you had brought a friend!"

Glorine felt instinctively that her surprise was feigned. Don Castro's sister had carefully avoided looking in her direction from the moment she had entered the room.

"This is Miss Glorine Barker," Stanton replied stiffly. "It is on her account that I am here. I want to know if I may leave her in your charge until to-morrow?"

There was a brief pause while Martita looked at Glorine through narrowed lids. Then instantly her expression changed to one of concern and friendliness as she went swiftly to the girl's side.

"Why, of course!" she exclaimed. "How rude of me not to have noticed you at once! Please forgive me. Are you ill? Would you like me to telephone for a doctor?"

Glorine opened her lips to speak, but Stanton Fraser cut in before she could reply.

"There is no need. Miss Barker fainted in the taxi coming here, but she is all right now. The favor I ask is that you have her locked in a room somewhere in your house where she will be safe until to-morrow. It is a strange request to make, I know. Perhaps I had better explain. I intend to make Miss Barker my wife."

"Your wife?"

The other girl stared at him incredulously. Whatever her true emotions, she kept them firmly under control.

"How thrilling!" she exclaimed. "I had no idea that you contemplated marriage, Stanton. You, of all people! I thought you despised women and avoided their company as much as possible. But I do not understand. If this lady is to be your wife, why do you wish me to lock her up, as though she would run away from you?"

A frown of annoyance crossed his face as he moved toward the mantel-piece and stood scowling down at the blazing logs.

Martita remembered another time when he had worn just that same expression. It had been one moonlight night when she had used all her allure to try to win him, to make him kiss her. But she had been unable to pierce his indifference to her charms, although for one moment he had made as if to draw her to him. His reluctance to confide in her now was obvious, and she was too clever to press him.

With a shrug of her shoulders, she laughed and went toward him.

"Forgive me," she said. "I should not have asked that. Of course, I will do as you ask. In return, I will tell you what it is you can do for me. I have had a cable to say that silver has been discovered on some property I own in Brazil. A mining syndicate wishes me to grant them a concession to work the ore, and it is essential I should get there as quickly as possible to watch my interests. Now, as the boat of which you are in sole charge will be leaving New York sooner than any of the ordinary passenger liners are due to sail, I want you to allow me to accompany you on your new expedition. Just as far as Manaos, from where I can travel overland to my estate."

She paused, waiting for him to reply. Then, seeing his hesitation, Martita laid her hand on his arm and continued quickly.

"Please don't deny me this favor," she urged. "I know it has always been strictly against your rules to allow any woman aboard your ship, but as you are making an exception this trip in any case—I mean, surely you are not going to leave your wife behind?" She looked up at him, her eyes soft and lovely.

"No, my wife will accompany me. But I'm afraid that I cannot allow you to accompany us."

"Why not?" Martita asked gayly. "Apart from the service you will be doing me, think what the companionship will mean to your wife. Surely you don't contemplate letting her sail alone with only men aboard—cut off for months, a year perhaps, from all female society?"

She returned swiftly to Glorine and spoke sympathetically as she sat down beside her on the couch.

"No wonder you have quarreled with that fiancé of yours!" she exclaimed laughingly, looking at Stanton Fraser in reproof. "I should be angry with him myself, if he treated me so thoughtlessly. Why, I bet you haven't even bothered to engage a stewardess, Stanton, or a maid to attend to the future Mrs. Fraser's personal needs. How like a man!" Martita slipped her arm around Glorine's shoulder and spoke with pretended indignation for one who is being ill-used. "Of course he must let me come with you!" she protested. "Juan tells me that the ship is small, so if there isn't sufficient accommodation for a stewardess, you and I will have to share a cabin and manage as best we can. What do you say, Glorine? You'll let me use your Christian name, won't you? And I want you to call me Martita. We're going to be great friends, you and I. So tell that stubborn fiancé of yours that you won't marry him unless——"

"But he isn't my fiancé!" Glorine broke in. "He isn't! You don't understand. The whole thing is a——"

Glorine's sudden outburst was checked as Martita's arm tightened around her.

Under pretense of soothing her, the Spanish girl drew Glorine's head lower and quickly whispered in her ear:

"Say nothing now!" she warned. "Pretend to be in agreement with all I say. My brother has told me everything, and we are trying to help you. Juan and I are your friends."

To Glorine an hour might have passed

or only a few minutes, before Stanton Fraser announced that he must go. Her senses were so dazed and numbed that

dressed her curtly, without even troubling to look in her direction.

"You will have the night to think



she had lost all count of time.

Vaguely she realized that Martita had gained her own way and obtained permission to accompany her brother on the new expedition as far as Manaos.

Glorine watched, wondering only how she could escape from this house, and whether Martita and her brother would indeed prove her friends, while Stanton Fraser put on his overcoat and ad-

things over," he said. "For your own sake I hope to find you willing to marry me when I return to-morrow morning. But whatever your decision, you will accompany me as soon as the new ship I am fitting out is ready to sail." He took up his hat and turned to Martita.



“But I do not understand. If this lady is to be your wife, why do you wish me to lock her up, as though she would run away from you?”

“I am relying on you, señorita, to keep Miss Barker here until I am able to come and take her off your hands. You had better hasten your own preparations for the voyage, for I hope to have my ship ready to leave to-morrow night or Thursday morning at the lat-

est. Meanwhile, I will bid you good night.” He made a formal bow and quickly left the room, accompanied by Juan Castro.

As soon as he had gone Glorine rose from the couch, anger and indignation burning in her cheeks.

She had started to move toward the door when Martita faced her, and she grasped a chair unsteadily, for she still felt weak.

"Wait, my dear!" urged the other. "It is useless to appeal to him. You can see for yourself that he is a law unto himself. It is no use trying to reason with such a man. Wait until he has gone, and then my brother and I will help you. Here, drink this."

Glorine felt too weak to protest as Martita led her back to the couch. The Spanish girl's back was turned toward her as she stood by the sideboard pouring some brandy out of a decanter.

Glorine closed her eyes. She heard the shutting of the front door, and realized that Martita was holding a glass to her lips.

"Drink this."

She took a sip and shuddered as the fiery spirit burned her throat.

"No more, thank you."

She pushed the glass away, and tried to look gratefully up at the girl standing by her side.

Still, she could not rid her mind of distrust and doubt. Was her offer of friendship genuine? Did this girl really intend to help her? If so, dared she tell her everything and hope that Martita would assist her to escape?

"You are very good to me," she said. "There is one thing I should like to ask you."

She hesitated, then took courage as Martita sat beside her and smiled.

"Yes? Go on," the other invited. "Do not be afraid to ask me anything, my dear."

"It is this. Forgive me, but I could not help noticing—though, perhaps, I may be wrong—is—*is* Stanton Fraser anything to you?"

Martita did not answer for a moment, but sat with one arm around Glorine's shoulders, gazing straight in front of her. The burning light that glittered in her eyes confirmed Glorine's belief more

than words could have done. This girl loved Stanton Fraser!

"And you?" Martita asked suspiciously. "What is Stanton Fraser to you?"

"Nothing! Less than nothing!" Glorine exclaimed. "I hate and despise him! He is a stranger to me. I—oh, I don't know how I can explain—but I never saw him in my life until to-day. This evening he came to the apartment I share with a girl friend. It was only a few hours ago, and——"

She stopped as Juan Castro came into the room. Again she was conscious of the Spaniard's eyes upon her—piercing eyes that seemed to read deep down into her very soul.

"Go on. Tell me everything," Martita urged. "You must not mind my brother hearing you. He is as anxious to help you as I am."

A moment's hesitancy, and Glorine thrust her doubts aside. Her only chance of escape lay in telling them the truth.

In quick, brief sentences she recounted all that had happened, while brother and sister listened in silence.

"And you say he refuses to believe that another girl sent your photograph?" Martita asked incredulously. "Surely it isn't reasonable to try to hold you to the promises written in those letters? Haven't you been able to make him see that?"

"He will not listen to me!" cried Glorine. "I have tried to explain. He believes I am an adventuress who has been using the money he has sent every week, and is now unwilling to keep her share of the bargain. Nothing I can say will make him believe that it was not I who wrote those letters at all. Oh, help me to escape from him before he comes to claim me to-morrow! Tell me what I am to do!"

Martita rose and moved toward the fire.

"It is simple," she answered. "Juan



She could feel his hot breath upon her cheek. His fingers tightened on her as he strained her toward him. Then suddenly she swayed backward in his arms in a dead faint.

will call a taxi and see you back to your apartment. And then——”

“Just one moment!” Juan Castro stepped forward, interrupting his sister. “Miss Barker is tired and far from well. I suggest that she should rest here for

to-night at any rate. Not only is it late, but for her to return to her apartment would be useless. Immediately Fraser discovers we have allowed her to escape he will go there at once and find her. No, I have a better suggestion to make

and——” The Spaniard paused and looked at his sister meaningly. “Take Miss Barker upstairs, Martita. It will be best, I think, if she sleeps in the bedroom leading off your room. See that she is comfortably settled for the night, then return to me here and I will explain.”

A wave of fear swept over Glorine as she heard his words, and all her distrust of the man returned. She glanced swiftly at Martita, about to appeal against being kept a prisoner in this house against her will, but the words died on her lips as she saw that, beneath her mask of friendship, Martita could no more be relied upon than her brother.

“Juan is right,” the other girl said.

“You cannot go back to your apartment, and it is too late to arrange anything to-night. Come! I will take you up to your room.”

Glorine felt as though she were being inclosed in a net of intrigue. There had been some hidden meaning behind Juan Castro's words—a meaning that Martita had understood and was now acting upon. It was as though they saw some way by which they could use her for their own ends, and they meant to keep her in this house. She could rely

upon them for help no longer. Without their aid escape was impossible, and they did not mean to let her go!

She rose to her feet and spoke quickly, defiance in her voice.

“Please let me leave this house at once!” she began. “If you attempt to stop me——”

She glanced at the large curtained windows.

Her movement was forestalled by the man who seized her by the arm and swung her around until her face was close to his. A wave of terror overcame her as he gripped her by the shoulders, and his eyes gazed into hers.

“I should not call out for help if I were you,” he said.

She could feel his hot breath upon her cheek. His fingers tightened on her as he strained her toward him until she had to bite her lip to keep from crying out with pain.

“Let me go! You are hurting me!”

She turned her head away and looked appealingly at Martita.

Then suddenly a black mist rose before her eyes. Her last remembrance was of Juan Castro's lips against her own before her muscles relaxed and she swayed backward in his arms in a dead faint.

TO BE CONTINUED.





A Fair Exchange

By Anita Davis

CELIE FARRAND'S dress of silver tissue sheathed her supple figure almost to the knees, then foamed to her ankles, as lovely and gleaming as moonlit water. Above the low-cut bodice her rounded shoulders and throat were of a gardenia whiteness, set off by the burnished gold of her thick, waving hair.

Celie looked lovely and knew it; nevertheless, she felt a little nervous, a bit frightened, as she descended the stairs to join the gay, country-club crowd.

Her sapphire eyes, burning with excitement, sought everywhere for Bob and failed to find him. Where could he be?—she wondered.

A thin, wiry girl with dark, inquisitive eyes, approached her smiling.

LS-2C

"You're Miss Farrand, aren't you?" she asked. "Bob Allston told me about you. I'm Connie Telfair. You're a trained nurse, aren't you?"

Celie lifted her head proudly, as she replied:

"A student nurse at the Vereck Hospital at Riverton. . . My father was head surgeon there until he died two years ago."

"And Bob met you there a month ago when he got hurt in a polo game?" Connie went on eagerly. "Awfully romantic, wasn't it? He was practically engaged to Mara van Slyke until then, you know."

"But I thought Miss van Slyke was engaged to some one else."

Connie laughed, wrinkling her sharp, little nose.

"Oh, Mara," she said deprecatingly. "She's like that. Engaged to a new man every week. Bob's awfully good picking for any one."

Celie turned Bob's ring nervously upon her finger. She had been engaged to him just twenty-five minutes. He had proposed to her on the drive out from town, a whirlwind proposal that had left her gasping, acquiescent, and very much thrilled. It is not every day that a penniless student nurse gets a proposal from the town's richest young man. He was good picking—no question about that; but she hated having it put that way. Had his money, his position flattered her, influenced her not a little in the answer she had given him?

"You look a lot like Mara," Connie confided, watching Celie's face avidly. "She's blonde like you and tall."

"Oh," said Celie blankly.

"Yes, that was probably what attracted him. Men usually go with one type of girl, don't you think so?"

Celie nodded absently, wishing desperately that Bob would come and rescue her from this little cat before her cleverly sheathed claws came forth and scratched too sharply.

"Mara's really wonderful," Connie went on. "So awfully—well, cultured. Men go mad about her. It seems so strange about Bob—he's such an aristocrat."

Celie went hot with fury; but when she spoke her voice was studiously sweet.

"You'll have to excuse me, I'm afraid," she lied cheerfully. "I'm just a bit hard of hearing. And I must run along. I'm meeting Bob outside."

And she swept away, leaving Connie feeling that she had been slapped smartly in the face.

On the broad veranda, Celie looked this way and that for her fiancé. It was a very dark night, cloudy and moonless; and in the shadows the men,

in their dark coats and white flannels, looked very much alike. Celie strolled down the steps and out along the gravel path that led to the ocean. She was feeling hotly indignant with Bob for deserting her. He knew just how strange, how alone she would feel. Where could he be?

But as she rounded a curve in the path, the question was solved with a disconcerting suddenness. There was a clump of cedars ahead of her and from behind them came Bob's voice, low, impassioned.

At the first word, Celie had darted forward impulsively; but as the purport of what he was saying came to her, she paused abruptly.

"Mara, Mara! Do you know that a man goes crazy with loving you?"

Then a woman's voice, silky soft, languorous.

"Silly boy! You must have gone crazy indeed to get yourself tangled up with that nurse."

"Oh, forget about her! I have. Give me your lips, Mara. Oh, I love you, worship you! I'm mad about you!"

Celie could see them dimly through the fringe of trees. Their two figures melted together, swayed.

Like a ghost, she skirted the trees, and hurried on toward the sea, her hands balled into furious, impotent fists. Bob Allston—she hated him now, hated him with a fury that seemed to shake her whole body.

"But I'm not really hurt," she rejoiced, wondering. "I'm not feeling sad and heartbroken. I'm just plain mad—mad clean through. I'm jilted—jilted!"

"Mara," a man's voice spoke suddenly, so near to her that she jumped; and then two arms like steel springs caught her; and a man's lips closed down upon hers.

For a moment Celie struggled; then lay still and passive, her head thrown back. Why not? Why not steal

Mara's date? It was fair enough, wasn't it, under the circumstances?

As suddenly as he had caught her to him, the man released her, still gripping her arm firmly.

"I had almost given you up." His voice was deep with a quiver of suppressed excitement running through it. "It's quarter of ten, fair lady; and nine was the hour of your appointment with me. Knowing you, however, I had decided to give you until ten o'clock to get here."

He was hurrying her out along the pier as he spoke.

"As I told you in my note," he went on, "I wanted you to be the first to try out my new speed boat. I've named her the *Last Shot*. Wish the light were better so you could see her; but at least you'll have a chance to judge her speed. She's a whiz in the water."

Easily, lightly, Celie felt herself swung up and lowered into a little craft moored at the end of the pier. The next minute, the man was beside her. She heard him working at the ropes; then the engine coughed and began to throb steadily; and the boat fairly leaped away from the shore in a wild welter of spray that drenched Celie from head to foot. She uttered a sharp exclamation and heard the man give a short, hard laugh.

"A sweater just at your feet," he called at her. "You can throw it around your shoulders."

Celie, soaked, and unaccountably frightened, groped with cold fingers, found the sweater, and wrapped it thankfully about her. Just what had her mad impulse got her into?—she wondered. There had been menace in the man's laugh, in the tone of his voice. She shook with a nervous chill; then she squared her small chin, and wiped the salt spray away from her lashes. Whatever the man's feelings were, they weren't for her. They were for Mara van Slyke.

She glanced back, but already the shore lights were dim. They seemed to be heading straight out to sea; and the water was very rough. The boat now was making for a dim point of light that came pricking through the murk to the south. On and on they went, the minutes ticking by relentlessly.

"Wait!" she called, "please wait!" but her voice was lost in the noise of the engine and the rush and roar of the water. The man never turned his head nor slackened speed. The boat continued to leap forward.

Then, almost in the next minute, the engine died; a dark mass loomed up straight ahead; and the little boat slid into what appeared to be a tiny bay. Celie started to her feet, but the man pushed her back.

"Sit down!" he commanded harshly. "It's deep here."

Then he fastened the ropes; and once more, Celie was swung up in his arms and lifted out upon a wooden pier. The man sprang out beside her and took her arm.

"Well, Mara," his voice was exultant. "Let me introduce you to Crab Island. This is Otway's place, you know. He lent it to me."

"But——" Celie interrupted.

"You can talk afterward," he laughed unpleasantly. "I'm doing the talking now. You've heard of Crab Island, Mara. It's rocky about here—way off the course of steamers and fishing boats. No one ever comes here—one but Otway."

He was hurrying her now along a narrow, stony path; and Mara was startled to hear the sharp bark of the motor. The man laughed again.

"Yes, my dear, the boat's gone. My man, Pete, was waiting there for us. He's taken the boat back to shore. We're quite alone except for a chaperon of sorts in the person of old Indian Annie who keeps the place for

Otway. You're marooned, Mara, marooned for a whole week with me! Pete has his orders not to return until the time's up."

Celie tried to speak but her dry lips refused her utterance. She stumbled and would have fallen, but he dragged her to her feet; and stopping in the pathway, he grabbed her roughly by the shoulders.

"You thought you could play fast and loose with me, didn't you?" he demanded. "When I left for South America two years ago we were engaged. Have you forgotten that? Engaged! Down in those countries a man would kill a girl for playing with him as you've played with me. I wasn't rich enough for you, was I? When I came back last week and tried to see you, you were busy. But the idea of testing out the speed boat pleased you. I thought it would. And now you're a castaway—shipwrecked, my lovely, helpless Mara. You'll learn in this week to cook your own food or starve. You'll learn to dress yourself and comb your own hair. At the end of the week, Pete will come out with a minister, a friend of mine; and you'll marry me then, Mara—or stay another week."

"Oh, please," Celie faltered; but he was pushing her through the doorway of a little cabin into a long, narrow room lighted by an oil lamp in a bracket. Celie, turning, glimpsed a darkly handsome face, lighted by burning dark eyes, eyes in which a horrified amazement dawned as they rested intently upon her face.

"Who—who are you?" he gasped. Then, not waiting for her to answer: "Is this more of Mara's work? Some practical joke or other?"

"No, no!" Celie cried. "Mara doesn't know I'm here. No one knows."

"Then why are you here? Who are you?" He flung the words at her furiously.

Celie twisted her hands together.

"Oh, I shouldn't have come!"

"And have you just found that out?" he inquired grimly.

Celie flung up her head.

"How was I to know what you were planning?" she asked hotly. "I—I thought we were just going for a little ride and then back to the club."

"And like all the rest of your crowd," he sneered, "you thought it didn't make any difference that you were going off with a man you didn't know, masquerading as another girl? Well, the joke apparently is on you—as well as on me."

"I didn't do it for a joke," Celie said hurriedly. She hated the look of cold contempt in his eyes. She wanted desperately to have his respect, his liking. "I—oh, it sounds so silly—but I—I had just seen my fiancé making love to—to another girl. I—I ran away down to the pier to get away from them. I was furious—fighting mad. And—and then, you stepped out of the shadows and called me 'Mara,' and— Oh, don't you see, I thought why not steal another girl's date since, since some one was stealing mine."

"Very commendable, I am sure, and exactly what one of your type would do. Even though you are not Mara, you're probably just like her and I'll treat you accordingly." Deliberately the man took a pipe from his pocket, filled and lighted it.

Celie shivered in her wet clothing and flung her dripping hair back out of her eyes.

"Very silly, you mean," she countered. "I know it and I'm sorry, but apparently it can't be helped now. We—we'll have to make the best of it. I'm Celie Farrand."

"So delighted to meet you, Celie." He grinned down at her sardonically. "I'm Courtland Vane—Court for short. I surely hope that you will enjoy your visit."

Celie smiled back at him impishly, matching his tone with her own.

"Oh, I know I shall," she said. "So nice of you to ask me."

"You're a good sport," he told her grudgingly. "Here, you must get out of those wet clothes right away or you'll be sick." He flung open a door into a tiny bedroom where another oil lamp was lighted. "You'll find everything you need there. This next door is Annie's room. I sleep in the loft. Annie

isn't half bad, although her English is nil."

Celie lingered for a moment in the doorway.

"Good night," she said, "and please don't hate me too much—for being a fool."

His eyes bored down into hers for a moment. Then he laughed.

"Good night. I suppose I should say I'm sorry, but why should I? You got yourself into this, didn't you? I never



*"How was I to know what you were planning?" she asked hotly.
"I thought we were just going for a little ride."*

asked Miss Celie Farrand to test out my speed boat."

With a hot flush, Celie stepped inside the door and slammed it sharply behind her. He was insufferable, insufferable! And yet, and yet what was there about him that held her, thrilled her? She knew that at one word from him she would have gone into his arms again as she had back on the club pier. And a few hours ago she had promised to marry Bob Allston, and Court Vane was engaged to Mara van Slyke! What a precious comedy of errors life was!

She glanced with curious eyes about the tiny bedroom. It was clean, but sparsely furnished, containing nothing but a cot bed, a pine bureau, and a chair. Articles of clothing hung on hooks along one wall, and a pair of cotton pajamas was flung over the bed.

"All the comforts of home," Celia remarked a little ruefully, as she ripped off her ruined evening dress.

She put on the pajamas gratefully; and, having blown out the light, crept into the narrow bed. She was quite sure she would not be able to sleep. She was too excited, too disturbed; and the moment she closed her eyes, she could see Court's dark face, could hear the sound of his voice. But the long ride and the wetting had wearied her; the air that came through the one window with its tang of the sea and of pine trees was more potent than any sleeping draft. Ten minutes after she had laid her head on the pillow, Celie was sleeping as deeply, as peacefully as a child.

When she awoke it was broad daylight. She glanced about the room with bewildered, sleep-dazed eyes. Then, in a moment, memory returned and she sprang quickly out of bed. Adventure! Romance! She had always longed for it; and now here it was handed to her in a thick slice.

From the hooks she selected a blue shirt, some khaki knickers and a pair

of golf stockings. At the end of the bureau she found a pair of sneakers that fitted well enough. Dressed at length, she wished rather wistfully for a mirror. Her hair discouraged her. It was shoulder length and apparently every pin had been lost out during the night's wild ride. She managed to put it in some semblance of order with a small comb that she found in the top drawer of the bureau. Then she stepped a little shyly out into the cabin's big general room.

An Indian woman, fat and placid, was sitting beside the cook stove, working over a wet, snarled, and slimy looking mess of fish line. She looked up as Celie came toward her, nodded, grunted, smiled, and went on with her work. By motions Celie made her understand that she wished to wash; and the woman led her to a door at the end of the room that opened into a tiny bathroom. Evidently, Mr. Otway did not believe in roughing it too strenuously. There was even warm water. Celie came back to the kitchen feeling refreshed and ravenous.

The room was empty. Annie had doubtless departed to try her luck at fishing; and there was neither sign nor smell of food anywhere. The stove was bare save for an enameled coffee-pot turned tidily upside down.

"Then he did mean it," Celie muttered. "He's going to treat me just as he planned to treat Mara. I cook or starve! Well"—she gave a short, half-angry laugh—"it certainly won't be starve if there's anything eatable anywhere in this shack."

She started immediately on a foraging tour; and soon discovered everything needful in the cupboards back of the stove. In a few moments a pot of freshly ground coffee was bubbling merrily; bacon was sizzling in the pan; and Celie was ladling pancakes onto a smoking griddle.

She made a hearty and satisfying

breakfast; and was just drinking her third cup of coffee, when Court came up to the open doorway in a bathing suit. He eyed the table with lowered lids.

"Good morning," he said shortly. Then added with quick suspicion: "Who cooked breakfast?"

Celie lifted her eyebrows.

"Not Annie. You have her perfectly trained. She left me to starve, but you see I didn't."

"You're quite welcome to anything you cook yourself," he assured her coolly, and then without another word crossed the room and vanished up the ladder to the left, his wet feet leaving a trail of water across the floor.

"War to the death!" Celie murmured to herself, a dimple showing in her cheek. "Well, Court, my lad, I think you'll find that in cooking I'm not a bit like your lovely Mara."

She hastily cleared the table, washed the dishes, and made the little room neat. Then, as Court had not yet appeared, she wandered out into the sunshine. At the corner of the cabin were a couple of fishing rods and a bait can. Celie dipped into the earth in the can with an exploring finger. There were some fat worms wriggling in it.

"Must be a stream around somewhere," she told herself, "and with any luck at all I ought to be able to have fish for dinner. Oh, I'm not going to starve, Mr. Courtland Vane, far from it!"

It was nearly three hours later that Celie found her way back to the cabin. She was splashed and muddy and her feet were wet, but she had a string of four fine trout.

Court stood at the cabin doorway smoking; but when he saw her, he snatched his pipe from his mouth and came toward her, his eyes blazing.

"Where have you been?" he demanded fiercely. "I—what do you mean by going off like that and not telling me? This isn't any pleasure re-

sort. The water's deep; it's rocky; and it shelves off to a thirty-foot drop. You—you might have been drowned."

Celie thrust grimy fingers through her tangle of hair.

"Oh, blah!" she said wearily. "If I had been, think what a nice way it would have been out of all your troubles. As it is, I'm here yet, and I mean to have fish for dinner."

And she brushed unceremoniously past him and into the cabin. Court followed her almost meekly.

"See here, Celie," he began, "I—I'm sorry I spoke like that. You had me scared when I couldn't find you. Let me help you get dinner."

"Help me!" Celie flared. "I don't want your help! Annie's attitude this morning showed me plainly enough that you expected me to cook or starve. Well, I can cook—although you probably expected I couldn't—"

"But"—Court's voice broke in gently—"but, Celie, can you clean fish? Can you now? Do you like to rip 'em up and scrape 'em?"

Celie turned on him furiously.

"Oh, go ahead and laugh at me if you like. Of course, I don't like to clean fish, but I can—and I will!"

Court reached over and possessed himself of the trout.

"You can, but you won't. I clean the fish! Annie's fishing down at the point and if I know her she won't be back until dark. We'll both get dinner and we'll both eat it. That's fair enough, isn't it?"

For a moment an angry retort trembled on Celie's lips; then she laughed. Court, returning from the cupboard with a sharp knife in his hands, shrugged his shoulders lightly.

"Glad you've decided to be sensible," he remarked. "You might cook some potatoes; and there's plenty of canned stuff in the cupboard."

The meal that followed was quite gay. Court unbent and made of himself a

delightful companion; and yet ever and again Celie felt, as his eyes met hers, a coldness, a disdain that cut her like a knife. It was as if he were weighing her again and finding her wanting.

Later in the afternoon, Court rummaged a bathing suit from a chest in the loft; and they went swimming. Then, there was supper to get and more dishes to wash. Celie pleaded weariness and went early to her room; but, Court, as he bade her good night, caught one of her hands and examined it sardonically.

"You must be worried," he said, curling his lips, "to think of anything so slim and white as this becoming all roughened and red with honest work—you and all Mara's breed are parasites!"

Idly Celie let her hand lie in his clasp while her eyes mocked him.

"So glad," she murmured, "that you like my hands."

But Court dropped her cool fingers as if they had stung him and with a gruff good night turned on his heel.

That night, before she got into bed, Celie wrapped Bob's ring in a bit of paper and dropped it into the top drawer of the bureau. With it on her finger she felt fettered. Without it she was free. She realized now that she had been merely flattered, carried away by his extravagant courtship. She had never had any real feeling for him. Never had she felt about Bob as she already felt about Court. Jealously she treasured the memory of that one kiss he had given her when he thought she was Mara. He would never kiss her again—he had shown her only too plainly how much he despised her.

"But," Celie whispered into her pillow, "being a fool—and a woman—I love him just the same."

The days slipped by. One was very like the other. To Celie, who had often gone camping with her father, the work of the little cabin seemed simple.

The island itself she loved. Together she and Court explored it; and it seemed to Celie that he invariably chose the roughest and longest route to any given point in order to test her endurance. But she never gave him the satisfaction of lagging behind. Where he could go, she could go, and she gloried in showing him that she could—even though at night she ached in every muscle and her tortured hands, arms, and legs were covered with scratches and bruises.

But if Court noticed her pluckiness, her unflagging courage, he gave no sign. He was friendly; but it was a friendliness that erected barriers about itself. And always he would interrupt their talk to make some slurring, sarcastic remark. It was as if he had determined not to be too friendly, not to allow himself to be fooled.

It was late in the afternoon of the fourth day, that the storm came up, so suddenly that one moment it seemed the sun was shining and the next the sky was black and angry with clouds; the wind was ripping fiercely through the trees; and then came the rain, driving, pelting, roaring.

Court and Celie, who had just returned from setting some fishing lines, got inside the cabin just in time.

"This is fun," Celie said joyously. "I love being shut in all nice and warm when it storms. Let's light a fire in the fireplace."

"Just touch a match to it—the kindling's ready," Court agreed, taking down a slicker from its hook in the corner.

"You're not going out?" Celie could not keep the dismay from her voice.

"You're no fisherman," Court laughed. "I'm going to bring in those lines we set or they'll be washed away."

"But," Celie protested, "the—the wind—it's so terrible! Suppose a tree should be blown over or something!"

"And would you care?" his eyes ques-

tioned hers strangely. "Would you care, Celie, if a tree should fall on me?"

Celie drew back from him, her eyes averted.

"Oh, I—I——" she faltered.

He laughed shortly.

"Don't bother to lie, Celie," he said.

"I've surely given you no reason to care whether I lived or died."

And then the door banged sharply behind him and he was gone.

Celie's fingers trembled as she touched a match to the fire; and she glanced with flaming cheeks at old Annie; but the Indian woman, in her favorite corner by the stove, was apparently fast asleep in her chair.

Slowly the minutes dragged by; and to Celie the waiting was intolerable. Every moment the ferocity of the storm seemed to increase; and now to the roar of the wind and the beating of the rain was added the blinding flash of lightning and the sharp crack and rumble of thunder.

It was useless to watch for Court from the window, for the rain was as thick as a fog, and Celie could not see clearly four yards in front of the cabin. Nervously, she piled more wood upon the fire; and then went about making preparations for supper; while all the time her too-vivid imagination was picturing all sorts of things that might have happened to Court.

Annie came to life, and evidently terrified by the storm, fished some sort of wooden fetish from her pocket and began mumbling over it in her harsh gutturals. The woman's fright added to Celie's own; and she began to pace feverishly up and down the narrow confines of the cabin.

At last when the hands of the battered clock above the fireplace pointed to five o'clock, Celie could stand it no longer. She slipped on a sweater and an old cap and went outside. The storm met her, buffeted her. She was drenched in a moment, cold, breathless,

almost blinded; but she struggled on toward the shore. She must find Court!

Then she saw him stumbling toward her through the circle of bending trees. With his left hand he was hugging his right arm to his side; and instinctively Celie knew that he was hurt. She was at his side in an instant. There was blood on his forehead and along his cheek. His face was gray, haggard.

"Oh, what is it?" Celie cried wildly. "What have you done? What's happened?"

"Nothing much," he smiled down at her, gasping. "Slipped on the rocks and fell. Hit my head on something and it knocked me out; and my arm—I'm afraid it's broken."

Celie had slipped her arm through his left arm and was half-leading, half-dragging him toward the cabin.

"Don't worry," he muttered. "Annie'll fix me up!"

Celie turned on him, eyes blazing.

"Annie! Annie! She shan't touch you. I'll set your arm. You needn't be afraid. Dad taught me how to set a broken bone when I was only thirteen."

And so it was Celie who took charge of things; she found iodine and bandages in the medicine closet; who helped Court take off his slicker and slit the sleeve of his shirt.

"Tell Annie to whittle some splints from the kindling," she ordered. "And tell her to hurry."

Her lovely face was absorbed, businesslike; and Court watched her like a man in a dream. She seemed different somehow, more mature. But when at last the cut on his head had been attended to; when his arm was set and in a sling; and he was comfortably settled in the biggest of the easy-chairs before the fireplace, she laughed, a little relieved laugh, but her face was white and drawn.

"Well, that's over," she said, "and you were very good not to groan."

"You're mighty clever," Court said,

his eyes warm with admiration. "And, by the way," he added, a little shamefacedly, "I'll probably be out of my head to-night and rattling off a great string of nonsense. I always have—ever since I was a kid. Whenever I've been hurt or sick, I've been delirious. Nothing to worry about—only I didn't want you to think I'd suddenly gone crazy."

They were both rather distraught that evening; and Celie, assured that there was nothing further she could do for him, excused herself to Court very early and went to bed. She felt worn out, exhausted, oddly unhappy; and when at last she fell into a troubled sleep, her pillow was wet with tears.

She did not know how long she had slept when she was awakened by a muttered sound of talking. Startled, frightened, she sprang out of bed and cautiously opened the door into the general room. The storm had long since died away and a great shaft of moonlight came flooding through the window. Court sat where she had left him.

"Mara came," he was saying impatiently. "Where is she? I saw her just now. Mara! Mara!"

Celie took a step forward. She could feel her heart fluttering in her throat; and at the sound of her step, the man started, turned, then held out his arm eagerly. Like a homing bird Celie went toward him. What difference did it make that he was delirious, that he thought she was another girl? Head flung back, eyes closed, she lifted warm, red lips to his; and once again she knew the wonder, the ecstatic thrill of his lips on hers.

"Darling," he whispered, "little golden love. I thought there was some one else—some one else you loved."

"No one but you ever and always," Celie whispered, tears slipping down her cheeks. "No one but you, my own dear."

His left arm caught her still more closely to him. His lips caressed her

cheek, her hair, the lovely line of her throat; and Celie, kneeling beside him, caught his dark head in her hands. Gradually, the arm that held her slackened and Court's body slumped heavily back in the chair. He was asleep. Softly Celie kissed his temple where the crisp, dark hair grew low. Then, she brought a quilt from her own bed and flung it lightly over him; and with a last, lingering look at him, she crept quietly back to bed.

It seemed that she had hardly closed her eyes, when a loud knocking at the outside door aroused her. The window was already gray with dawn, but it was still very early. Court's voice came to her, startled, incredulous:

"Pete! You here! What's wrong?"

Then a gruff voice, apologetic, pleading.

"Gee, boss, gee, Mr. Vane, I didn't mean nothin' by it; but it—it just sorta slipped out—about you bein' here I mean."

With hurried, nervous fingers, Celie slipped into her clothes. Pete was here. That meant the boat was here too, and the chance to return to the mainland. Yesterday, she would have been dismayed, but to-day she was glad. For after last night with its cruel revealing of the depths of her love, it would be torture to stay here longer. She could not; she dared not look in Court's eyes again. What would he read in hers?

She opened the door and came into the general room. Pete and Court stood on either side of the fireplace facing each other. Court's face was dark and furious with anger.

"I thought I could trust you," he said. "You were paid to keep your mouth shut."

"I know, boss," Pete whined, "but I got to shootin' crap with a coupla darkies. Them babies sure cleaned me out, and you said I could charge anything within reason, so I went in this here store for a pack of cigarettes, an' this



"You're mighty clever," Court said, his eyes warm with admiration.

skirt stood there. She heard me chargin' 'em. She came up to me like a whole army. I never had a chance. She just shoos me into her car an' starts askin' me questions. I dunno how she done it, but gosh, she had me spillin' ever'thing in a minute."

"She would," said Court.

"Yeh," Pete scratched his sandy head. "Well, this was last night an' the storm came up and I didn't dass come then,

so I come first thing this mornin'. But I tell you, boss, she had blood in her eye. I betcha she'll be here in time for breakfast."

Noiselessly Celie crept back to the bedroom and closed the door behind her. For a moment she stood irresolute. Mara was coming! The girl to whom Court was engaged! Of course that was whom Pete had meant. She, Celie, could not, would not face her! Fever-

ishly, she glanced about her; and then, her mind made up, she snatched open the bureau drawer and retrieved Bob's ring. A moment later, she had snatched the flimsy screen from one of the windows and with a quick, lithe movement had dropped over the sill into the wet undergrowth. Like a thief she skirted the house; and screened by the trees, made her way over the now familiar ground to the little dock. A tiny speed boat was just nosing into the bay.

Celie, well-hidden, watched while the boat was being secured to the dock; then, as two figures stepped ashore, she gave a start of surprise. For one of the newcomers was Bob Allston! The other was Mara van Slyke. After a few minutes of controversy, Mara made her way quickly along the path to the cabin, and Bob was left pacing the dock. As soon as Mara was well out of sight, Celie crept from her hiding place and hailed Bob. There was no time for explanations—no time for anything.

"Bob," she pleaded, "take me back to shore—right away! Please! Please! I can't stay here."

She sprang into the boat and began feverishly to work at the rope that held it. Bob followed her, protesting, questioning. But Celie had already started the motor.

"Get me away from here," she cried hysterically. "I'll explain afterward."

And Bob, perforce, began dazedly to manipulate the rudder. As the boat pulled out into the open sea, Celie leaned back with a little sigh of relief that was part a sob. Then, faltering, she told him a little, a very little of what had happened.

"I know you care for Mara," she said. "I saw you that night at the club by the cedar trees, and——"

"But I don't," Bob protested. "I—I'll admit that Mara had me going, but that's all over. You've had me half crazy looking for you—wondering what

on earth had happened—and now, I've found you!"

"But, it's all over for you and me too, big boy," Celie said gently, wondering how Bob's weakly handsome face had ever attracted her. She fumbled at her finger, and then slipped his ring into the pocket of his coat. "I—I don't care for you either."

She listened unmoved to Bob's protestations, his pleadings; and when at last the speed boat was moored at a wharf a few miles from the country club, she turned to him and held out her hand.

"Sorry, Bob, old dear," she said, "but it's good-by—once and for all. I'll get a taxi back to Riverton."

"But, Celie," Bob clung frantically to her hand. "You—you can't leave me like this!"

It was hard convincing him, this spoiled rich man's son; and Celie was glad when at last the taxi whirled her away from him; glad too when she was back at the nurses' home. She found her pocketbook, paid the driver and then locked herself in her room. There were a few nurses about, but her roommate was, fortunately, on duty. Celie, seated on her narrow cot, took stock of the situation, and then, bathed and dressed, went to the hospital to report to the matron.

The interview was short. The matron, a strict, unbending woman, who had never liked Celie, told her plainly that she was no longer in training at the Vereck Hospital.

"You were seen to leave the country club with a man, Miss Ferrand," she said coldly, "and you have been gone five days. You know how our board looks at such things. You will have to leave at once."

Fifteen minutes after she had left her room Celie was back in it again and jobless! Hastily she packed and locked her trunk and a suitcase. Then she removed the uniform she had loved so

well and donned her street clothes. But where should she go? She must get away and quickly, but where? Then with a flash of inspiration, she remembered her father's best friend, Gene Merriton. At her father's death, he had told her not to hesitate to come to him if ever she were in trouble. She would go to him now; and perhaps he could find work for her.

It was late that night when the maid at the big Merriton house in Syracuse ushered Celie into Merriton's study; and the kindly man gave her a most cordial welcome. Briefly Celie explained what had happened.

"I've not done anything really wrong," she told him with a straight glance from her blue eyes. "And I've not come to fling myself on your charity. I want work."

For a long minute Merriton regarded her keenly. Then he thumped his big fist on the table.

"By George! Celie, if you mean that, I've a job for you right in this house. My sister, Louise—she's years younger than I—is in a sanitarium, following a serious operation for appendicitis. Her husband's on a six months' business trip to Peru. I'm taking care—that is, I'm trying to take care of their youngster; but the tot is killing herself with longing for her mother."

"Poor baby!" Celie said impulsively.

Merriton shook his head, a worried frown between his eyes.

"She's lost weight and she cries herself to sleep at night. She won't eat—and Louise mustn't be worried. She's got to stay five or six more weeks in the sanitarium; and I'm afraid she'll come out to find she has a very sick child. You're young, Celie, and, if you'll pardon my saying so, you're pretty."

"But—but what can I do?" Celie queried.

"Here's my plan. Patsy is bound to like you; and if you'll stay here with us

until her mother comes home—play with the youngster, take her out, tell her stories, get her to eat and sleep, everything will be fine. Will you do it, Celie?" He brushed his hand across his eyes. "Louise—she and little Patsy are all I have in the world. If—if anything happens to either of them——"

Celie caught at his hand, tears in her own eyes.

"Of course I'll do it," she cried. "I—I only wish I could begin right now!"

"You can!" Merriton's eagerness was pathetic. "She's not asleep yet. Her nurse was in here not ten minutes ago—but you must be worn out with your trip!"

"Nothing wears me out," Celie assured him gaily. "Come on, now. Take me to Patsy!"

It was as Merriton had hoped. Patsy liked Celie on sight; and as for Celie, her heart went out to the tiny four-year-old mite, with her thin, white face, and her big black eyes red from weeping.

"I'm the good fairy come to wave my wand and make you go to sleep. Then to-morrow you and I are going to plan all sorts of wonderful things to surprise mummie when she comes home. Won't that be fun?"

Softly the others withdrew from the room; and Celie, seated beside the bed, began to relate in her low, richly modulated voice some most surprising adventures that befell a little brown bear named Fuzzy Buster. And that night for the first time in several weeks, Little Patsy had ten hours of refreshing, life-giving sleep.

And Celie, kneeling by the window in the spacious room that had been allotted to her, looked out unseeing at the lights of the city. She was promising herself solemnly that she would bring Gene Merriton's little niece back to health again.

The next morning a pleasant-faced maid brought Celie her breakfast, together with the morning papers.

"Miss Patsy's hasn't waked up yet and Mr. Merriton's that pleased! But you don't look as if you'd closed your eyes a wink all night, miss."

"Oh, I'm quite all right," Celie assured her hurriedly. "I had quite a— a tiring trip yesterday."

When the maid was gone, Celie forced herself to eat a little of the appetizing breakfast, then listlessly she glanced at the papers. She was about to fling them to one side, when something caught her eye. With shaking fingers she held the paper closer. It was the announcement that Courtland Vane, who had recently returned from South America, and his fiancée, Miss Mara van Slyke, would be married early in the fall.

Celie flung herself back among the pillows, her slender body shaken by long, quivering sobs.

"You—you win, Mara," she gasped. "You held all the cards!"

The next few days were busy ones for Celie. But all her effort was amply repaid, for the color was coming back into Patsy's face; she was eating better; and sleeping nights. Celie got a big calendar; and gayly the two checked off each day that was bringing mummie nearer.

Celie herself was eating little and sleeping less; but to Merriton's protests she laughingly proclaimed that she was quite all right. Inwardly she wondered just how long she could go on with this ache at her heart. She was hungry for the sight of Court. The memory of his kisses seemed burned forever upon her lips; and although she sternly told herself she must forget, she found, somehow, that she could not.

At last the days were nearly all checked off on the calendar; at last Patsy could say, jumping about like a small automaton:

"To-morrow, mummie's coming! To-morrow! To-morrow!"

"You must eat just heaps to-day," Celie told her. "Won't mummie be surprised to find you so nice and fat!"

But in spite of all Celie could do the day did drag. For the first time since Celie's coming Patsy refused to take her nap; and, finally in desperation, Celie ordered the car and they went to the park. Patsy had brought her big ball; and while Celie sat on a bench, Patsy played happily for a few minutes. They had chosen a deserted corner; and Celie, her eyes on the child, gave herself up rather bitterly to her own unhappy thoughts.

Patsy bounced her ball, higher and higher, giving little screams of delight. Suddenly without warning, the ball went over the hedge and out into the bridle path. It bounced directly under the nose of a big chestnut mare, making her shy violently; while at the same moment, Patsy went scuttling through the hedge in pursuit of her treasure. A wild cry of warning tore at Celie's throat as she dashed madly after the child. She must save her!

Under the feet of the maddened horse ran the child, quite unaware of her danger. In the same moment Celie had caught her up and sprang to one side—but not quite quickly enough. The horse's foreleg caught her shoulder and she was knocked roughly to one side—then darkness.

Celie, coming back to consciousness, realized that some one was holding her close; that she was being kissed roughly, passionately. She stirred uneasily.

"Patsy!" she cried huskily. "Patsy!"

Then she lifted heavy eyes and looked up into the haggard, agonized face of Courtland Vane.

"The child's all right," he told her brusquely. "The chauffeur has taken her back to the car—and you, thank Heaven, were only stunned. Oh, Celie!"

But Celie was remembering things. Quickly she pulled away from his en-

circling arms. Her voice was shaky, but her smile was convincing.

"I—I wasn't expecting to see you," she said.

"Nor I, you. I—I suppose you're married!"

Celie laughed.

"Save your congratulations. I—I'm not even thinking of being married; but you—you and Mara—I read about your plans in the paper."

For answer she felt herself swept close into his arms again.

"You're not married! When you and Bob Allston both dropped out of sight, I thought—well, what every one else was thinking—that you'd eloped. Celie, Mara had that notice put in the paper. It's been retracted since. Celie, loveliness, I learned in those few days on

the island that I—that I couldn't live without you. I'm mad about you, Celie."

Dizzily Celie swayed against his shoulder, color flooding her white face. She didn't understand how Court happened to be there. She didn't care! Explanations were tiresome things, and could follow later. She lifted the crimson flower of her mouth to his, and looked deep in his eyes.

"Kiss me!" she breathed. "Kiss me and be awfully quick about it—that wretched chauffeur's coming back. And then—and then, Court, let's go back to Crab Island. I want to be marooned again!"

Silently, he drew her loveliness closer to him and crushed the softness that was her lips with his.



EMPTY ROOM

THOUGH nothing has been taken from your room,
Though nothing has been moved from where it stood,
When you went faring out into the gloom
While hoot owls sorrowed in the twilight wood;
Though your tall bed still thrusts its canopy
Against the ceiling, while your shaded light
Stands ready to your hand that you may see
To read away the hours of the night;
Though bureau, dressing table, stool, and chair
Still gaze upon the rag rug that you made,
While from the walls the stolid pictures stare,
As sun and shadow pass them in parade,
Without you and your kisses on my face
I find your crowded room an empty place.

EDGAR DANIEL KRAMER.

So This Is Romance!



By
Helen
Hibbard
Dau



enough most of the time, but had a funny, homely habit of squinting narrowly whenever anything interested them particularly.

Iris was dark, too, but her prettiness was shadowy and mysterious. It

WHEN Blue Harbor became aware that Pat, for the first time in her nineteen years, had been hard hit by a man, and that her sister Iris was interested in that man, too, it felt profoundly sorry for her, because, of course, she didn't have a chance.

There was an amazing difference in the Weldon girls. Both were pretty. Pat was pretty in a droll sort of way, with her small nose that tilted slightly upward, and wore a sprinkling of freckles on its bridge, her tight dark curls, short and always tousled, her sapphire-blue eyes that were wide

lingered with a person, while Pat's flashed by. Her hair fell in loose, neat waves, her nose had somehow come out straighter, and her eyes, sapphire, too, were always wide and soft and dreamy-looking.

Men liked Pat for her straightforward manner, her good sportsmanship, her thorough knowledge of such things as carburetors and pistons, the admirable way she could handle any automobile or boat, the intelligent reasons she could present as to why a forward pass should or should not have been attempted at a particularly critical mo-

ment in a football game, and, above all, for her fairness.

Men liked Iris—for different reasons. They filled her room with red roses, maneuvered to take her strolling in the moonlight, and grew foolish and chivalrous over her.

Nobody ever thought about Pat like that—romantically. That is, nobody did except Bill Treadwell, and as far as romance was concerned, Bill Treadwell spelled nobody.

Bill was a man's man, smart as they came. Another year at the university, where he was studying to be an engineer, and he would start to do big things in the world. He was very large and very young, not handsome unless you looked straight into his steel-gray eyes, and he seemed awkward because he was shy.

He could talk straight conversation with any one, but when it came to the nonsensical banter indispensable for flirting, he was as flat as a flounder. As he figured it, he just wasn't the type. Pat wasn't, either. There would seem about as much sense in growing sentimentally demonstrative over her as over a lively kitten frolicking on the floor with a spool.

Bill felt romantic enough about her, but the time hadn't come for Pat to hear about it. She hadn't awakened yet to the importance of red roses and strolling in moonlight. When she did, he would be around and ready. In the meantime he could wait.

But it wasn't Bill who awakened Pat to those things; it was Roy Todhunter. One bright August morning, cutting through the clear, sparkling waters of the Sound in her small motor boat, she came across him, stalled some distance out in a dinghy with an outboard motor fastened in the stern.

She saw him quite passively at first as an oldish young man, tall and slender and lithe, handsome with his tiny black mustache in the way of a moving-pic-

ture actor in the rôle of a Parisian gentleman, with an easy, assured manner that suggested sophistication.

But Roy Todhunter had a way of looking deep into a pretty girl's eyes with a half-smiling, half-challenging gaze that brought swift color to her cheeks and sent her heart racing. When he looked into Pat's eyes like that, her passiveness took wings. She drew in her breath sharply, and knew instantly that now life was different. And she began to understand that there was something better to live for than automobiles and speed boats and airplanes, something even more thrilling. And that man, smiling at her, was all of it rolled into one—mystery, romance, glamour—breath-takingly so.

All of a sudden she felt weakly, nervously, deliciously excited in a way that left her trembling. Revelation came to her in a flash.

"This is love!" she told herself. "I'm in love with this man I have never seen before!"

She squinted hard at him for a moment, and then managed to ask in a level-enough tone, considering the tumult inside of her:

"Are you in trouble?"

His eyes told her gallantly that nothing could be trouble that had brought her to his rescue, while his smooth, easy voice explained that he was stopping at the inn, had rented the boat for the morning, and that half an hour before the motor had coughed over its last drop of gasoline, and he had made the discovery that the boatman had forgotten to put in such comfortable resources as oars.

"That's like Joe," Pat commented, and discovered that it was easier to talk when she wasn't looking into his eyes. "I'll tow you in."

He fastened the anchor rope to the stern of her boat, and they started off toward shore, not attempting to speak above the racket of the motor.

When they reached the dock, he didn't try to thank her in any ordinary way. He made a wildly thrilling, intimate moment of it. Not so much by what he said; Roy was no wit.

"To think that you've been hidden away up here all summer," he murmured. "If I had known—I would have come days ago." It was all in the inflection he put into his voice, the way he took her hand, and smiled into her eyes. Roy Todhunter was an artist at such business.

Pat's heart thumped furiously.

"I wish you had," she returned simply. "I like you a lot. How long are you going to stay?"

That seemed to amuse him. He lifted his head and laughed.

"You don't waste any time getting to the point, do you?"

"Should I?"

"Some people think that it's pretty. I like your way best. It's refreshing for a change. I want to see a great deal of you while I'm out here. May I, little girl?"

"You can if you want to. I live up in the big white house on the hill, and my name is Patricia Weldon."

He laughed again. "I'm Roy Todhunter, and I'll be around before you know it."

As Pat's boat moved away she looked across the water and saw Bill out puttering over the engine of his new speed boat.

He hailed her and shouted between cupped hands: "Want to go for a ride?"

Her boat ran noisily alongside of his. She tied it to the mooring, and scrambled over to the seat beside him.

"There's a new man at the inn," she said quietly.

Bill smiled good-naturedly. "There always is over the week-end."

"I suppose so," she remarked calmly, and didn't bother to explain that this man was different.

They had been riding out on the Sound for an hour when Pat saw some one waving to them from the dock.

"It's Iris, I guess," she shouted to Bill above the roar of the engine. "We'd better go see what she wants."

Obediently he swung the wheel toward shore. As the speed boat swept nearer, she saw that there was a man beside Iris, a tall, slender man. Her eyes squinted hard. He had a tiny mustache; it was Roy.

The boat drew alongside the dock. Bill shut off the engine.

Iris spoke first. "Mother sent us down to hurry you home for lunch. She expects you, too, Bill." Her soft voice went on to introduce Roy. She finished with a sweet sisterly smile. "But you already know Mr. Todhunter, don't you, Pat?"

Mr. Todhunter displayed his white teeth in a smile at Pat. But there was something lost from that smile. It was casual now, even careless.

"I took you at your word," he explained, "but you weren't home. I found your sister instead."

It was the way he said that last sentence that gave Pat her first pang of sickening, jealous fear. Then he turned to smile down at Iris, a smile that excluded the whole world save the enrapt sapphire eyes into which he gazed. Pat's heart seemed to stop beating. A voice inside of her cried out fiercely: "He's mine! He's mine! I was the one who found him and brought him in. I was the one who asked him up to the house. I was the one he went up to see."

But he had forgotten all that. And he had said that he liked her way of getting to the point best, but he hadn't meant it. He liked Iris, who was soft and elusive. All men did. She would have to learn to be like that, or give up men, Pat decided. She would be like that, rather than give up Roy.

Now she saw Iris, as if for the first

time, cool and exquisite in white silk, consciously demure, faintly smiling, her eyes starry and warm, her slim fingers gently, possessively resting on Roy's coat sleeve. Was Iris always like that—so deliberately, it appeared to Pat, coquettish?

Suddenly she became agonizingly aware of her own appearance, aware that her hair was rumpled, that the wind had long since played havoc with her hasty make-up of the morning, and that there was the grime of engine grease on her nails and hands. She couldn't bear to climb out and face him like that, in her mussed linen skirt and blouse.

So, squinting hard at Roy, she said to Iris: "You go ahead. I'll help Bill moor the boat, and come along in his car."

The motor sputtered into a steady purr; the boat slid away from the dock, out toward its mooring.

Rowing back in the dinghy with steady, vigorous strokes, Bill for the first time noticed that something was bothering his companion. Instead of her usual bright alertness, there was listlessness in her eyes.

Of course he didn't pry, but he made an attempt to arouse her.

"We'll take her out again this afternoon," he remarked eagerly, referring to the sleek mahogany speed boat.

"No. I'm going to the hairdresser's."

"The hairdresser's! How come? I thought you always did your own. And it won't take all afternoon, will it?"

"Wouldn't be surprised, the condition I'm in. Look!" She lifted a browned and grimy hand for him to see. "Can you imagine anybody wanting to hold a paw like that?" she demanded.

He looked at it hard, and gulped down a funny lump that came into his throat. He wanted badly to say that he would rather hold it than the softest, whitest hand in the world, but all he managed was:

"It looks all right to me." Then he added abruptly, suddenly afraid when he thought about it: "Since when have you gone in for holding hands?"

He took three long pulls on the oars before she answered. And eventually, when her words came, he was astonished by their tone, not clipped and staccato as usual, but drifting and dreamy.

"I haven't gone in for it yet," she murmured slowly. "But I will—I hope. Every girl does some time if she's not too bad-looking, doesn't she? I'm not too bad-looking, am I, Bill?"

For a moment, where there had been fear, Bill felt exultation. Was she paving the way for him? Coaxing him to speak? But when he glanced at her covertly, he saw a look in her eyes so remote that she couldn't possibly be thinking of any one so near as himself. Who then? The thought was too depressing to pursue. He avoided it, went back to the beginning.

"The hairdresser won't take all afternoon, will she?"

"It just occurred to me that I need a new dress, too," she explained. "You asked me to the club to-night, didn't you?"

"But I like you in that blue thing you've been wearing."

"Do you?" And that was all the satisfaction she offered.

That night a party of ten, which included Pat and Bill and Iris and Roy, was to have a table at the club for the dinner dance.

It was seven thirty when Pat heard Bill's horn honking in the driveway. She was bending toward the dressing-table mirror, trying to shape her lips with rouge as nearly as possible into a living semblance of the word "provocative."

She stepped back to survey herself at full length. Her unruly curls, set in a wide, loose finger wave, fell softly about her face. Her new pale-yellow dress,

low cut, that was molded close to her slim, firm figure, and then swooped down to billow about yellow slippers that matched, had an air of smart defiance about it. It softened her prettiness, lent her years and grace, and a shade, an illusion of sophistication. Excitement gave her cheeks and eyes a glow of irrespressible radiance.

The whole effect was enchanting, Pat thought, and almost any one would have agreed with her.

She patted an extra dusting of powder over the freckles on her nose, slipped into a tiny, gold jacket held tight about her hips, and turned from the room.

As she came down around the bend in the stairs, she saw Iris and Roy in the hall below. She paused. Her fingers clutched the banister tight; her face went a little white beneath her careful make-up as she watched him, suave and handsome in his well-cut dinner clothes, help Iris into her white wrap and allow his hands to linger on her shoulders. Suddenly he was turning her gently around toward him; his face was bending closer, half smiling. There was a quality in that smile which eluded Pat, stung her slightly with resentment. It was, of course, because she knew that he was going to kiss Iris.

A low, dry sob broke in her throat. Roy straightened and looked up at her.

He flashed a teasing smile. "Well, here's little sister playing grown-up."

Color flowed back into Pat's cheeks, as she lifted a trembling hand to the wall for steadiness. He was talking to her as if she were a child! It hadn't been like that that morning; for a second she hated him fiercely.

Iris gave a fluttering little laugh. Together, she and Roy waved a casual, gay, "See you later!" and disappeared out the door.

Left alone, Pat's anger subsided into a sickening sense of failure. But it

wasn't like her to cling to misery for long, and in another moment she noticed that the hall light was dim, and that the floor above cast a shadow where she stood. He couldn't have seen her very well under those circumstances. At the club there would be bright lights to reveal her new glory.

Slowly she descended the remaining stairs and stepped out onto the porch, just as Bill brought his roadster to a halt in the place where Roy's had been a moment before.

He didn't speak for a minute, but stared at her hard. And Pat hesitated with the bright aperture of the doorway for a background, and the porch light gleaming down on her from above. Something in his eyes brought back her radiant confidence, and when at last she moved forward, once again hope was surging high within her.

"You look different," said Bill, as he climbed out of the car and went around to open the door for her.

She settled herself in the seat and wound a blue chiffon scarf around her head to protect the finger wave.

"Do you like me?" she asked eagerly.

He threw the car into gear. "Don't I always like you?"

Pat sighed for something better than that.

It was at the club that night that Blue Harbor began to see how things stood with Pat, and started to feel sorry for her. Every one saw except Iris and Roy, who were too absorbed in each other to notice anything else. They were being very gay, laughing into each other's eyes and whispering silly things beneath their breaths.

Across the table, Pat, her eyes wide and miserable, her face pale beneath its tan, sat very still, and tried so hard not to look at them that she couldn't help doing it.

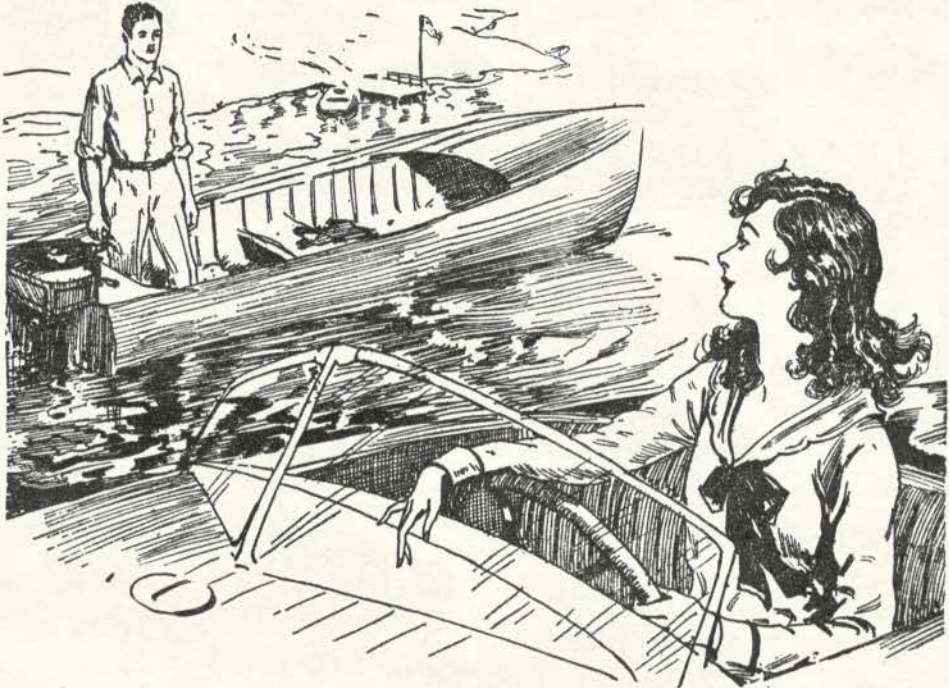
Bill, disheartened and bewildered, was beside her. He couldn't understand Pat's giving away her emotions

like that, but he stood stanchly by, trying to shield her from curious eyes.

Pat couldn't understand it, either. She couldn't seem to cope with the overwhelming desolation inside of her. The time she had been thrown from her horse and her leg had been broken, she

grew gayer, as parties at the club had a way of doing. It was almost twelve when Dick Ward shouted gleefully above the pounding of the jazz orchestra that they ought to have a wedding.

"I'm all in white," Iris cried, laughing. "I'll be the bride."



All of a sudden she felt weakly, nervously, deliciously excited in a way that left her trembling. "This is love!" she told herself. "I'm in love with this man I have never seen before!"

had been able to grin at Bill when he picked her up. And once in an airplane, when the engine had sputtered out and the pilot had shouted that he would try a forced landing, she had grinned back at him. There were a dozen such incidents in her memory—when she had grinned back in the face of things. But now there didn't seem to be a grin left in her anywhere.

It was sheer torture to stand by and watch Roy, the man she loved, falling in love with her sister Iris.

As the evening grew later, the party

"Then I'll have to insist upon being the groom," said Roy, his gaze very ardent.

The vanity case in Pat's hand clattered to the floor. Bill retrieved it.

"I don't know what's the matter with me," she said, with a shaky, apologetic little laugh, as she took it from him.

"It's hot in here," he suggested. "Let's go for a drive."

She slid back her chair. "Let's," she echoed faintly.

He waited for her to get her wrap, and they went out to the parking space

together. Pat sank back in the seat beside him, and closed her eyes tight to keep the tears from squeezing through her eyelids.

The car moved out of the club grounds onto the highway, raced smoothly through the darkness, gathering speed. The clean, fresh rush of air against her face cleared away a little of the pain. After a while she felt that she could look at the situation without breaking down.

"Let's stop some place. I want to talk," she said finally.

Bill found a spot, and drew up the car on the side of a road that looked out over the moonlit Sound.

He lighted a cigarette for her, another for himself, and waited patiently for her to speak.

Eventually, she remarked shakily: "I guess I am too plain, after all. He wouldn't even look at me. What makes a man fall for a girl, Bill?"

He looked down at her small pert face, wretched and miserable in the pale light from the moon.

"Turned-up noses," he said a little huskily, "dark-blue eyes, and tight curls. Being honest and alive and interested in things."

"Silly," she said. "I mean, why is everybody—why are so many men crazy about Iris, and none about me?"

"I'm crazy about you, Pat, but you don't care." His voice had a tight, hoarse sound.

"Of course I care. We're best friends, aren't we?" She flashed him a quick smile, and didn't know that he winced. "But that's not the way I mean. I mean—I mean—Roy." Her voice broke on the name, but confession brought relief in a quick flow of words. "O Bill, I adore him. And it isn't fair. Iris has had everybody. She acts the same over all of them. She doesn't care any more about him than she does about a dozen others. He's just newer. I have a right to try for him—anyway, I saw him

first. But how? How, Bill? How does a girl get a man to—to love her?"

Bill didn't say anything. He tossed his half-smoked cigarette out onto the road, and slid low in the seat. If she had been looking into his face, she would have seen his mouth strangely drawn to a tight, thin line.

"What is it, Bill?" she persisted. "What makes everybody fall for Iris and nobody for me?"

"I don't know." His voice was steeled to a level tone. "Maybe it's the way she looks at them. She looks at them as if she thought they were wonderful, and pretty soon they begin to believe it. Men like that."

"But when I look at Roy I do think he's wonderful. I couldn't help but think so."

"You've got to put it in your face; just squinting won't do. He doesn't know about your squint. Pat—are you really—crazy about him?"

"O Bill!" she breathed.

He stared forlornly into her face. He felt the way she looked—sick at heart, broken, as if nothing mattered any more. But after a while he decided that it would hurt him less to feel that way himself than to see her feel that way.

"I don't know much about these things, Pat, but why not try stealing a little of Iris's stuff?"

"What do you mean?"

"Thinking about loving—him."

She laughed softly. "That's easy."

"Not like that. Close your eyes tight and think about loving him until it hurts." Bill knew this much: He loved Pat until it hurt.

She closed her eyes tight, and thought.

"Now," said Bill, "open them slowly. Look at me. Make believe I'm Roy."

Pat's eyes opened and turned to him, soft and warm and shining, the corners of her mouth lifted in a sweet, radiant smile. She looked at him like that, and said softly:

"My Bill, you're sweet to help me!"

He caught in his breath until it seemed as if it would choke him. He reached suddenly to take her in his arms, then checked himself just in time.

"That—that was great." He played with the gear shift. "We'll go now."

"Is that all I have to do?" demanded the astonished Pat.

"Just look at any man like that," he declared grimly, "and I dare him to——" He broke off.

He drove home so fast that Pat had to hold onto the side of the car. When he stopped in front of the house, she asked:

"Will I see you to-morrow?"

"Oh, I suppose I'll be around. Good night."

If she was at all surprised at his unusual and abrupt departure, Pat soon forgot it, thinking about Roy.

The next day Bill met her on Main Street on her way to the post office. Her face was fallen and sorrowful.

"You were all wrong, Bill," she greeted him with a wan smile. "I tried looking at him the way you told me Iris did and"—her voice broke into a thin wail—"he asked me if I was going to sneeze. Oh, isn't it awful?"

He might have laughed, but he didn't. He dug his hands deep into the pockets of his linen knickers, and said solemnly: "That was rotten of him."

"Oh, no! It was my fault. I should have known better than to try to be like somebody else. I never could act worth a cent. I'll just have to go on squinting. He'll have to like me as I am, or else I'll——"

"You'll find a man who'll love you, squint and all." He didn't meet her eyes, but frowned out at a passing automobile.

"Oh, no," she breathed, horrified. "There'll never be anybody else."

Something inside of Bill snapped then. He groaned.

"Not even me? I'm crazy about you, Pat. Didn't you know? Pat, will you marry me?"

His eyes eagerly searched her astonished face.

Suddenly the ridiculousness of it struck her. She laughed.

"Bill! Proposing to me on Main Street! No moon or anything!" She noticed his hurt eyes and sobered. "O Bill, that's just like us. There isn't an ounce of romance in either of us, and we need it. Romance softens all the harsh edges of things. In two months you'd be wondering why I couldn't be more like Iris, and I'd be wondering why you couldn't be like—somebody else."

"I'd never want you to be like anybody else, Pat. And romance—I always imagined that it was the way you felt inside, not the things you did outside."

"Please, Bill, let's not talk about it. Let's be friends—the kind we've always been."

He straightened, looked squarely into her eyes, and managed a rueful grin. "All right. Anything you say goes with me."

She choked back the lump that came into her throat. Suddenly she was embarrassed before him. It was absurd, but she couldn't think of anything to say.

"I'm hurrying to the post office for mother," she said hastily. "Come over to-night. We're having the bunch."

A funny thing happened at the party that night. Suddenly Pat found herself face to face with Roy. They were apart from the others. Roy was almost as surprised as she was.

"Oh, hello," he said. "How's little sister?"

Pat colored, quickly pulled herself together, and tried not to let him see that she was shaken. "I've got to be natural," she told herself. "I've got to talk to him just the same as if he were Bill or anybody else."

"I hate your calling me that," she said aloud, and her sapphire eyes met his brown ones quite levelly. "I'm only a year younger than Iris."

Roy looked amused. "Are you now? Who would ever dream it?"

"Almost anybody but you, I guess."

"Do you know," he asked, suddenly bending closer, and his eyes kindled with interest, "I had forgotten—but you're exceptionally pretty?"

"I've been praying you'd notice."

"That's a line," he accused.

"It's not. I never say anything that I don't mean. I've been in love with you ever since I towed you in."

"Why, I believe you mean it!"

"I never say anything that I don't mean."

He caught her hand, smiled into her eyes. "You know," he said softly, "your sister is like the summer, warm and soft and indolent. You are like autumn, sharp and clear and bright. I like autumn best. You intoxicate me, little Pat. You've gone to my head."

Pat's cheeks crimsoned. She wondered if he could hear the thump of her heart.

Then, suddenly, he had straightened, was smiling casually over her head. "Hello there, Treadwell." And Iris came up and led him away.

Pat turned to Bill, realized that he had been standing there, and had probably heard Roy's last speech. She looked for him to be glad over her triumph, but Bill's face was tense and unrevealing.

"I came to say good-by, Pat. I'm going home to pack. My train leaves at midnight."

"Going away, Bill? Where?"

"I don't know. I'm fed up on this place."

"On Blue Harbor? Why, Bill! I thought you adored it. Where are you going?"

"Just bumming around, I guess. You won't care, Pat."

"Why, Bill, how can you say such a thing! I'll miss you terribly."

"You'll have Roy."

Her eyes grew round with hope. "Oh, do you think I really will?"

"Unless he's more of an idiot than I already think he is. Here's the key to the boat. You can take it out any time."

"That's nice of you!" But he could see that she didn't really care about the boat any more.

"Good-by," he said stiffly.

"Good-by, Bill. Write to me."

"Good-by," he said again, hesitated a brief moment, then whirled around and strode from the room.

Pat's eyes followed him, but she wasn't really seeing him; she was feeling the sweet ecstasy that was flowing through her. Roy had said such a beautiful thing—that she was like autumn, and he liked autumn best. She lifted her fingers to her cheek to touch the fire in them, and laughed joyously.

A little later Roy came back to her.

"I've been trying to get to you."

"I hoped you would."

"Come. We must see the moon in your mother's garden."

He took her arm. They turned. Nearly everybody in the room seemed to be watching them. Pat's eyes met Iris's startled ones. She laughed, suddenly exalted, a little heady with her triumph of being able to carry Roy off before every one.

She drifted by his side out through the French doors onto the terrace, down across the lawn.

They didn't speak. It was a soft night, still and caressing. The white light of the moon shone through the dark, lacy fretwork of the trees and patterned the grass with misty shadows. The scent of honeysuckle filled the air; leaves rustled; a cricket chirped.

"I'm not like autumn now," thought Pat, her heartbeat so hard that it seemed to take her breath away. "I'm not sharp

or clear or bright. I feel all misty and dreamy."

Roy drew her arm through his, folded her hand in two of his. A little shudder ran through her at his touch.

"Pat, little Pat!" he whispered caressingly.

She smiled warmly into his eyes.

They went down marble steps into a sunken garden, and near by the trickle of a fountain sounded a silver patter. Roy went down first, turned with one foot on the bottom step, and lifted a hand to her.

He looked so handsome, so romantic, so gallant in the gesture, that Pat caught her breath, and her hands fluttered to her throat. There should have been lace at his sleeves, velvet knickers buckled at his knees, a sword clanking at his side.

"This is romance!" her heart whispered, and she reached down a hand to him.

He drew her down beside him, close.

"Little Pat," he whispered again, "I love you."

"He's going to kiss me," thought Pat, and all her senses reeled at the thought. His arm tightened around her. His face came nearer; his lips beneath the tiny mustache parted in a half smile. It was that smile that frightened her suddenly. She stiffened. It was the same smile she had seen on his face the night he had almost kissed Iris. She resented that smile now, too, but it wasn't because he was going to kiss any one else. Suddenly she knew that smile was cynical; more than that, it was derisive. It was mocking her. He was going to kiss her, but he didn't mean it. Inside, he was laughing at her.

She gave a low, startled cry, and wrenched herself from his grasp.

He stared at her blankly. "What's the matter?" he demanded.

"You were going to kiss me," she accused.

"What did you expect me to do—describe the physical geography of the moon?" Roy was angry.

"I didn't want you to—suddenly," she said.

"You didn't want me to," he returned with a sneer. "No, of course not. You deliberately led me on. You asked for it."

"I asked for it!"

"Back there in the house you said that you loved me. You started the game, and now you aren't willing to play."

Bitter resentment that came from disillusionment flared up in Pat. "I wasn't leading you on. I meant it. I thought that I loved you. I thought that I had found romance in you. Now I see that in finding you I lost romance. You have all the trimmings and nothing underneath them. I wanted something real. You couldn't ever be real. You're—a charlatan!" She softened. "I'm sorry. That was a bit rough. I just don't understand your way of—playing, you call it. Iris knows. Go back to her."

She turned from him, fled up the steps, and across the lawn to the house. She paused on the threshold of the door, her eyes searching for some one. She saw Iris across the room, her sapphire eyes blazing out from a tense, still face. Every one had seen Pat go out with Roy, and Iris was suffering for it. Suddenly, looking into her sister's face, Pat felt terribly sorry for her. Poor Iris; she didn't have anything in her life that was real—like Bill. Bill! Her startled eyes swept the room. He wasn't there. She remembered. His train left at midnight. By the mantel clock it was twenty minutes of twelve.

Roy stepped through the French doors behind her. She turned to meet his eyes. There was no resentment left in her now. He couldn't be real himself, but he had shown her what was. In a way she was even grateful to him.



Suddenly her own eyes kindled with fun. "But it's going to cost him something, anyway," she told herself, "to make it up to Iris."

She crossed the room to her sister.

"Iris," she cried, not too loud, but loud enough so that those near by could hear and tell the others, "Roy wants to give you a present. He was asking me—I couldn't think of anything. You'd better decide together."

As she stooped to deliver a hasty kiss on her sister's cheek, her eyes laughed into Roy's. Then she swooped up the

It was sheer torture to stand by and watch Roy, the man she loved, falling in love with her sister Iris.

billowing folds of her long yellow skirt in one hand and raced from the room as fast as she could.

It was five minutes of twelve. A tall, tanned young man with a gray felt hat pulled down over his eyes, and a gray overcoat hanging over his arm, stood



by two pigskin bags, staring down the railroad track into the darkness.

"Bill!"

He turned sharply toward the sound of the voice, saw yellow slippers racing over the wooden platform toward him. A small face looked up at him; two sapphire eyes squinted at him hard.

"You can't go away like this," she was saying. "You're going because you heard what Roy said to me. You couldn't bear it."

He looked down at her grimly. "Yes, that's

it. But you don't have to worry about me. I'll be all right."

"But if you go away, I won't be all right. Bill—it was a beautiful thing—your asking me to marry you on Main Street to-day, right in the middle of all the crowds. It showed that what you felt inside of you was so right that it

didn't need moonlight and gardens and beautiful speeches to help it along. It could stand sunlight and crowds and the screech of automobiles or any old thing. I have a hunch that it could stand all the harsh things in life just like that, Bill. I think"—her eyes were suddenly shining—"that it was the most romantic thing in the world."

His eyes blazed down into hers. "Pat! You're looking at me now the way I tried to teach you to look at—him."

"I can't help it, Bill. I feel that way now. That night when I did it, I wasn't thinking about Roy at all, but about how sweet you were to help me. I couldn't look at him that way, because I couldn't feel that way for him."

He dropped his coat and his hat down on the pigskin bags; his fingers closed tightly over her arm; he stared into her face.

"I can't say any of those things about your being like autumn—"

"It all sounds so idiotic now," she interrupted. "So terribly silly. How could I ever—"

"But I like your curls and your cute nose and your eyes and your squint—I'm crazy about your squint, Pat. But"—he put a masterful arm around her—"let's not have any kind of speeches now—good ones or bad. Let's not waste any precious time."

He led her over to an express platform, lifted her up on it, and then swung himself up beside her. Without a word he took her in his arms and kissed her. Somehow Pat wasn't afraid, wasn't resentful. Softly she sighed, let her arms slip about his neck, yielded her lips to his. Sitting with Bill on the express platform of a railroad station, hearing the whistle of the train he wouldn't take shrilling in the distance, feeling his lips, sweet and tender, on hers—that was thrilling; that was wonderful; that, after all, was romance!



COMPARISON

NO song as sweet as your own sweet song,
 No smile brighter that is known;
 No lips as soft as your own soft lips,
 And no kiss dear as your own.

No stars as clear as your own star eyes,
 No moon gold as your hair;
 No vision excels the grace that is yours,
 And beauty never more fair!

BERT MURRAY FLIEGMAN.



Fair-weather Love

By May Wynne

“WOMEN are all alike,” scoffed Arnold Kenton. “And the feminine is ever akin to the feline. They want a home; so does the domestic cat. They love comfort; so does puss. Fair-weather love is the best they can offer a man who is deceived into believing he is the one and only conqueror, while all the while any other man with a home to offer would have filled the rôle equally well.”

Gerard Fayle lay on his back, staring up toward the massed foliage of trees.

“You talk in ignorance, Nol,” he answered, with genial tolerance. “It is plain you have no knowledge of the subject. You have never been in love.”

“Never! And hope I never shall be.”

“Your mother died when you were a kiddie. But you had a sister——”

“With whom I fought all the time, and finally broke with when it came to dividing the old man’s money,” Kenton interrupted.

“Hard luck! But you can’t judge all the sex by the light of an avaricious sis-

ter. If we judged human nature by our relations——”

“And you called me a cynic!” Kenton again broke in.

“Never used the word. But I’ll undertake your education.”

“Thanks. I was about to make the same offer, and save you from a fate I would not wish my worst enemy.”

Fayle sat up, laughing.

“You idiot!” he exclaimed. “Stop your complaining. Look around and say, if you dare, that it is not good to be alive. And if life is good—love is better.”

Kenton rose to his feet and looked around as he was bidden. Nature was bountiful, gorgeous, restful here in the cool Canadian forest.

Mosses grew luxuriantly over gnarled roots, flowers bloomed, while from beneath the massed undergrowth rose the murmur of insect voices, echoed above by the tuneful trilling of birds. As Fayle said—it was good to be alive. But there this son of Adam stopped. He had no desire for Eve—despised Eve.

Fayle contemplated the dainty fairyland with other eyes.

“If you knew my Dariel,” he murmured, “you would be a convert. Only your jealousy might spoil a pleasant friendship. There is only one Dariel in the world.”

“Pooh!” mocked Arnold Kenton, flicking the ashes from his cigarette. “And yet in a week, a month, I could make the one and only Dariel mine—if I chose! It is a foregone certainty. I have a bigger home to offer, more servants, better clothes.”

Fayle smiled. He was too confident of Dariel’s love to take offense.

“Poor cuss!” he retorted. “I’ll make a bet with you, and give you a clear month, since you’re going home before I am. You shall have your introduction and your chance. But I’ll wager one hundred dollars that you will never win Dariel.”

“In the course of education,” Kenton quoted, “one learns expensive lessons. I will take your bet, win your Dariel, and leave her while I return to comfort your disillusioned self. Is it a bargain?”

“A bargain it is. You shall have one hundred dollars when I have to stand aside and see you claim my Dariel before me.”

Then they laughed, half in earnest, half in the spirit of joyous, senseless kidding which appeals to youth when life is at flood time.

But, because man is a riddle even to himself, each of the two resolved to stick to that bargain. Some primitive instinct set them to the combat. Each wished to prove himself in the right.

And so, when it came to hand grips and good-bys, Kenton added:

“When you get home—but don’t get excited about things—Dariel, I shall be calling her Dariel then, will have accepted me, my larger income, and my comfortable home. Then I shall write an article on ‘Feline Femininity.’”

“Excellent! Quite a grand story,” laughed Fayle. “And won’t Dariel teach you a lot of things before you have finished! But if you put your finger in the fire, don’t blame me if you get burned.”

“I won’t,” Kenton replied, and smiled.

He knew he knew so much more of womankind than this kindly simpleton. He had seen and watched the feline methods of feminine hunters of men.

“Oh!” said Dariel, smiling and dewy-eyed. “How kind it is of you to come and tell me about Gerard. It seems such ages since he went away, and there’s another whole month before he comes back.”

Kenton laughed. “He’s in perfect shape,” he replied. “And having a great time. You’ve never been to Canada, have you?”

“I’m going,” she announced, “on my honeymoon.”

Kenton regarded the speaker with interest. She was several degrees prettier than he had expected, and compared most favorably with that contentious sister with whom he had so finally quarreled.

Few people match their names. But Dariel matched hers to perfection. She was tall and slim, with big brown eyes and soft chestnut hair. Her beauty was the beauty of romance; her pretty, half-shy manner captivated the heart of aggressive or enthusiastic manhood without the least bit of effort on her own part.

If he had not been his own obstinate self, Kenton would have excused Fayle's absurd outlook on life, and, even grudgingly, congratulated him. The idea of Dariel choosing the happy hunting ground of Canada instead of the frivolities of Paris struck him as unusual selflessness.

Yet he clutched at old theories and hugged them. It was up to him to win his hundred dollars; but already he hoped it would not hurt this sweet-eyed maid.

"Women and cats—both alike," he persuaded himself. But he didn't quite believe it as firmly as he had.

The hospitality of Dariel's parents was Southern in its quality, and Kenton, to his secret shame, accepted the genial invitation to make their home his headquarters, and there await his friend Fayle.

Dariel was charmed. If he were not the rose, he had at least been near the rose. He was Gerard's friend.

"And a delightful man," added Dariel's mother, looking pensively at her daughter Clare. Clare was a year younger than Dariel, but ten years older in worldly wisdom. In appearance, however, she was angelic, with the blue eyes and golden hair of a fairy-book princess. From the first moment she saw him she marked Arnold Kenton down as the ideal man for her.

Outdoor men, sportsmen, the men who regard woman—before they love her—as a purposeless riddle, they are the ones who make the ideal of what a woman wants, since woman has this in common with the great Columbus—the love of conquest.

Not that Arnold Kenton had the least suspicion of his danger. He was far too intent on his own problem. If it had not been for that obstinate kink which develops and mars the most splendid of natures, he would have made out a check for one hundred dollars and sent it to Fayle. But, the kink was there. So, heedless of Clare, Kenton watched his opportunity to win Dariel.

To begin with, he casually announced his intention of buying a house near and settling down. When he said this he had the catlike propensities of woman in his mind. He showed the home. And home is the exquisite word which thrills through the love dream of maiden hearts.

Having definitely introduced the home, he allowed Dariel to realize he had quite a bit of money. When enough time had elapsed for these facts to sink in, he began his campaign of conquest. A gay and daring campaign. A campaign of cool and mocking eyes, audacious speech, the half-jesting speech of a man who quite obviously desires a wife.

All this took time—and time proved traitor.

For through those autumn days flitted the gossamer vision of Clare. Clare, the joyous comrade, the ardent sports-woman, the gay talker, who made him laugh and see the sunshine. He looked on Clare as recreation after business.

She was always a pleasure to look forward to. And her blue eyes seemed to the unsuspecting Arnold, pools of innocence and fresh delights.

He began by treating her as a child. He concluded in placing her, in his

imagination, in the house where he planned to settle down.

The odd thing was that he saw nothing feline about Clare. He never so much as thought of cats in connection with her. She was the joyous comrade. And, stranger still, he did not ardently desire to save Gerard Fayle from his wretched fate. He admitted that Dariel was delightful.

And while in this chastened frame of mind, he received Gerard's letter. A fool's letter, jubilating, taunting, scoffing at his worldly wisdom.

Gerard flouted the disbeliever in true love's endurance. He minutely planned how he should spend his hundred dollars. Openly he pointed the finger of scorn at the man who had debased the glory of womanhood in his thoughts. "Winner all along the line—that's me!" concluded Fayle. "Be ready to pay in public."

The hot blood burned under Kenton's skin. The queer kink had gotten hold of him again and wrestled furiously. Regardless of every scruple, he would win his bet.

Clare was away, or the game would never have been played. Dariel was growing more pensive than ever. Gerard Fayle was one of those superfluous people who love giving surprises.

Following Fayle's letter came a wire—to Kenton.

Shall claim my hundred dollars to-morrow stop be prepared.

Confound the idiot!—Kenton thought. Fayle never knew when to stop rubbing it in. Again that obstinate, all-confounding little kink raised its audacious head.

Arnold went to New York that afternoon. In the evening he returned, in uncertain spirits, with two enormous boxes of chocolates. Clare accepted hers with a subtle smile. She had her own theory—a most romantic and thrilling theory which told her Arnold Ken-

ton was really in love with her, and was trying to enlist the sympathy of Dariel. Darling Dariel, who had been quite right when she told her that to be in love was the most exquisite experience in life. Clare took her chocolates to bed with her. They were chocolates of love, which was her excuse for eating the whole top layer as she lay in bed reading a new novel. How deliciously happy life could be—and was.

To-morrow, maybe, Arnold would propose. Dariel had given her sister so loving a kiss that night—a kiss filled with meaning. Clare felt she knew the meaning, and she did hope Gerard would write or turn up soon. He had not even told Dariel when his boat was going to sail.

Clare had the usual flapperlike contempt for a prospective brother-in-law. Of course, she could not see what Dariel saw in him.

It was Dariel who met Arnold early the next morning as she went out in the garden to get some roses for the house.

"We are expecting company to-day," she told Arnold. "Mums had a wire last evening, saying that Mrs. Goldrike, a widow, and her nephews were coming this afternoon. She—Mrs. Goldrike—said in her last letter that she knew you. You had called on her."

"Accidentally," retorted Kenton, and his voice was nervous. "I knew her brother. Great Cæsar's ghost! What in the world am I to do?" He paced up and down restlessly.

Dariel—whose mission in life was to be a sympathizer—watched him, wide-eyed.

"Are you worried?" she asked, hoping he might confide the story of his passion for Clare.

He halted, passing his hand over his brow.

"Worried is not the word," he groaned. "I am desperate. I—I can't

—I simply dare not meet Mrs. Goldrike.”

Dariel was mystified.

“You mean you don’t like her? But she seemed to like you a great deal. I’m sure.”

“That isn’t the point,” groaned Kenton.

He looked at Dariel. She played pitying angel quite prettily, but there was no heart throb in her sympathy. To

his chagrin, relief, disgust, he realized he was still merely Gerard’s friend.

“The point?” she echoed.

“Mrs. Goldrike’s affections,” hinted Kenton, “bestowed on a most unworthy object, are embarrassing, as you may understand. There is only one way I could elude her—to become engaged myself.”

Dariel’s eyes grew so tender with thoughts of Clare that Kenton was al-



“You do love me, don’t you, dear?”

most persuaded that he might win his bet in open and legitimate fashion.

"I am so happy myself," she murmured, "it is only natural I should want to make others happy."

His sharp ears caught the note of invitation.

"Will you?" he asked. "May I really ask? You won't be angry?"

"Of course not," she promised. "How silly you are. You are Gerard's friend."

So that was all he had accomplished. Kenton hardly had time to philosophize over the fact. His outlook regarding womankind had been revolutionized without his knowledge.

Once having the laugh on Gerard, even for a day, they could use the hundred dollars in paying for a grand celebration in New York. A celebration in which Dariel and Clare should be toasted as queens of womanhood. Hm-m-m! Had he said Clare? If so, what did that mean? Clare—and the home he had bought to which she somehow had come to belong.

Enough of dreams! He must have an hour's triumph over Fayle, who should not have all the mockery on his side.

"Be engaged to me for one day," he begged, "and Sophie Goldrike's claws are drawn for all time. One day, Dariel, one day. Give me your promise, your word. One day—and not a word to any one!"

Dariel dimpled.

"Not even Clare?" she asked. She had almost asked, "Why not Clare for a day, a year, for all time?" But, being wise in such matters, she guessed this blundering man was not wholly aware yet that Clare had stolen his heart. But her words hurt, and Kenton became the most awkward thing in manhood, yet he stuck to his request—thanks to that obstinate kink which drove him ruthlessly to ruin. It was madness, but it was manlike.

Dariel had started to laugh softly.

"Well, for one day," she said. "Clare will not be home till evening. I shall be free then."

"Agreed—a bargain," promised Arnold, and had the temerity to produce a ring.

Dariel hesitated.

"It must go on over the other," she insisted, "for Gerard put my engagement ring on."

Her world was Gerard. Alas for the theory of luxury-loving cats!

Company was due to arrive at the big house. Dariel, in pink and gray, looked her sweetest. Sophie Goldrike was among the first arrivals. She was large, she was handsome, she was enthusiastic, and how was Dariel to know Arnold Kenton had already given this friend of his her rôle? It was quite a moment of moments as the widow greeted Kenton, who stood, morally supported by Dariel.

"Why, Arnie," cried Mrs. Goldrike, "how nice to see you!"

Kenton faced the attack gallantly.

"Delighted," he replied. "And you've not met my fiancée, Miss Dariel Wallen?"

The widow recoiled, froze, stared, and rallied. Kenton turned red, and Dariel smiled, until she saw Clare's white face peeping out from behind the door. Clare had returned too soon, and had heard the startling news with ears which seemed to listen to the exploding of a bomb.

What happened next was fixed only dimly in Kenton's memory. He, too, saw Clare coming toward them. Her blue eyes blazed. She looked at Dariel as one looks at a traitor.

Dariel twirled her ring and riveted her gaze. How silly Clare was. How silly Arnold was. And, oh, how she hated widows!

Clare did not congratulate them; she went on out into the garden. Kenton followed at a distance.

Suddenly something clicked in his brain. Fate was playing into his hands with a vengeance, for a cab had stopped near the house, and Gerard Fayle sprang out. Arnold, feeling a hundred per cent worse than a thief, watched the meeting between Clare and Gerard.

Arnold knew she was breaking the news. Now was his hour of triumph. He had basely left Dariel to congratulations from the widow's friends, who had heard the startling announcement. Poor Dariel! Clare had slipped away, and Gerard, seeing him, came into the garden.

Fayle did not shake hands, but his handsome face was grim, a sneer about the lips.

"So I'm to congratulate you, am I," was his greeting. "You've stolen all I cared for in life. You've sneaked in and betrayed a friend. Well, you shall have your hundred dollars—and may every bill burn your fingers."

It was not a nice speech. In fact, it was about as nasty as it could be. It did not straighten out Kenton's self-respect or cause him one thrill of triumph. Fayle's joyous mockery and a lost bet would have been nothing to this. But, the obstinate little kink took a wicked twist, and Arnold did not explain facts. He merely laughed.

"It was an open deal," he drawled. "Don't be a fool, Fayle."

"I shall be worse if I stay," raged Gerard. "Well, you've won the bet. I wish you joy. But I shan't stay to congratulate the lady."

And, without a word, he signaled to a passing taxi.

"Here, Fayle, you idiot!" cried Kenton, his triumph savoring of dust and ashes, for at this moment a vision in pink and gray came running toward them.

It was Dariel. And while Clare had told her what she thought of her, Dariel had not had time to say a word. She tottered and tripped as she ran, and

Arnold had to put out his hand to steady her.

The taxi was turning—crablike—in cramped space, and Fayle, looking out, saw his one and only Dariel supported by another man's arm. He could have wept in fury. Dariel wept in despair.

Kenton felt like a brute. This came of meddling in what he had not understood, he told himself.

After all, women were not cats, but—

"Gerard! My darling Gerard," wailed Dariel, and the amused taxi driver suddenly stopped the cab.

Kenton swallowed hard. "Come here, Fayle," he commanded. "It's—it's all a joke. I—I am not engaged to any one."

Fayle had leaped from the cab, and the taxi man drove on toward the house to leave his baggage.

"Dariel!" cried Gerard.

Dariel hurled herself into his arms.

"It was all Arnold Kenton's fault," she sobbed. "Oh, darling! How could you believe—"

Gerard Fayle looked over his sweetheart's head and smiled at an amazing fool.

"Well?" he asked. "What about cats?"

Kenton forgot his manners. His brow was still damp with distressing dews.

"The deuce with cats!" he roared, and went in search of Clare, while Dariel told the whole crazy tale of her desire to bring happiness to Gerard's friend.

One cannot malign a whole sex without being punished by at least one member of it!

Kenton, his eyes opened, went in search of Clare. Humbly, rid forever of obstinate kinks, he searched for her and found her sobbing.

The widow had gone, the company had departed. Mums and dad were

seated indoors in the gloaming. Gerard and Dariel were love-making in the summerhouse. By the lakeside Arnold Kenton bowed his head under the caustic upbraiding of sweet seventeen. He had confessed—and had been punished.

Clare considered him a monster, she gave him to understand. But Kenton was a quick reasoner. A monster is a beast. And somewhere he had read of Beauty loving a beast. He told Clare so, and she, frowning and pulsating with indignation, laughed in spite of herself.

"Would you—could you—will you teach me, Clare?" begged the penitent. "For I love you, darling, with all my heart."

"If I told you I loved you," mocked Clare, "you would say I should make the same answer to any man who offered me a home. Cats and women——"

"I was a raving lunatic," Kenton interrupted. "There is only one woman in the world for me, and only one man for you. Darling—be generous and say I am right."

"I may as well," said Clare. "And then we will go and tell Dariel she must give me my engagement ring. Of course, when I saw it was a sapphire, I remembered telling you it was my favorite stone."

Together, they started in search of the others, but on the way they stopped, while Kenton told Clare of his great love for her; how he couldn't ever live without her; how necessary she was to his happiness. He drew her close in his arms, and kissed her lips tenderly. "You do love me, don't you, Clare dear?"

She looked at him a moment, then she nodded her head shyly. "Of course I do."





One Spring Night

By Margaret Littell

THE moment Constance Fraser got on the early evening train back to college she wished fervently that she had waited for a later one. For the first person her wide blue eyes lighted upon was the last person she wanted to meet.

For an instant she thought she might avoid him by slipping into a rear seat and keeping her head lowered.

But no! He turned curiously just as she stepped into the aisle and sprang to his feet, greeting her in his loud slangy voice.

"Hi, there, Connie! Knew I was saving this seat for somebody but didn't know I'd be this lucky."

He waved his hand airily at the seat he had chosen and grinned boldly at

her. To-night his face looked more depraved, more heavily sensuous than ever.

Connie hesitated.

"Don't let me disturb you," she began. "I intended to——"

"Say, what's the racket?" he interrupted. "You can't pull off that gag about having to study on the train, because you finished your stenog course before that mildewed old dean hired you to reign in his office and high-hat us college boys." Mort Heath laughed so that all the passengers who weren't already listening turned to stare.

Flushing in embarrassment and annoyance, Connie passed swiftly along the aisle and into the seat ahead of

Mort. Perhaps if she sat down at once she and this boy whom she had tried to avoid since coming to State would not attract so much unwelcome attention.

But, if anything, Mort was still more exasperating in the semiseclusion of the seat she shared with him.

"This is one time you can't very well be haughty," he said with a vague leer. His head was lowered in a way that onlookers would diagnose as welcome attention.

But Mort Heath was one college boy that Connie distinctly feared to encourage. Not so much because of what she had heard about him as for what she instinctively felt. His weak, handsome face was rapid to her. His narrowed eyes told her he had no ideals about girls. His manner indicated that he considered her the same as he did any other girl—the lawful quarry for men like himself.

"I wasn't aware that I ever appeared haughty," she told him, pulling away as far as the seat would permit. "The dean gave me certain duties in the college office and I want to perform them as well as I can. But that doesn't include accepting dates from every boy who has time to lounge around the halls, does it?"

Mort laughed. "You tell 'em, Connie!" He reached out and pulled her hand over to him, peeling off her glove. "Listen. When are you coming over to my apartment?"

Connie flashed angry blue eyes at him. "I don't gamble," she answered simply, her voice cold. "And will you please let go my hand?"

"Say, where d'you get that stuff!" he blurted out. Then he remembered to laugh. "Listen, just because I have the only bachelor's apartments in town instead of living in the dorms like an old maid, don't get it in your head that I'm a card sharp to pay for it. I suppose that pill that sorts bugs over in the lab—Elliot Brown, isn't it?—has

been telling you stuff. Well, what he knows about me and my doings you could put in the corner of your eye."

He broke off and sat nervously twitching his hands. One corner of his mouth worked spasmodically. His whole bearing was strangely on edge.

Connie wondered if there was any way to get rid of him before reaching the campus. Elliot would be waiting to meet her and he would be caustically unpleasant if he found them together.

"To tell the truth, I'm not the least curious about your apartment," she said lightly, thinking of all the rumors she had heard about Mort's activities among the students. As a matter of fact, it had been the steady-going, plodding Elliot who had hinted darkly of the wholesale gambling that Mort maintained in his place for the students. He had warned her against the sly ways of all the students who were younger, care-free, gayer than himself, but especially he had confided that the college authorities had their eyes on Mort as being a dangerous influence on the campus. One suspicious move on his part, and Mort would be expelled.

Connie had taken all Elliot said with a grain of salt. He was the laboratory assistant and as such considered himself on the college faculty. When Connie had got her new job in the dean's office, the well-paying position that enabled her to keep her sick mother in a sanitarium twenty miles away, Elliot had promptly begun to take her to the doings around college.

And Elliot was safe. No one could doubt that. Slightly plump and wearing glasses over near-sighted eyes, he was as far from dangerous romance as east from west. And he was so terrifyingly respectable. To the girl trying to face the world after her father's sudden death and her mother's physical breakdown, he had seemed at first like a solid, though plain, pillar of strength in the midst of a topsy-turvy world.

The boy at her side began talking in her ear, low, almost threateningly.

"If you aren't interested in my place, you better be careful about what you insinuate," he leered.

"Oh, I didn't mean to insinuate anything," Connie said. She gave him a frank friendly little smile that she hoped would prove how different she was from the girls he usually attracted. "I merely wanted you to understand that it's useless for you to keep urging me to go there, or to have dates at all with you. I'm more serious than you think. You see, after all I'm a working girl, not a college girl."

A grin appeared once more on Mort's thin dark face.

"Well, maybe you are, but you've got it all over the whole crowd! You're the prettiest girl that ever set foot on State's campus since I've been there and all the fellows think so. If it weren't for that old beef you have hanging around you all the time, you'd get the rush of your sweet young life."

Again he reached over and pressed his hand boldly on hers.

Uneasily, Connie pulled away. This boy was capable of using any number of smooth devices to attract a girl if he chose, and she had no desire to be the target for his attentions. Better not to rouse his anger. Better to preserve the aloof friendly coolness she had practiced since coming to work at the college.

"Then you'll forget what I said?" she murmured.

"Forget! Say, baby, you could make me forget anything! I'm crazy about you." His fingers tightened about her palm. His face came near.

Uneasily Connie's eyes searched the train. It was filling up rapidly now with only a minute or two until time to start. Suddenly she started as she recognized a tall athletic figure in well-cut tweeds that moved through the train and found a seat near the door.

Mort saw him too, and immediately a new purpose showed on his shallow face.

"There's Grant English!" he exclaimed. "Say, I've got to see him. Will you excuse me?"

And before Connie could answer he had seized his hat and was hurrying along to where Grant sat.

Connie watched the two. The difference was amazing, even to any one who did not think Grant the handsomest man in the world. And to Connie, who had worshiped him secretly since the first day he had come into her office on some errand, it seemed impossible that he could endure the presence of Mort Heath.

She knew the explanation. Grant and Mort were fraternity brothers, and Grant was the kind who would live up to his responsibilities in the face of anything. But he was the president of his class and fraternity. He was the richest boy on the campus with a position of importance waiting for him in his father's business. And he had given his pin to Ruth Montgomery, the wealthy, haughty-eyed coed who had brought her sports roadster along to college.

Connie sighed, sitting there watching the play of muscles in Grant's lean cheek as he turned his proud head to answer something Mort was saying. How did it happen that some girls had everything, parents, money, position and a wonderful boy like Grant English, while she herself had so little? Was it because of her poverty, and her obvious position as working girl among all the more favored coeds that such a boy as Mort had dared ask her to go to his apartment?

Something flared up in her, something that made her head go higher and her slender hands clench into firm little fists.

And at that moment Grant turned and saw her, saw her proud defiance that struck out from her blazing blue eyes. She couldn't know that to him she appeared utterly lovely, with rebel-

lions gold ringlets escaping from under her tiny hat, the smudge of thick black lashes that fringed her eyelids, her curved red lips that looked so soft. Without a shadow of doubt she was the most beautiful, most aristocratic-looking girl on the campus—on any campus!

Almost involuntarily, Grant rose, stepped out over Mort, and came back through the swaying train.

"Hello!" he said in a voice that told of cultured upbringing. "I didn't know you were on this train. And here I'm just getting off!"

Looking at him so closely, Connie was aware again of his lithe strength that always sent the blood racing through her veins.

"Aren't you going back to college, then?" she managed to ask.

"Eventually. But I have to get off at Clifton for a car I brought down to be repaired," he told her. Suddenly his eyes flashed, and he smiled. "Say, I have an idea! Suppose you get off and ride back to college with me. I guarantee to deliver you safe and sound at your boarding house."

Connie's heart hammered. Then she remembered Elliot who was to meet her at the train. Perhaps she could manage, though, if she hurried after Grant left her and reached the station before the slow-moving local was due.

"Why, I'd love it!" she breathed, looking up at his great height, at his dark eyes.

"Great!" he exclaimed. "That means we get off at this next stop." He reached out and guided her from her seat, and they went to the door at the end of the coach. "I'm in luck, having you for company on a night like this."

Under the simply-tailored blue suit, Connie's heart was going so hard that she could hardly breathe. A wild confusion tore through her brain. How had this happened? Grant, the wonderful boy who had set her pulses racing each time she had seen him, who had

been so aloof, as inaccessible as the moon, was right there behind her! His big hand was under her elbow. He had come to her quite naturally and asked her to ride back to college with him. It couldn't be true!

She looked shyly up at him from under her tangled lashes and caught the swift smile he flashed at her. Yes, it was true! Somehow he had noticed that she was on earth. Perhaps he had only asked her to get rid of Mort. But the fact remained, he had asked her. She was to have a half hour at his side to-night and she could keep the memory all her life. It would help her endure the cold pride of girls like Ruth Montgomery who liked to remind her of her inferior position.

The train groaned to a stop. Connie felt herself lifted to the platform as though she had been a feather. Then, just as she and Grant were hurrying toward the near-by garage, they heard footsteps following.

"I decided to come along, too." It was Mort. "Plenty of room for three, I guess."

Connie saw the contempt that flashed over Grant's face, then the determined friendliness that followed.

"Why, yes, of course. Come along, Heath."

The light seemed to go out of the moon for Connie. Would Grant think that she and Mort were more than mere acquaintances? She hurried along at Grant's side, keeping close to him, keeping pace with his long strides.

The garage man ran the car out and at the sight of it, Connie's heart sank. It was Ruth Montgomery's car, and not his own, that Grant had left at Clifton for repairs! That proved how attached he was to the rich girl. The girl who bought her popularity on State's campus with rides in her big roadster and week-end house parties on her father's estate.

Connie felt queerly like a usurper of

another's rights as she got in and sat in the center of the wide leather seat. All the gay laughter that had sprung up so suddenly at Grant's appearance was hushed in her throat. It seemed that a cold hand had suddenly squeezed the joy right out of her soul. The ride wasn't going to mean a thing, then! She had guessed rightly. Grant wanted her along to keep from being bored by Mort.

The boys got in, one on either side of her. A warning glance from Connie's great blue eyes made Mort keep his hands to himself instead of flinging one arm about her as he had started to do. Grant got in under the wheel and his deft touch sent the engine to roaring.

"All set?" he smiled down at her, but she knew that flashing in his eyes meant nothing except the riotous youth in him, the abundant vital health that leaped through his big frame. "Move your knee a bit, Connie. I don't want to hurt you when I put the car in high."

A dull ache came into Connie's heart. His voice was so mellow and low that she couldn't help being thrilled by it. His profile was like that of a young god as he started the car moving out on the pike. The garage man stood there, grinning at the bright picture of youth—the exquisite girl, small, desirable, popular enough to be protected by two men. How could he know from appearances what was in the heart of each, or behind those quick smiles?

The three rode along in silence. Connie felt the rush of night air whipping her hair against her face, but her body was warm where it touched Grant. His bigness protected her. She was almost hidden beneath his arm.

On her other side Mort slouched in the corner, his hat pulled down over his scowling eyes. Very likely he was angry because Grant's presence kept him from making love to whatever girl chance had put near him.

"Cold?" Grant wanted to know.

"Not a bit," Connie assured him. "I love this. I don't know when I've ridden in an open car by moonlight."

She felt Grant's eyes on her and she could not meet them. She could not endure it if he was looking at her curiously because she was a queer creature in his world—a working girl, poor, so like the girls he knew and yet so different. And she could not risk letting him see the hopeless love that burned in her heart like an everlasting flame. She wished she could be gay and hard like Ruth Montgomery, but no clever words came to her mind. Instead her heart felt heavy, and she sat silently staring straight ahead at the road stretching away between the headlights.

"And I don't know when I've ridden in an open car by moonlight with a girl so little," Grant said softly. "I declare, your feet scarcely touch the floor, do they?" His voice broke in a peal of rich laughter that the wind flung out into the night.

A grunt of disgust sounded from Mort.

"Well, for crying out loud!" he burst out. "Are you going to make me listen to that sort of gush? How about letting me out up the road at Jake's? I like his cigarettes and I'm completely out."

"Sure thing!" Grant agreed. His good humor seemed to have returned. "The place looks dark, but I guess you know your way in." He swung the car to a stop along the roadside and Mort got out.

"I'll only be a sec," Mort said as he was swallowed up in the darkness that enveloped the roadhouse that the college authorities tried to keep closed against the college boys.

"Don't hurry," Grant called softly after him. "Stay an hour, for all we care. What do you say, Connie?"

He snapped off the lights and turned toward her, his face thrown into strong



Ruth gasped with fury. "If you think Grant English is easy prey for your designs, you'll find out that you're mistaken. You keep away from him. He's mine!"

relief by the white moonlight. He took off his hat and his hair glistened faintly where it grew thickly back from his high forehead.

Something caught in Connie's throat as she looked at him. Why had fate

brought her out in the moonlight with him when he belonged to another girl?

"I have to get back to college," Connie said faintly. "To tell the truth, I'm expecting some one to meet me on the train we just left."

"Oh, I'm sorry about that," Grant said. He looked at his watch. "If Mort isn't back in five minutes, we'll leave him here to get back the best way he can. Five minutes won't hold you up, if you don't mind driving fast."

"Not in the least, with you at the wheel," she told him.

His teeth flashed in a swift smile. "Say, why haven't I ever talked much to you before? You always seem so distant in the dean's office, and you had me half scared of you. It took all the nerve I had to even ask you to get off the train, and here I find you are just a tiny, cute little girl who knows how to keep the boys away. How do you do it, Connie?"

"That's easy, because I don't want the boys to hang around me like most girls do. I have my work, and I haven't time to waste pretending I'm in love with every boy I see," she said with a shy little smile. "That's old-fashioned, I guess, but it's the way I feel."

Grant whistled. "Well, at least it's a diplomatic way to warn me I'd better not try making love to you just because we're parked here along the road." His face bent a little closer and his eyes searched her face. "You certainly are different from most girls, do you know that, Connie?"

"Yes. At least I'm different from the girls you know. I have to work, and I'm poor. There's no one to look after me but myself, or to see that life treats me squarely. But I don't think that's why I refuse to pet like most girls," she said. "It always has seemed so obvious, so sort of cheap, because boys always talk about the girls who kiss promiscuously. I've heard them in the dean's office, and I know."

Grant's eyes searched her closely. "You're right, Connie. Unless a boy's really very much in love, he's liable to talk—just like girls do," he smiled faintly. Suddenly his hand closed warmly over hers. "Do you know you're the first girl I've known since I came to college whom I couldn't kiss and the first one I've wanted to!"

The moment hung like a quivering drop of heavy, mysterious silence. Connie had stopped breathing, so Grant

would not hear how her heart was hammering. Every fiber in her small body was straining toward him, crying out to be taken into his arms and deliciously crushed.

With a valiant effort that cost her much, she closed her eyes and heard herself saying, "I want a man's kisses to mean more to me than that, Grant. I haven't made a habit of them, so you see I don't want them unless they mean—what they're supposed to mean."

His hand had impulsively tightened on hers and she looked up swiftly. A little vein on his forehead was beating visibly and there was on his face a look she had never seen before. It made her blood leap madly, so that she trembled.

Grant's voice was a little hoarse when next he spoke.

"I didn't know there were any girls like you left," he whispered. "You almost made me believe there can be such a thing as—real love."

For one delirious instant Connie thought he was going to gather her in his arms, and she went weak at the thought of it. She knew that she would be powerless to draw back, when all she could think of clearly was how wonderful his kisses must be. For in spite of her determination to keep free of casual affairs at college, she was too utterly feminine, too human, too normal to not yield to the man who had haunted her dreams since the first day she had seen him.

Suddenly a noise behind them made them turn quickly. Mort was coming through the darkness toward them.

"Well, if this isn't a good one!" he roared with laughter. "You two staring at each other like nothing human. Move over, Connie."

Connie caught her breath as she realized how near she had come to going into the arms of another girl's man. She moved over nearer Grant, and there was a vague breathlessness as he looked

down at her without smiling. It was as though their lips had met through their eyes.

The car leaped forward through the darkness and Connie trembled at the touch of Grant's body against her. She was so close to him that it almost seemed like an embrace. She forgot Mort sitting on the other side. It was as though she and Grant were alone in this silent, rushing, spring night.

Once his coat flew back against the wind, and Connie caught the gleam of gold on his vest. Mort saw it too.

"Am I awake, or am I not?" he asked bluntly. "What pin was that?"

Grant kept his face to the road and his profile was stern.

"It's mine, if you happen to be interested," he said between his teeth. "Don't let the drink you had at Jake's make you too curious."

Mort had the sense to keep still, and Connie's heart turned over. Why was Grant wearing his fraternity pin when he was engaged to Ruth Montgomery? He was still engaged, when he was driving her car to the garage for her.

No, there wasn't any hope, she knew. Boys like Grant English didn't turn down girls like Ruth just because a new stenographer came to work in the dean's office. He might admire her, but he was too honorable to go out with her when Ruth didn't know. He wasn't the kind to heap questionable reports on a helpless girl like Connie. It would be hands off for them both.

A heavy sadness stole over her as they came in sight of the campus with its string of lights, its shaded gravel walks, its famous Spoon Lake where sweethearts strolled under the white-pillared portico on the tiny shore. It was as though her youth was over now, as though she was returning the man she loved in silence to another girl. She was coming back to the place that meant youth and gay laughter to others, work and serious loneliness to herself.

The train was just pulling out as they rounded the curve that brought them to the station.

Connie saw a figure pacing the platform, peering into every face that passed, and a swift rebellion leaped up in her. Elliot was waiting for her. He would be angry and jealous if he saw her riding up with the college's two most prominent men. He might cause her to lose her position.

"Oh, stop here—behind the station, please!" Connie breathed, involuntarily touching the muscular hand on the wheel.

The car ground to a stop and Grant got out.

"Sure you won't let me take you home?" he asked softly.

"Oh, no. And please don't come with me," Connie begged.

She started to climb out, and saw his two arms reach forward and lift her like a child. Then, before he had time to say what was on his lips she was darting away, lost in the crowd on the platform.

Her heart was beating wildly as she hurried toward Elliot. Her brain was a confusion of thoughts. Elliot must think she had got off the last car. Grant belonged to Ruth, he didn't think of her except as a girl, any girl. She must make her heart stop feeling as though it was sobbing inside her.

"Well, I wondered if you had missed the train." Elliot came up heavily. "What's the matter? You look tired or scared or something. Sure you're not the one all this scandal's about?" He looked at her questioningly.

Her heart almost stopped beating. Surely no one could know she had driven part way with two boys! It would be against college rules for a coed, but she hadn't thought what it would mean for her.

"What are you talking about, Elliot?" she asked, looking at the smug satisfied expression he had when he knew some-

thing had happened to somebody. "What scandal?"

Elliot drew his chin in against his fat neck, a gesture that expressed how pleased he was with himself.

"Wait till we get away from here," he said. "It's not public news yet."

With a proprietary air he took her arm and led her across the tracks, away from the campus to the boarding house where she lived.

"What is it, Elliot?" she begged. "Tell me."

"It's a juicy one this time," he beamed through his thick glasses. "Some one's going to get into trouble or my name's mud. Well, Saturday night after midnight two students, a boy and a girl, were caught swimming alone in the pool in the boys' gym!"

Connie breathed with relief. At least her own thoughtless act had not been found out. She was safe to keep on working while the others played.

"Who was it?" she asked, not caring.

"Well, it's not quite certain who the girl was. But the boy—well, I'm afraid it's out for him," Elliot said joyfully. "A member of the faculty happened to see them."

"You mean he was snooping around." Connie's lips curled with scorn. "Sure it wasn't you, Elliot?"

Elliot's face turned to her quickly. "I'm not saying who it was. All I'm saying is that the college authorities are going to sift it to the bottom. If it leaks out that things are so lax, where's the college reputation? Listen, Connie, keep your ears open and tell me anything you hear. We want to find the name of the girl, and the boy's going to be allowed to think he wasn't known, so's we can catch her too, see?"

They had reached the steps of the boarding house.

"I see," Connie said. "You'll do your best to ruin the name of somebody if you can! Well, I won't help you. Good night, Elliot."

Elliot's jaw fell. "Why, I thought I had a date! I'm coming in."

"Not to-night, Elliot," Connie said finally. "I'm tired."

After she had reached her shabby little room, Connie wondered if she had offended Elliot. It would be madness for her to do that, for it was within his means to make her lose her position merely by speaking to the dean, in case he had anything to tell. But to-night it was impossible to endure him, with his stodgy self-complacence, after that magic ride with Grant.

Undressing in the darkness, Connie remembered her mother in the sanitarium. She must be kept there until she got well. The girl must keep her position at any cost, even if it meant being nice to Elliot.

Lying in the dark room, the cool air of the spring night sweeping over her hot face, she allowed her thoughts to go back over the unexpected thing that had happened to her. Never before to-night had she held a conversation with Grant. In the dean's office she had been aware of his surprised scrutiny the day he and Ruth had come in for something. She thought of Ruth's cold eyes, how she had looked contemptuously at the girl behind the desk when she, too, had noticed how Grant was interested. Ruth had been wearing Grant's fraternity pin that day.

Yet to-night Grant had admitted it was his own pin he wore. Hope pulled at Connie's heart. Perhaps Ruth had given it back to him for some reason! Then as quickly that vague unhappiness rolled over her, crushing out the hopeful little flare.

"You're not to get excited over any college boys, Constance Fraser," she reminded herself firmly. "You're to keep a stiff upper lip and not court any more unhappiness than what comes to you."

But all her resolutions couldn't make her forget the thrill of his face straining toward her in the moonlight, his big

hands warm on her arms as he had lifted her from the car—Ruth's car.

Elliot was standing at the entrance to the college building the next morning as she walked swiftly along, smart and desirable as any coed in her fresh blouse and warm green jersey suit.

Her heart sank as she saw him. Surely he hadn't come to make trouble for her because she had made him angry last night! For Elliot could make trouble so easily.

But in his mild excitement, he seemed to have forgotten.

"Say, Connie," he told her with an important air of confidence. "Do something for me."

She looked into his broad sallow face, and noticed how greedy his little eyes were. They seemed livid with excitement.

"I haven't much time," she answered, trying not to show how repulsive he was to her. Strange, how she could have endured his company before this.

"What I want is for you to talk to Mort Heath," Elliot whispered, although there was no one near them. "Try and get him to tell you what he knows."

Connie stared at him. "Why, Elliot! After you've warned me against him so often, never wanting me to even speak to him."

"But this is different," Elliot urged. His eyes had a strange gleam in them. "The college has to use what means it can, you know."

"You mean that Mort was the boy who got caught Saturday night," she burst out. "You want me to play detective and find out the girl. Well, I'll tell you, Elliot, I won't do it. I don't care if the girl never gets caught. All I care is to do my work the dean gives me, and I'll stay out of trouble."

"Oh, yes? Well, we'll see about that. Anyway, you keep it quiet what I told you. And get set for a little surprise soon."

He turned and left her, walking across the grass on short sturdy legs toward the laboratory. Connie hurried in through the wide corridors and was soon at work at her desk.

A flame of anger swept through her. Elliot wanted her to spy for him! She hated his sly, sneaking ways, his curiosity about the girl in the scandal, his eagerness to help land some one else in trouble.

The door opened, and Connie looked up, half expecting to see Elliot there. Instead, she found herself looking into the haughty face of Ruth Montgomery.

"Good morning," she said brightly, walking to the desk that separated them. "What can I do for you?"

Ruth glared at her through narrowed eyelids. Then she spoke slowly and clearly.

"You can keep out of my car after this," she said in a seething voice. "My fiancé took it to the shop so we could go to the dance Friday night, and not to drive you back to college. Understand?"

"Perfectly." Connie faced the angry girl, her expression betraying nothing that was in her mind. "I didn't know it was your car, Miss Montgomery, or I wouldn't have cared to ride in it."

Ruth gasped with fury. "Oh, no? And another thing. If you think Grant English is easy prey for your designs, you'll find out that you're mistaken. You keep away from him. He's mine!"

The telephone rang sharply at Connie's elbow and she picked it up.

"Hello, this is the dean's office," she said faintly.

"That you, Connie?" It was Grant's voice, joyous, booming. "Say, you didn't give me a chance last night to ask you something. Will you go to the big dance with me Friday night?"

Connie gasped. "What's that? You can't mean——"

"But I do! I mean what I say. Will you?"



"Oh, I don't know—I can't think——" She saw Ruth's glaring hostile eyes beyond the telephone. She thought of her resolution to have nothing to do with certain heartbreaks, because it seemed better to leave things as they were. And yet Grant's voice was so urgent, as though he weren't trying to bait her. Perhaps he actually wanted her, perhaps affairs with him and Ruth had broken off! "I'll let you know the next time I see you," she said.

Ruth tossed her head and looked at Connie haughtily. "Don't worry about me. I never make a third, thank you," she sneered.

Excitement raced through her as she turned back to Ruth. Now she could laugh at her rudeness.

"Please do not annoy yourself," she said smoothly. "I want nothing that doesn't belong to me."

For a long moment the two girls stood looking at each other and now it was the girl behind the desk who was cool and poised and self-assured. Ruth's eyes were angry and smoldering with threatening fires.

Of a sudden the door swung open. Ruth whirled, and seeing Elliot had just come in, she went rushing out. Elliot stared after her, then came over to Connie.

"The girl friend seems preoccupied," he remarked with a sly wink that somehow made Connie's blood boil. "Say, honey, I'm afraid I'll have to disappoint you to-night."

"In what way?" Connie asked without interest.

"There's a faculty meeting at seven thirty and I can't be with you as usual on Monday nights," he said patronizingly. "But never mind. I'll have some news for you all the sooner. I could tell you some things right now about some people in college that would make your hair curl, but I'm keeping quiet till the dramatic moment."

"Yes, I suppose you would!" Connie said, turning away. "I'll try and bear up under my disappointment about to-night, though."

Elliot missed the sarcasm and went out with the air of an important personage. And once out of sight, Connie forgot even her dislike for him in thinking about Grant's telephone message.

All day she thought about it, trying to reason with herself that it was courting unhappiness to accept his bid for the dance. Her better judgment told her that Grant and Ruth had had a quarrel and he was using Connie to make the other girl jealous and bring her around. And if Connie had an idea that she could charm a man like Grant English in the face of wealth and beauty and position that Ruth possessed, she was foolishly mistaken.

Five o'clock came and she had decided it was best to stop before she

began. She told herself firmly she could not endure seeing too much of Grant if he was to drop her later when Ruth and he made up their fuss.

The dean came in as she was closing her typewriter for the day.

"Miss Fraser, could you look up these references at the library to-night for me?" he asked. "I have to have them in the morning and I intended doing it myself. But there's a special meeting of the faculty to-night and I have to attend. I'll be glad when they find those culprits who disgraced themselves and the college last Saturday, and let me get my regular work done."

"Certainly I'll attend to it for you, doctor," Connie promised.

Out on the campus she looked for Grant, but he failed to appear. She was half-glad to put off a little longer the moment of shutting off the opportunity of going with him. She dreaded it, yet it was the only thing for her to do.

Several times during the next few hours she tried to make herself go to the telephone and tell him she was declining, but eight o'clock found her in the library with the thing still undone.

She found the dean's references quickly, while it was still too early to return to her lonely room. She wandered into the magazine alcove and read for an hour. But the face of Grant seemed to come between her eyes and the pages so she could see nothing but his eager look, compelling her to surrender to him, no matter what the consequences.

At last she got up to leave. Going out the door she bumped into some one coming in.

"Connie!" It was Grant. His voice was a low cry of gladness that made Connie's heart leap.

"Oh! I've been looking for you," Connie breathed, looking up at him and feeling faint.

"And I've been hunting you everywhere. Your landlady said you weren't

in your room, and this was the last place I thought of." He stopped to smile down at her. And as they looked at each other she was aware of a breathlessness between them. "Are you going now?"

She nodded. Her voice refused to speak, and without a word Grant took her arm and led her out onto the campus.

The moon had come up, making the wide spread of smooth lawn a silver carpet under their feet. Connie walked along, not caring where they went, because she wanted to know the joy of his nearness till the moment when she must explain to him that their paths lay far apart, that it would be cruelty to her to try to merge them when they could never remain that way.

"Do you know, I've been thinking ever since about what you said last night? About caresses meaning what they ought to mean," Grant said softly, bending over her. "I was thinking how lightly most girls value them. Do you know, I believe that's why there are so many broken-up love affairs and marriages."

Here was the time, and Connie caught her breath as she plunged.

"I'm sure of it, Grant," she said rapidly, not looking at him. "And if people would consider who it is they're playing with, they could save themselves so much distress. That's why I can't go to the dance with you on Friday. I don't want to begin something that neither of us could finish."

"Connie! What are you saying!" Grant exclaimed. "Why couldn't we finish! That would just be the beginning for me."

They had reached the drive that circled about the campus and came out by Spoon Lake. Without thinking, Connie stepped away from Grant's outstretched hands and crossed the gravel. Now she was stepping onto the soft grass that bordered the tiny lake, to get away from

the look in his eyes that her judgment warned against.

But Grant was swifter. With long strides he reached her side so that they stood at the edge of the water, neither seeing how the moon made a path of gold across it, nor hearing how the tiny waves lapped the shore like soft kisses. All they heard was the beating of their own hearts, all they saw was the light in each other's eyes.

"Connie, you don't mean that! You've got to go with me! I want every one to see how proud I am that I've found you——" He stopped, as though amazed at his own words. Then with a low cry he gathered her in his arms. "Darling! Don't you understand? I've fallen in love with you!"

Swift as an eagle his head bent low until his lips met hers, crushing them with delicious pain that sent darts of flame tearing through her. And Connie was powerless to resist, as she had known she would be. She drew her arms around his dark head and clung to him, answering his kiss with all the pent-up love in her being.

"Oh, Grant," she breathed, her face like a flower in the moonlight. "I—I——" She hesitated, then stopped.

"Say it, dearest! It could be nothing else, since you've given me your lips," Grant whispered. "Say it!"

"I love you," Connie gasped, and could not go on for the mad caresses Grant rained on her upturned little face. "And I guess I'll go with you Friday—I was afraid before."

"Of course you're going, you darling! And I'm going to give you my pin, so the whole college will know we're in love. What's that?"

A sound was drifting toward them, the noise of a low powerful motor. Swiftly, Grant drew Connie up into the pergola, behind one of the huge marble pillars. But not before a long low roadster had coasted past the place where they had been standing.

"That was Ruth!" Connie breathed after the car had disappeared around the bend. "Do you suppose she saw us?"

"What if she did?" Grant wanted to know. "She'll learn soon enough what the whole college is going to know—that we're in love, and that we're going to get married as soon as I graduate. Won't that be wonderful, darling?"

Connie caught her breath. "But there's mother! She's ill, and I have to keep her in the sanitarium."

"She'll be my mother, darling. She'll have everything on earth to make her well, and after she's better she will live with us. That will be a gorgeous excuse for us to build a beautiful home right away." He gasped as he saw her beauty. Reverently he kissed her eyes, then more madly he pressed rapturous kisses on her alluring mouth that was so soft and red. "I can't believe I've found you, darling, and I can't wait till Friday to tell the world!"

Through the ecstasy that thrilled her, Connie wondered if Grant would have found her so quickly if she had been afraid to say what she had about cheap kisses that night they drove back to college.

"You're sure you aren't sorry I'm not a coed, dear?" she murmured. He must have no regrets.

Grant laughed, low, thrillingly. "What difference does that make, sweet girl? At least you haven't been out with all the boys in college. Your lips are precious, and your very kisses are proof that your love belongs to me alone."

Yet even in her tearing joy, the thought of Friday terrified her strangely. She shrank from the scene Ruth was sure to make when Grant's pin was seen on her gown.

All week she avoided Elliot, but that person was so engrossed with tracking down suspicious rumors that he did not

realize he was being kept away purposely. Each night she and Grant slipped down to the lake and stood within the marble pergola and whispered their love again.

Connie saw Ruth only at a distance those days, but to guard against any chance meeting, she wore Grant's pin on her lingerie over her heart.

Friday night she got ready for the dance with a lilt of joy in her being that tried to crowd out her vague terror of what the evening could not fail to bring forth. For when an engagement was announced at a large affair, it always caused commotion among the students.

Connie had just slipped into her simple little evening gown that nevertheless revealed her alluringly curved slenderness, and showed the lustrous white skin of her rounded arms and shoulders. She was touching her mouth with soft rose color, when the landlady called her downstairs.

Thinking it was Grant coming early, she hurried down, and found Elliot waiting at the foot of the stairs. His jaws dropped with surprise when he saw her.

"You don't expect me to take you to the dance!" he burst out. "The movies are my limit till I get a raise in salary."

"I didn't know it was you down here, Elliot," Connie said, thinking that the evening's excitement was beginning early. "I'm not expecting you to take me to the dance, or anywhere. I'm going with Grant."

Elliot stared. "What's that! Why, this is our regular night for a date. You can't stand me up and get away with it."

"Oh, no? Well, we'll just see!" They both turned to see Grant coming in the door. "Ready, Connie?"

"Yes," she answered. "You're the first to know it, Elliot. Don't you wish us happiness?"

A dark scowl spread over Elliot's flat

face "I wish you'd break your necks—both of you!"

Grant hesitated, his fists clenching at the insult. But Connie drew him outside. "Don't bother with him, dear," she whispered. "He has an ugly disposition, and I don't want him to use it to-night when we're going to be so happy."

Grant pressed a swift kiss on her lips, then lifted her lightly into his car. Neither spoke very much on the way to the dance, for both were filled with the joy that swept over them at the thought of their future.

"I see you're wearing my pin where every one can see," Grant said with a swift smile as they got out before the gym where the dance was already in full swing.

"Yes," Connie breathed. "But I hope no one notices it till I get my breath. I'm so excited!"

"You adorable little thing! I'm liable to kiss you right in front of the orchestra and give the college a thrill."

They left their coats in the check room and went into the gym where a blare of music drew them into the drifting crowds. Overhead gay balloons floated against the lowered ceiling. Around them gay students called surprised greetings and whispered at their appearing together. A couple passed them without speaking, their heads turned away. It was Ruth and Mort.

Seeing them brought back that vague dread to Connie, but it faded quickly as Grant drew her close and they danced, slowly, divinely, their hearts bursting with the emotion that had drawn them so resolutely together.

Perhaps an hour later, perhaps only five minutes, a man stepped and intercepted their close dancing.

"No cut-ins to-night, big boy," Grant said over Connie's head.

"Who wants to cut!" came a growl. Then Mort stepped around into view, with Ruth close by, her narrowed eyes

sending darts of dark hatred at the girl in the close haven of Grant's embrace. "Look here, Grant, I've just had a summons to a special faculty meeting and I've got to go now, before they come and get me." His face was haggard, his eyes desperate. "Will you keep Ruth with you and take her back to the sorority house?"

Ruth tossed her head and looked at Connie haughtily. "Don't worry about me. I never make a third, thank you," she sneered. "I'll drive you over to the College Building, Mort, and then go on home."

"Well then, get a move on." Mort seized her arm and led her swiftly through the dancers.

Connie looked at Grant. "What does that mean?" she asked.

"It means that Mort's been caught at some of his mischief," he said soberly. "Between you and me, I knew all along he was the one who had a girl in swimming last Saturday night. Guess some one's squealed."

The music started again and Grant whirled Connie on the waves of jazz. Her thoughts raced in confusion, thinking of the disgrace that would be Mort's, wondering who the girl had been and if he would betray her identity to make his own punishment lighter. Then she heard some one exclaiming near her, pulling her away from the shelter of Grant's arms.

"You're wearing the Delt pin, Connie, you sly creature! Oh, look everybody, Connie has Grant's pin!"

The cry was taken up on every mouth and Connie's face burned. Grant looked at her with love and pride shining in his eyes.

Suddenly above the uproar came the tattoo of the drum. Now, thought Connie, the orchestra leader's going to announce it! The big moment had come, the one she and Grant had waited for, the one she had feared without knowing why.



"Connie, what made you do it? Oh, darling!" It was Grant, trembling as he clutched her close. "Connie, didn't you know I couldn't live if anything happened to you?"

"Miss Constance Fraser!" came in a booming voice. The leader stood out on the platform, a small white paper in his hand. "Miss Fraser, will you please

go at once to the faculty meeting? The dean has sent for you."

The dancing started up immediately, but Connie stood staring at Grant.



"What is it, a joke?" he asked.

"No, it can't be," Connie thought rapidly. "You heard what Mort said, dear. The dean wants me there to take dictation, I suppose. He's helpless without me. Oh, dear!"

"Now don't let that bother you, sweetheart," Grant said. "I'll go with you. Come on, let's get it over and come back again."

They made their way out through the whirling couples, found their coats and hurried down the outside steps.

"Don't bother finding your car, Grant," Connie said. "We can get there just as soon walking fast."

They reached the College Building shortly, and before they went round to the entrance Grant drew Connie into the shadows and kissed her tenderly.

"I can't wait, darling," he whispered, trembling. "I love you so much. Hurry back from that meeting, dear. I'll wait in the hall for you."

Then Connie started to run, knowing the impatience of the dean. Rounding

the curve of the walk, they saw a car standing at the steps. Ruth's car, and the girl at the wheel sneered openly at the two who went up arm in arm.

"Why don't you sit in that big chair, Grant?" Connie said as they entered the corridor. "You'll hear everything, but it doesn't matter. The college will know it soon enough."

She smiled up at him as he pressed her hand, then she saw him sit down in the chair as she went into the lighted room.

The entire faculty was there and standing out from all the serious faces in the room was the dean's. Connie saw Mort slouching up in front of them all, then every face in the room turned toward her.

Something in the dean's expression made her stop short on the threshold so that she forgot to close the door.

"You sent for me?" she said uncertainly.

"Yes," the dean's voice was sober. "We have just learned who the young lady was that disported herself so disgracefully in the men's pool last Saturday. I regret to find it was you, Miss Fraser."

Connie gasped. "I! But there's some mistake. I was visiting my mother. I came back on Sunday night—with Mort and——"

"Yes, you were seen with him and another student," the dean interrupted. "But we can't accept your story of visiting your mother, because two students have identified you, and a member of the faculty has given evidence."

"But it's not true!" Connie cried. "Mort, say something! You know it wasn't I—tell them you met me coming from town."

But Mort only shrugged his shoulders and remained silent.

"He has already received his penalty. He is expelled from college," said the dean. "And you, Miss Fraser, will please leave the town not later than the

midnight train. We cannot harbor a young woman of your type among young students."

With a cry Connie turned, and saw Grant standing in the hall. His eyes were staring at her, and suddenly he turned and walked outside.

Connie never quite knew how she got to her room in the boarding house. All she remembered was the sneer in Mort's desperate eyes, the cold refusal of the dean to believe her, and above all that the way Grant had turned away from her. That had made her give up trying to plead for her innocence. If he had turned away coldly without believing her, she did not want to stay any longer where she could see him. She would find a job somewhere else, to take care of her mother. That was the only reason now for her to go on living.

But who had lied about her? Who had pinned the blame of the swimming-pool scandal on her? A swift thought answered that only a word from Mort had been enough to convince the faculty that she had been guilty. She thought of Elliot, his smug face showing surprise that the girl he had escorted around so faithfully had been blamed for the trouble he was so intent on solving. She thought of Ruth, sitting outside in her expensive roadster. Had she still been there when Grant had turned away from her? Had he gone back to Ruth's side, believing the girl he had loved so swiftly and so madly was guilty of foolish indiscretion with Mort?

Her hands seemed paralyzed as she went about packing her clothes. Tears coursed down her trembling face and sobs tore through her body, cold now from nervous exhaustion. If she could only get some one to listen to her, but no one seemed interested in hearing her story. They were so anxious to pin the blame on somebody, but who had lied about her?

If she could only talk with Grant, make him understand it was all a mis-

erable lie, that some one was hiding behind her because she was poor, not a student and, therefore, not a social asset to the college, and had no wealthy parents to demand an investigation! But he had turned away, his eyes horrified, and she was too proud to beg him to listen. If he had only believed such a thing was impossible for the girl he loved!

Connie arrived at the station fifteen minutes before the train was due. She attended to her ticket and checking her bags. Her plans were hazy, but she had decided to go to the city and live at a working girls' club until she found a position before she told her mother anything of what had happened. She would lose herself in her work and try to forget the swift keen pain of her love for Grant.

Coming out onto the platform she saw Mort coming toward her. He saw her too, and a dark saturnine smile distorted his dissipated face. She turned quickly and walked the other way. She did not want to meet him.

Then around the corner she saw Elliot coming, too late to avoid him.

"Well, you've found out what I said was true," he sneered. "Girls like you have no business fooling around with rich college boys."

"Please don't talk to me," Connie blazed, "There's nothing I can endure to hear from you. If you had been half a friend, you would have believed me—as you will some day when the real truth comes out."

Rapid footsteps sounded and a slim figure brushed past them.

"Well, nothing like a little old reunion!" It was Ruth, her face gleaming with a victorious smile. "Never mind, Connie, you'll get over it in time to go on another swimming bat soon."

"And maybe she isn't a hot swimmer!" Mort came up, grinning. "She sure could dive circles around yours truly!"

"Oh, it isn't true!" Connie sobbed aloud, drawing away from the little group.

She turned and ran down the platform, stumbling blindly, not caring whether she fell in the tracks of the oncoming train or not. Which was almost what happened to her, for the fast express that preceded the city local roared through just then, and her uncertain feet failed as they carried her to the edge of the platform.

She saw the blinding light bearing down on her, but she was unable to get up. She heard the roar and the shrill whistle, and the screams that rose from the people behind her—

Suddenly she felt herself lifted out of the path of death by strong arms that reached out from the darkness. Looking up through her blinding tears, she saw a face that she had thought never to see again.

"Connie, what made you do it? Oh, darling!" It was Grant, trembling as he clutched her close, his face drawn with horror at the nearness of fate. "Connie, didn't you know I couldn't live if anything happened to you—that you mean the world to me?"

"But—I don't understand," Connie faltered. "You turned away from me when they told those lies. I thought you believed them."

"Why, darling! How could I believe them? Surely you couldn't think that!" He gazed down into her tear-streaked face, love burning in his eyes.

Unable to believe she was actually seeing Grant, Connie put forth her hand and touched his face with her finger. Yes, it was he! But how had this happened—what had really happened?

"Then why did you look at me that way?" she quavered.

Grant turned and confronted the group who had stood speechless at his appearance. He put Connie on her feet but kept his arm about her.

"I heard all that stuff at the faculty

meeting, and I decided it was time for some one to clear the whole mess up," he said in staccato tones that rapped out like bullets. "It took me all evening to do it, but now I have the dope in time. First, let me clear up any false ideas about Connie being Mort's swimming partner last Saturday night. It was you, Ruth. You sent in a note to the dean, anonymously, saying it was Connie."

"I!" Ruth screamed. "Why—how dare you?"

"Easily. I doped the whole thing out, and then I proved my theory. I got a master key to the the gym lockers and found Mort had forgotten to pack his swimming togs this afternoon in the rush. And I found this wrapped up in his jersey. Look at

it, Connie." He pulled something red out of his pocket and gave it to her.

With cold hands, Connie held the rubber cap he gave her. There, in indelible ink, was printed the name—"Ruth Montgomery."

With an angry snarl of an infuriated animal, Ruth snatched it from her hands.

"Don't try to make any trouble for me, or you'll find out who you're dealing with—see!" She turned on Mort. "What did you do, squeal? You miserable little rat!"

"Wait a moment, Ruth, don't run away like that," Grant went on. "He gave it away, without knowing he did it. You see he's been bothering me for a loan so long that about a month ago

I got soft-hearted and wrote him out a check. I got a bit suspicious when he insisted I make it out to cash, and then I forgot about it till this afternoon. Last Sunday night on the train, he said if he didn't get three hundred dollars at once, he'd be ruined. Even then I only laughed at him. I supposed he'd got in some sort of trouble in that gam-

bling place for students he runs on the sly. Well, he had, but differently from how I imagined. This afternoon I went through my returned checks, and there on the back of that fifty-dollar cash check was the signature of our eminent friend, Elliot Brown. He was so dumb he gave the whole thing away, because he was so greedy to get his hush money he en-

dorsed a cash check," he finished.

"Listen here!" Elliot sputtered, his face purple. "Be careful what you say. You can't prove that."

"No? Well, I can. You brought this whole business to a head, Elliot. You saw Mort and a girl who we know to be Ruth, sneaking from the gym at midnight. You thought it was a great way to get more money out of Mort, and this time he happened to be strapped. You had bled him so often for keeping quiet about his gambling joint that the poor boy couldn't come across. Now you see what a lovely mess you've made, and you'd have got away with it if you hadn't picked on the girl I love."

He looked down at Connie, and saw her great eyes filled with tears.



"Let's go," she whispered, clinging weakly to his arm. "I can't stand this any longer."

He turned and walked away with his arm about her, his head bent over hers. Neither said a word until they reached Spoon Lake and were leaning against a marble pillar that reflected the moonlight over Connie's white face.

"Connie, little darling!" Grant's arms closed about her, drew her tight against him. "I'm sorry you thought I had turned against you, but I had to hurry away before Mort got out of that meeting. I'll tell you a secret. I ran like nothing human over to his apartment and went through his papers. I found plenty of things to incriminate Elliot along with him, darling."

"Oh, Grant, let's not talk any more about the whole horrid affair," Connie begged. "I'm so tired. I'd just like to stay in your arms like this till I die!"

"Sweetheart! What a thing to say! And yet, that's just what you're going

to do. Listen, darling, we're going to get my car and drive and drive until we find a magistrate to marry us."

"But, Grant! You can't do that!" Connie gasped. "You aren't graduated yet, and they'd expel you if you brought a wife to college."

"I don't know about that, darling, but I'm willing to try it. Anyway, I'd rather have you than ten thousand college educations or degrees. We'll get married first, and find out results later. And if I have to leave college on account of it, at least I'll know more than a certain member of the faculty named Elliot Brown."

"Oh, Grant, how could I ever have thought you didn't love me?" Connie sighed happily as she went into his arms.

"Yes, how could you, darling?"

Grant pressed his lips down on hers in a kiss of delicious madness, while the mysterious beauty of old Spoon Lake wrapped them about with a mantle of love and moonlight.



VOTIVE CANDLE

LIKE votive candles burning steadily,
Like ceaseless tides that to the moon are true,
Like the sure light of morning after night,
So steadfast, true, and sure, my love, for you.

If I might feel your kiss upon my lips,
Your breath again move softly in my hair,
Within the circle of your arms once more,
What need of heaven? Have I not found mine there?

CLARA HATHAWAY.



Head Over Heels

By Dara Magoon

AROUND the next bend, she knew, was Sutro Baths, and a little farther on a car stop where she could get a ride home. She had plenty of nickels. But Rider Halsey had gone that way. He was probably waiting for her now somewhere along the road, snickering in his big car, sure of her ultimate capitulation to his unwelcome kisses.

She started walking in the opposite direction. If she kept on long enough she might come to a familiar landmark, and there would be another street car near. She had no idea how far it was, but it was probably far enough. Walking on high heels was infinitely slower and more wearying than riding in a luxurious car.

The fog was gathering around her chiffon dress, and the cold breeze from the Pacific penetrated her thin, short, velvet wrap. She almost wished she had played ant instead of grasshopper while her job had lasted. Then she would have had flat heels and a warmer coat.

"But then," she giggled, "I wouldn't have been riding with Rider Halsey and have had to get out and walk."

The lights of an approaching car sent her suddenly scrambling up a bank much steeper than it looked. She didn't want to be seen walking alone through the fog in evening clothes.

She was climbing rapidly up the bank, in spite of the brambles tearing her

skirt, when her foot caught in a root and down she tumbled to the very edge of the road.

There was a sudden scream of brakes, and the car halted beside her. A figure slid from behind the wheel, and a moment later a man lifted her to her feet. She groaned.

"Are you hurt?"

"My ankle!" she gasped.

Without a word he picked her up, bedraggled skirts and all, and put her gently into the snug roadster he was driving. He tucked a rug about her, and got in on the other side.

"Since you've forgotten your roller skates, you'll have to ride with me. Where to?"

"You don't have to take me," she answered in a low voice. "I'm sure I'm not badly hurt."

She was thinking that it was clever of him to have understood her predicament so quickly. But he needn't think he had to come to her rescue. If he hadn't come she would have gotten along somehow. She was sick of men, anyway.

But he merely smiled at her look of resentment.

"It doesn't matter where you want to go eventually," he said. He was swinging the car about. "We'll go around by the Embarcadero. If I brought you under all the lights of the concessions some one might think I had been abusing you."

She stole a look at his dark, sharply carved profile. The man's lips were twitching with amusement. Her own irrepressible spirits were rising. Ostentatiously she got out a diminutive comb and a compact. She made a ceremony of putting a few finishing touches to her appearance.

"I look pretty well now," she said. "You can put me down at any corner where a street car stops."

"Please, dear lady, allow me to keep my self-respect. All the rules of chiv-

alry demand that I see you safely home," he said, his eyes twinkling.

"Twenty-first Avenue, then," she said. "And all my honorable ancestors looking down from the castle walls will bless you for rescuing a damsel in distress."

She tried to ease her ankle by resting it on the other. It wasn't sprained, but it hurt.

"Could you trust your knight to give you a little first aid in his apartment?" he asked. "You seem to live way across the city."

There was no hesitation in her "Yes." If she couldn't trust him, she would trust herself. But she knew she could trust him. There was no one where she lived to get hot water for her, and without it her ankle might pain all night. Her landlady wasn't the hot-water kind.

Nothing more was said as they eased down a steep hill and drew up before an apartment house.

She made no remonstrance when he lifted her again and carried her to the elevator of the building. He supported her until they reached the tenth floor. Then he carried her again, that time through a charming entrance into the living room of the most luxurious apartment she had ever seen. He set her down on a sofa.

"Naoshi!" he called.

A Japanese boy appeared at once, and was given instructions. In an instant she removed her shoe and stocking behind a considerably turned back. Her ankle was comforted with hot water—cold—hot again.

Not since her mother's death had any one ministered to her. She liked the feeling of being waited upon, although the service was as impersonal as a spring shower.

But the servant annoyed her. His flashing white teeth protruded in an ugly way, and his Oriental eyes seemed to be looking wisely and disapprovingly at her.

"It's only a strained ligament, I think," she said. "It doesn't hurt enough for a sprain."

She was leading up to the suggestion that she be taken home at once. Naoshi was making her feel uncomfortable and she wanted to get out of the place.

"Strains hurt while they last," her host commented.

He seemed to sense her discomfort and the reason for it.

"Naoshi," he said, "I'll take care of this now, and you get us some tea, weak but hot."

And when the tea was served:

"I won't need you any more to-night, Naoshi," he said.

Naoshi hesitated. "Miss Ilene Foles-ter telephone many times. She say you call her no matter how late you come home," he said.

"Thank you," said his master shortly.

"She say she wait," Naoshi persisted.

"That will do, Naoshi," was the somewhat sharp rejoinder, and Naoshi took himself off.

Then the man did an odd thing. He tore bits off a blotter and padded the bell on the telephone!

The tea was fragrant and hot. The girl nibbled little cakes slowly. This "Arabian Nights" setting would be changed soon for her own drab world, and she believed in tasting luxury while she could. She was at ease now that the Oriental had disappeared.

"I hope I'm not usurping Miss Irene Forester's place," she ventured mischievously, and got paid for her mischief at once.

"My dear child," said her host, "even a worm would be welcome in the place of a hornet."

"My goodness!" she gasped. "Do I look like a worm?"

He didn't answer that. "How old are you?" he asked.

"Nearly twenty," she said.

"Believe it or not," he went on, "though I act like a rescuing hero, my

name is plain Sam Brown. What's yours?"

"You're thorough, aren't you?" she said, with her lilting giggle. "First you bind up your guest's wounds and feed her. Then you ask her name. Well, it's just plain Sally Mason."

"Your adventures are next in order, I believe," he said.

She flushed slightly. But after all, why should she be embarrassed? She had done nothing wrong. Her walking should have proved that. Besides, he might know of a job for her, and she was growing desperate.

"There, isn't much to tell," she began. "I came here a few months ago from a small town to work for the Italia Petroleum Company. It went on the rocks, and I lost my job. I don't know San Francisco very well yet, and it's awfully hard to find work. That—man who took me out to-night thought I'd stand for anything, just because I haven't any money—except nickels," she added, and again she gave that irrepressible giggle that caused her host to smile in spite of himself.

"Can't you go home to your people?" he asked.

"I can—if necessary. But my step-mother and I don't get along any too well. And there's no use making it harder for father."

"Have you tried the shops for modeling?" he asked. "You're an extraordinarily pretty girl, and your figure is excellent."

He said it as though he were commenting on the weather.

"I hadn't thought of that," she answered. "But I really am a pretty fair stenographer."

"Do'btless," he said dryly. "You look as though you'd had years and years of experience."

At that moment Naoshi appeared again. "I remove the tea now?" he said, busying himself at the wagon. "You call Miss Ilene?"

Sam Brown was evidently annoyed. "Yes, yes," he said.

He followed Naoshi to the kitchen door and locked it.

"I haven't had that Jap long," he said, "and the fellow doesn't know his place yet."

He came and sat down beside Sally. He looked at her closely. She had the feeling that he might have given the same scrutiny to an inanimate object in which he was interested. His manner began to pique her.

"I'm ready to go home any time now," she said, starting to rise. "You've been very kind."

"I know," he agreed, but he drew her back on the sofa. "But I want to know more about you first. How can I help you if I don't?"

He took it for granted that he was to help her!

"First," he went on, "you are beautiful. I know for the first time what Irish poets mean by eyes like fairy flax. Second, you're bright. You're educated, too."

"Oh, I've been to high school," interrupted Sally. "But it really is time for me to go."

"Later," he said easily. "Third, you have courage and you have principles. Fourth, you have a quick tongue to defend yourself. So I imagine you could defend me."

"What is this, anyway?" broke in Sally. "A new kind of third degree? I guess you'd better take me home before you take it into your head to look at my teeth."

"They look nice and healthy," he said, "and I'll take you home as soon as you've passed on my proposition."

Her dusky lashes swept suddenly upward in suspicion. He smiled sardonically at what her face revealed.

"My dear girl," he said, "don't be stupid. What I have to suggest is perfectly honorable. It may seem ridiculous at first, but you'll admit the good

sense of it when you stop to think. What was your salary as stenographer?"

"Thirty dollars a week, and," she added defiantly, "I've had measles and whooping cough and mumps——"

"What a careless family yours must have been," he interrupted in his turn. "Very well. I'll pay you a hundred and forty dollars a month for a year to marry me and live here that long. The salary will be clear. I'll pay all expenses, including clothes and—a year from now—a trip to Reno for three months. You'll have a tidy nest egg at the end of that time, and you'll be as safe here as you'd be in an angel's pocket. All I'll ask in return is a little pretense at being my loving wife in public."

Sally's head was swimming. She could only stare out of great, startled eyes. Here was the maddest proposal, surely, that ever a girl listened to!

"What's the joke?" she asked at last.

"There isn't any. I need a wife who is beautiful and sure of herself and of my loyalty to her for a year. I need her to protect me and my fortune and my work against a pursuing woman who is making life miserable for me in San Francisco."

Sally thought quickly. What wrong could there be in such an arrangement? It could hurt no one. She felt sure that she could rely on Sam Brown. And surely, there could be no wrong in later divorcing a man to whom she would never really be married. She could be of service to him, and he to her.

She laughed aloud as an amusing idea occurred to her.

"What if I should fall in love with you?" she asked, thinking that the most impossible of events.

He looked at her, and his eyes were like gray ice. "You'd have to keep it to yourself if you did," he said. "I'm fed up on women. I'm an artist, and



I can't escape contact with them entirely. I want to finish my portraits here in San Francisco. It will take a year, and a wife could do a lot to help me get some work done."

Sally's Irish perversity showed in her last demurring remark.

"I promise that if I take the job," she said, "I'll never say anything like this again. But right now I will. What if you should fall in love with me? What then?"

Then Sam Brown said something so strange that, remembering it afterward, Sally couldn't have broken her promise even if she had wanted to.

"I never court pain," he said.

They were married in Sacramento a week later, and they drove back to

"Darling!" murmured Sam, as though fatuously worshipping his wife, and Irene looked furious.

San Francisco immediately. There was to be a small dinner dance at a hotel for the announcement of their marriage, Sam informed her.

He wanted to break

the news publicly to a few people.

He coached her in the apartment, and encouraged her not to be afraid. Her rôle was that of a young, adoring bride.

"Could you manage occasional admiring glances my way out of those fairy-flax eyes?" he asked.

"If you go on flattering me so, I'll overdo it," said Sally.

Sam squelched her again. "I'll enjoy that—in public," he said.

What had promised to be an ordeal turned out to be a tremendous lark for Sally. She located the "hornet" at once. Irene Forester, clad in daring, flame-colored chiffon, scrutinized Sally's gown of white satin. She tried to look contemptuous, but Sally's beauty was startling in its purity, and Irene's black brows drew into a near scowl.

"The marriage was rather sudden, wasn't it?" she asked, a sneer in her voice.

"I should say it was!" agreed Sally heartily. "I fell down a bank head over heels into Sam's arms, and then we both fell head over heels in love."

The men looked at her approvingly.

"Darling!" murmured Sam, as though fatuously worshiping his wife, and Irene looked furious.

Sally managed to whisper "That must be the hornet!" and receive Sam's assenting nod.

All evening the guests gave her opportunities to talk about Sam. They liked to hear her bubbling enthusiasm about her husband and his wonderful portraits. She injected into her remarks just the right amount of shyness. It wasn't hard. She really did feel shy, bearing the name of this handsome, distinguished artist whom every one seemed cordially to respect and admire.

The men were frankly delighted with Sally. The women, too, were friendly enough. All but Irene.

She didn't like this marriage at all. She was not reconciled, and she wouldn't pretend. She wanted Sam Brown, and she didn't care who knew it. She meant to have him!

She watched Sally openly. Once, when Sam bent over his wife to whisper: "You're doing the thing beautifully, Sally," she read his lips as clearly as though she had heard him.

What could such a remark have meant? Irene was no fool. She knew Sam had wearied of her pursuit of him. His marriage had been sudden. No one

had ever heard of Sally until to-night. Could it be merely a marriage of convenience?

She had flattered herself that she had Sam Brown practically landed at the altar, and then this crazy announcement party had been given. Well, she wasn't through yet.

She had to know if her suspicions were correct. She slipped away to a telephone and called Naoshi at Sam's apartment. She talked to him in a hushed tone for several minutes.

"Well, she finished, "it's a good thing for you that you didn't know about it until it was all over. Now find out what I want to know. There'll be ten dollars in it for you."

She returned to the dancing before any one had missed her.

When the party broke up, Sally and Sam were the last to get into their car. Suddenly Sam put an arm about her and kissed her. His lips were cool.

As she drew back, she saw in the car passing them the livid face of Irene Forester. The rage in her expression turned to a look of mockery as she disappeared. Sally wondered if her own face had betrayed the emptiness of that kiss.

"I must remember that he always has a reason for caressing me. I must never betray him again," she thought. "But it's going to be hard."

When they reached the apartment, Sally dropped on the sofa.

"It was a beautiful party, Mr. Brown," she said. "I had a lovely time."

"You were perfect, Mrs. Brown," he answered, lighting a cigarette. "All but at the last. You mustn't draw away when I kiss you. Didn't you see the hornet?"

"Not until too late," murmured Sally. "I'll do better next time."

Sam laughed. "See that you do. You're usually quick-witted. The 'head over heels' was very good."

He stifled a yawn.

"As you were dressing," he asked, "did you have time to see whether you liked your room?"

"It's lovely," Sally assured him.

He had had the room communicating with his own fitted for her. Both opened off the living room. Sally had noted that there were keys in both her doors.

"I'm sorry it's so small," he said, "but I couldn't see any other way to manage than to move my books into the studio and let you have that room. I couldn't very well give you Naoshi's. It opens off the kitchen. Did he leave everything all right?"

"Yes, indeed," said Sally, and then remembering his stifled yawn, she added: "I'm tired now. Good night. But I think I'm going to like this job. I hope I'll be satisfactory in it."

"Stop laughing at me," he said. "Surely you see that I really do need you. Good night. Sleep well."

But Sally couldn't sleep. His words comforted her, but they stabbed her, too. "Surely you see that I really do need you," he had said. But his need of her was most impersonal. "I need him, too," she thought, "and I'd better be careful that I don't fall in love with him. Have I already?"

She remembered his cool lips on hers. She heard him enter his room, and she listened to the vague noises that accompanied his retiring. His light showed, a thin sliver, under the door between their rooms. She wondered if he were reading.

She had locked the door into the living room, but not the other. She couldn't have told why, unless it was because if he should discover that she had not turned that key he would know how thoroughly she trusted him.

She lived the evening over again. It had been fun. It was nice to be the wife of so courteous, so assured a man. He was masterful, even though he

couldn't altogether protect himself against a designing woman. Every one had been lovely to her except Irene.

He had a nice smile. It was a little bored, a little cynical, but sweet. She liked his arms. They were strong. She like his wide shoulders and lean figure. She thought none of the men at the party had worn evening clothes so well. She was sure no woman there had had a lovelier gown than the one he had selected for her.

She saw his light go out.

"Better be careful, Sally," she warned herself. "Don't get too enthusiastic over your employer. You're not his wife. Just remember that. You're only hired help."

On and on her thoughts rambled. She was not at all sleepy. Her clothes were so beautiful. The apartment was so charming. Everything was strange, unreal, exciting. There was much to think about.

Suddenly her heart leaped to her throat. Her eyes flew to the living-room door. She could see nothing in the dark, but distinctly she heard the knob turn.

She lay still, her blood pulsing madly. What was the meaning of Sam's trying her door? Would he try the door between? She waited, tense and still, but everything was quiet. It was almost daylight when she finally fell asleep.

The next morning she and Sam met in the dining room just as Naoshi came in. He kissed her good morning. When Naoshi had gone again, Sally determined to find out about that knob turning.

"Why did you try my door last night?" she asked directly.

He didn't look up from his grapefruit. "To see if it was locked," he answered.

"Why didn't you try the one between our rooms, too?" she pursued.

"Oh, I knew that one would be locked," he said easily.

Sally dropped the subject. But when, in the middle of the afternoon, Naoshi left, bag and baggage, she knew it had not been Sam who tried her door. Naoshi! What on earth did it mean? Did the fellow suspect something he wanted to verify? Surely he could have had no other purpose. She said nothing to Sam about it, however.

"I've hired a woman, Mrs. Kilby, to come in every day," Sam explained. "She'll stay as long as we need her. I've told her that we'll often have dinner out, and she'll cook for us when we want her. She will sleep at home."

"I'm glad," said Sally simply. "I was uncomfortable with Naoshi. Besides, I can cook a little."

She showed him that she could cook more than a little, and the new arrangement worked out very well. But Sally found that being Sam Brown's wife on the job wasn't too easy. There were any number of annoyances from which she was expected to save him so he could work peacefully in his studio.

Irene was a nuisance. She came at all hours of the day. Sometimes she came alone, sometimes with a crowd, to lure Sam out to golf, or ride, or do anything that would interfere with his painting. She intruded even when a patron was sitting. She harassed the paid models.

Sometimes she hung about the studio until Sam must have been on the verge of violence. And always Sally stayed with them, according to instructions, never leaving them alone.

Irene pretended a sort of friendliness, but she couldn't entirely conceal her purpose to interfere with their lives. She was open in her suspicion of Sally.

One day she asked Sally why she always hung around. "Don't you trust the husband who loves you so truly?" she asked.

"I love him, too," said Sally, "and I like to be where he is. He assures me I never interfere with his work."

Sam choked a little, but he suppressed his mirth. Irene flounced away, announcing that she wasn't ever coming back. When she stayed away for nearly a month, Sam believed she meant it. He was working without a model one day, and he urged Sally to go out by herself for once. He knew she must be tired of the apartment. He wouldn't answer any doorbells.

Sally had some shopping to do, and she went. When she returned, she let herself in softly. She always was as unobtrusive as possible. The studio door was open, and she heard voices.

"Kiss me, Sam," said the voice of Irene Forester.

"Confound that woman!" thought Sally. "I can't leave the place for a minute without her getting in. What's the matter with Mrs. Kilby?"

She remembered that Mrs. Kilby was out for the afternoon. Had Sam let Irene in, then? His answer to her settled that.

"Good heavens, Irene," he was saying impatiently, "can't you see that I don't want to kiss you? You're silly to throw yourself at me this way. It's cheap of you."

"You used to kiss me," said Irene. "And you know I'm mad about you. I'll never give you up—never! I know you're not in love with that insipid wife of yours."

"You've certainly got Sally wrong," laughed Sam. Sally had to smile at that description herself. "But what makes you think I don't love my wife?"

Sally glanced in at the door, wondering what to do. Irene was hanging onto Sam's paint-smattered smock. Sally could have laughed aloud at Sam's look of mingled disgust and helplessness. It was so unlike him not to manage any situation. Well, she'd rescue him. That's what she was there for.

She retraced her steps and banged a door.

"O Sammy dear!" she called im-

mediately afterward. "Come here and kiss me quick! I have the loveliest socks for you!"

By that time she was in the doorway of the studio.

"Oh!" she exclaimed in pretty, simulated confusion. "I didn't know any one was here!"

Sam was at her side instantly. His arms folded about her, and she felt his lips tremble with laughter as he kissed her.

He turned to Irene. "You wouldn't have me deny such pretty pleading, would you?" he asked.

"Take his kisses while you can get them," Irene said spitefully to Sally. "He used to give them to me. He'll be giving them to some one else pretty soon!"

She flung her coat about her and went out. Sally followed her to the door, playing hostess. Irene made no direct answer to her good-by.

"I'll show you, you little love thief!" she snarled, and Sally recoiled at the venom in her voice.

She said nothing to Sam about Irene's threat, however, because he had thrown off the smock and relaxed comfortably on the sofa.

"It's true I used to kiss her," he remarked, lighting a cigarette, "but that was a long time ago, and it didn't last long. I don't feel like a cad in admitting that even then she asked me to."

"You don't have to explain to me," said Sally, and she was amazed at the coldness in her own voice.

"I know I don't," he said. "But I wanted to. If you are to help me avoid her, you have a right to know that I don't encourage her to come."

"That's why I helped you," Sally answered. "But how did she get in today of all days, when you were all alone?"

"She said she had a key that happened to fit," said Sam, "but the locks are special. She managed it some other



"Oh!" she exclaimed in pretty, simulated confusion. "I didn't know any one was here!"

way than just happening to have a key that happened to fit."

He speculated a moment, and then went to the telephone to order new locks put on the doors.

"You don't let the grass grow under your feet, do you?" said Sally.

"I couldn't stand another scene like that," he replied. "And believe me, I know they aren't easy on you."

"I get paid for them," Sally pointed out. "And besides, those new locks will help."

But the locks were not changed that day, nor the next, and somehow Sam failed to notice the omission. Sally forgot about them, too, because Irene



called up the next morning and said she was leaving on the evening train for New York. Wouldn't Sally and Sam come down to see her off?

"I'll let you talk to Sam?" said Sally.

Sam told Irene that he was sorry, but he was taking his wife to the theater and couldn't make the train. But he would send her a message—a *bon-voyage* remembrance of some sort.

"Sally, please send some roses or cabbages to her train," he said. "If I do it'll probably be onions."

"I'll send her lilies," promised Sally. "They suit her."

"Cat!" said Sam. "What was that you said yesterday about socks for me?"

"I got you some," she answered.

"How did you know I needed them?"

Sally laughed aloud.

"My goodness, Sam!" she said practically. "Who do you suppose has been looking after your things since Naoshi left? I have to earn my salary, don't I?"

"You earn it all right," he said.

"You were priceless with that 'Sammy dear' yesterday," and he chuckled at the memory.

They dined out and went to the theater. Sally had been vaguely depressed since Irene's venomous departure of the day before, but Sam was so merry, so entertaining, that she put Irene out of her thoughts.

Did she merely imagine that Sam was almost tender with her that evening—that his arm touched hers more than was necessary in the theater—that he looked at her less impersonally than usual.

She wasn't sure of it, but the very thought made her bloom. She had never been more beautiful. Her eyes were starry with happiness. Her black velvet dress made her skin gleam more whitely than usual. Not once during the evening did she reflect that this felicity was soon to be over for her.

They returned to the apartment, gay and bantering. They made sandwiches and drank buttermilk. Sam wouldn't let her have cocktails at night. She liked having him dictate to her like that.

He tilted her chin as they returned to the living room.

"How long have we been married?" he said.

She flinched as though he had struck her. If she had looked at him, she would have known that he was not teasing her. But she didn't see the light in the deep-gray eyes, and she answered brusquely.

"I have worked for you nearly seven months." She stretched her arms lazily. "I guess I'm tired now. Good night."

"Good night, darling," he said gently, and when she stole a lightning glance at him that time he was lighting a cigarette, and she saw nothing but the quirk in the corner of his mouth.

As she undressed, she wondered if he were laughing at her. Did he suspect the secret she had tried so hard

to keep to herself? Did he know that she loved him? Surely he wouldn't tease her, if he knew. He wasn't a cruel man. She was sure he wouldn't want to hurt her.

She noted that Mrs. Kilby had changed the position of her bed. It was strange that she hadn't observed it when she had dressed earlier in the evening. She supposed she had been too excited.

The head was placed so that a light from across the court shone full into her eyes. It annoyed her. She tried to move the bed, but she couldn't. The thing was certainly heavier than it looked.

She got a scarf of dark tulle and put it across her eyes. The light was less annoying, but still she couldn't sleep. Her thoughts were obsessed with Sam, his kiss of the afternoon, his words of commendation, the "darling" that had sounded so tender when she left him. She wished with all her soul that his kind words, his caresses, were not make-believe.

She heard him retire, saw his light go out, and still she lay as sleepless as on that first night when she had occupied this room. The tulle across her eyes irritated her more than the light.

Finally she got up, leaving the scarf on the pillow. She smiled a little because it looked like hair in the dim light. She took a comforter with her and went to the living room, where she curled up on the sofa.

Surely the good fairies must have come across the waters to look after her that night! She fell promptly asleep, her last conscious thought being that automobile backfires sounded like shots.

She was awakened by a tickling on her nose. There was Sam, bathed and dressed, trailing one of her curls across her face. Sally jumped up and dashed away, and soon she, too, was dressed.

"Has your bed grown hard?" he asked when she joined him at breakfast.

"No," she said lazily. "Mrs. Kilby changed my bed around, and a light from across the court shone in my eyes. I couldn't sleep, and I couldn't move the bed, so I slept in the living room."

"A child could move that bed," he said.

"Beg pardon, Mrs. Brown," said Mrs. Kilby, "but I didn't move your bed."

An odd look crossed Sam's face. Suddenly he left the table and strode out. In a moment he called Sally, and she went to him in her room. His face was drained of every vestige of color.

"I thought I heard a backfire during the night," he said. "Do you see what it was?"

Sally looked about. There was a small hole through the fine screen at her window. He lifted the scarf. There was a hole through the pillow where her head would have lain if she had not moved into the living room. Her own face paled.

"You think—a bullet—was meant for me?" she asked.

She swayed, and he caught her slim form close in his strong arms. He carried her back to the sofa.

"Good heavens, Sally!" he cried brokenly. "What might have happened! And I promised you you'd be safe here."

"I'm not going to faint," whispered Sally, embarrassed that his arms still held her so close. "I always do feel safe with you," she added to comfort him.

His eyes adored her. "You have the courage for anything," he said huskily. "But if——" He couldn't say it. "I couldn't have lived, either, Sally."

Sam had been gone an hour. He had been gone two. Sally had fussed in the kitchen, mixing ingredients for a dessert that Sam liked. She had put it into the electric refrigerator some time before, and she was beginning to worry about Sam. She had told Mrs.

Kilby nothing of the fearful threat of the night.

Sally dressed in a cloudy blue chiffon gown. She wanted to look her loveliest when Sam returned. At last he telephoned.

"Everything all right?" he asked.

"Yes," said Sally, and then, for the first time, she showed strain. "Can't you come back soon?" she asked, and there was a little quaver in her voice.

"Yes, dear, soon," he promised. "Don't worry. Everything's coming out all right."

Time dragged, but Sally hugged that "dear" to her heart, and was a little comforted. At last he came.

"It was Naoshi," he explained. "He wasn't hard to find. He's been in Irene's employ all the while. It was he who tried your door that night. Irene paid him to do it. They came up here while we were out, arranged your bed, and fastened it down. Naoshi and Irene both swore——"

"I thought she had gone to New York!"

"She didn't. But she's gone now. They both swore that they meant only to scare you out. I let the lie pass. I thought we'd rather not have the messy publicity. Both of them are scared to death, and I'm sure they'll never trouble us again. Naoshi is well out in the Pacific by now. I sent him back to Japan."

His face was so stern that Sally knew he had been unmerciful with them. She could imagine their fright.

Sam's face relaxed as he looked at Sally. She started up.

"I've made you some nice cool dessert," she said. "We'll have some lunch."

But he caught her as she passed and drew her down into his arms, despite her struggles.

"Let Mrs. Kilby get it," he said in a strange voice. "Look at me, Sally."

But the dusky lashes still lay on her

cheeks. She was afraid of this promised happiness. It couldn't be true that his arms were holding her so tenderly! She'd wake up in a moment.

"Why won't you look at me?" he insisted.

"I'm—I'm afraid," whispered Sally weakly.

"Surely not of me?" he said gently, drawing her closer.

"No," she admitted in a small voice.

"Of what I might see? Of what I hope to see?"

At that the dark lashes flew up.

"You never court pain. Am I pain?" asked Sally with a flash of her usual banter. "And are you courting me?"

"I'm certainly courting you," he said. "It's for you to say whether it's to be pain for me or not."

Sally hid her face against his shoulder. She was trembling with happiness.

"Sally darling, you'll either have to go before the year is up or stay on forever—as my dear wife!" he told her, his lips on her cheek. "I couldn't bear to have you here otherwise—wanting your love, and not having it would be too terrible. Tell me, dear. You know I love you. I think I always have. Anyway, I'm head over heels in love with you now. Darling, how is it with you?"

Sally lifted glorious eyes to his. "I'm in that deep, too," she murmured.

He found her sweet lips swiftly, and in that long kiss Sally knew at last the difference between the make-believe and the real.



ECSTASY

GIVE me your lips in one deep kiss—
 I ask no more of life than this—
 To hold your loveliness and charms
 Within my eager, waiting arms,
 And feel your throbbing heart next mine,
 To drink your kisses, sweet as wine;
 To know your love is all for me—
 This is life's greatest ecstasy!

RUBY WOODARD.

The Stroke Of Eight

By E. Almaz Stout



A Serial—Part II.

THE STORY SO FAR:

VIOLA, wife of Roger Shelton, plans to run away with Wilbur Fulton, and is in his apartment one evening at eight o'clock when they hear a shot. They do not investigate, fearing the consequence. Pauline Prentice, Viola's cousin, comes and tells her that she must return to Roger. Viola consents, and on their way out they see Peter Maryon whom Pauline knows, knocking on the door of Winston Grant's apartment. The next morning Grant is found dead and Peter is accused of the murder. Pauline, knowing that Viola heard a shot at eight, and that Peter was not there until eight thirty, realizes that he is innocent. She begs Viola to tell what she knows, but Viola refuses, fearing Roger.

CHAPTER IV.

DURING the weeks that followed nothing turned up to point suspicion to any one in connection with Winston Grant's death except Peter Maryon.

The weeks between the time that Peter was first questioned and the date that was set for his trial were filled with mingled happiness and misery for Viola Shelton.

She was living through what was practically her real honeymoon. She was discovering all sorts of unexpected things about both herself and her husband. It was like making the acquaintance of some one quite new and fresh, and she found herself watching for him, counting the hours till his return, like any bride.

She thrilled under his kisses, she was only really happy when he was with her, she wanted constantly to feel the touch of his hand, the clasp of his arms. As Pauline had told her, she was like a girl in love for the first time.

But with this newly found happiness was mingled bitter regret for her past flirtations and for her fleeting disloyalty

in connection with Wilbur Fulton. Her cheeks burned with shame when she remembered that humiliating visit to his apartment and, with every day that passed, it seemed more impossible than ever to confess to it.

She seldom saw Pauline now, for Pauline was at no pains to hide her feelings as to her silence. She had suggested as a possible way out of the mix-up that Wilbur Fulton should be sent for and that he should confess to hearing the shot that Pauline was convinced was the fatal shot at eight o'clock.

But Viola pointed out she had no idea where Fulton was, and had no method of communicating with him.

Pauline even went so far as to call herself at Grayling Apartments and ask if a letter sent to Mr. Fulton would be forwarded, only to be told by the hall man that Mr. Fulton had said no communication was to be sent on to him, as his movements were absolutely uncertain. If he ever knew where he was likely to be at any date he might inform the house, but until such information arrived, all letters were to be kept and nothing was to be forwarded.

"We have heard nothing whatever from Mr. Fulton since he left," the man added, somewhat contemptuous of a young woman who, as he told his wife afterward, was obviously pursuing Mr. Fulton, "and until I hear, as I say, I cannot forward anything."

With flushed cheeks, as she realized how the man regarded her inquiries, Pauline turned away, feeling that one more avenue leading to the vindication of Peter Maryon was closed.

When she told Viola this, Viola had burst out crying and had said bitterly:

"Oh, can't you leave things alone! I am sure everything will come all right if only you won't interfere."

But Viola herself had no real peace. Although she wanted to save herself, she could not get out of her mind the

thought of the bright-faced, boyish-looking man she had seen standing outside Winston Grant's apartment.

She pictured him, however hard she tried to put him out of her thoughts, in a prison cell, wearing convict clothes, she even imagined the electric chair!

There were days when she could and did almost forget him, but there were others when she could not get him out of her mind, and she became nervous and irritable, her sleep broken and disturbed with bad dreams.

One day, after a restless night, when she was feeling particularly nervous and strained, Roger turned her face around to the light and looked deep into her eyes.

His own face and voice were stern.

"Viola, I'm going to ask you once more. Are you sure Wilbur Fulton was nothing to you?"

A little shiver ran through Viola, but she forced herself to meet his eyes steadily.

"Quite sure. Why do you ask?"

"Because you have lost all your good spirits ever since he went away, and you still start or change color every time his name is mentioned."

Viola jerked her head aside so that the light did not beat so pitilessly on her.

"I am sorry. I am not well—you know I am sleeping badly. But, O Roger, you must know how I love you. If I haven't been able to make you believe it during the last few weeks, then nothing I can do ever will. I thought we had become friends and that you trusted me!"

She tore herself free from him and began to sob bitterly.

"I want to trust you. I believed you when you told me that evening after the motor accident, that he was nothing to you. I know you have been sweetness itself to me ever since. I believe you do love me and you know I worship you. But how can I help being afraid

that, after all, he won something from you? You do not like to hear his name mentioned, yet in your sleep you often say it. Last night you called to him three times!"

"O, Roger, why won't you believe me?" She lifted a tear-stained face. "I have told you, you know I have told you repeatedly he was nothing to me—nothing!"

"I know. That was just a month ago, and I believed you. But you have changed so much lately. You are nervous and jumpy and you are growing thinner every day."

"It is just the spring weather." Every one is feeling limp and listless. Besides, I hate Wilbur Fulton, I hate his very name!" she added in a little passionate burst. "I pray I shall never see or hear of him again! O, Roger, if you don't believe me, I shall die. You must believe me!"

She flung herself into his arms, and Roger gathered her close to him and held her tenderly.

"My little darling. Forgive me. It was brutal of me to doubt you. But I have been so worried about you, and then when you talked of that scoundrel in your sleep, I couldn't help wondering if, after all, you had cared for him and had been afraid to tell me."

Viola lifted her quivering face. "There is no one in the world for me but you. I love you, I love you. I can't bear it if you won't love me and trust me!"

"Of course I do. There, I promise you I will never worry you about him again. But you must get stronger and put more color in your cheeks. I'll tell Graham to give you a tonic. Don't you think you'd better go away for a while? Down to Atlantic City or maybe Bermuda?"

"No, no, I don't want to go anywhere without you. I should be horribly lonely, and I know you are too busy to go."

"Yes, unfortunately I can't go away just now. But in two weeks I could get away for a long week-end—Friday to Monday, say. We'll drive down to Atlantic City and see what the sea air will do for you."

"And you promise me never again to think there is any one in the world but you?"

She looked up at him pleadingly and Roger's stern face softened. He loved her passionately, but jealously, possessingly. If he knew he had ever had reason to distrust her in reality, he could be quite capable of ruining his own life and hers by doing something irrevocable. If he knew she had ever yielded her lips to another man, he would never be able to forgive her, or trust her again. And Viola, who had learned to know him so much better the last few weeks, knew it.

She knew that if, that next day after she had gone to Fulton's apartment, she had told the truth, as, for a short moment, she had been tempted to do, it would have been the end for her. Roger could never have forgiven such an affront to his honor, such a betrayal of his love.

With her perceptions sharpened by her own newly awakened love, Viola had come to realize the intensity of Roger's love, but the narrowness of his sympathies.

A few minutes after he had left her to go to the office, Pauline came in.

It was Saturday and every other Saturday she did not go to the office at all.

She greeted her cousin with constraint.

"I've just come in to bring you the books you want, Viola."

"Aren't you going to stay a while? Won't you spend the morning with me and stay to lunch? I see so little of you now."

Viola had dried her eyes and was looking at Pauline with definite re-

proach on her face, which looked more beautiful than ever in spite of, perhaps on account of, its pallor.

"I have been very busy lately," Pauline returned evasively, as she loosened her coat. "And I can't stay long now, as I have an appointment."

"Pauline, has—has anything fresh turned up?"

"I believe nothing," Pauline answered coldly.

"But something must! When a man is really innocent, he can't be proved guilty."

"But he sometimes is."

Viola pulled at her damp little handkerchief.

"I know you think I am a little fool, Pauline."

"I think you a coward," she answered uncompromisingly.

"O, Pauline, do try and understand," Viola begged desperately, getting up quickly and walking up and down the long drawing-room, filled with bowls of hyacinths and tulips. Viola adored flowers and always had her home filled with them, an extravagance in which Roger encouraged her, for his eyes delighted in the rich riot of their colors.

She stopped and turned to her cousin with a defiant light in her blue eyes. "I've said this to you over and over again, but I'm going to say it once more. Don't you see that if I admitted I heard that shot at eight o'clock, it would be the end of everything for me? Roger would never, never forgive me. He couldn't. It wouldn't only be that he would never believe me again, but he wouldn't be able to believe that—that nothing wrong had happened. All the world would know I had been dining alone with Mr. Fulton, and of course every one would say if there was nothing wrong in my being there, why hadn't I told what I had heard before."

"I have told you before that I see all that," Pauline answered. "And I see it would have been far better to tell

Roger everything in the beginning, to have made a clean breast of it. I see that now. And if nothing hinged on it, I should say the only safe thing was never to tell him, because I know his views about such things. But when a man's *life* depends on it, I don't see how you can go on keeping silent."

"But perhaps a man's life won't depend on it," Viola answered obstinately. "A dozen things may still happen to prove Mr. Maryon didn't do it."

"They may, but nothing has turned up yet. There has been no clew to any one else. No one else has been mentioned or connected with the murder in any way. No one else was seen to go to or leave Mr. Grant's apartment, there are no finger marks anywhere except Mr. Maryon's. On the revolver itself the only finger prints are those of Mr. Maryon."

"Then perhaps, after all, he really did it," Viola said almost eagerly.

"You don't know Mr. Maryon, or you couldn't even suggest such an impossibility," Pauline answered coldly. "But everything will look very black against him at the trial. He admits, you see, he went there with the determination to punish Mr. Grant for something he had done. But he says he never saw him. Yet there is only his word for it. Oh, I can see the clever case the lawyers will make of it, and, so far, there is no evidence to rebut it except his own denial."

"How do you know so much about it all?"

Viola suddenly looked at her cousin curiously.

Pauline flushed a little. "I have been to see Mr. Maryon."

"Good gracious, and you never told me! How on earth did you manage that?"

"Well, I know Mr. Frank Gray, the lawyer who is to defend him. His father and my father were friends, and I asked him if it would be possible to

manage it. And I am going once more before the trial, perhaps one day next week."

"You astonishing girl, Pauline! And you never told me a word about it."

Pauline turned away tremulously.

"No," she answered in a low voice.

"I didn't feel I could talk to you about

it. He looks so ill, so changed. His eyes—they hurt. And, you see, I know you could set him free to-day, if you chose."

Viola's face went gray.

"You don't know it. Just the facts that I heard a shot at eight and that Mr. Maryon went into the apartment at



His face and voice were stern. "Viola, I'm going to ask you once more. Are you sure Wilbur Fulton was nothing to you?"

half past eight, mightn't be sufficient to clear him. Besides," she added sharply, "he may have been there at eight as well. He may have gone and returned again at half past."

"To see a man he had murdered a few minutes before? It is hardly likely! O, Viola, won't you save him?" Pauline turned with sudden swift passion and seized Viola's two hands. "My dear, if you only will, I'll do anything—anything in the world for you! I'll make Roger forgive you——"

"You could not," Viola said drearily. "He couldn't understand. He wouldn't believe I was innocent."

"Surely if you swore on your oath?"

"No. He would say if there was no real wrong in my being there I would have told him before. He wouldn't believe any woman could be alone with Mr. Fulton in his apartment and—and be innocent. Besides, at the moment, I did mean to go away with him. Roger is so awfully clever and he hasn't been a lawyer for nearly twenty years for nothing. I might try and make up some story about going there to see Wilbur about something quite harmless, but Roger would worm the truth out of me. You see, the awful thing is that though you brought me home in time, I did go there meaning to run away from home and to go with Mr. Fulton!"

Pauline let go her hands with a sigh. Like all weak people Viola was obstinate. She was fighting for her own happiness, for her own honor, and she was dogged. Pauline had gone over the same ground with her so often she felt there was nothing fresh to say.

"Well, I really must go now. I have a lot to do."

"But when will you come again? When will you come and dine?"

Pauline looked at her steadily. "I'll be honest. I don't feel as if I could be with you much. I can't bear it. I feel as if I wanted to scream all the time.

You can save a man who is accused of murder and who may be sentenced to death and you won't! If you are wise you won't even ask me to come. I might lose my nerve and say it before Roger."

"Pauline"—Viola laid two hot, damp hands on her arm—"why are you taking this so desperately to heart? What is Peter Maryon to you?"

A slow flush burned in Pauline's pale cheeks.

"He is nothing, of course, but an innocent man wrongfully accused."

"You—you are not in love with him?"

"Oh, don't be absurd, Viola." Pauline's voice was sharp. She was almost at breaking point. "For one thing, I believe Mr. Maryon is engaged to another girl."

"Who is it?"

"No one you have heard of. In any case Mr. Maryon would not like her name mentioned till this hideous affair is over. Now I must really go, Viola. Good-by."

Very perfunctorily she kissed her cousin, who tried to cling to her, for Pauline had always stood by her, helped her, petted her, spoiled her, and Viola missed her companionship badly.

But Pauline felt now she could not bear to be with her a moment longer, if she stayed she should only say something cruel, something which in Viola's present mood could do no good. She turned and almost ran out of the room.

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Frank Gray was waiting in his office for Pauline Prentice. It was the Friday morning before Peter Maryon's trial, which was the first on the calendar for the following Monday. He was to be opposed by Robert Lenning, acting for the State, and he knew that in meeting Lenning he met one of the most skillful, one of the most eloquent

men at the bar. He was feeling anything but sanguine, for while he firmly believed in his client's innocence, he realized the circumstantial evidence that would be brought against him would be very strong. He had not been able to discover any witness whose evidence would be of even a shadow of use to the accused man. In fact, it seemed as if the evidence of any witness he had seen must in the long run tell against him.

The man with whom Maryon had been dining that fatal night of January 28th, Captain Harold Dawson, had actually walked as far as the entrance to Grayling Apartments, and had left him there a few minutes before half past eight. He was able to be precise about the time, because they had left the club dining room at a quarter past eight, had gone to the cloak room for their coats and hats, and then had walked the short distance to the apartment house.

Maryon had apparently not been seen by any one else that evening till he returned to his own apartment in Lake-wood Street at half past eleven, when the man there admitted him, and said he noticed nothing unusual about him.

Even if he could produce a dozen witnesses to say they had seen Maryon at the concert where he claimed he had spent most of the evening, that would not help him, for Maryon said he did not go there till about nine thirty and the doctor's evidence was strong that the murder had been committed before that hour.

There was plenty of material for Lenning to work up into a damning case, precious little for himself to weld into a strong defense.

Pauline arrived at last, looking a ghost of her former self. Under her eyes were dark shadows.

"I'm sorry if I'm late," she said. "There was a block in traffic and I was held up."

He glanced at the clock. "It's all right. We'll take a taxi. We shan't be very late."

They hurried down the stairs and out into the street and, hailing a taxi, drove quickly to the prison where Peter was waiting his trial.

As his lawyer, Gray, of course, had access to him at any hour, but it had been difficult to get permission for Pauline, being no relation, to see him for a second time. But she had begged hard for this concession, because she felt convinced that if the worst came to the worst, Viola could be induced to give the evidence which would save him.

But she was only allowed a very few minutes, which wrung her very heart, for the few weeks in confinement had utterly changed the gay, debonair, successful young man she had known, aging him by many years. His face was lined and gray, and there was a stoop to his shoulders which might have been caused by months, not weeks, of anxiety and imprisonment.

Life had been smooth and sunny for Peter. He had never wanted anything unreasonable, and he had usually got what he had wanted. Now he was accused of the cowardly crime of murdering a man who was defenseless against his greater strength. His name was held up to the world as an object of shame—he felt crushed, broken.

"I only came to-day," Pauline said in a low, rather breathless voice, "to beg you to cheer up, not to feel too terrible when Monday comes. Because I feel sure something will happen. I mean that some one will save you. Don't lose heart. I am sure there is no need."

He smiled at her drearily. "It's too absurd isn't it when I never even set eyes on the man? But I can see even Gray isn't too hopeful."

"I'm sure he is really. And I am. You see, I know you are innocent. I—I can't explain. I mustn't say any more now. But I'm certain it will be all right

on Monday, and I wanted you to know and to face the awful ordeal with a high heart." She smiled at him, and somehow his courage rose.

He looked brighter than he had done for days.

"It's great of you to take so much trouble. You make me feel I have been

I know it will be all right. I—I can almost promise it will be. No," she said hurriedly, as he exclaimed eagerly, "I can't say any more now, I mustn't. But I know you'll be cleared."

There was a strange light in her eyes, as the guard, who had remained in the background, gave the signal that it was



"He couldn't understand. He wouldn't believe I was innocent. He wouldn't believe any woman could be alone with Mr. Fulton in his apartment and be innocent."

a fool and a bit of a coward to be downhearted. Of course things must really go right. I never laid a finger on Grant, for the very good reason I never saw him, and I can't be found guilty of doing a thing it was an impossibility for me to do. It's the close confinement that's making me feel so rotten, I expect."

"Well, don't feel rotten or downhearted any more. I feel certain—no,

time to go, and she went out and waited in the waiting room for Frank Gray, who remained with Peter for nearly half an hour longer.

His face was much brighter when he joined Pauline and they made their way out into the spring sunshine.

"I'm glad to see that Maryon is more hopeful. It never does for an accused man to look downhearted. It is extraordinary how small things will create an

adverse atmosphere in court, and a man who looks as if he expects to be hanged has half the sympathies of the public and jury against him to start with. He said you had put fresh heart into him. I wonder how you did it? You—you can't know anything likely to help him or you would have told me before! Am I right about that?"

Pauline turned to him, her dark gray eyes aglow. "Don't ask me anything now. I—I can't tell you anything. But I am sure if things look too hard against Mr. Maryon, something will happen to save him."

Frank Gray's eyes were puzzled as he looked at her, as they paused at the corner of the street where their ways separated.

"Remember," he said sternly, "if you know anything, even the slightest thing which might help, and are withholding it, you may be endangering a man's life."

"I know," she nodded. "You mustn't ask me anything more. But I fully realize the danger Mr. Maryon is in, and I may be able to do something to help him on Monday. Only you must trust me till then. I shall be in court, of course. No, no, I can't say another word now. Good-by." And she hurriedly ran across the street, leaving him standing looking after her, wondering and puzzled.

Half an hour later Pauline was in Viola Shelton's bedroom, where she had been shown by Matthews, who told her that her mistress was packing to go away.

Viola rose from her knees in front of a large suitcase in which she was packing a lovely new blue evening gown which she had specially ordered, at her husband's request, for their week-end visit.

Her face flushed with pleasure at sight of her cousin.

"O, Pauline, I am so glad to see you. I began to think you were never coming

again. I—I do miss you so terribly now you are so angry with me."

She flung her arms around Pauline and lifted her beautiful face, which was less pale and less haggard than when Pauline had last seen it, with a word of pleading in the big blue eyes.

"Be kind to me, Pauline, as you used to be," she whispered.

Pauline kissed her with something of the old affection. She had come to make a final desperate appeal to Viola.

"I see you are packing. Where are you going?"

"To Atlantic City with Roger. We are motoring down. I am looking forward to it tremendously. It's the first time we've been away together—oh, for ages."

"When are you coming back?"

"Roger's coming back Monday morning. He has to see a client at eleven. He wants me to stay a day or so longer."

"But, Viola, you can't. You must come back Monday with Roger."

"Why?" She tried to look at Pauline, but her eyes fell. She knew only too well.

"Because on Monday morning Peter Maryon is to be tried for his life."

Viola shivered and sat down suddenly.

"O, Pauline, how cruel you are! I—I did not know I could love any one as I have come to love Roger. You don't know what he has been to me just lately. He promised to put away all his doubting thoughts about me forever. Now he believes in me as completely as he loves me. And there is a reason I—O, Pauline, have pity on me!"

Pauline knelt by her side and put her arms around her very tenderly.

"Darling, don't think I don't understand—I do. I know how awful it must be to face doing what you must be prepared to do. But to secure your own happiness you can't let an innocent man suffer. I mustn't let you do it. Why, you could never breathe in peace again. The horror of what you had done would

be a thousand times worse than facing Roger with the truth. You could never look any man or woman in the face again.

Viola began to cry. She cried very readily these days. "Oh, what have I done that I should be punished so terribly!"

"Perhaps you won't be punished. Perhaps it won't be necessary to tell the truth. But, Viola, you must come to the trial on Monday. If you drive up with Roger, you will be there in time for the beginning of the trial. I will meet you there and we'll sit together. If—if things go worse than we hope for and things look black, then, O, Viola, then you'll tell the truth, won't you?"

For a moment there was tense silence in the room. Then Viola lifted her face, tearless now, and strained with a look of utter despair.

"You've won, Pauline. I'll come and, if necessary, I'll tell what I know and break my life and Roger's in little pieces. But, I warn you, I won't live afterward. I couldn't face life without Roger now. But I'll come, I promise. And, if I must, I'll tell the truth."

CHAPTER VI.

With a little rustle of ceremonial the judge had entered the court and, after bowing to left and right, had taken his seat; the jury had been called and sworn, the prisoner, with a guard on either hand, had been brought in, and had been addressed:

"Prisoner at the bar, you are accused of the murder of Winston Grant on the night of January 28th. Do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

In a low, clear, penetrating voice, the prisoner had replied: "Not guilty."

Then the crowded court had settled into silence and the trial had begun.

Pauline Prentice had been accommodated with a seat near Maryon, by

Frank Gray's intervention. It was not the first time she had been present in court; as a matter of fact she had attended several times with Viola, who had constantly gone to the courts when her husband was interested in a case. But it was the first time she had been present when a man was being tried for his life, and her lips felt so parched and dry she could hardly open them.

She had waited at the entrance of the court, watching for Viola, until Mr. Gray had come forward and told her in a low insistent voice that she must go in at once if he was to find her a place.

"I must wait for my cousin—I must," she said, her face the color of chalk. It couldn't be that Viola was going to fail her, it couldn't! It was only that she was a few minutes late!

"You won't get a seat if you do," he said. "The place is crowded now."

Reluctantly Pauline had followed him. After all, Viola would be able to get in as soon as she arrived. She knew the various policemen at the door and many of the officials, and Pauline had often been amused at the way they had fallen victims to Viola's beautiful face and charming smile.

However crowded the court, Pauline felt convinced Viola would manage to get in. At the worst she would plead she was a witness and insure admittance.

But the minutes sped on, and though Pauline looked wildly around, hardly taking her eyes from the doors, she saw no sign of Viola Shelton.

The trial promised to be an unusually short one. The case for the prosecution was clear and appeared unassailable.

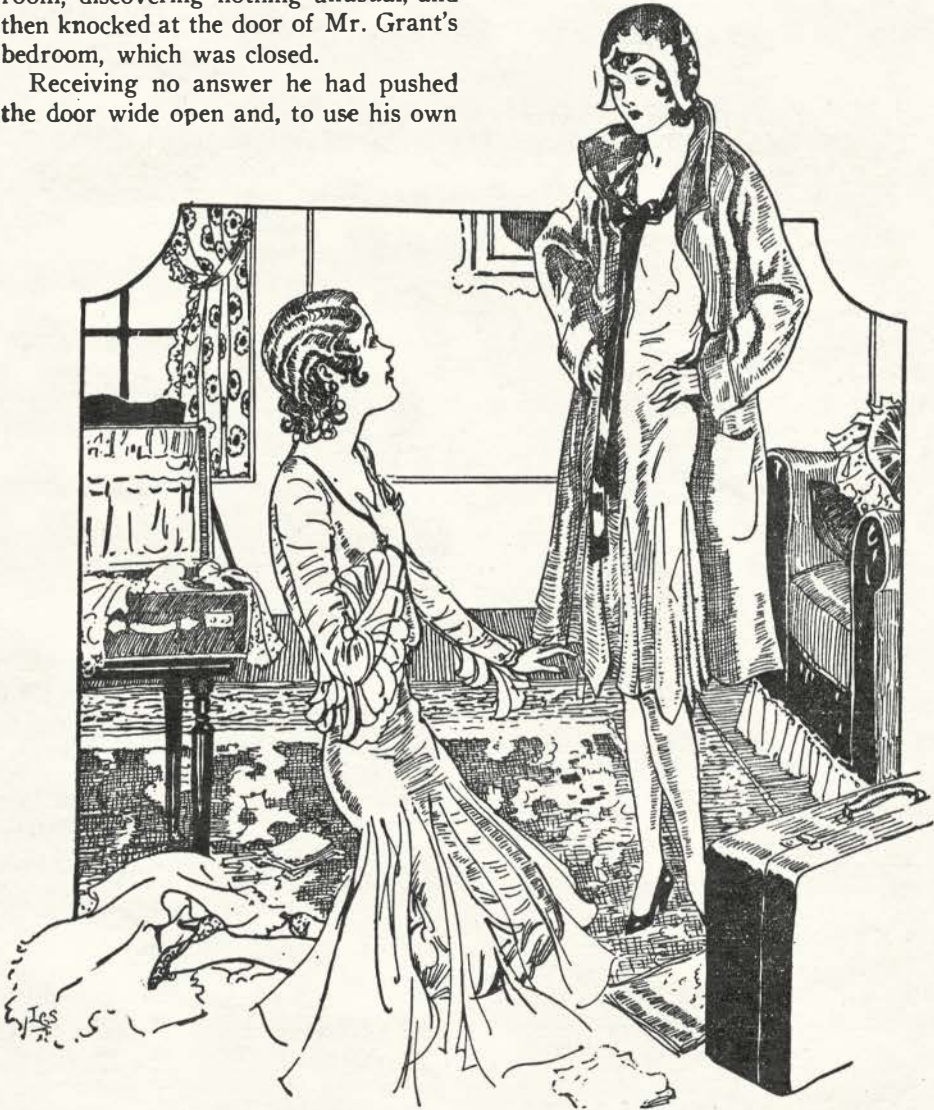
Winston Grant had been murdered on the night of January 28th by a shot from his own revolver, which was found in the hall of his apartment, fully charged, save for the one bullet which was embedded in his heart. He had

been found on the floor of his bedroom, dressed, but wearing a velvet smoking jacket instead of an ordinary dress coat, by Johnson, his valet, who was off duty.

It was eight o'clock in the morning when the man had let himself into the apartment, which consisted of two bedrooms, a sitting room and a bathroom. He pulled up the blinds of the sitting room, discovering nothing unusual, and then knocked at the door of Mr. Grant's bedroom, which was closed.

Receiving no answer he had pushed the door wide open and, to use his own

expression, "had gone all of a dither" when he saw that Mr. Grant was lying sprawled full length on his face on the floor. He had tried to lift him, but had found that he was stiff and heavy with the weight and the rigor of death, and that the rug under him was crimson with congealed blood. He had hurried downstairs and rushed into the superin-



"O Pauline, how cruel you are! I did not know I could love any one as I have come to love Roger. You don't know what he has been to me lately. Oh, have pity on me!"

tendent's office, almost wordless with terror and horror.

The superintendent had immediately gone upstairs and, finding the valet's story only too true, had telephoned instantly for the police and a doctor.

The only clew the police had discovered were finger prints on the front door and on the revolver with the one discharged chamber, which they had found lying on the hall table.

Those prints had proved to be those of Peter Maryon who had been seen leaving the apartment and walking down the stairs at about half past nine by the hall man, who had taken a messenger boy up in the elevator and was descending in it alone. He had stopped for Mr. Maryon, whom he recognized as a friend of Mr. Grant's. But Mr. Maryon had shaken his head and had run on down the last two flights and into the street.

The doctor who had been summoned fixed the time of death at some time about eight or eight thirty the previous evening. Strongly pressed as to the time, he said it was very difficult after twelve hours' lapse, to fix the time to within half an hour, but death certainly could not have occurred as late as nine thirty nor as early as seven thirty. Therefore some time between eight and nine, probably nearer eight than nine was the approximate hour at which he thought the murder must have been committed.

From the nature of the wound, from the position of the dead man and from the presence of the revolver in the hall, it was quite impossible that the wound, which was the cause of death, could have been self-inflicted.

Peter Maryon's friend, with whom he had been dining that evening at his club, Captain Harold Dawson, gave his evidence with obvious reluctance.

Yes, they had dined together that night. He had accompanied the prisoner to the apartment house, reaching

the entrance at a minute or so before half past eight. He had seen no hall man there then, neither had he seen any other visitor. He had said good night to the prisoner at the entrance and had gone on.

Pressed as to whether the prisoner had told him of the reason of his visit to the dead man, Captain Dawson had at first refused to answer. But a sharp rebuke from the judge had won from him the admission that the prisoner had said he had learned something about the dead man which had infuriated him, and that he was going to teach him a lesson.

"But," he added indignantly, "if any one construes out of that it was possible for Mr. Maryon to murder a man in cold blood, he's a fool. Maryon is as white a man as ever lived."

The little outburst won the passing sympathy of the court for the accused man, as Frank Gray was quick to note, and in his address to the jury he naturally made the most of the prisoner's splendid record and history, also of the utter lack of motive for the murder.

He pointed out that at one time Maryon had been on friendly terms with the dead man, had even shared his apartment for a few weeks. True, he had discovered something Mr. Grant had done which had drawn forth his righteous indignation, and he had gone to see him that evening with the avowed intention of getting some sort of satisfaction from him. But, as the prisoner would tell them, when he went on the witness stand, he never saw the dead man that evening. And if he had seen him, there was no possible motive or reason for taking his life—quite the contrary.

A little rustle passed through the court as, a few minutes later, the prisoner entered the witness stand. And he took the Bible in his hand and swore the usual oath, to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth,

there was a deathly stillness in the court, all eyes fixed on the splendid-looking young man, with the crisp fair hair, the honest, clear, but bewildered-looking eyes.

Pauline held her breath and clenched her hands tightly in her lap. Oh, why was not Viola here? Why had she failed?

Once again her agonized eyes searched the court in case she had missed her entry. But Viola was too arresting a figure not to be seen if she were present. And Pauline's heart fell like lead. If she were only there, if she only realized how desperately the man standing there, with the light from the top light of the court falling on his bared head, might need her help, she could not have failed. And her whole heart went up in one intense, wordless prayer that Viola might come before it was too late.

Examined and cross-examined, the prisoner's tale was brief and unshakable.

He had learned that Winston Grant had treated, in a disgraceful manner, a woman who had definite claims on him. He utterly refused to give the name of the woman, saying it could not possibly concern the court to know it. But the woman was an acquaintance of his and was lonely and in great poverty, while she had a heavy claim on Winston Grant's generosity and care.

He, Peter Maryon, had only just discovered Mr. Grant's outrageous treatment of her, and had determined to try and force him to make provision for her. If he failed, he admitted he had been quite prepared to show him what he thought of him in a more forcible way than by arguing with him.

He said he had telephoned Mr. Grant for an appointment. He had not seen Grant for some months, although at one time they had been friends. He had even shared his apartment for a few weeks the previous summer and had had his own key, which he had omitted to

return when he left to take an apartment of his own in Lakewood Street. Grant himself had answered the telephone and had told him to call on the evening of January 28th. He had told him to call about eight thirty, but had added that he might be a few minutes late, but would not be later than eight forty-five.

If he—Maryon—got no answer when he knocked he was to let himself in and wait for Grant's return, and Grant repeated that he would not be later than eight forty-five.

Peter related, simply and straightforwardly, that he had walked to the house with his friend, Dawson, arriving there as nearly as possible at eight thirty. He had run up the stairs, as there was no hall man to be seen, and had rung Mr. Grant's bell several times.

Deciding at last that Grant had not returned, as he had been warned might be possible, he had let himself in with the key he still retained, and went into the study, where he found a fire burning, whisky and soda, cigarettes and cigars on the table. He had waited, expecting every minute that Mr. Grant would return, until nine thirty. Then he gave him up and decided to go. When he reached the hall he noticed that a revolver was lying on the floor and he picked it up and placed it on the table.

No, he replied in cross-examination, he had not seen it when he went in, but he was not likely to do so in the place where it was. It was only when he left the study that he was able to see it, as it was lying on the opposite side of the hall, straight in front of him.

That was all he had to say. He was in the apartment alone, for one hour, and during that hour he had not seen Winston Grant. After he left the place and was running downstairs, he had seen the night man in the elevator lift, who had offered to take him down the last two flights, but he had refused.



"I adore you, darling. And at last my trust is as great as my love. Never, never do anything to shake it, Viola, for if I lost my trust in you, I should lose faith in heaven itself!"

He had nothing more to add to or to subtract from his statement.

Pauline sat back, her eyes closed for one moment. Surely, surely, the jury would accept his statement? It was so simple, so clear, surely any one could see that he was innocent!

But in a few minutes Robert Lenning commenced his address to the jury, and Pauline could hardly believe her ears as he riddled Peter's statement with ridicule.

Had such a far-fetched story ever been put forward by a guilty man for a jury's credulity? Here was a man who admitted he had a grudge against the murdered man, who admitted he intended "to teach him a lesson" by force if argument failed, a man who would not even produce as a witness the woman whose wrongs he *said*, with cutting emphasis on the word, he wanted to avenge.

He was the only man who was known

to have visited the murdered man's apartment that fatal evening. Mr. Grant had been proved, by the hall man's evidence, to have reached his apartment at six o'clock that evening and had not been seen alive since. Neither had any one but the prisoner been seen to enter or leave the apartment.

His finger prints were on the front door, on the revolver from which the fatal shot had been fired. The case was surely as simple and plain a one as had ever been given to a jury to give a verdict upon.

If every man who treated a fellow creature badly—as the prisoner had said the dead man had treated a woman—was to be shot down in cold blood in his own home, civilized society would cease to exist.

As Pauline listened, she felt stiff with horror. Point after point was mercilessly made, logically put forward, and she felt that if she hadn't known Peter was innocent, even she would have believed him guilty.

"Viola! Viola!" The words were almost audible on her lips as she gazed with agonized eyes around the court. To her, each face seemed blurred.

But Viola was not there, and in despair Pauline found it in her heart to curse her. "Oh, you coward, you cruel coward!" she muttered between her clenched teeth, as the prisoner, by the judge's orders, sat down, and the judge commenced his summing up.

At nine o'clock the morning of Peter's trial Roger Shelton's car drew up before the Grand Hotel, Atlantic City, the baggage was strapped on behind, and he and his wife took their seats and started on the return journey home.

Viola moved and spoke as in a dream. For two days—she had told herself they might be her last days of happiness, possibly even her last two days of life—

she had pushed from her every worrying, every miserable thought.

She had reveled in every moment of the radiant little interlude. Never had Roger been so tender, so loverlike, so adoring as he had been during those two days, not even when she had been his bride.

By reason of the rift which had existed between them for so long, by reason of the cloud which had darkened some of their days, their new intimacy, their new happiness, was sweeter, dearer, infinitely more precious. It was something rare which Roger, at least, handled with reverent fingers, and Viola felt that never, while she lived, could she give so much as a thought to any other man but the man who was her husband.

The narrow escape she had had from ruin and disaster showed her the beauty of the sanctuary of her home, and the newly aroused love for her husband told her that she wanted nothing more of life than to preserve and retain his love and trust forever.

Like a desperate gambler refusing to face the results of his unlucky speculation, Viola refused to face what the Monday morning might hold for her, shame, ignominy, the loss of everything she now held dear. But with the coming of Monday, she could forget and shirk the knowledge no longer.

As she sat by her husband's side she looked out drearily over the fields, brilliant with their spring verdure, and over the trees, radiant in their new leafy dresses. It might be the last time she would see them. It might be the last time she would drive in her husband's car, the last time she would lean against his shoulder.

He suddenly glanced down at her face and gave a little exclamation.

"My darling, what is it? Are you feeling ill? You look so dreadfully white."

She shook her head. "No, I'm all right."

"You don't look it. And yesterday you looked so healthy! When we get to town you must go straight home to bed, and I'll get one of the clerks to telephone for Graham."

"No, no," Viola said emphatically, "I'm all right. I—there are a lot of things I want to do."

"Well, keep the car and do what's necessary and then get home as soon as you can and rest. I wish you had stayed a few days longer, even though I should have hated your being away from me, but you certainly looked much better last night for your two days in the sun and sea air."

"I felt better. I'm all right, really." She forced herself to smile up at his anxious face and gave his hand a grateful squeeze.

Perhaps, after all, her fears were unnecessary. Perhaps, after all, something quite unforeseen would occur and Peter Maryon would be cleared by some circumstance quite outside her knowledge. There would be no need for her to say a word unless the jury gave a verdict against him. And why should they give one against him, seeing he was innocent?

A faint color returned to her face. What was the good of expecting the very worst that could happen, when, even at this moment knowledge might be in the lawyer's hands which would exonerate and clear the accused man?

If only she and Pauline had left Wilbur Fulton's apartment two minutes before or after they had done, they would not have seen Maryon! And then there would have been no question of her having to give evidence and of branding herself! Why had she not waited, or why had she stopped to argue with Fulton? The questions came and came again to her tortured brain. She could find no conclusive answer.

She clung close to Roger. "Oh, my dear, my dear, you do love me, don't you?"

He gazed down to her with the concentrated love and happiness that only a man who has kept his love whole and undivided and has not frittered it away, can feel.

"I adore you, darling. And at last my trust is as great as my love. Never, never do anything to shake it, Viola, for if I lost my trust in you, after these last few days, which have been the most perfect of all my life, I should lose faith in heaven itself!"

And the terror that she had tried to push away from her surged over Viola's soul again, submerging it.

No use, at the eleventh hour, to confess everything to him, to confess, and plead for forgiveness and understanding!

Suddenly the car slowed down and stopped, and the chauffeur got out to examine a back tire.

"I was afraid of it, sir," he said, putting his head in at the window and pulling off his coat, "that back tire has gone."

"What a nuisance!" Roger looked at his watch. "I have an important meeting at eleven. You've got a spare, haven't you?"

"That's not very good either, sir. I shall have to change the tube. It won't take me more than twenty minutes."

But the twenty minutes ran into nearly thirty, and Roger fidgeted and Viola thought desperately that at this rate she would be too late to get to court. If she were not there, she couldn't confess. But she pulled herself up. She had promised Pauline. She must get there somehow. Pauline had said Mr. Maryon's life would probably depend on her. In turn she began to fidget.

"It doesn't matter for you, darling, surely?" Roger said. "I hate to be late, because the meeting is really important."

At that moment a small roadster, with one man in it, came whizzing by. But the driver stopped, with the friendly

courtesy of the road, to know if he could be of any assistance.

Roger hesitated. "Yes. I wonder——" Then he glanced at his wife. "I suppose it wouldn't be possible for you to give me a lift, I am in a great hurry. You are going to town?"

"Of course," replied the man at the wheel heartily. "I'd be only too pleased. There's room only for one though, I fear," he added, glancing at Viola.

"That's all right. I have a very important appointment and I shall be late if I wait for my own car. I really should be awfully grateful. Viola, dear, you won't mind waiting and coming on alone, will you?"

"No, certainly not." She felt, in fact, a sudden relief. At least she could let herself go, she need no longer talk, keep up appearances.

Roger got into the empty seat of the small car and was whirled away, while Baines returned to his struggle with the refractory tire. Ten minutes later he said he was ready to resume the journey.

At that moment the trial was beginning, and Pauline was looking wildly around the court and sending up a wordless prayer that Viola should come and come quickly.

Just fifteen minutes later, in his desire to make up time, Baines took a corner short. A truck was coming around at the same instant, whose driver was young and inexperienced. The truck swerved, wobbled, and then skidded straight into the big car.

Baines tried his hardest to steer clear, failed, and a moment later there was a crash and smash as wood splintered and glass flew about in shining fragments, and the car turned over on its side.

The driver of the truck jumped down from his seat, white to the lips, followed by the man who had been sitting by his side.

In an instant they were helping Baines to his feet. The man was bleeding from a cut on his cheek, where he

had fallen on a sharp stone, when he had been shot out of his seat, but he was able to stand.

"I'm all right," he said hoarsely, wiping the blood from his cheek with his hand. "But it's the mistress. If anything's happened to her, the boss'll never forgive you or me."

The three men turned to the broken wreckage of the body of the car, in which Viola was lying in a crumpled heap. It was no easy task to get her out, for the wood and glass were splintered in every direction, but at last Baines, who appeared like a man demented, lifted her out, limp and unconscious, and laid her gently on the grass by the side of the road.

"Is she dead?" asked the truck driver in an awe-struck whisper.

The perspiration was running down Baines's face, mingling with the blood from the cut on his cheek, as he turned savagely to the man.

"Hold your tongue! You are the cause of the mischief. Do something, can't you. Get a doctor or something."

The driver conferred with his companion for a moment and then said: "We passed through a small village a matter of two or three miles back. Shall I go and see if I can find a doctor there?"

Baines lifted his haggard eyes and gazed around. There was not a house in sight.

"I suppose you'd better, only you'll be so slow in that old bus of yours. Ah, thank goodness, here's a car coming."

A moment later a small touring car pulled up and the driver leaped out as he saw the wrecked car.

In a few words Baines told him what had happened, and the man was kneeling by Viola's side, gently feeling her arms and legs.

"I'm not a doctor," he said tersely, "but I served on an ambulance in France, and I know enough to know it might be madness to try and move her



till a doctor's seen her. I don't think any bones are broken. But——" He drew a flask from his pocket and tried to force a few drops of brandy between Viola's gray lips and for one instant her eyes opened and looked dully, unseeingly at him.

Baines and the truck driver gave a simultaneous sigh of relief. "Thank Heaven," muttered the former as he lifted his head and passed his hand across his dripping forehead.

"I'll drive on quickly," said the newcomer. "I know this section well. There's a doctor living about a mile off. If he's at home I'll have him back here

Oh—if only it had been herself who had heard that shot. If only it had been herself whose honor would be compromised, whose happiness would be jeopardized, she would not hesitate to save him!

inside of ten minutes."

He jumped up, brushed the dust from his knees, and, leaping into the car, started off.

He was as good as his word, and within ten minutes was back with a gray-haired, weather-beaten man.

After a brief examination Doctor Jerrold said he could not tell how serious were Mrs. Shelton's injuries until he could examine her more carefully, and as his own house was quite near she must be taken there at once.



"You are with friends," came the answer in a soft, soothing voice. "You have had an accident with your car, but you are not badly hurt and will be quite all right in a little while now."

Very gently the still unconscious woman was lifted into the back seat and was driven to a small rose-covered house on the outskirts of the near-by village.

Mrs. Jerrold had been a nurse before her marriage, and Viola was quickly undressed and placed in bed with hot blankets and hot-water bottles to her feet. But, in spite of all the care of Doctor and Mrs. Jerrold it was some hours before Viola opened her eyes and gazed up into the face of a middle-aged woman, whose anxious eyes quickly became reassuring as she gasped:

"Where am I?"

Viola closed her eyes thankfully, for the room was spinning around and around and it was an effort to think.

It was at this moment that the judge commenced his summing up, and Pauline was bitterly reproaching the woman who had given her word and who had failed. "Coward—you cruel, cruel coward!" were the words on her lips and in her heart.

For she was acutely conscious of the pleading, bewildered eyes of the prisoner turned to her.

"What did you mean?" she felt them

saying in accusation. "You told me you knew something which would clear me. What did you mean? Why did you deceive me?"

What had been her last words to him?

"I can promise it will be all right. I must not say any more now. But I know you will be cleared."

Peter had built on her promise. He had been like a drowning man to whom a rope had been thrown. Now she had failed him. It was not her fault. She should not have trusted to Viola's word. She should have forced her to tell the truth before. She herself ought to have broken her word to Viola and have told the whole story, which only Viola knew, to Frank Gray.

Suddenly she started. It was not too late even now.

She half opened her lips, half rose in her seat, then sat down again.

She felt sick. She hoped she was not going to faint. It would be horrible to make a scene in court.

She must wait till that deadly nausea passed. She gripped the back of the seat in front of her and gradually her nerves and senses steadied as she listened to the judge's harsh, clear voice.

As the words pierced her consciousness she realized that every word he uttered pointed to his own conviction of Peter's guilt. The jury—the twelve men and women sitting there listening with quiet, tense faces, would find the verdict, but the judge was directing them toward their verdict in no uncertain method.

Even the least experienced in that court of tragedy realized the judge's summing up was dead against the prisoner.

Frank Gray hid his face with his hand, his elbow leaning on the desk in front of him. He realized what a poor show he had been able to put up, understood what a logical, damning speech the lawyer for the State had made.

With that summing up poor Maryon wouldn't stand a dog's chance with the jury. There was only one verdict they could bring in—he knew that.

He glanced up and looked at Pauline. She had held out hopes of some knowledge she might produce at the last moment. But she had said nothing, done nothing. It was only just an hysterical girl's imagination, the wish being father to the thought.

Pauline lifted her eyes and met his, as accusing, as bewildered as Peter's had been.

"Viola!" her thoughts went up, in passionate pleading, as though she could invoke her presence. "Viola! Why don't you come to save him?"

But the judge's voice went on inexorably and no miracle brought Viola into court. Pauline knew now it was too late. Viola was not coming. The only living soul who could have saved Peter had failed.

Oh—if only it had been herself who had heard that shot at eight o'clock! If only it had been herself whose honor would be compromised, whose happiness would be jeopardized, she would not hesitate to save him!

Then suddenly she sat very still, and it seemed to her as if she was quite alone in an absolute void, where her own thoughts were the only realities.

If it had been she who had been alone in the apartment with Fulton? If it had been she who had heard that shot a few seconds before the clock chimed eight?

She no longer heard the judge's voice, she no longer saw the sea of faces around her, she was no longer conscious of Peter's reproachful eyes. Her brain worked as it had never worked before, with a swiftness and clarity she had never experienced. It darted here and there, weighing possibilities, considering chances.

A man was most certainly going to be sentenced to death unless a woman's word, which meant the blasting of her

honor, saved him. That woman had promised to come and speak that word, and had failed.

Was an innocent man then to suffer the most awful fate that could be meted out to him? What was that silence?

Had the judge finished? Was his summing up over?

A little rustle in the court brought Pauline back to full consciousness of what was happening around her. Yes, the judge was leaning back. The jury had been told to consider their verdict.

At the back of the court a small elderly woman in shabby black half rose to her feet.

One or two faces turned toward her, but attention was swiftly diverted and riveted on a slim young girl who had been sitting near the prisoner and who had started up and with a little dramatic gesture had turned and was directly addressing the judge. The whole court was tense with expectation.

"Your honor," she was saying in a clear, ringing voice, "I have held back till now evidence which will clear the prisoner. I can prove he could not have committed the murder. I can prove that Mr. Grant was killed half an hour before Mr. Maryon entered his apartment."

TO BE CONTINUED.



DEAR HUNGER

BLOSSOMS are shedding a crimson snow
Over the orchard's scented row;
And why must their petals remind me so
Of petallike lips I used to know?

Why must I be remembering
The songs a dear one used to sing,
When deep in the woodland's newborn spring
A small brown thrush starts caroling?

Over the meadow's green loveliness
A warm wind stirs the clover's dress;
And why must the heart within me press,
Recalling the kiss of a girl's caress?

Why must the wind and a valley bird
Cling to my dreams till my heart is stirred
Close to its breaking to great love's word
From lips too dear, and so long unheard!

BERT COOKSLEY.



Reference Required

By Ruth L. Frankel

MARIAN WARE looked from the quarter she had just shaken out of her empty bag to the letter in her hand. Her mother had written:

DEAREST MARIAN: We do hope you're getting along, for we've had quite a bit of trouble at home. Father fell last week and broke his leg. He's better now, but of course it means weeks before he can work again, and it will be impossible to send you any more money. However, by now you're probably working with that interior decorator you mentioned, and no longer need our help. In fact, though I hate to speak of it so soon, we're eager for the time when you can help us out here. I'm sure that once established in New York, a clever girl like you will have no difficulty in forging ahead.

Marian laid down the letter and looked about her at the cheap little room, with its rickety iron bed, golden-oak chest of drawers, and crockery-laden washstand. From the window, a

blank brick wall smote her eye as she gazed helplessly about. Far above a patch of blue sky was barely visible, its blueness shamed by Marian's own eyes. Those eyes were wide now with worry.

She sat down on the bed, and chin in hand, gravely considered her next move. For move she must. Her rent was paid until that evening only. Her sole capital consisted of twenty-five cents. The job she had mentioned so confidently in her last letter home had attracted fifty other applicants as well, each more skilled and experienced than the little art student from Ohio. After six months of peddling pictures from one art dealer to another, she was now realizing—a bit late—how meager was her talent, how formidable the opposition. She had had a small job coloring Christmas cards, but for weeks now she had been desperately hunting for work, and

counting for subsistence on the small but regular check from home.

The cuckoo clock in the hall shrilly announced that it was nine o'clock. Marian had had no breakfast, but on a capital of twenty-five cents breakfast is not essential. With a grim set to her red lips and a defiant toss to her red-gold curls, she pulled on her shabby blue beret, buttoned up her threadbare tweed coat, and set out to face the world.

In the hall stood her landlady.

"Will you want your room after today, Miss Ware?" Her experienced eyes, hard and flinty, took in every detail of the girl's appearance, from the hunger circles under her big blue eyes to the neat darn in her stocking above the worn brown oxfords.

"I—I can't say now, Mrs. Watkins," stammered Marian. "But I'll be back in a little while, and I—I think I'll know then."

"Well, make up your mind by noon. I can't afford to have empty rooms," commanded the tall, gaunt lady of the house. "As it is, I ought to demand either a week's notice or an extra week's rent."

Marian fled down the steps, murmuring something as she went. As if fate weren't unkind enough! The old iceberg!

Outdoors, she headed straight for the corner news stand and invested two cents of her precious capital in a paper.

Jobs! Jobs! Jobs!

Marian read advertisements for canvassers—must have own car. "That lets me out," she told herself. There were ads for chambermaids, with references, cooks—good bakers, models for dresses—five feet eight or over. There was no use there; she was only five feet three. She turned to ads for waitresses, experienced in tea-room work, salesladies, experienced only, who must be over twenty-five. She couldn't qualify there either.

And then she saw one that might do:

Governess, young, patient, and kind, to care for motherless boy of five. Must be intelligent and well educated, unencumbered and of a quiet disposition.

Marian reread the ad and hesitated thoughtfully. Governess? What might that require? She loved children and had had a good education, and at least there'd be enough to eat. From somewhere near by the aroma of hot coffee floated toward her. She jingled the two dimes and three pennies in her pocket a minute more, then walked to the corner and boarded a trolley car going north.

Fifteen minutes later she was standing before a tall, narrow house in East Sixty-fourth Street. From an upper window a child's face peered down as she mounted the steps. As she smiled up, the face disappeared.

A very correct butler opened the door and led her, after she had stated what she wanted, into a gloomy, formal living room where she was asked to wait. "I'll get Mrs. Butt, the housekeeper," he said. "She'll talk to you."

Mrs. Butt proved to be a large, matronly person with thin lips and a long, slightly reddened nose. She looked Marian over coolly.

"You look very young to me," she said. "Have you had any experience?"

"No," Marian explained eagerly, "not exactly, but I love children and have helped take care of my own brothers and sisters. I'm not so young as I look, either. I'm nineteen."

The hard face stiffened. "Even experienced people seem to have trouble with Billy. We've had five governesses in the six months since his mother died. I might as well tell you at once that he's spoiled and needs strict discipline. He wears us all out." She sighed. Then: "Where were you educated?"

Marian told about high school and her subsequent art studies at home. "I could

bring my diploma to show you," she said eagerly, "and I'd like to try the position. I—I'm very patient with children, and they usually like me." She clenched her hands tight lest Mrs. Butt see them trembling.

But the housekeeper shook her head. "It's not just a diploma I must see, Miss Ware. What about references? Can you furnish those?"

Marian, taken aback, looked troubled. "I have a letter from our minister at home"—her voice trembled—"but I've never had a position like this before, so I can't give a reference for ability."

Mrs. Butt pursed her lips. "I'm afraid then," she began, but at that moment the door opened. A small, slender boy of five, with wistful brown eyes, rushed in, to plant himself before Marian and regard her solemnly.

"Are you going to be my new nurse?" he asked.

"No, Billy," Mrs. Butt began hesitantly, watching him, "She's not experienced enough to manage such a naughty boy as you."

Billy shrugged his shoulders. "Say," he demanded, still staring at Marian, "is that true? Why can't you? Don't you think," he asked hopefully, "little boys always ought to do as they're told?"

Marian started to smile, but the child looked so wistful that she answered gravely: "That would depend on what they've been asked to do."

Billy nodded in accord. "That's what I think. If a fellow worked all afternoon building a blockhouse, would you make him knock it down again at bedtime?" He paused and waited anxiously.

"No," Marian considered. "If it had been built in a place where it wouldn't inconvenience any one, I think I'd let it stay up a while."

Billy drew a deep breath and moved one step closer. "Say, I like you," he confided, and then turned to Mrs. Butt. "I want her to stay," he announced. "If

you let her, I'll be good, but if you don't"—he planted his chubby legs apart defiantly—"I'll be an awful, awful nuisance." With crossed arms he waited.

Mrs. Butt seemed nonplused. "But, Billy, she hasn't got a reference. Your daddy wants an experienced——"

"I don't care what he wants," Billy shouted. "I want her! It's my nurse you're picking. Why can't I have the one I want?"

"You see, Miss Ware," Mrs. Butt said helplessly, "that's the sort he is. Now——"

She was interrupted by a loud wail from Billy, accompanied by the opening of the door. Marian jumped to her feet as a tall, handsome man in the middle thirties walked in.

"What's this?" he demanded irritably. "Billy, stop crying!"

"It's this young lady, Mr. Barrington," Mrs. Butt hastily explained, rising. "She's applying for the job of governess, but she has no references, and she was just going when Billy came in and——"

Here Billy interrupted again. "I don't want her to go away. I like her. She's nice. I want her to stay." He paused for breath.

The man's irritability vanished. He looked down at his small son, smiled, and then regarded Marian gravely. "I see," was his reply. "Thank you, Mrs. Butt. I'll speak to the young lady myself. Perhaps she'll do even without a reference, if Billy wants her so much."

At his nod of dismissal the housekeeper vanished.

"Won't you sit down, Miss——"

"Ware," Marian supplied, as she sank back hopefully into her chair.

"Miss Ware. Thank you," he said, seating himself. "Now tell me about yourself. You can see what the position is. Billy's mother passed away six months ago. Since then, we've been rather unlucky in our choice of governesses. Just what can you do?"

Marian told her story, of the search for a career, the glad adventure, the job hunting, and the accident to her father which made a position so imperative.

He listened quietly with Billy nestled against his arm. "Well, I don't see why we shouldn't try it. Billy approves, and you're certainly intelligent enough to pick up what you don't know now." He rose. "When could you begin?"

"To-day," she stammered, getting to her feet, scarcely able to conceal her joy. "I can get my things at once."

"Very good. I'll send the car with you immediately so the chauffeur can help with your things. Good morning."

Marian turned to Billy and put her arms tight around him. "You darling!" she murmured against his dark hair. "We're going to have good times together."

Solemnly Billy agreed. "You bet!" he whispered. "I like you."

Days passed. Marian found her position pleasant and Billy a neglected little boy who needed only an outlet in play and work for his energy. Finding his father prejudiced against kindergartens, she turned her energies to helping him make friends with other children in the park, and to building up a routine of fresh air and outdoor activity. In his play room she found an abundance of expensive mechanical toys. Unobtrusively she began putting these away, substituting for them crayons and paints, paper, clay, hammer, wood and nails and other simpler materials. He would get more pleasure out of doing things himself.

Billy responded eagerly to her guidance. His plaintive: "Show me how this train runs," and: "Build something for me," changed to an independent: "Look what I made by myself!", an eager interest in doing things alone.

When they walked in the park in the afternoons, Marian pointed out signs of the coming spring—the budding trees,

the fragrance of awakening earth. She led him to watch for the birds, and to recognize the few which braved the winter's snows and cold.

Billy speedily adored her. They were always together. Their meals were served in his small living room. Her bedroom adjoined his, and both led into the delightful yellow-and-blue play room with its shelves and cupboards and toys.

Of the rest of the household, she saw little. Mrs. Butt and Lena, the maid, attended to their meals, and Mr. Barrington sent up to the nursery each evening for Billy to join him for an hour. Otherwise the world outside and that downstairs passed them by. Only her letters home, in which she never mentioned the nature of her job, preserved Marian from total isolation.

One afternoon in March, as she and Billy were coming home from a walk, they met Mr. Barrington in the hall. His grave face lighted with a smile at the sight of the two sets of sparkling eyes and red cheeks.

"You and Billy seem to be getting along pretty well," he said pleasantly to Marian, bending to put his arms around the small boy. "Are you happy now, son?"

"You bet!" asserted Billy, grinning at Marian. "Daddy, can't you come up to see the picture I'm painting? Miss Ware and I are artists, and we make lovely paintings." He tugged at his father's hands.

Mr. Barrington glanced at the library door behind which was a sound of voices. "I have guests," he said doubtfully. "Just let me explain to them, and I'll come. You run ahead."

As he opened the door, Marian caught a glimpse of a table drawn before an open fire, and of a lovely, stately blonde sitting beside it, pouring tea. For one second as she mounted the stairs, the cold green eyes of the beauty met hers. Marian half smiled, but the

girl looked as if she were gazing into mere space. Marian moved on, suddenly aware of another life far removed from nursery teas and romping.

Fifteen minutes later, as she and Billy sat before their fire, the play-room door opened and Mr. Barrington came in, followed by the lovely, haughty lady.

"Here we are, Isabel," he explained, as they entered. "What do you think of my treasure?"

The woman dropped lightly to one knee beside Billy, who had rushed to meet them. "Ah, the little angel!" she murmured, one arm about the child. "Would you kiss Auntie Isabel?" Even as she knelt she was careful, Marian observed, to hold her soft blue draperies well away from the child's warm hands.

"Nope," said Billy inelegantly, giving her a push. "I'm not an angel. You're silly." Wriggling out of her reach, he grabbed his father and pulled him across the room to an easel.

"See, daddy, I made that picture." His father listened patiently to his explanation, smiling indulgently, and throwing a grateful glance from his clear gray eyes at Marian.

"How contented you keep him," he said to her in a low voice, giving one of his rare, kind smiles. Marian's heart skipped a beat, and she smiled back, warmed and grateful.

"Miss Ware has done so much for Billy," he explained to Isabel, who was roaming restlessly about the room. Then turning to Marian, he said: "And Miss van Dreer is an old friend of mine who has just returned from several years abroad."

"How lovely!" murmured Marian, watching the slender Grecian beauty, as she paused at the doorway to light a cigarette.

"Come on, Bob. Don't make yourself ridiculous over your child's artistic struggles. He shouldn't be allowed to attach so much importance to them."

Without another word, she disappeared, to be speedily followed by her host, who gave Billy one hug and Marian one smile as he went.

"She's a horrid lady," Billy announced, as soon as the door had closed. "I don't like her."

"You mustn't talk that way about your father's friends," Marian reproved gravely, though in her heart she agreed.

After that, though, the house seemed suddenly gayer. There were frequent sounds of life from the living room and library. Mr. Barrington began to appear every evening at the nursery door for a talk with Billy, but often now he was dressed in evening clothes ready to go out. Sometimes—and those days were always disappointing to the two who listened for his step—"Auntie Isabel" would be with him. She would sweep into the room, fragrant and stately in her evening gown, the inevitable cigarette between her too-red lips, bestowing a careless kiss on Billy, a disdainful nod on Marian, and after a restless moment or two, drift out again.

Marian always felt uncomfortable and inferior in her presence, but loved to watch her. She noted eagerly every detail about the other woman, the softly waved Grecian knot of her hair, the long, glittering red-enameled finger nails, the low-cut, shimmering gowns which to her own country-bred eyes often seemed shockingly immodest. Marian never listened to gossip, but she could hardly avoid hearing some of Mrs. Butt's incessant babblings about Miss van Dreer, who was heiress to millions, and an old sweetheart of Mr. Barrington's. She had been most unhappy, according to Mrs. Butt, at the news of his first marriage.

"But there'll be another wedding here soon, or my name's not Mathilda Butt," the housekeeper predicted more than once. "She'll never let him get away again."

Sure enough, one spring night, when

the scent of lilacs blew across the park and the robins were madly caroling their good-night songs outside the nursery windows, Mr. Barrington brought her into the nursery, and lifting Billy into his arms, said:

"Billy, little son, I have some news for you. You're going to have another mother."

"Goody!" Billy clapped his hands. "Can I pick her out myself? I want Miss Ware."

Marian gasped and turned crimson. His father smiled, and Isabel's lovely face hardened.

"No, son," Bob Barrington said, without glancing at the girl. "I'm the one who's doing the choosing. Auntie Isabel is going to marry me next month. Aren't you glad?"

Caressingly, Isabel reached over toward Billy, opening wide her slender white arms, but the child, ignoring her, turned, buried his face in his father's coat, and began to cry.

"No, no, daddy! I don't want her. I want to pick out my own mother! I want another lady for my mother!"

"Why, Billy!" Hastily his father set him down, whereupon the child flew to Marian and the shelter of her arms. "That's not very nice of you," his father went on. "Turn around at once and give Auntie Isabel a kiss."

There was something in his father's tone that seemed both stern and inevitable. Slowly Billy raised his tear-streaked face and advanced toward Isabel. "I'm sorry," he murmured, holding out his hand. Then, very gravely: "Have you ever had ex-experience? Because, you know, only experienced people with—with—" he fumbled for the word, "refrents—can manage me. Mrs. Butt says so."

Everybody laughed, and even Isabel warmed a bit. "No, Billy," she said in her clear, icy voice, "I haven't had a bit of experience, but I'll try to supply you with people who have." Her gaze

rested ever so lightly on Marian, and an extra pang went through the girl's heart.

"Well," said the small boy magnanimously, after a pause during which he stared at Isabel, "I guess it doesn't matter much anyhow. I'll keep Miss Ware, daddy, and you can have whomever you want. Maybe she"—he pointed at Isabel—"is all right for you." And with that he turned his back and trotted off to his supper table.

"May I offer my congratulations?" ventured Marian softly to her employer as he turned to go. "I do hope you'll be very happy." Her small, round face with the big blue eyes looked very earnest and very young. Mr. Barrington seized the tiny proffered hand in his big strong one, and shook it heartily.

"Thank you, my dear, thank you. We mean to be." With a smile for her, he laid his arm lightly across Isabel's white shoulders. "It will be good to have a wife once more to preside over my home, and it will be splendid for Billy." He looked lovingly across at the boy, sitting so sedately in his blue linen suit and sweater before his evening meal. "He does need a mother."

Isabel stepped lightly out of his clasp and laughed as she moved toward the stairs. "You folks up here make me feel I'm taking on a dreadfully responsible career. Don't forget, Bob, I'm going to marry you, not Billy. You make me feel like a spectacled matron. Come on." She turned to go, ignoring Marian as usual, while Mr. Barrington, smiling at her whim, followed.

"You'll get used to the rôle," he murmured as he went.

Marian soon found that she and Billy had to get used to many things, too. The house seemed to be in a perpetual ferment. Decorators came and went. Circulars of all sorts lay about. Florists and caterers, secretaries and innumerable special workers appeared and disappeared. Billy, enjoying the excitement,

scampered in and out like a small mouse. It was impossible to keep him upstairs. He was in daily demand for tailors and shoemakers, wedding rehearsals and general showing off, and he seemed to relish the fun, though he refused point-blank to call Isabel mother. Marian, standing by helplessly had to see him dragged about like a pet poodle by his father's fiancée, who had suddenly decided that the maternal rôle fitted nicely after all. Marian watched the roses fade out of Billy's round cheeks, saw him return day after day, listless and cross, and noted with alarm that his small world of routine and order was crumbling to chaos.

Once she even ventured to expostulate. "Don't you think he's looking a bit tired?" she asked Isabel, as the weary child stumbled over the threshold on their return from a gay afternoon. "He's never had so much excitement."

Isabel tossed her lovely head. A disdainful look appeared in her cold green eyes. "I think, Miss Ware, it's high time he began to get out a bit. What with camp this summer and boarding school next fall, he'll need to get out of this hothouse nursery." Her gaze sweeping the bright little room, touched Marian as it noted the superfluous things in Billy's life. Marian trembled.

"Camp?" she repeated. "And boarding school? For that baby? Why, his father wouldn't even let him go to kindergarten!"

"Certainly," replied Miss van Dreer. "His father and I are going abroad for seven or eight months, and we surely can't be bothered with a troublesome



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child on our honeymoon. So naturally Billy must go to camp and school. He'll have far better care there than he's ever had with only servants to look out for him."

She turned to go, and Marian gave a gasp of sheer dismay. Billy was slumped disconsolately in a chair across the room. As Marian looked over at him, he burst into tears. "I don't feel well," he wailed. "I have a pain."

Anxiously Marian felt his head, then swiftly undressed him and slipped him into bed. When the thermometer



brought speedy confirmation of her suspicions, she sent for his father, who rushed upstairs and sent promptly for the family physician.

"Nothing to worry about," declared the doctor an hour later, as Marian, Mr. Barrington, and Miss van Dreer gathered about Billy's bed. "He's just a bit upset, I imagine. Let him stay in bed a day or so, and give him nothing but broth and toast."

"My wedding is one week from today," announced Isabel softly. "He'll be all right by then, won't he? He's our page boy, you know." Her beautiful face took on an expression of devotion to the doctor's eyes.

"Yes, yes," he answered. "Don't fret. Of course he'll be well then."

Isabel smiled at him sweetly, and laid a cool hand on Billy's forehead. Swiftly he shook it off. "Go away," he snapped. "I don't want you. I want Miss Ware."

As Marian slipped unobtrusively to the other side of the bed he settled drowsily down again. But Isabel's eyes, meeting Marian's, were hard and cruel.

"Poor child! He's been dreadfully babied," she explained to the doctor. "I'm eager to have him in my care."

Doctor Wilkinson, beaming approval, patted her long white hand and murmured: "How fine of you to feel that way!" Bob Barrington looked

down at her tenderly. Only Marian, gazing at the little white face on the pillows, still looked grave. She failed to notice their going, nor to realize that Bob, still a bit uneasy, had hesitated at the door, and looking back as the lamp-light outlined red-gold curls bent low over Billy's dark head, had recalled irrelevantly a small voice saying: "Because you know, only experienced people with—with refrents—can manage me."

Two days later a wan, pale little Billy sat in a big chair by the nursery window. On his lap was an easel, and beside him a table held paper, paints, and brushes. Marian had just noted the

listless way he was painting, when the door opened and in swept Isabel, lovely as ever, wearing orchids and radiating an aura of expensive perfume.

"Ah, I'm so glad Billy's up and well again, Miss Ware," she said at once. "We're having an unexpected wedding rehearsal this afternoon, and of course we'll need him."

Marian looked at the gray drizzle outside and at the child's pale cheeks. "Not to-day!" she exclaimed. "He's not well enough. He'd be ill again. He just got up."

"Nonsense!" said Isabel firmly. "He's quite all right, and we need him. He can rest later. Please get him ready at once."

Marian looked desperate. Her blue eyes filled. "Please, Miss van Dreer, rehearse without Billy to-day. Really, he's not well enough to go yet. He had fever only yesterday."

Isabel turned haughty, angry eyes on the girl. "You're forgetting your place, Miss Ware. I am in charge not you, and I've already given you your orders. Get him dressed at once!"

Still Marian hesitated. "Does his father know?" she questioned. "Does he approve?"

Isabel's color mounted. "You know, of course, that after next Wednesday your services will no longer be required. If you care to, you may go at once. Now please get him ready. I'll wait right here." She sat down impatiently, lighted a cigarette, and sat tapping one blue kid shoe constantly.

Marian's hands trembled, as without another word, she led Billy into his room, dressed him, and brought him swiftly back. With tears in her eyes, as Isabel rose, she asked very gently: "Do you mind if I stay until the wedding?"

Isabel shrugged. "It really doesn't matter to me," she said coldly. "You're going just as soon as I take charge, but you might as well wait five more days."

Then, seizing Billy's hand, she hurried off, leaving Marian to pace the floor anxiously. Marian thought of many things—her family back home, who still thought her job interior decorating, her art, her daydreams, especially those regarding her prince, who had alarmingly of late taken on certain definite characteristics instead of concerning himself merely with waving plumes and a white charger.

Later, as she sat quietly before the fire, trying to plan a future, the sound of voices roused her, and soon the door opened. In came Billy, whimpering, followed by his father and Isabel.

"He doesn't seem very well," said Bob anxiously, as the child ran to Marian. "I'm rather surprised you let him go out."

Marian, kneeling before Billy, unbuttoning his coat, looked up at Isabel and waited. Isabel said nothing, but Billy piped up:

"She didn't want me to go. She almost cried 'cause I went, and said I'd be sick, but Aunt Isabel made me come." His head drooped wearily and he snuggled close in Marian's comforting arms. Bob looked questioningly from green eyes to blue.

"Of course he was all right," snapped Isabel, tossing her head. "You and your silly servants make a perfect baby out of him. I suppose you'd have actually postponed the rehearsal if Miss Ware had so ordered," she ended mockingly.

Marian said nothing. But as she gathered the tired child up in her arms to carry him to bed, her large blue eyes met the keen gray ones of the man, and between them flashed a look of understanding.

"You'd better go on now, Isabel," Bob said after a pause. His voice was gentle and curiously tired. "I'm going to see Billy safely in bed. If he's all right I'll call for you at eight. Good-by."

Isabel disappeared, and he turned back

anxiously to Marian, now busy with a thermometer. When after a minute or two, she said quietly: "You'd better get the doctor. He has quite a lot of fever," he almost snatched the instrument away, and after one look, sprang to the phone.

From then on came dreadful hours. Marian, kneeling in breathless fear beside Billy, saw Doctor Wilkinson enter and go swiftly to work. A white-clad nurse appeared and motioned Marian to a corner of the nursery, where, unnoticed and apprehensive, she huddled, watching Bob pacing the floor wildly, and hearing only Billy's gasps. Once the phone jangled. A voice appeared at the door summoning Bob. "Go away!" he snapped.

But the voice persisted. "It's Miss van Dreer, Mr. Barrington. She says it's important."

"Tell her nothing is important except Billy—that he's very sick," Bob ordered, and turning from the door, resumed his tramping.

Three minutes later the butler reappeared. "Sorry, sir, but Miss van Dreer insists that you speak to her. She's waiting on the phone."

Bob glared helplessly for one second, then lifted the phone on the table at his elbow. "Well?" he said laconically. A prolonged squeak in the receiver told that some one was speaking rapidly and excitedly at the other end. Finally the squeaking paused. "I'm staying right here with my boy. Do you understand that?" came Bob's answer. There was a pause; then: "Certainly not. I'm only glad it's happened now. Send it back if you like. Billy is the most important person in my life. I'm glad you realize that. Good-by." He slammed the phone back on the holder and swore softly under his breath.

The nurse appeared at the door. "He's asking for Miss Ware, and I think it would help a little——"

Like a shot, Marian sprang forward and tiptoed into the bedroom.

"How is he?" whispered the father. "Well, in pneumonia," began the nurse gravely, "it's always doubtful. His temperature is very high, but perhaps if he could sleep——"

Bob groaned. "O, Heaven help him!" he prayed, and buried his face in his hands.

Hours passed. There was no sound except the labored breathing of the small patient, and the eternal ticking of the nursery clock. Doctor Wilkinson reappeared, his professional suavity completely gone, and all his underlying competence on the surface. On the floor in one corner, one hand clasped tight in Billy's, knelt Marian. Her red-gold hair had loosened and was falling over tear-filled blue eyes. Whenever she stirred, the brown eyes beside her would open, the little hand grope feebly for a fresh hold on hers, and the small voice murmur: "Don't go 'way. Please stay with me."

"I'm here, Billy darling," Marian would answer. "Don't worry. I won't go away."

Once, toward morning, Billy was delirious. He sat up in bed and shrieked: "I want to go home. Go away! I want Miss Ware. I don't like you!"

"Here I am, sweetheart," said Marian soothingly. "It's Marian. I'm here," and the little head dropped back into slumber.

Morning came. A day nurse replaced the other one. Doctor Wilkinson came and went. But the two who watched so faithfully remained at their posts, unmindful of the need for food or rest. Only Billy mattered now.

It was late afternoon of the second day. Billy had at last fallen into a deep sleep and had finally loosened his clutch on Marian's numb fingers. Weakly the girl arose.

"You must eat something," said the nurse kindly, "and get some rest, or you'll collapse too. Come along. The crisis is over now, and Billy's going to

get well, so be ready for him when he'll need you."

Her insistence drove Marian to the tea table in the nursery, where Bob was already obediently eating sandwiches and drinking scalding hot tea. Marian slumped down beside him on the couch. "I can't eat," she gasped. Bob looked

too much. Hastily setting it down, she gasped and collapsed, falling back against the arm of the couch in a faint. The sound brought the nurse with restoratives, and a moment later Marian opened her eyes to find Bob's arm under her head, and Bob himself kneeling beside the couch where she lay, forcing



Marian opened her eyes to find Bob kneeling beside the couch where she lay. Her eyelids drooped hurriedly. "Don't wake me up," she begged. "This is such a nice dream."

at her, at the dark rings under the blue eyes, the aureole of reddish hair—and saw her for the first time.

"Here," he offered, as the nurse, after repeating: "You must eat something," disappeared. "Let me help you."

Deftly he poured a cup of tea, and placed it with a sandwich before her. "Try—dear—for Billy's sake," he whispered. "What would all of us do now if you became ill?" His long, fine fingers closed gently over her small ones, and a rough shoulder brushed her own.

Gratefully Marian picked up the cup and tried to drink. But the effort was

something from a flask between her lips.

"There now. That's better!" he said, as the big blue eyes gazed into his. "Don't go off again like that!"

But her eyelids drooped hurriedly, and Marian nestled closer. "Don't wake me up," she begged. "This is such a nice dream."

A second later a rough cheek brushed her own, and a pair of firm lips found hers in a long, sweet kiss. "My little darling," Bob was murmuring. "Oh, how blind I've been!"

Marian stirred and sat up hastily. "I'm fast asleep and dreaming," she said.

"I must be!" Happily she smiled at Bob, still kneeling beside her.

"No, Marian," he answered. "You're awake and so am I—at last—awake to the wonderful fact that I love you!"

"But Miss van Dreer?" urged the girl. "And Billy? She dismissed me, you know. I have to go away——"

Bob's eyes flashed. "Miss van Dreer at last showed her true colors. She broke our engagement yesterday because I wouldn't leave Billy to take her to the opera."

"And I'm not dismissed? I don't have to leave Billy—and you?" Marian whispered. "Can I really believe that? You really mean it?"

Bob rose, then sat beside her, and again his strong arms held her close. "If I have my way," he murmured against her hair, "you'll never leave either of us again." Once more his lips found hers, and that time, deep in his arms, as she responded to his kiss. Marian entered paradise, a paradise she would never lose while Bob loved her.



RED LILIES

DEAR love, where red lilies blossomed and grew
 In those halcyon days when our love was new.
 Now radiant roses of summer sway,
 But their charm is gone—you are away;
 The robin pipes to me tune after tune
 And fair is the earth beneath skies of June,
 But my ears are deaf and my eyes are wet,
 Recalling the glad days I can't forget.

Sometimes, when the perfumed south-winds blow,
 I cry out in longing, I want you so;
 Like a raging torrent my blood runs riot
 And my brain in vain bids my heart be quiet.

It is hard to wait, so hard just to wait,
 But when you return, be it early or late,
 If when morning's golden smile is bright
 Or at dusk when the rain is falling light,
 I shall clasp you close and shower on you
 Kisses and love-words, as I used to do;
 It will be the sweetest day of the year,
 For I love you, want you, need you, my dear.

H. H. FARISS.

Beyond The Mist

By Fanny Bennett



ROY DANVERS stood very still for a moment at the foot of the ladder leading up to the bridge of the S. S. *Nereid* and observed the brooding stillness of the night. He also observed the comparative peace of his own life.

About him lay the unruffled waters of the Pacific Ocean; above him was the unending sky, aglare with stars and rich promise of good weather. Beneath him was the steady throb of the ship's engines; somewhere aft the sound of music

filled the air. It was all very peaceful, and far better than running around on dry land, half crazy with troubles and worries, harassed by every sort of anxiety.

Of course, in a way, he had been a young fool. He should have made good in his business career in San Francisco. There had been a time when he had appeared to be doing so well. And he probably would have weathered the storm, which finally overwhelmed him,

if Zoe Hamilton had stuck to him. But she hadn't; and there it was. He didn't regret having thrown the whole thing up, and getting a job on the *Nereid*. The "Old Brute" had been a good friend to him for six months now, putting fresh strength and manhood into him, and he believed that in the long run he would be the better for this experience.

"One's away from women!" he muttered.

Then he saw Zoe.

Nothing had ever surprised him quite so much in his life before. The *Nereid*, it was true, was only forty-eight hours out from San Francisco, and during most of that time he had been fully occupied with his new duties. It was not altogether to be wondered at that he had not seen any of her passengers. At the same time to find Zoe, the girl of all girls, the woman who had failed him a year ago, and had been the cause of his running away to sea, here on the same ship, bound upon a voyage of several weeks with him, was disconcerting.

She passed him, chatting to a ship's officer, not wasting a glance in the direction of the mere seaman who stood half hidden beneath the ladder. For one moment the radiance of the full moon caught her fair face. She was as beautiful as ever, he thought. If only their beauty would desert women, their spell on mere man might be broken. He heard her silver-toned laughter as she disappeared down the deck, and then, with a half-smothered laugh, he turned and hurried up onto the bridge.

The *Nereid* was a comparatively small vessel, trading with various ports in the Pacific, now on a leisurely trip from San Francisco to British Columbia. She did not carry many passengers, and was noted for her comfort and her seaworthiness. It was inevitable that Zoe and the man who had loved her should soon come face to face, and the following afternoon, as Roy hurried along the deck, the girl looked up from the deck

chair in which she sat reading, and met his eyes.

He saw the start of amazement she gave, and then her lips framed his name: "Roy!"

He answered with a smile of recognition. He had wondered whether she would know him; for he had shaved his mustache off, his shoulders were broader and a deep tan covered his face. Later that afternoon he ran straight into old man Hamilton, her father. He was walking along the deck with Captain Fraser and, although he looked straight at Roy, he did not recognize him. Well, that didn't break the young man's heart. Unlike most of those who go down to the sea in ships, old man Hamilton had never learned to be open-handed or understanding where his fellow men were concerned. He was a hard-hearted old sea dog, who had amassed a fortune, trading with simple-minded natives and people less wily than himself.

The sudden darkness of the tropics had touched the uncovered ocean that same evening, when Roy felt a hand upon his rough sleeve.

"Roy, what does this mean?" asked a voice he had once loved with all his heart and soul.

He turned, not without a secret thrill, and found himself looking into eyes as lovely as the night itself. Great pools of mystery and mocking beauty, he had once called them in the old days—and he had been quite right!

"Did you know that father and I were traveling on this ship?"

They were alone, far aft in the ship, and unlikely at that hour to be disturbed.

"No, Zoe," he replied, with a shake of his head, "I had no idea. You see, I've been working on her six months now, and I might more properly ask you if you knew that I was on her!"

"Of course not!"

The words were spoken rather crisply, and Roy smiled a little at the sound of

them. But glancing at the girl he saw that she was breathing hard, her lips parted softly as though in emotion. After a second she turned and looked into his eyes.

"You went away without saying good-by to me; just that cruel, cruel letter, Roy. You didn't give me the chance to change my mind. Why? And what are you doing here—a common sailor?"

Roy laughed softly, and, turning away for a moment or two, watched the toy-like twisting and squirmings of a floating bit of driftwood.

"When a fellow is kicked by the thing he loves best in the world, Zoe," he began, "I mean a fellow who is down for the time being, he is apt to do a desperate thing. You blame me for not seeing you. Have you forgotten how, the day I lost my job and the waters closed in upon me, you—you broke off our engagement, gave me back your engagement ring?"

The girl nodded, avoiding his eyes.

"My father——" she said, and would have continued, but the young man stopped her.

"Oh, I know, Zoe; I know! Your father was chiefly to blame. Although the old gentleman was a master mariner himself, he had a pretty hard head. I was all right so long as I was doing well in business and seemed to have a chance of making my pile. But as soon as things went bad——"

"Thanks to your own folly, Roy!"

"I grant that; but as soon as things went wrong, Zoe, he was through with me, and you put up no fight. You gave me back the ring and finished things. Do you blame me for going to sea? Do you, really? I've always loved the water and I'm happy here. I don't say I shall remain on a boat the rest of my life, but it's doing me good, building up my strength, putting muscle into my back and vim into my soul. I'm content!"

The girl was silent for a little while. From the cook's galley came the doleful information that, although the skies were gray, some one made them blue for at least one seafaring gentleman.

"Roy, you're hard on me," the girl exclaimed at last. "You know what dad is—so utterly masterful. It comes from having been at sea all his life and commanding not only a ship, but a fortune for years. It's a bad combination, the sea and riches. The sea, I think, was made for poor men."

"You mean honest men, Zoe!"

"Father's honest!" the girl cried, reddening. "You've no right——"

"Zoe"—he touched her arm gently—"I'm sorry. I meant nothing like that. Why should we argue? The past is dead. Why dig it up? Where are your father and you going this trip? What's the idea?"

"Oh, father is thinking of buying a schooner which is for sale. An old friend of his wrote to him about her, so suddenly he made me pack, and here we are. Roy, don't change the subject; I—I spoke to you on purpose this evening."

"I guessed that, Zoe." He laughed. "A woman's curiosity would make it imperative for you to know what and why and wherefore. Hm-m-m?"

"Don't be so hard," the girl pleaded. "Listen. I—I'm sorry about the past."

"Zoe," he breathed, and caught one of her hands.

To his utter amazement, he saw that her eyes were filled with tears.

"I did care for you, Roy. I do care for you," she whispered, watching him with tenderness. "Can't you make good? Oh, I don't pretend that I should ever be strong enough to fight against dad for you. I'm so accustomed to his commands. But deep down in his hard old heart I think he liked you, too, and he isn't trying to marry me to any one else. I'm all he's got in the way of relations. I can wait, if only you can

make good. Roy, go back to business, write to me sometimes and let me know how you are getting on. I—I want to wait!"

Roy bit his lip. Madness swept over him, and he felt all the old longing to crush her to his heart. Yet should he? She had failed him once, and there are some things about which a woman should never fail the man she loves.

"I must think, Zoe," he said softly. "It's all rather difficult, and honestly, as far as I am concerned, the future looks pretty bad. Look out, there's your father coming with the captain!"

He disappeared like a ghost into the night.

The mist had fallen about the *Nereid* like a blanket, annoying the captain and

Overjoyed at the prospect of pleasing the man she loved, she brought him back a big handful of pearls.



crew, and rather amusing the passengers. For the first hour or two the sea had been dead calm, and the steamer had proceeded on her way.

There was not a sound—no creeping, slinking phantoms screaming their muffled fog warnings. Just the dead silence of the mist.

That Captain Fraser was worried, however, Roy Danvers was well aware by the little man's attitude on the bridge. Ahead of them, the man with the lead suddenly shouted a warning, and at the same moment the sea, with her fiendish trickery, saï up and took notice.

It was an hour later that the *Nereid* struck, amid the sudden onslaught of the gale, upon the greedy teeth of a barrier reef. The fog was still clinging to her, as steam to a heated window, and when at last Roy was told to fend for himself, he knew that there was little hope for any of them.

Slipping down from the bridge, he made his way to the deck. It was aslant, the great waves pounding down on it with relentless fury. An officer bawled an order in his ear. He could distinguish no single word, but he thought he understood. They were trying to get a lifeboat away. Not much point in that, Roy reflected, with the swift thinking of potent tragedy, down that sloping side of the ship into those seas, for that yawning reef to pound into matchwood. But the instinct of the sailor at sea is entirely natural. He leaped forward, fighting to help his fellows.

As he did so, it seemed to him that he heard his name amid the thick heaviness of the fog and the storm.

"Roy! O Roy!"

It was Zoe Hamilton. He saw her struggling to reach him across the deck. She held out her hands.

"All right!" he hurried to her side. His arms closed about her, then they started back toward the lifeboat. A wave sent them reeling, but he managed to retain some sort of hold upon the

deck, and with one giant effort reached the boat.

Strong arms were stretched out for the girl, and some one said: "Bravo!"

Zoe was still holding out her hands to him. They were letting the boat down and every moment she seemed certain to be broken into bits against the side of the sinking ship.

"Roy, Roy, come to me," said her eyes. "Forgive me and come to me!"

"Some day!" he shouted, putting her hands to his lips, and then a wave sent him hurtling across the deck.

Roy opened his eyes, conscious of the blinding presence of the tropical sun. A moment later he was conscious of a presence more blinding than all the suns in the universe, a smile from the rarest eyes in the world.

"Hello," he said, and managed to sit up.

The little lady sprang back, showing the most perfect set of teeth Roy had ever beheld, laughing and gay.

He looked about him, rubbing his eyes. Where was he? Beneath him was sand of the purest gold. Above him a sky beyond his dreams. The peaceful waters of a lagoon were close at hand, and up there the deep, brooding foliage of a tropical isle.

In a while he was able to get up, and the little lady came back to him quite unabashed. Taking his hand she led him from the beach, until they came at last to the native village a mile inland, and there to her folk.

It was some days before Roy was able to get the hang of the broken English which one of the natives spoke, thanks to a short voyage on a freighter. It was, however, only three or four weeks before he had taught Yola, the little lady who had found him half drowned upon the beach, to speak sufficient English to tell him all he wanted to know, and a good deal that she was anxious that he should not forget.

For Roy Danvers had been cast away in Utopia!

For some time he would awaken at night, as he lay beneath the stars, or upon a native mat, listen to the distant boom of the breakers on the barrier reef, and tell himself that this was all but part of death. He was dead, dreaming all this, and in the end it would change for the utter forgetfulness of eternity.

Yola, as they swam together with her brothers and sisters in the lagoon, as they played together like children on the beach, worked idly together collecting food, fishing, chasing the angry waves in their canoes, told him the simple story of the island.

The natives called it, in their tongue, "The Island of Happy Dreams." And when Roy heard this he laughed long and softly to himself, so that Yola was a little hurt.

Later, she was able to make him understand as much as she herself understood—that which she had learned from Mala, her father and the chief of the island, a placid, amiable gentleman, who dozed in the sun all day, sang love songs in the evening, and allowed no man to speak evil in his presence.

About "The Island of Happy Dreams" hung a mist.

"Ah, yes!" said Roy, when he heard this, and for the first time believed that he was still alive. He had heard some such tale at sea.

A mist which for three hundred and forty days out of the year, or thereabouts, lay thick about the island, so that mariners kept their vessels many miles to the north of it. There was nothing, however, to bring ships here. A golden beach, a coconut or two, and a few innocent natives, unspoiled, was all that the island consisted of.

It was Yola, as they walked by the edge of the lagoon one perfect night, hand in hand, talking softly, who spoke to him of a very important matter.

"Mala want speak you, Roy!" she announced.

"Does he, Yola?" the young man replied. "Well, I'm ready. I didn't know. Shall we go along to him now? I like old Mala. Fine fellow!"

"Mala tink Roy plenty fine fellow!" she whispered.

"Roy is a plenty fine fellow, Yola," the young man breathed, and stopping suddenly, looked at her.

The moon coming from behind a fleeting cloud suddenly caught her face. The beauty of it stupefied the young man for a moment. Her skin was almost as fair as his, her eyes as big and as gentle as a child's, her soft, graceful form more beautiful than anything he had ever beheld.

"Yola love Roy!" she sighed, repeating the words he had taught her with much care.

His arms crept about the exquisite tenderness of her.

"Roy love Yola!" he answered in the same strain.

Somewhere close at hand a native instrument chanted to them of a love unsullied by the march of time; a love as pure and as beautiful as that of children; a love toward which the little waves of the lagoon stretched forth their friendship and their understanding.

"Mala make plenty big talk all along Roy make Yola him wife," the girl whispered, her lips very close to his.

"He does, does he?" Roy was taken unawares, and then, a little ashamed of himself, added: "Well, why not, you lovely little thing? Why not? I'm as happy as a boy here, and you are more beautiful than the day. I never want to leave you or your island, Yola."

She understood this immediately. "Some time, one day, maybe, ship come out through—through mist, and then Roy not want go 'way?"

He laughed and shook his head.

"Never, never, Yola," he assured her. "I hope that no ship ever penetrates that

blessed wall of mist. It would be a tragedy if white men ever came down here and found you all. But, in any case, I am content. Yes, we will see Mala to-morrow and have a talk about you and me getting married!"

She laughed like a child, and flinging her arms tight about his neck, kissed him again and again.

When the morrow came they went together and stirred Mala into wakefulness. The old chief sat up with a jerk, grinned, and clapped his hands. The whole population of the island gathered around, chattering, bringing refreshments and laughing.

Yola did the talking for her father, and after various compliments had been paid, the old chap announced that it was only right that their visitor should take unto himself a wife. Unhappily the moon, at the moment, was not in the right quarter for a matrimonial ceremony. He looked up at the sun and blinked sleepily. Toward the end of the week all would be well, and he, Mala, would perform the ceremony, which, Roy understood, merely consisted of drinking with Yola out of the same piece of broken coconut shell, and would give a feast to his friends.

That was all. Mala turned over, swept the flies from him, and went to sleep.

Yola and Roy strolled away, down to the lagoon. There, already, dozens of maidens and youths were sporting in the sea like so many brown animals. Their singing, their laughter, their grace, filled the world with utter joy. Out to sea there was no sign of that grateful mist. But Roy knew that a few leagues out it was to be found—a wall against a sinful world.

"You come swim, Roy?" the girl asked, smiling happily up into her lover's face.

"Yes, I think I'll have a dip, Yola dear," he began, then gave quite a start. "Say, what's that?"

He pointed to the single pearl which hung at that moment about Yola's faultless throat upon a rough fiber string.

"Pletty!" laughed Yola and held it out to him.

"Pretty!" gasped Roy, and felt a sudden warmth creep guiltily over him.

It was a pearl of the rarest worth. He had not been unconnected with such matters in his prosperous days ashore, and he knew what was what.

"Where did this come from, Yola?" he asked quickly. "Got any more like this?"

Yola laughed happily.

"Plenty more," she said, "all along down lagoon there, plenty more. Roy want?"

"Yes!" Roy was hot now. "I should say I do. It's worth a fortune!"

"Fortune, Roy—what him?"

Roy Danvers stood back a moment, abashed by the simplicity of the question. Poor, ignorant little savage, she didn't know what a fortune was. Yet—and yet! A fortune? Pearls, gold, diamonds, silk; and motor cars, stocks and shares. Did these make a fortune?

He looked down at the golden sand which crept about his bare feet. Wasn't there more of a fortune in each grain of that unsullied sand than in all the gold in the world? Wasn't fortune to be found in a man's heart?

"Yola find!" the girl had suddenly exclaimed, and before Roy could stop her, had run from him.

He sat down where he was and watched her. She went about among her brothers and sisters, her cousins, her aunts and her nephews. She laughed and splashed and sang. She rushed back to the village, and finally, panting a little, overjoyed at the prospect of pleasing the man she loved, she brought him back a big handful of pearls.

"Yola find plenty more when Roy want!" she laughed.

Roy mopped his brow. In his hands was a king's ransom.

"That's enough for now, Yola," he said.

"Roy like um?"

"Sure," he whispered. "Roy like um plenty, Yola. You find me all you can see. Plenty, plenty!"

She clapped her dear little brown hands.

"Yola find all, all!"

It was like living in a dream. The natives, all of whom loved Roy, had discovered that the simple gift of one of these white stones from the sea pleased him beyond all belief. They ran and laughed as they brought them to him. He sat, like a usurer at the seat of profit, gathering in this untold treasure. He was a changed man already. He counted them and valued them as best he could. He slept now with the rough bag he had made to hold them beneath his head—though there was not a living person on the island who would not have given every pearl in the world for one juicy coconut.

And when the moon had shifted in her regular orbit, and Mala, the chief, announced that the day had now come when his daughter Yola and Roy, their guest, could be made man and wife, Roy suddenly faced the fact of wealth.

It was all so different now. He was a rich man. If he went back to civilization he could command where and what he would. Beneath his head was a pillow containing riches beyond the dreams of kings. He could take his place in the big world, he could find Zoe again, if by any chance she lived, or failing her, another Zoe from folks of his own blood and understanding.

"Roy not want marry now?" Yola whispered that evening, seeing him pensive.

"Of course, Yola, of course," he murmured quickly, "but the moon isn't right for me now! A few more days, see? You tell Mala!"

She pouted, for a woman is a woman the world over. But when she ran and

told her father what Roy had said, the old chief nodded good-naturedly, and remarked that, after all, a stranger had as much right to the moon as a South Sea Islander.

So the marriage was postponed, and the next day Roy went to the top of the one hill in "The Island of Happy Dreams," and looked out to sea. From there he could see the thick wall of mist. Beyond it, what?

And that same day the mist lifted.

As Roy Danvers stood there, a solitary figure on his hilltop, shading his eyes and looking out toward the sea, he could scarcely believe the evidence of his own senses.

The mist moved away like a curtain drawn aside, and he could see far across the uncovered ocean. The blazing sun beat down on it relentlessly, the door of the world was open to him again.

He shouted aloud.

"It's a sign to me!" he cried. "I must get away from the island. I'm rich now, and can go and do what I want. I must get back to civilization!"

All day long he made the friendly natives toil for him. At the top of his hill he built a great bonfire, and when nightfall came he put a light to it, and then stood back to behold the flames mount to the skies.

"What for you do that ting, Roy?" a voice asked him, at his side.

He turned quickly. It was Yola, and one glance into the girl's eyes told him that she understood.

"That make plenty ship see us," she whispered fearfully. "Him mist stay away plenty day now, him ship come all along fetch Roy. Roy go 'way from Yola?"

"Listen, Yola dear." He took the girl by the hand and led her away from the fire, down the hill, for his bonfire would burn alone now. "I want you to try to understand. It's going to be very hard, little girl, but you love me and will forgive me. I—I'm a white man. I've got



Roy's fists clenched. She was kissing the other fellow, her arms about his neck, laughing up into his eyes.

ambition, ideas. This is no place, no life, for me. You must try to understand my point of view. I've been very happy here, and you've all been very good to me, but I would go mad in the end!"

"Yola love Roy!" was her inevitable answer.

"I know, dear, but listen!"

He sat by her side, telling her many things. She understood none of them. Being a simple-hearted woman she understood only her love; realized only that her man wished to leave her forever.

At last she crept away from him, and Roy, who had not mentioned pearls, who had given her no hint that they

mattered, that they had caused this change of heart in him, stayed where he was, ashamed of himself and yet unable to move against the thing that held him prisoner.

The bonfire died down. Once he started to his feet angrily. Some of the young boys on the island had promised him to keep the fire going all night. Simple children that they were, they had probably gone comfortably to sleep about it. Why trouble them? Why stir up those flames of discontent again?

Then suddenly one night he heard the sound of a steamer's siren. Out there beyond the reef. He leaped to his feet. They sent up a rocket! They had seen his fire and were signaling to him. Running as swiftly as he could he reached a cove, beyond the lagoon, pushed a canoe into the water, making sure first of all that his precious bag of pearls was safe where he had placed it in the bows.

Paddling madly, he was soon skimming over the smooth surface of the sea. The steamer was small, schooner rigged; a dark emblem of civilization come to him out of the mist. He laughed aloud with joy and anticipation. They would take him back to San Francisco. He would say nothing of his untold wealth, and then what a time he would have! He would repay his old friends, his old debts. And those who had kicked him when he was down should hear of him, too!

He frowned for a moment, thinking of Yola, and of his friends on the island. They did not worry themselves with thoughts of revenge. And they would think it unkindly of him to have deserted them without a word of farewell. Still, it could not be helped. It was a godsend to have a ship come in close like this. The mist might fall again at any moment, and the skipper would surely want to push off without delay.

He came close up to the ship, was seen, caught a rope that was thrown to him, and came alongside.

LS-9C

"Who are you, and what do you want, eh?" bawled a voice.

Roy's heart stood still.

"That Captain Hamilton?" he cried.

"It is. Who in thunder are you?"

"I'm Roy Danvers, sir," the young man shouted. "Thank Heaven you are alive. I thought you were lost with the *Nereid*. I'm coming on board!"

He scrambled up the side of the ship, as agile as a native, and a minute later was shaking hands with an astounded and slightly annoyed old sea-faring man.

"Well, I'm jiggered. It's you, Danvers. Thought you were drowned. Zoe told me you were on board the *Nereid*. Zoe, here's Roy Danvers come to life again!"

And from the group of people standing about, Zoe came slowly forward.

"Roy!" she whispered. "You!"

He held out a hand. He stood there, bare to the waist, without shoes or socks, a young god, but wild to look upon.

"I am glad you were saved, Zoe," he said simply.

"Was that you signaling to us, Danvers?" Captain Hamilton asked.

"Yes, sir! The bonfire, you mean. The mist lifted to-day for the first time since I have been on the island, and I built the fire. Thank Heaven you saw me. The natives say that the mist will remain lifted for some days, but I've got my doubts!"

"Natives?" the captain muttered. "I always thought the island was uninhabited. What's it like?"

A guilty feeling passed through Roy's heart. If he sent any of these people ashore, Utopia would pass in the flash of an eyelid. No!

"Not much, sir," he answered; "nothing at all, in fact. I thought I would never get away!"

The skipper nodded.

"Well, I suppose you want a passage back to civilization, my lad?"

"If you please, Captain Hamilton,"

Roy said, clinging to his precious bag of pearls.

"All right. Get for'ard, and the bos'n will rig you out. You can work your way back. I've bought this vessel, and am taking her back to Sydney. None of your pranks, though," he said in an undertone, glancing toward Zoe.

Roy reddened.

"I quite understand, sir," he said, and laughed as he went for'ard. The captain would sing a very different tune within a few weeks. When he knew that Roy Danvers was rich beyond all telling, he would not talk so glibly about pranks.

He was soon rigged out in the rough garments belonging to his trade, and then went on deck again to take one last view of the island. The schooner, for some reason, was still at anchor. It seemed that Captain Hamilton wished to finish his supper in peace, and was half inclined to remain where he was until dawn.

"Wants to have a squint at your island, mate," said a deck hand. "If I was him, I'd have the hook up afore this and beat it. That mist—I met her once. Gee!"

Roy laughed.

"So did I—he's a fool not to put to sea at once."

He had not had more than a word with Zoe yet, and he wanted very badly to whisper some hint of his good news in her ear. She should be the only one to know—until he reached San Francisco. But she should know. She would be glad for his sake—and for her own. It made all the difference in the world to them both.

Creeping around the deck, rather an uneasy figure in the darkness, he came at last to the entrance to the saloon. Then suddenly he heard Zoe laugh. Then he saw her. She was just ahead of him, standing with a man whose arm was about her waist. They were by the rail of the vessel, looking over the side into the deep, dark sea. They were talking softly and earnestly.

Roy's fists clenched, and for a moment he was upon the point of going forward to remonstrate. But what was the use? She was kissing the other fellow, her arms about his neck, laughing up into his eyes.

Her words reached Roy clearly.

"No, no, Jim," she said, "don't be so silly. A penniless sailor. Dad's silly to warn you about him. I liked him once some time ago, before he was foolish enough to lose all his money and run away to sea, but do you really think I would give you up for him?"

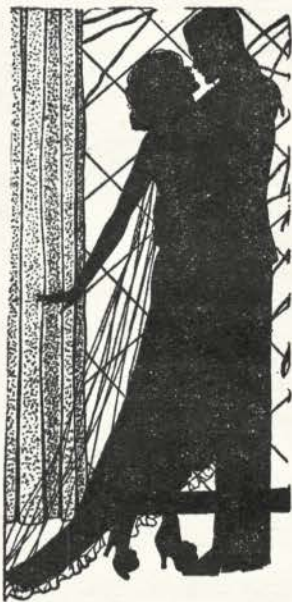
The man kissed her happily.

"Well, anyhow, little lady," he said, "I've got too much money to ever lose it, and I'm no fool. So give me another kiss and let's forget that poor guy!"

The "poor guy" moved back. He was smiling to himself. He had just heard Captain Hamilton come up on deck.

"All right," the skipper said loudly, "we'll weigh anchor now, Mr. Smith, and get away at once. You're right, Smith. There's that infernal mist rising again. Come along, jump to it! We've got to hurry along!"

The "poor guy" jumped to it, too. He dived for'ard, and found his bag of pearls, then aft again, and without be-



ing seen, slipped over the side of the vessel. His canoe was still there, made fast. They had forgotten it.

He laughed softly, as he heard the men at the anchor, laughed again as he cast off, and laughed long and loud as the mist spread about them a minute later, and hid the ship completely from him.

"Good-by to you all!" he cried, raising a hand in the heavy darkness. "Good-by, Zoe—and good-by to you all!" He lifted the bag of pearls high, stared at it for a moment, then flung it into the mist and the ocean.

For hours he sought the island, struggling to penetrate the mist. Weak and weary at last he gave it up and lay down in the canoe to rest. He supposed that this was the end of it all, his punishment for the trick he had tried to play upon Yola and her "Island of Happy Dreams."

But just when he felt that all was over, just as the sea began to freshen dangerously, his little craft drifted out of the fog, and with a few deft strokes of the paddle, he had passed into the quiet of the lagoon.

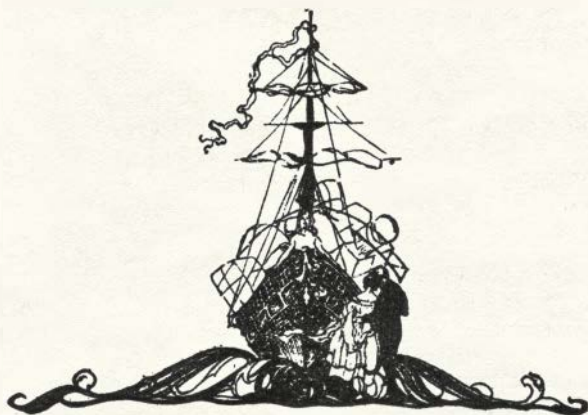
On the shore stood a single, lonely figure. That of a girl. She shaded her eyes as he approached, then suddenly held out her arms. It was Yola.

He sprang ashore, laughing, happy, glad. The salt water glistened on his bronzed body in the perfect sunshine. Slender arms entwined themselves about him; soft lips rested upon his own and filled his heart with happiness.

"You come back to Yola?" she whispered.

"I've come back to you, my love!" he replied.

Her arms were outstretched, and in another moment she was in his close embrace.





Love Letters

By Nina Kaye

ANN DORAN lifted her golden head, put down her pen, and cupped her delicate, quivering chin in two small hands. She did not read over the letter she had just written. Each word had burned deep in her heart.

DEAREST: You and I were not meant for each other, yet I love you. You would have seen it in my eyes if only you had looked. If I were to walk with you down the path to the lake, even if I didn't say a word you would know it. Oh, do you know what it means to love like this? Just to be near you is wonderful—I cannot hope for more. I am writing this because I cannot help it, because I must tell you of my love, and because you will never know who I am.

There on a piece of hotel stationery, she had poured out her love for tall, bronzed, handsome Jack Madden, who didn't know she existed. Surely, with all the girls in the hotel after him, he would hardly have noticed the little gray-eyed stenographer and day clerk, who all day long watched for him as she worked at her typewriter behind the lobby desk.

Perhaps while she sat in her room now, looking at the patch of night sky she could see from her window, he was walking in the scented summer darkness with some one else. Would it be Edith Cahill, who was most often by his side?

Oh, why couldn't she be the one?—Ann wondered.

Night after night Ann asked herself the same question. Those other girls could smile at him, a beckoning light hiding a hard, calculating gleam in their eyes. Why couldn't she show him her love with shining eyes, with lips framed ready for a kiss?

Ann sighed. She knew it was bold, but something stronger than herself had made her write the letter. She put it, unsigned, into an envelope.

In a green-linen dress with organdie cuffs and collar standing pertly at wrists and throat, Ann sorted the mail the next morning and placed the letters in their proper pigeonholes. At last there was only one letter left—her letter. Hesitating, she stood balancing it in her hand. Did she actually dare send it?

When she saw Jack Madden, clad in riding clothes, come down the stairs, she quickly inserted the letter in the "M" pigeonhole. Her heart gave a pounding leap as he approached the desk. How handsome he was, with his broad shoulders and his dark hair brushed smoothly from his forehead! His eyes flashed in his deeply bronzed face.

With outward calm Ann handed him his mail. She saw him pick up the unstamped envelope with interest. When he went out to the veranda, Ann put her hands to her throbbing temples. What would he think of that cry of love which would never—could never—be answered?

Ann would not have written a second letter—she would not have had the courage—if she had not been compelled to do so.

Always thinking of him, she could not help overhearing proud Mrs. Cahill and her daughter, Edith, when they mentioned his name. It was the hour before dinner, the gentle, golden hour of summer twilight. The guests were gathering in the lobby, and the two women stood near the desk, talking in

low, eager whispers. Then Ann heard Mrs. Cahill's voice, clear and tense with excitement as she said:

"Jack likes you as well as any of the others, and when you're Mrs. Madden it won't make any difference. It can be done to-night. Ask him to take you out in a canoe. Keep him out all night. I'll make the proper fuss in the morning, and he'll do the right thing and marry you!"

All the guests gradually went into the dining room. Left alone in the quiet lobby, Ann's head seemed to be going around in a circle with Jack Madden in the center. So Edith Cahill and her mother were calmly plotting to trick him into marriage! Could it be, she wondered, that they had never known the meaning of such love as she felt for him? For a moment Ann let herself slip off into dreams in which there was no summer hotel with its social barriers, dreams of a place where she and Jack were alone together and nothing stood in the way of their love.

Suddenly Ann terminated her dream. What could she be thinking of? Were Mrs. Cahill and her daughter to be allowed to carry out their plan without a finger raised to stop them? But what could she do—beckon to him and reveal the plot? He would never believe her. Ann's eyes glowed with a desperate light. She must save him!

Quickly she drew out a sheet of paper and wrote:

DEAR ONE: Would you do something for me? Just to feel your dear nearness once—that is all I ask. If you care to do this for one who loves you, meet me in the old summerhouse at the top of the hill as soon as it is dark. Don't make me speak to you, for you must not know who I am. I trust you.

The last mail came in. Ann sorted it with trembling hands, and without hesitating thrust her letter into the "M" pigeonhole. The guests began to trickle out of the dining room. Jack Madden came out with Edith Cahill on his arm.

Mrs. Cahill appeared as if from thin air, and draped a scarlet Spanish shawl over Edith's shoulders. Ann heard Edith's laugh with a hard edge to it as Jack left her and came toward the desk.

"I'll run down and get a canoe," Edith called after him. "It's always so difficult to get one after dinner."

Ann handed Jack the letter, saw him start as he noted the handwriting and the hotel envelope. A flush spread slowly over his face as he read it. Slowly he folded it many times, and thrust it into his vest pocket. He crossed the lobby and went out of the door Edith Cahill had just passed through.

Ann seemed suspended in space. Would he ignore her call and follow Edith Cahill into the trap set for him, or would he meet her at the summerhouse? She did not know, but she knew that she would keep her part of the tryst.

When Mr. Archer, the night clerk, arrived to relieve her, Ann almost ran across the lobby.

"Had your dinner, Miss Doran?" Mrs. Wayne, the housekeeper, asked, passing her on the back stairs.

"Oh"—Ann's throat was constricted with excitement—"I don't want any dinner to-night."

Up the stairs she flew and into her little room. It was growing dark. She must not keep him waiting.

How glad she was she had brought along the evening dress she had made for herself. Oh, it had only been a dream, that hope of ever wearing it here in the hotel where all the gowns were French creations. And now she was putting it on—for him!

She had a black-and-orange mandarin

coat that had been brought to her mother years before from Japan. Ann had kept it for just such a night as this. Enveloped in its dark shadows, she looked like an Oriental flower, her cheeks flushed with excitement, her lips tremulous with love. Tiptoeing, she ran down the back stairs. It would be unfortunate if she encountered any of the management now. They would not approve of an employee's going to meet

a guest, whatever the circumstances, and certainly Ann could not explain the present circumstances.

There was no moon. Ann picked her way carefully up the hill in the darkness. It was no wonder the guests never used the summerhouse. It was placed on the peak of the hill, and no one thought it was worth the climb. Ann listened for another footstep on the path, but heard nothing. Far off, from the lake, came the sound of silvery laughter echoing across the water. Was it Edith Cahill, joyous over the thought of her

coming triumph, with Jack Madden dipping the paddle, sending the canoe farther and farther from shore?—she wondered.

Ann stepped into the summerhouse. Enveloped in grapevines, it was even darker than outside in the moonless night. She stood still, both hands clasped over her heart. She was afraid—afraid of her own audacious courage! Was she alone? She did not dare speak. Taking a step forward, she bumped against something which yielded to the abrupt pressure of her body. A startled "Oh," escaped her.

"Well?" It was his dear voice. He



had come! You do not wish to speak?"

She shook her head, though he could not have seen it. He replied to her silence: "If I didn't speak either, you couldn't be certain it was I, could you?"

Ann sighed.

"But I must know who you are," he begged. "I could strike a match, you know."

For a moment panic seized Ann. Then she was relieved. He would not do that; he was a gentleman.

Groping, she moved to the side of the summerhouse, around which a rustic bench ran. He followed. Letting the mandarin coat fall from her soft shoulders, Ann sank to the bench. He sat beside her. She must keep him here. Edith Cahill would hunt him out if he went back to the hotel. Oh, if he knew what she had saved him from tonight!

Ann's head was near his shoulder. What did she care, so long as he would never know who she was? Nothing mattered except to be near him now, to see how her head came just to his shoulder, to know, as she had always known, how she would fit into the curve of his arm.

Suddenly she felt strong arms about her, felt her curls pushed back from her face and a kiss on her lips. Edith Cahill and all the others faded into oblivion. All Ann remembered was that she loved Jack Madden, and that he had kissed her.

Then she remembered—he did not love her! He had kissed her because he thought she expected it. She pushed him from her and drew out of his arms. Tears stood in her eyes. She was angry. She wanted to tell him so. Yet she could not speak. Jumping to her feet, she paced up and down the summerhouse. He would see that she was angry. Perhaps he would go! In despair she set herself before the entrance.

Time dragged by with the leaden feet it has for every one except sweethearts. Ann stood her ground, nails pressed deep into the palms of her hands, cheeks burning. He remained seated on the bench and said nothing. At last she slipped away. In her room she gave vent to her fury. In bold strokes she wrote:

You should not have kissed me. Would you cheapen my love?

Ann went to bed, but it was long before she fell asleep. Almost before it was light the sounds of preparations for breakfast beat into her consciousness. Pulling on her old blue bathing suit, which made her look like a saucy, golden-haired imp, she crept down the stairs in the early-morning hush and picked her way barefoot down the path. Quiet and deserted, the lake sent up from its unruffled surface a misty steam. Ann ran out on the diving board, and with hardly a splash slipped into the icy water. She swam out to the float where she rested, lying on the boards that were beginning to be warmed by the strong rays of sun.

Oh, if she were only a guest here and not one of the "hired help," taking her dip before the guests were up and about! Jack Madden would notice her then! She would wear a white-linen sports suit with a yellow sweater to set off her hair. And in the evening she would wear blue chiffon, a heavenly color.

At the sound of a rhythmic splashing, Ann turned to see a figure moving in the water toward the float. As the swimmer came closer, she noted with a little start that it was Jack Madden. Carefully hiding her confusion with a demure smile, Ann watched him climb up on the float.

"Good morning?" he said. "May I come into your parlor?"

"It's not mine," she answered.

"You're up early," he observed.

"So are you."

A frown came between his eyes. "Couldn't sleep," he explained briefly.

So he couldn't sleep last night! Why would her heart beat so? He was sure to hear it and see the throbbing in her throat.

She laughed unsteadily trying to hide her feelings, for he must never know that she loved him.

Casting a steady gaze on her as he stretched out on the smooth boards, he asked: "Just come to the hotel?"

She knew then that he had never even noticed her. "Why, no," she said. "I've been here all summer."

He looked at her in astonishment.

"All summer! Well, where have you been all the time? I'm sure I've never had those gray eyes looking up at me while we danced."

"No." She shook her head ruefully. "We haven't danced together."

"Where have you been hiding?"

Ann laughed. "Behind the desk, Mr. Madden." She pulled off her bathing cap, and her hair, lovely in its disarray, framed her face. "I'm just Miss Doran, the stenographer and day clerk." Quickly she rose, stood poised on the edge of the float, then cut the air gracefully and slid into the water.

He plunged in, and with his swift crawl was beside her in a moment as she headed for the shore. "Oh, you can't leave me like this, Miss Doran!"

"I always swim before breakfast," she called over her shoulder. Climbing out of the water she shook herself like a puppy and ran up the path.

Again in her room, putting on the green-linen dress, her eyes encountered the letter addressed to Jack Madden, ready for her to add to the incoming mail. Oh, how could she be angry with him? Recalling his tender smile, she tore the letter up.

Coming downstairs, Ann saw Edith Cahill in her riding habit already in the lobby. Perhaps Edith would try

again to-night. Jack was not yet safe from her. Behind the desk, Ann managed to scribble him a note. All it said was:

Will you come again to-night?

Jack, in riding clothes, greeted Ann with a friendly: "Hello—you look crisp after your swim. Any mail for me?" Ann handed him her letter. Twirling it into a tight roll, he stood at the door, gazing off toward the lake. Edith Cahill tapped him on the shoulder with her crop, and they conversed in low tones. After breakfast, they went off together.

In the evening Edith came down in a gorgeous orchid-tulle dress with a little green-velvet wrap over her shoulders. Two bright spots burned in her cheeks. What had Jack said to her? What were their arrangements for the evening? Would he come to the summerhouse to-night? All those questions Ann asked herself as she ran to her room.

At first Ann had the same fear that she was alone in the summerhouse. Then he spoke out of the shadows. "I want you to know why I came," he said. "I want you to know how deeply I appreciate your—affection. Do you know. I've never been sure of being loved before? Oh, I've known so many girls, but they all seemed to be thinking of themselves, rather than of me. And I'm foolish enough to want to be loved just for myself, not because—well, of my father's money."

Seated side by side on the bench, he took her hand and held it gently. "I thought you might be Lilian la Vern, but I don't think you are. I've been watching all the girls, trying to pierce the mask of the one who would be you. Won't you tell me who you are?"

Ann shook her head in the darkness. He began to talk about himself, his hopes and his ambitions. Ann listened and loved him more, though the hopeless-

ness of her love grew. When the first rim of the late-rising moon shone over the hill, Ann rose to go.

"Will you come to-morrow?" he pleaded. "I seem to find myself when I am with you."

In the morning he met her on the float and together they swam the length

of the lake. They rested on the sun-warmed float until Ann almost forgot that she had to be at the desk at nine o'clock. Oh, it was so easy to be with him, to laugh, to watch his funny, tender smile, and in the evening to have him to herself, that other self he did not know.



Why would her heart beat so? He was sure to hear it and see the throbbing in her throat. She laughed unsteadily, trying to hide her feelings, for he must never know that she loved him.

Again and again in the dark summer-house he begged her to tell him who she was. During the day she saw him talking to one girl and another, and Ann knew he was trying to find out who it was who met him at the summerhouse and who wrote him the letters.

Often she heard Mrs. Cahill or Edith calling him, inviting him to their bridge table or suggesting an excursion. Grim determination showed in their tight lips, but Jack came nightly to the summerhouse and certainly he could not be tricked into a difficult situation by daylight.

The day passed for Ann with a rosy opening and a happy closing. In between she dreamed of Jack over her typing and poured into her love letters the things she could not say to him as they raced and dived together or as they sat side by side in the summerhouse.

Sometimes he came to the desk and stood talking, carrying on conversations begun on the float in the morning. He asked her, too, if he could not take her driving when she was off duty. But Ann had to tell him that the employees were not permitted to go out with the guests.

She would have been content to go on, wrapped in her cloak of romance, had not that gossamer garment been pricked by Jack Madden himself. He forgot to ask for his mail!

At first Ann thought nothing of it. After she had spent the early-morning hours pouring her heart into a love letter, she would offer it to him along with his other mail. Casting about for a reason after he had left his mail uncalled for for several days, Ann recalled that his lapse of interest had coincided with the arrival at the hotel of Harriet Hughes, a languid girl with burnished copper hair and tawny eyes that seemed to plumb the very depths of those on whom she gazed.

Her coming set the hotel on edge. Things did not go on as before. For Harriet was different. While the other girls rode and played and swam, Harriet sat enthroned in a great peacock chair on the lawn. In the evening she was ensconced in a corner of the lobby. Wherever she might be, she was sure to be holding court with all the most sought-after men gathered about her. During the day, her laughter floated in to Ann, with the answering, admiring laughs of the men. And among the mingled voices there was sure to be one, the voice to which Ann listened in the darkness, whose every cadence she knew. Jack Madden was at Harriet Hughes's feet.

Ann found she could no longer write her love letters. Before her on the page would appear the face of Harriet Hughes, daringly confident. Ann hated her! With an angry thrust she pushed the paper away from her and paced the room. Her fury spent, Ann faced her problem squarely. She had been a fool to have dared to love Jack Madden, to have dared to think he could ever care for her! All the weeks of loving and yearning—even their joyous mornings together at the lake—had not brought him as near to her as Harriet Hughes could bring him to herself in a day with her beauty and the sense of wealth and luxury that clung to her.

With aching heart and heavy step Ann made her way up the hill to the summerhouse. Guided by the glowing tip of his cigarette, she found her place beside him on the bench. He threw aside his cigarette at once and began to talk.

"When you first told me of your love, my dear unknown, I was amazed and intrigued. It was rather a new sensation, being loved so devotedly."

Ann's cheeks burned.

"Then I thought that so great a love would surely kindle in me a like feeling. And I wanted to love. I never

had before—nothing more than a passing fancy. I wanted to love you, though you would not reveal yourself to me. Perhaps I would have, if you had let me know who you are.”

Ann wondered if he would.

“But I have found love,” he went on. “It’s just as wonderful as you said in your letters. It’s more wonderful to love than to be loved, I think. For I don’t know yet if she loves me. I’m trying to summon my courage and ask her.” He rose. “I shall always cherish your—interest. And I’m sure you’ll find some one more worthy than I——”

Ann stumbled to her feet. She could tell by the finality of his words that this was farewell. Farewell to romance for her! She must see him go, relinquish him to some one else. She wanted to cry out her love for him, yet she had to stand there dumb, forcing down the lump that kept rising in her throat, blinking back the tears that welled in her eyes. If it were only over! She wanted to be alone in her room, to pour out her love for him in a letter. But no—she could not even do that any more!

“I don’t think it would be fair to her to come here again,” he said. “Shall we shake hands?”

Ann put forward a trembling hand, lightly touched his, and ran blindly out of the summerhouse. She must get away from him at once.

Once in her room, flinging herself across her bed, the tears which she had so valiantly kept back fell now unchecked. When at last it seemed that she had wept away all the tears she had, she lay quietly, too stricken to move. It was so hard to give up the man she loved! And to-morrow she must face him, race with him to the float, laugh with him, be light-hearted and gay. The very thought reduced her to tears again. And then to hand him his mail, without the usual love letter! She could never do it. Her eyes would betray

her; she would not be able to keep the hurt out of them.

Sometime during the dim hours when all the hotel slept, Ann made her decision. She would not stay any longer at the hotel. She would go back to town, back to a job like the one she had had in the coal-and-ice plant, back to matter-of-fact Bob Farnum, who never knew whether it was a starry night or a rainy one. Somehow, her friends had narrowed down to Bob. That was one reason why she had decided to leave home and work at the hotel. But now she must say good-by to it all. Her heart would be tied up like a lavender sachet and tucked away, ever to cherish the one whom she had loved in vain.

Ann packed her things, put on a trim little traveling dress, and sought out Mrs. Wayne in the linen room.

“My dear, are you ill?” the housekeeper asked.

Taking her cue from the question, Ann replied: “Yes, I’m not feeling well.” It was true, she assured herself. She was heartsick, though she could hardly explain that to Mrs. Wayne. “I think I’d better go home. The truck’s going down now for the first mail. They could take me along.”

Ann must have looked very forlorn and wistful, for Mrs. Wayne left her task of issuing the day’s linen long enough to see her and her baggage stowed in the truck. Her last words to Ann were to urge her to come back and finish out the season if she felt better. Her check would be mailed to her at the end of the week.

Shouts from her two young brothers and her mother’s exclamation of surprise greeted Ann when the taxi dropped her and her suitcases at the front door five hours later. It was just past dinner time, which was in the middle of the day at the Dorans’, and Mrs. Doran bustled Ann into the kitchen to give her something to eat.

Ann followed her mother as though she were in a dream. It was all so unreal to her—the sunlight streaming across the washtubs, her brother's tool chest open in the center of the floor, the apron her mother made her put on over her dress. It was all so remote from the quiet luxury of the hotel. For the hundredth time that day, Ann thought of Jack Madden and wondered if he had missed her at the lake that morning. Perhaps he had been too joyous in his newly found love to remember his swim with the little hotel stenographer.

"Just wait till Bob Farnum hears you're back," her mother said, pushing pots back on the stove. "He stops here almost every night on his way home from work, complaining you've been away too long. You couldn't have picked a better day to come back, either. They're having a dance to-night out at Four Corners, and Bob will be tickled to death to take you. When you've finished eating you can just give him a ring at the store."

But Ann said she was very tired after the trip, and she went up to her room to lie down.

Bob stopped in on his way home. He greeted Ann in his calm way.

"Hello, Ann. Didn't they treat you all right up there? Home's best after all. Want to go to a dance to-night?"

"Of course she wants to go," Mrs. Doran put in.

Because Ann knew she must resign herself to all this, because she knew that never again would Jack Madden hold her in his arms, for he belonged to another, she put on the evening dress he had never seen, though its soft texture had often brushed against his hand. She could not help noting how lovely she looked in it. Its satiny smoothness was almost the color of her hair. Oh, if he could only see her to-night! But she must go with Bob and forget that she had ever known Jack.

When she was dancing with Bob in the rustic, open-air pavilion, Ann realized that she could never go through with it. She resented the possessive way Bob held her in his arms, and the commanding tone in which he spoke to her, as though she had to accept him as her fate. It would never occur to Bob that she might prefer any one to him with his matter-of-fact attitude of ownership. When he unceremoniously piloted her into a dark corner of the pavilion and kissed her, Ann turned from him with a little cry, and she was off like a mad streak in the night.

She knew it was many miles from Four Corners to her home, but there was only one way for her to get there and that was to walk. Tense with indignation, she set out along the dark road. After trudging for about an hour, pebbles pressing through the thin soles of her dancing slippers, she was forced to scamper to one side as the bright headlights of a powerful car swept the road.

Clinging to the bushes like a frightened butterfly, Ann saw the car sweep by and come to a sudden halt a few yards down the road. A man was running toward her, and Ann, terrified, thought of flight but was so scared she could not move.

Then he called out: "In trouble? Car break down or something?"

For one moment the rapid beating of her heart stopped. It was Jack Madden! He would find her here all alone on this lonesome road! She hid her face in her hands.

But now he was close to her and he knew who she was. "Ann, Ann, it's you! I've found you at last!" he cried, and then he lifted her, unresisting, in his arms and bore her to his car.

"O Ann, how could you run away from the hotel without letting me know?" he asked reproachfully. "I waited for you on the float, and when you weren't at the desk either, I found

Mrs. Wayne and she told me you had gone home. I made her give me your address. I drove all afternoon as fast as my car would go. A flat delayed me a little, but I pushed on. And when I got to your house your mother said you had gone to a dance—with your sweetheart. Oh, tell me it isn't true, Ann darling! He isn't your real sweetheart, is he? I hoped I was going to be. I've wanted to tell you for a long time, but the morning's no time for a proposal and you never would see me any other time."

His dark eyes were shining as he bent over her, tucking her into the seat.

Ann was perplexed. "But Harriet—I thought you were in love with Harriet Hughes!"

His laugh rang out in the still summer night, and the stars seemed to twinkle with him in his merriment. "Harriet!" he exclaimed, climbing to his place behind the steering wheel. "Why, I've known Harriet for years. She's such a good sport she let me rave to her about you. But, Ann darling, let's talk about us. Don't you love me a little?"

Ann rested her golden head on his shoulder as she had so often longed to do. Her gray eyes looked up into his. Her lips were framed ready for a kiss.

"O Jack, I love you so much!"

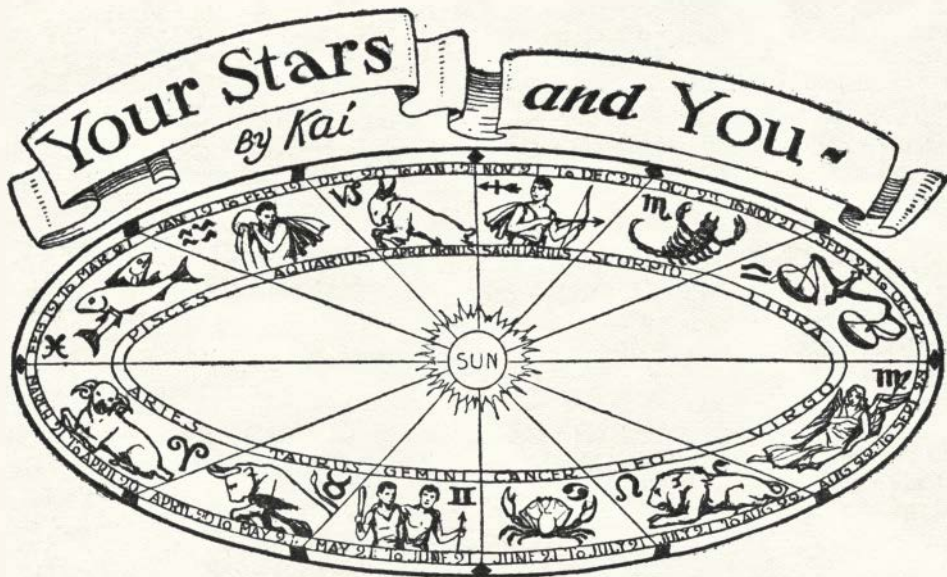
She closed her eyes as his lips met hers, eagerly, tenderly. That kiss was the sweetest thing Ann had ever known. Her whole heart seemed to go out to him there beneath the stars. How glad she was now that she could be herself, that she could whisper: "Yes—oh, yes!" as he begged her to be his wife soon.

"You darling, you sweet, precious darling!" He held her close and kissed her again and again. "Look at those stars up there, sweetheart—don't they look like punctuation marks in a love letter?" They laughed together at the fancy. "I'll write you a love letter some day—telling you how much I love you, if I can find words enough."

Ann nestled in his strong, protecting arms. "O Jack, I——"

She caught herself just in time. She had been about to say: "O Jack, I poured out my whole heart in the love letters I wrote you at the hotel!" But Jack must never know it was she who had written him the love letters. That would be her secret, tucked away in her heart, only every time he kissed her in the fragrant dark of the night—just as he did at that moment—she would remember and love him the more!





YOUR WEEK.

This is a week for expansion and a more hopeful frame of mind, providing it doesn't cost you anything in dollars and cents. The prevailing influences are adaptable to travel, pleasure seeking, following the arts and the details of existence that deal with higher levels of thought. There is some uncertainty connected with the influences this week—a doubtful trend and variable experiences. You cannot rely upon your views and beliefs right now, because of the speculative angle that will be attached to any venture that may be brought to your notice and because of the tendency to be too optimistic in considering the returns to yourself. In view of the fact that we have been experiencing many complex entanglements for some months in the past, it might be well to take into consideration that, while we are on the up grade in adjusting the various problems in our lives, it will not pay to be too hasty at a time like this when we are at the climax of our readjustment of general living conditions. It will not be long until the distress and agitation will be confined to memories of the past. We are not at the stage yet where we can expand safely into a wide scope of activity. Therefore, I suggest you take everything quite calmly; base your actions on reason instead of emotion. If we attempt to reach out too far at this time, we are going to undo much of the stable recognition of values that has been the underlying reason

for the depression. Make your dealings this week of a temporary nature, but retain the thought that any of your activities have a definite bearing on the future. If you are conservative, are not too speculative in your ideas, use discretion, and act with the understanding that the peak of revival is six months away, at least, you will find your mental and material outlook advanced by the end of this week.

DAY BY DAY.

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time.

**Saturday,
May
23rd.**

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This is an intense day, but favorable for your usual Saturday activity. Excellent for pleasure, for dealing with women, for social affairs, love interests, travel, and inspirational thinking. At all times it is advisable to be discreet in your actions, and this week is a time when you should not let your feelings rule over your good common sense. If you will remember this, you may proceed with freedom. You young folks with your alert minds should not be too hasty in seeking adventure and fields of pleasure to-day, and you should avoid getting in too deeply where your emotions are involved. It

will not be safe. If you are traveling or participating in social activity, remember the inflammable and impulsive influences around eleven thirty p. m. and five a. m. Sunday morning. Do not take chances to-day; avoid jealousy and anger; expect strange experiences. Any opportunity presented to you before one o'clock in the afternoon will merit your careful consideration. If your personal influences are favorable, take advantage of opportunities. If you are not operating at your best at the present time, look for queer angles in connection with new ventures and unusual ideas. It is a day for sound thinking in business deals.

**Sunday,
May
24th.**



Restraint should be the keynote for to-day. Otherwise, follow your usual Sunday program. Do not allow yourself to worry, because it is a day filled with strange fears and suppositions, and you will be inclined to enlarge upon your mental processes in the wrong direction. The most satisfactory periods of the day are between four and six in the afternoon and around midnight.

**Monday,
May
25th.**



Here is another queer day when unexpected happenings may produce temporary chaos in your affairs. Good for promotional ventures, creative work, inspirational writing, expansive thinking blended with cautious consideration. The evening hours are more stable than the daylight hours, and between ten o'clock and one a. m. may be used for adjusting old conditions, dealing with older people, and for going straight to the point in handling existing problems. It is a favorable day for changes and for business, if you keep the general speculative tendency of the week in mind.

**Tuesday,
May
26th.**



This is a favorable day when you may consider partnership matters and follow your usual lines of business and routine. The day is best before nine p. m.; late evening hours are unsatisfactory.

**Wednesday,
May
27th.**



Handle affairs to-day that require serious thought; act with shrewdness in all dealings, and use your head in settling problems. It is not a favorable day for the lighter phases of life. The evening hours are most unfavorable for social affairs or for contact with the opposite sex. Not good for love affairs.

**Thursday,
May
28th.**



To-day has a nervous trend, when you may expect changes and sudden developments. The morning hours are favorable for trading, selling, writing, and interviews. The evening hours around eight o'clock are suitable for social affairs, interesting conversations, inspirational thinking and writing, and for matters that concern the heart. The influences around eleven thirty p. m. are unreliable and conducive to quarrels, accident, and unpleasant occurrences.

**Friday,
May
29th.**



The entire day is generally unfavorable until after nine p. m. for anything of importance. It is not a day for contact with women, for writing, interviews, or handling important business details. You will be inclined to pay more for an article than it is worth during the morning hours. The evening after nine thirty is expansive and good for rest, relaxation, contact with people, and consideration of financial affairs.

IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN—

March 21st and April 20th
(Aries ♈)

—it is the same old story for you Aries people. You should control your erratic tendency and your impulsive streak. Do

not try to sweep aside all your difficulties with one stroke. Take life easier and less intensely. You will enjoy your days more. Financial, emotional, partnership, and home difficulties are in store this week for you who were born between April 6th and 16th. It is not a favorable time for you to make changes. The week will be pleasant and happier for you who have birthdays between March 24th and 31st.

April 20th and May 21st

(Taurus ♉)

—it is a favorable period for all you Taurans, except those born between May 13th and 15th. This group born about the middle of the month will find themselves losing their tempers easily and making mistakes through using hasty judgment. It is an emotional time, when love interests and social activity will occupy the minds of you who celebrate your birthday between April 25th and May 2nd. Financial affairs and opportunities will improve, and you should utilize all the chances that come your way if born between May 7th and 12th.

May 21st and June 21st

(Gemini ♊)

—it is a neutral period for you, except those born between May 24th and 30th and between June 8th and 13th. The first group will find complications in the emotional department of their lives and in business affairs; your judgment is not at its best during the next seven days, and you should postpone important decisions. The folks born between June 8th and 13th are in line for new business, travel, improved financial conditions, and general activity in their lives. Further all your interests during the current week.

June 21st and July 21st

(Cancer ♋)

—you folks have been having all kinds of complications in your affairs. The next seven days will adjust many problems and bring a happier state of mind for you born between June 24th and 27th and between July 1st and 5th. The Cancerians born between July 10th and 13th and between July 15th and 17th still have limitation, unpleasantness, bad health conditions, marriage problems, and restrictions in their lives. The next two weeks will relieve the pressure somewhat on account of the good daily influences, but it is not wise for you to make important changes at this time.

July 21st and August 22nd

(Leo ♌)

—most of you Leo folks are under favorable planetary influences. To the regular customers of this department the mention of the word influences is full of meaning. The positions of the planets in the heavens have a bearing on your daily lives and on the general trend of your affairs. The general business conditions have not been satisfactory to any of us for the past eighteen months, but you folks born under this sign are going to be the first to profit by an improved state of affairs. The people who will benefit during the coming week are those born between August 13th and 18th, and this group should find their lives on the upward trend and affairs straightening out satisfactorily; take advantage of all the opportunities that come your way. It is a period of uncertainty for the individuals born between July 26th and 28th; an unsatisfactory time for love affairs for you who were born between July 26th and 31st; a nervous and unsatisfactory business period for you who have birthdays between August 1st and 5th.

August 22nd and September 23rd

(Virgo ♍)

—you are under a favorable ray from the planets and should find life pleasant and profitable during these spring months. A favorable business period for you who have birthdays between September 1st and 6th. For you who have literary ambitions or who are connected with the writing profession, this is a productive mental time. Good financially for the folks born between September 11th and 14th, and a time of opportunities which you should grasp; an active and stable state of affairs, when old conditions may be adjusted satisfactorily, for you who were born between September 14th and 18th.

September 23rd and October 22nd

(Libra ♎)

—you are under planetary rays that bring unpleasant conditions into your lives and distressing results if you attempt to adjust any of these conditions for the next few months. Try to be patient with the present state of affairs and wait for the future time when you can make a better deal in connection with the various departments of your life. The most favored of the Librans are those born between September 25th and 28th; this week is a happier time for you. Those under an adverse set

of conditions during the coming week are you who celebrate your birthdays between October 11th and 18th; this is not a favorable time for you to make a decision about anything.

October 22nd and November 21st
(Scorpio ♏)

—the conditions of your life during the next week will be varied and mixed. You Scorpio people are intense and take life seriously. Unfavorable emotionally for you who were born between October 26th and 29th. Use your sagacity and commercial knowledge to advance your business interests if you were born between November 12th and 17th. This last-mentioned group will find upheavals in their lives during the coming week and will have unpleasant angles that have to be handled; but your main influences are favorable, and you will benefit by the activity of the week. Adjust old conditions and use common sense and shrewdness in all your dealings if born between November 14th and 17th; the current week will bring a more settled state of mind, and you will feel you have made progress during these seven days.

November 21st and December 20th
(Sagittarius ♐)

—this is a favorable period for you, when you may use your energies and opportunities to further your interests and make progress in the fundamental conditions in your life. Those who will have the help of the planets in accomplishing their aims during the coming week were born between December 9th and 16th, and should exert every effort to get results. Control your nervous energy, avoid emotional upheavals, and check your judgment in every detail of your life, if born between November 24th and 28th.

December 20th and January 19th
(Capricorn ♑)

—you have been up against the wall for almost two years now, and all your activity has not produced the results you have desired. You are almost at the point where you will be relieved of the limitation and restriction of Saturn in your lives, and, as you may have heard before, "everything looks dark before the dawn." Do not feel bitter over your personal conditions; most of you should be too shrewd to allow yourselves to indulge in such destructive thoughts. This is a better week, when you

may make an effort that will bring results, if born between December 25th and 28th and between December 31st and January 3rd. If your birthday occurs between January 7th and 15th, you are still under unfavorable influences, and will have to be patient with conditions during the next seven days. Watch your financial interests; do not make contracts or changes.

January 19th and February 19th
(Aquarius ♒)

—the current week is not an especially important time for you, except in considering your personal problems. It is a constructive time for you who were born between February 10th and 14th and an active period; when you may travel or make beneficial changes if you have a birthday between February 5th and 10th. It is not a time for important moves or changes if you were born between January 25th and February 2nd, and you must be careful in matters that require sound judgment.

February 19th and March 21st
(Pisces ♓)

—you are under good influences and should forge ahead in all the matters that concern your life at this time. It is an important week if born between March 7th and 12th; your finances will improve and you may make advantageous changes and removals. A happy and pleasant period if born between February 22nd and March 4th; good for travel, affairs of the heart, business and social contacts.

CALENDAR FOR OPERATIONS.
June, 1931.

June 1st.—Moon in Sagittarius until ten eight p. m.; a dual sign; avoid all operations, especially those of hips, intestines, and for feverish conditions; operation would have to be repeated.

June 2nd.—Moon in Capricorn all day; favorable for all operations, if necessary.

June 3rd.—Moon in Capricorn all day; see above.

June 4th.—Moon in Aquarius at five twenty-four a. m.; good for all operations, if necessary, except for gravel, stone, and blood.

June 5th.—Moon in Aquarius all day; see above.

June 6th.—Moon in Aquarius until four p. m.; see June 4th. After that, in Pisces.

June 7th.—Moon in Pisces all day; a dual sign; avoid all operations, especially

foot and regenerative organs; operation would have to be repeated.

June 8th.—Moon in Pisces all day; see above.

June 9th.—Moon enters the sign Aries at four forty-four a. m.; see June 10th.

June 10th.—Moon in Aries all day; avoid head, eye, fever, and brain operations.

June 11th.—Moon in Aries until four fifty-four p. m.; see June 10th. After that, in Taurus; see June 12th.

June 12th.—Moon in Taurus all day; avoid throat, neck, and ear operations.

June 13th.—Moon in Taurus all day; see above.

June 14th.—Moon entered the sign Gemini at two twenty a. m.; see June 15th.

June 15th.—Moon in Gemini all day; a dual sign; operations would have to be repeated.

June 16th.—Moon in Gemini until eight thirty-eight a. m.; after that in Cancer; see June 17th.

June 17th.—Moon in Cancer all day; avoid operations on breast and stomach.

June 18th.—Moon in Cancer until twelve thirty-six p. m.; after that, in Leo; see June 19th.

June 19th.—Moon in Leo all day; avoid heart, back, and blood operations.

June 20th.—Moon in Leo until three thirty-two p. m.; see above; after that, in Virgo; see June 21st.

June 21st.—The Sun entered the sign Cancer at four twenty-eight a. m. Moon in Virgo all day; a dual sign; avoid all operations, especially for nervous or intestinal disorders. An operation to-day would have to be repeated.

June 22nd.—Moon in Virgo until six twenty-three p. m.; see above. After that, in Libra; see June 23rd.

June 23rd.—Moon in Libra all day; avoid kidney, stone, and gravel operations.

June 24th.—Moon in Libra all day; see above. Moon enters Scorpio at ten thirty-five p. m.; see June 25th.

June 25th.—Moon in Scorpio all day; avoid operations on appendix and regenerative organs.

June 26th.—Moon in Scorpio all day until one twenty-seven a. m.; see above. After that, in Sagittarius; see June 27th.

June 27th.—Moon in Sagittarius all day; a dual sign; avoid all operations, especially those of hips, intestines, and for feverish conditions; operation would have to be repeated.

June 28th.—Moon in Sagittarius all day; see above.

June 29th.—Moon entered the sign Capricorn at six thirty-five a. m.; see June 30th.

June 30th.—Moon in Capricorn all day; favorable for all operations, if necessary.

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★ THE STAR QUESTION BOX ★
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Very sorry, Miss J. P., born October 8, 1900, that you have not received a reply to your question sooner. You say you wrote long, long ago and that you would like to get an answer to your definite questions. Ah, there's the rub! Definite answers demand definite and complete data—and you do not send me the time of your birth. Nevertheless, here is an answer based upon your general planetary positions in your chart. You should be in a profession where you may use your personality more than you are able to do in a stenographic position. A connection with law would be most adaptable for you, as your chart shows a leaning in this direction. I do not like the cigar-stand idea for you, but teaching dramatics is in harmony with your horoscope; you have decided dramatic ability. You will note I have given fair warning to you Librans about financial conditions for 1931. You will have to curb your ambitions somewhat for the remainder of this year, but by the time you read this your influences will be slightly improved and will continue to improve during the next few months. You are fortunate in having good planetary relationship to the Fire signs in your chart, and with this help and by using good judgment—remembering to be content with mediocre advancement—you should be able to come through the remainder of the year with little damage. I would suggest you leave the emotional side of your life alone for the next year and stick to business; your influences for dealing with men are not the best that could be desired.

It is fine of you, J. J. H., born April 12, 1877, to write me so often and so complimentary. I am glad you like the new arrangement of the department, and I'll read just as many letters as you send in. Why don't you take up the study of astrology seriously? There is no question about your interest, and now that you are under the influence of the planet Uranus—the astrological planet—you would make rapid

progress. It seems to me you wrote me two letters from Florida. Am I right? Because you follow this department so religiously, I am sure I do not need to repeat that you are in line for many changes between now and 1933. Unfortunately, I am not able to offer you much help, except to suggest you continue to read the remarks addressed through this department to you Aries people. You have four planets in Aries, two in the sign Capricorn, and the sign Cancer on your Ascendant. This places you in the cross-opposition group I have been writing about these past few weeks, and it brings turmoil into your life for the next two years. The answer to all this is: You are at a most critical period in your life, filled with unexpected developments, but the general solution is up to you. If I can help you in any specific problem, let me know. You ask me if you could study astrology, and my answer is, "Yes."

Your letter surprises me, Miss L. G., born September 29, 1899, near Sunrise, Canada. You say you are a student of astrology, that you have not had "good luck" and "do you think I have met my future husband yet?" Now, Lorna, do you think that is the way for an astrologer to ask a question? If you have investigated astrology very far, you know there is no guesswork about this science. You know, also, that Librans should not be thinking about marriage during the year 1931. I was glad to hear from you—always glad to hear from astrological students—and I like your chart; but you should check up on your scientific knowledge. I am afraid, my dear, you base most of your reactions on your emotions, and that is bad business. You are in the right profession, and you may thank your stars that you have been led to the artist's profession and to being an illustrator of a children's magazine. My advice to you is: Stick to business, forget emotional affairs until after '31, continue your astrological studies, and wait for the opportunities of late fall of this year and during 1932. There are more worth-while things in life than marriage. L. G. If I can help you in your studies, let me know.

Here is a mighty nice letter from Miss D. B., born August 13, 1909, in Pennsylvania, at two thirty p. m., and she sends me a "million best wishes and as many thanks." Teaching is the right line for you, Miss D. B., and I am glad you are

able to use the "Day By Day" to your advantage in handling the children. I would suggest, by all means, that you go to the training college and complete your studies. You are going to have problems to solve in the next year, but there will be a splendid opportunity for you in the summer of 1932.

Constant Reader, born June 29, 1905, time unknown; husband born January 15, 1901: There is ample time for you to write me before the "big event" in August and furnish me with the complete data on your horoscope and that of your husband. I cannot answer your question definitely about children without your time of birth. In the meantime, try to control your nervousness. This is bad for your health and for your state of mind and only adds to the uncertainty of your condition. Just because you were unfortunate in your first attempt to have a family does not mean you will be in the future. I am sorry not to be able to reassure you on a matter of such vital importance as this is to you, but I could not conscientiously give you a scientific opinion without having the full facts in the case. Try not to worry so much. Your state of mind is as important as your astrological influences, you know.

The planet Mars goes into the sign Virgo on June 11th of this year, Miss G. T., born January 10, 1910, at three a. m., in New York, and this will produce an improved condition in your state of health. Your letter and your question perplex me. Evidently you know something about astrology, or you would not have asked me this scientific question. On the other hand, you must know your birth date carries the influence of Saturn in opposition to Jupiter, square Uranus, and that this configuration is greatly responsible for your ill health. Wish you had written me more in detail, Miss G. T., and told me just what is wrong with you physically. Of course, Saturn has been conjuncting your Capricorn planets, squaring your Jupiter, squaring your Mars and Saturn in Aries, and opposing your Neptune in Cancer. This is enough of a planetary affliction to make any one feel at low ebb—bad circulation, low blood pressure, and a morbid frame of mind. Keep as cheerful as possible, and react to the favorable planetary influences of your chart at this time—Jupiter conjuncting your Neptune trine the Ascendant. When Jupiter enters the sign Leo in August, you will feel the bene-

ficial influence of this planet in relation to your planets in Aries, and you will find yourself responding to the strengthening ray of Jupiter. Take care of yourself, get plenty of fresh air and physical exercise. If you aren't able to walk or move around a great deal, vibratory massage would help you.

Mrs. K. B., your son, born August 5, 1906, at eleven forty-five a. m., in Canada, is very young to have had his life so filled with adventure. Few young men can boast of having been marooned in the arctic and having had to walk a thousand miles. What an interesting and hard experience that must have been for him! The date of the young lady you send blends well with that of your son, although his present astrological positions are better than hers. She should take care of her health and not allow herself to worry about anything. If the position in aviation that was offered to your son relates to the management or the business end of the industry, it would be well for him to take the offer. Otherwise, I think he should continue with his business experience in the company you mention.

Glad to have your letter, Miss M. E. H., born August 22, 1907, at noon, in Ohio. I am glad to hear from you for several reasons: I am in sympathy with your ideals and your ambitions, know something about your profession of retail selling, and I know a bit about your Ohio city. Everything will not be plain sailing for you in the next year and a half, but it is not an unwise move for you to change now to another location. The population and opportunities in your town are limited, and I think you are in the right profession. You have a commercial sense, selling ability, and you should deal with the public. If you feel you have enough experience and plenty of courage, I suggest you take steps to bring yourself to New York. There isn't any reason in the world why you cannot be a successful buyer or follow any opening that might present itself in your line of work. Why not visit New York this summer, look over the situation, and prepare for the move when you feel you are equipped financially to maintain

yourself until the right opportunity comes along? Ordinarily, I would not advise young women to come to New York without some definite offer or a more stable foundation than you have. But I feel you would like New York, and it would probably like you. Remember you are going to have obstacles to buck, and it will require determination and grit on your part. Your planetary influences are not A 1, but I do not think you will be as unhappy in a new location as you are at this time in your present location. My main suggestion is: Be sure you have financial resources in case of emergencies. Outside of that, you have nothing to worry about. I think you are clever and in the right business; all you need is an opportunity, and the determination to reach your goal.

Mrs. McKee, April 13, 1907, I cannot help you until I know what kind of business you are in at present.

E., April 23, 1883: Please write again and give me the complete data on the question you asked.

The following people have failed to ask a specific question. About fifty per cent of the people who write in either want a complete horoscope or want to know what the future holds for them. It is impossible to answer such questions through the limited space that I have in *Love Story Magazine*. If these people will write again, asking a question, I will answer them: Sylvia C., June 5, 1914; Miss D. D., June 4, 1912; Gay, January 10, 1912; M. M., December 29, 1902; Mary O., January 29, 1909; Miss F. B., November 12, 1911; Victor T., September 9, 1901; Mrs. E. L. E., November 3, 1906; Mrs. G. C. M., October 27, 1896

If you do not send in complete data, Kai cannot answer you. If asking about marriage, be sure to give birth data of both parties concerned; if about business, name business interested in. Kai cannot answer questions pertaining to the stock market or the inheritance of money or property.

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.

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AS fascinating as fiction, as true as life itself! That's the way Navy Girl's story reads. She's at the age when most girls are thinking of parties, dates, new clothes, with love and marriage only a distant mirage to come into their lives in their own good time; yet she has met them face to face, and has emerged from the experience disappointed, bitter, with all her faith in love vanished with her happiness. Can you cheer her up? Whether or not you succeed, you'll find an interesting Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May a broken-hearted girl of eighteen put in a plea for Pen Pals? I was married at fifteen, and have two sweet baby girls. I'm in love with a sailor boy, but can't trust men any more. Won't you girls who are happily married or have sweethearts in the navy write to me?

NAVY GIRL.

Other people's houses are her only home.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonely widow, asking for friendship in your Corner. I go different places as domestic nurse or housekeeper. I love to read and go to

the movies, and, as I have no home in which to entertain friends, I am anxious to make Pen Pals.

MARIE OF ALBANY.

He builds his own wings.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man of eighteen, have built many gliders, and am now completing one of the swing variety. I have given instruction in building, live near a large airport, and have many souvenirs of the ill-fated Fokker 32. Come on, you aviation fans; write to a real Pal.

TAILSPIN OF NEW JERSEY.

A born hostess.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm living at home, and mail time is the most interesting part of my day. I'm a girl of twenty-three, like swimming and having a bunch drop in and roll up the rug to dance. I'm going to California in June. Who wants to write to me?

HOOSIER MADELEINE.

She sticks to her studies.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a dark-haired Massachusetts girl with large blue eyes, and I am studying to be a dancer. I live in an apartment with another girl and my twin brother, and get lonesome when they go out and I have to stay home and plug away at

my books. Girls, write to me, and hear about dancing and the other interesting things I have to tell.
DANCING ALYCE.

A country of blue skies and happy song we all want to visit.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a fair-haired girl of twenty, living in Genoa, Italy. I'm anxious to hear from girls of my age living in all parts of the United States, and can promise interesting letters about my country.
G. OF GENOA.

Surrounded by water and happiness.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman of twenty-one, with three little boys, and live on a noted summer-resort island in Maine. I love dancing and sports, but can't participate in them a great deal with my family to take care of. Girls, write to
ISLAND EVE.

A clever follower of a vanishing art.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder if your Pals can find time to write to little Lacy. I'm a plump Ohio girl, with needlework as my hobby. I can make Venetian-point lace, and will tell Pals about it. Please don't forget me.
LACY.

With nothing to do but stare at four walls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a twenty-year-old blonde, with poor health, living in New York State. I've been in bed for two months, and have found out how lonesome a person can get. Won't you girls please drop me a line?
BETTY ROSE.

A man who loves his world.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a man of twenty-eight, five feet eleven inches tall, brown-haired and hazel-eyed, married, and interested in people who have traveled. I've been in twenty-eight different countries, and am fond of swimming, hunting, and canoeing. All lovers of the outdoors, write to me.
KENTUCKY SLIM.

Ready with a mother's love.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a mother whose heart goes out to all lonely girls who have no mothers to talk things over with. I have a dear daughter of my own, but have time to mother many more girls. Lonely daugh-

ters, adopt me for your mother, and you'll add to my happiness.
MOTHER GORHAM.

A heart that follows the fleet.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't somebody write to a lonely girl in California, engaged to a United States navy boy, and anxious to hear from some one who is behind the service men also? I'm twenty years old, a blonde with blue eyes who sticks to old-fashioned ideas and yet manages to have wonderful times.
BLUE-SEA DOTTY.

Hear about the Rhine and the gay life of Berlin.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young German of twenty-three, have been in Philadelphia for three years, and at present am not working. I'd appreciate friends. I can tell all about Germany, and promise to show my Pals what real friendship means.
HERMANN.

She keeps life moving.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Is there room for one who loves mystery and excitement? I'm a girl of fourteen, thought reckless by my friends, as I always do the unexpected. I enjoy horseback riding and basket ball, go in many dancing revues, and have tap dancing for my specialty. Girls, solve the mystery of
MYSTERIOUS HELEN.

Who sticks up for old-fashioned ideals?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a real old-fashioned mother, taking care of my invalid brother. I'm in very poor health myself, and have no means of enjoyment in the little Canadian town in which I live. Pals of any age, write to me; you'll find me understanding.
NATIVE OF CANADA.

He'll show you speed!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder if you'll help me find some Pals of my type. I'm a boy of twenty, always on the go and having a wonderful time. I go to the northern part of Canada every year, and can tell interesting things about the woods.
ENERGETIC HUGH.

Three pets to care for.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Although I have a wonderful husband, a dog, a cat, and a

canary, and live near my mother, I still get lonesome. I'm a woman of twenty-five, tall, slight, with blue-gray eyes. I've been on several visits to Florida, and would like to hear from girls anywhere.

WINSOME WINNIE.

Nineteen years of fun and pep.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman of nineteen, living in Reading, full of fun and frolic, and always ready for a good time. Won't your Pals write to me?

RHEA.

More than a six-footer, full of Texas fire.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a boy of twenty-eight, weigh two hundred and thirty pounds, and am six feet three inches tall, a full-blooded Texas longhorn. I've traveled all over Mexico, Central and South America, am interested in radio, and am rarin' to start out on the Pen Pal trail. Who'll be my buddy?

TEXAS GIANT.

Plenty of life, off stage and on.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a dancer and swimmer, and would like to hear from girls everywhere. I've got lots of things to tell, some of them very romantic, and am full of pep and anxious to get started on this correspondence game.

NENA.

Starting life over at twenty-two.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of twenty-two, with gray eyes and reddish-brown hair. I have been married, but am not living with my husband now. Please, girls, married or single, write to me. I'm waiting for letters from all over.

BETTY OF THE BRONX.

She knows the best buys on the market.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd love to join your group of Pals. I'm a girl of almost eighteen years, very lonesome. I work in a grocery store out in Nebraska, and will tell the girls and women who write to me all I know about groceries.

NEBRASKA PAL.

Far away on a sun-drenched island.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Filipino girl of fourteen, with black wavy hair, black eyes, and a complexion tanned by the rays of the sun. I go to high school, am learning to play the piano, and am fond of the sports we have out here. I'd love to have some Pals among my American sisters. Who'll write?

MARIA CLARA.

A girl from the South with energy to burn.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I come in—just a brown-eyed, curly-headed Southern girl, wanting to make friends all over the world? I like everything concerned with a good time, and swim, dance, and am easy to get along with. Come on, girls; I'm just eighteen and ready to start all sorts of things.

WARM-HEARTED LUCILE.

She'll share your artistic tastes.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman of twenty-nine, living in Boston, a former school-teacher, interested in all the finer things of life. I often go through the art museum, seeing something new every time. I swim, enjoy movies, and in the summer live in New Hampshire on a farm. I'll be a friend to every one.

BOSTONIAN.

A Lone Star business girl.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm an accountant, but for the last two months have been at home in a small Texas village where life is lonely. I'm a twenty-year-old fair-haired girl, a lover of everything that spells a good time, and am especially interested in Mexico. Pals, get busy with your pens.

BEAM.

The high spot of a jazz orchestra.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man of twenty-two, and I'd like to have several Pen Pals. I'm interested in a variety of things, including travel, music, reading, cards, and sports, and play the xylophone and piano. I'd like to hear from musicians and athletes, but will be glad to write to any one else, too.

XYLOPHONIST.

The Friend In Need

Department

CONDUCTED BY

Laura Alston Brown



DO the long skirt and the pinched-in waist affect a girl's morals? Will these coy clothes we're affecting—the puffed and ruffled sleeves, the concealing gloves, the reviving stays—bring about a revival of the coy and languishing manners of the gay '90s?

Women have been refreshingly straightforward for a decade. Will our clear-thinking, clear-eyed young girls give way to intriguing, vapid young misses who take the most roundabout way to achieve their desires, young misses who never dare be themselves when a young man is around? Are we going back to the day when you could tell that a man had come into a room simply by the change in the manner of the women?

1888 seems to think that simply because we're going to wear ruffles on our dresses we must wear ruffles on our minds again. What do you think, girls? Are you going to let a few dressmakers set you back to the day when a woman could only live through bedazzling some young man into thinking her an angel, a superhuman, unnatural creature?

Do you want to be equal partners, working shoulder to shoulder with your men, or do you want to be graven images set up on a pedestal, worshiped but never understood?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Your advice to those who write you for help usually is excellent, and it is seldom I find anything I can conscientiously disagree with. But you are too well versed in your business to expect every-

body to agree with you, I am sure, so you will not take exception to the lament I am about to voice so vociferously.

Can't you, please, eliminate that detestable word "flapper"? Who can think "flapper" and not form a mental image of an over-painted, profane, drinking, smoking, necking muddlehead whose chief aim in life is dates? A girl who finds herself in demand only until the boys grow weary of her cheapness and leave her to look for some "nice girl" with whom they can safely settle down, without having a can opener and a divorce court hanging over their troubled heads.

I hate to see some of the girls who write you say, "I am only a flapper," and then proceed to enumerate all the virtues it takes to make a real woman. For goodness' sake, girls, you are not flappers. You are real girls, well on your way to become sweet, useful women.

That terrible word! Ever since people have begun using it, the flippant sound of it has never failed to send my goat galloping wrathfully on the green. Why, the thing sounds empty, foolish, frivolous, and I have never heard any one mention it without a note of contempt in their manner. It is psychologically destructive. It sounds as if not a girl remained with an ounce of sense in her head, and it casts an ugly reflection on the mother who reared a "flapper."

And with this I want to say a word to A Blue Flapper. If you really are loud, as you admit yourself, believe me, little girl, it won't hurt you one bit to get acquainted, and intimately as possible, with some of Bud's friends. Cultivate a low voice and quiet manners.

It is my honest opinion that the loose-thinking type of girl who sacrifices her self-respect by indulging in promiscuous love-making, which is really a harmful travesty of the real thing, is rapidly becoming passé. Some one remarked in your column recently that the "flapper" started going out when long skirts came in, and you answered, very

laconically, "Is that so?" Well, I think it surely is so, and God speed the day. 1888.

Shakespeare once said, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

How about a girl?

If she has all the virtues men have ever asked in women—faithfulness, intelligence, the ability to make a genuine home out of anything that offers—does her virtue lose its flavor simply because she chooses to call herself "flapper"?

Is it the name which makes the girl, or the girl who makes the name?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am eighteen years old and am good-looking. I am also a good dancer, drink a little to be sociable, smoke because I like to, but do not like to be kissed.

I have not many girl friends, because they think I am stuck-up and conceited; but I can't help how I look, and those that, by chance, take time to know me find out differently.

I know I expect too much of men. I don't want a sweetheart to make love to me and love me. I want to have men as pals, as well as girls; but here's the trouble: I want to go with men I am not ashamed to have people meet, and none of the men I meet measure up to what I want them to be. They're either uneducated, fast, drink too much, don't work, or they are sloppy and not well-mannered.

When I'm around this kind of men I show that I dislike them, and that's why I don't go to public places very much, on account of showing my dislike; also, that's how I get the reputation of being stuck-up and conceited.

I know I'm very silly and all that, but what would you do about it? ELOISE.

Isn't it a fact, girls, that as long as we women can see through the heaviest pair of eyeglasses, we will go through life trying to find the most devoted lover, the perfect romance, the most satisfactory platonic friend, and the ideal husband? All of which ain't! *Because* we are all human and have our little failings, and are loved despite our imperfections. You're not silly, dear; you're just a perfectly normal girl with ideas. Try not to show your dislikes so openly; others have feelings, dear,

and you don't want to hurt every person you meet, even though you do not like or approve of them.

I would like to hear from male readers on this subject of platonic friendship. Is there such a thing in working order?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl twenty-four years old. I have been working since I was sixteen years of age. I always gave all my money in the house. I've made considerably good pay. I never had much pleasure, and sometimes think I have been too devoted to my parents, because I was never allowed to be out late nights.

I am considered good-looking, and I dress fairly well. I love to dance, but when I go out I don't have as good a time as other girls, and very seldom do boys ask to see me home. There are a few, Mrs. Brown; but, using my own judgment, I don't think I'm fast enough for them.

Somehow, I can't converse with fellows very much. Of course, I understand some fellows don't like much talk, but I certainly would like to have a little more to say than I have. It's rather embarrassing to be so backward. Please, Mrs. Brown, give me a little advice. Tell me what I can do to gain more friends and be a little more popular.

UNHAPPY H.

The fact that you haven't gone around much is probably the reason why you are self-conscious, for that is your trouble. You probably wonder what others are thinking of you, what you should say next, or if you should say nothing at all. Try not to think of yourself at all when you are with others, dear. Instead of wondering what impression you are making, reverse the process and think what sort of impression others are making on you.

Some boys are quiet, but most of them like nothing better than to hold the floor and talk as much as they can. In such a case, all you have to do is—listen and show an interest in them. Ask a few questions to get him started. Join a club for young people, perhaps a church social or the Y. W. Take up some sport, such as swimming or tennis, in your spare time. It will help

you acquire unconscious poise. Shy people should go about more than others until they feel that they can be at home at any gathering.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl eighteen years old. My father died when I was eleven; then mother and I lived together till just a few months ago, when she got married again. She is very good to me, and so is my stepfather. But he has three boys, and they are the ones I can't get along with.

Would you advise me to stay with my mother or to leave home, as I wish to do?

BROWN EYES.

Dear child, leaving home is a very grave step to take for even an impulsive young person. Your mother is good to you, you say, and your stepdad also. Why let the three boys tease and make you miserable? Why not take the matter up with your mother and see what can be done about it? Have as little to do with the boys as you possibly can, if it is impossible for you to get along on a friendly basis.

You do not say how old they are, Brown Eyes, but if they are younger than you, don't let them aggravate you. If they are older, or about your own age, the thing to do is to have a talk with your stepdad and your mother. But you would regret leaving your home and a mother who loves you.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I always read your department, and see how much you have helped others, and hope you can help me. I have been going with a boy for a year now and love him very much. He is always telling me how much he cares for me, but is always saying little things that hurt. I have a sister who is two years younger than I am. He always wants her to be with us. It isn't that I am jealous of her, but it seems that when she or any of my girl friends are with us he says all things to hurt me. When we are alone we quarrel over it, and he says he didn't mean what he said, but still he always does it. I can't stand it much longer. Do you think I should show him how much he means to me.

LONESOME ANNA.

No, dear, don't show him how you feel about him. Try indifference, and

if he still doesn't seem to care at all and continues to say cutting little things that hurt your feelings, go out with other boys and try to forget him altogether. There's no sense in going on this way if he isn't worthy of your friendship.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have at last found the courage to write to you. I will start at the beginning, so you can understand my story better.

Before I was married I was a nice girl, didn't smoke, drink, or run around with wild kids. My parents would not let me date with different fellows. I was expected to go with one fellow at a time, steady. I went with my husband two years before we were married. I had two sisters who positively ran the house.

I married my husband, I suppose now, because I was so used to him I thought I couldn't do without him. I was eighteen, and he was, too. I have been married nearly four years now.

The first year, I can truthfully say, we both were happy. Then, because my husband did not make much money, I went to work. I had to work late in the evenings sometimes, and he would meet me and take me home. Then, after a while, he stopped meeting me, and I would come home and find he had been out with fellows and gotten drunk. Well, I didn't bawl him out. I treated him nicely and hoped against hope that he would quit. When at last I found it was useless to beg him I gave up my work so I could be at home with him.

Then I found I was going to have a baby, and, silly that I was, I was backward about going to a doctor. Things went on for perhaps seven months, and I began to get seriously ill. My husband couldn't or wouldn't believe that I was very sick, and in the morning when I got up to get him off to work I could hardly stand up.

I was feeling terrible one morning, and I told him. He said that if I didn't stop grumbling he was going to smack me. Well, he did. That was the beginning of the end.

My baby, the sweetest blue-eyed, curly-haired girl, was born, and we both worshiped her.

Things went on pretty smoothly for a while, but once in a while my husband would go out and maybe stay all night. Of course, any one who has gone through that will know how I felt. I honestly believed that my husband would never go out with another girl, but I was disappointed about that, too.

I was frightfully fat after my baby was born, so I asked my husband if he cared if I smoked cigarettes. I knew they would make me reduce. Well, they did, but it took a long time, of course.

Then, as Bill kept going around to liquor parties and places where he drank, I decided that I wouldn't stay home by myself any longer, so I began going with him and drinking, too. I have no excuse for myself, only that I thought perhaps if he would see me drinking, too, he would rather stay home with me than to go out and let me drink. But he didn't care.

Then I started playing with an orchestra around town, making pretty good money, and Bill was good enough to keep the baby for me. But he kept getting meaner every day. He had given his consent to my playing, and music is my one ambition. I have played five different kinds of instruments since I was ten years old. I love it.

Finally he started getting drunk and beating me black and blue. Then he got to the point where he wouldn't need to be drunk to have the cowardice to hit me. He has beaten me almost to death more than once, Mrs. Brown; it seems that he enjoys doing it when some one is around, so they can enjoy my humiliation:

By this time I had no love for him at all, only for my baby. She worships her daddy.

Both his friends and mine beg me to leave him, but I only hesitate on my baby's account.

Mrs. Brown, there is a man whom I love, and he loves me, too. It could not be that, though, that makes Bill mean to me, as we have never been alone together or anywhere that my husband wasn't with me. As mean as he has been to me, I couldn't play him the dirty trick of running around with another man while I am living with him.

I hope this isn't too long, and I also hope you will tell me what to do. He tells me to leave him, but I can't take the baby, and I wouldn't even consider leaving without her.

I am twenty-one now, almost twenty-two. Four months ago I stopped drinking and going on parties, because I saw where it would lead me in time.

I hope you will answer this, as I am going to do whatever you say.

LOST.

I don't know whether anything I can suggest will cure your trouble, Lost, but I shall try to help you all I can.

In the first place, husbands who haven't much responsibility, as in your case—you work and your husband doesn't do anything—are apt to lose

their self-respect and their sense of perspective and appreciation, no matter how much their wives love them. Why not quit work, if it is at all possible for you to do that? Keep house, take care of your child, and stop going about to wild parties where drinks are served. In fact, for a little while, perhaps, it might be a good idea to cut out parties altogether. Be a housewife for a change and tell your husband you are going to undertake the job marriage cut out for you—to be a wife and mother.

If he works, he will have to stop drinking, pay attention to his job, and perhaps in this way he will get on his feet again. It may not be long before both your marital equilibrium and harmony will be restored between you. You owe your child a home, as happy and agreeable a home as you can make it between you, and try over again. It is never too late, dear, to try again.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Allow me, please, to get this out of my system. My Irish is up, and I'm rarin' to go. I'm so enraged that I can hardly see my paper. And all this was caused by reading A Rather Fleet Older Man's letter, which was recently published in your department. Did you give me the permission to battle with him? Thanks!

Now, Mr. Fleet Man, I may get off the subject that your letter consisted, but I'm reading between the lines, and the result is that my opinion of you is very far from being an auspicious one; but, rather, I think you are a conceited, useless man.

You talk as if woman was made for the pleasure of man. Oh, yes, a man can run wild as long as he chooses; but when he is ready to settle down, the girl whom he has assisted to degrade is not good enough for him. He must find a nice, innocent old-fashioned girl to wed.

Now the picture from life's other side.

A girl who lives a reckless life must never marry a respectable man. She has done wrong, and men who wish to settle down do not want her. Isn't that the idea you conveyed between the lines of your letter, Rather Fleet Older Man?

Tell me, now, why should the ladies be judged more severely than you men? In the other world, will the Master make any excuses for the men?

I think we—the women—should have as many privileges as you. Why shouldn't we have? We are human. If I could govern the world, I'd see to it that the wild and heedless men married that kind of women, and the righteous and superb men were mated with the superior class of woman.

The majority of the men in the world today have a similar opinion of the women. Girls should be atrocious and low when men want pleasure, and they must be godly and innocent when the males want the wedding bells to ring.

Mrs. Brown, don't you think that is true?

This Fleet Older Man must be six feet two, with lovely curly auburn hair, and big, brown, laughing eyes, and dimples, and pearly teeth, ruby lips, and the skin you love to touch. That is, I mean, he thinks so; but if he would take a nice long glance in the hall mirror he would see a short, bald-headed, fat old man, with spectacles dangling on the end of his nose, and, I'm sure, then he would lose some of his conceit.

I wouldn't marry that kind of man if my life depended on it, and neither would any other real girl. But I'd honestly like to get one little glimpse of the guy who signed himself "A Rather Fleet Older Man." Why don't girls turn the cold shoulder to his kind?

I'm cooling down somewhat now, so I'd better stop while I'm calm. It would not do for me to become angry again—no, not with my Irish temper. Girls, write and give this guy another flagging down, so he will decide to become a bachelor, because if he wants to live, he had better continue life alone. No sweet little girl will take Mr. Fleet for hers until death. If they did— Try another article on "Man's Preference Among the Ladies," and I'm sure you will some day succeed, "Fleetie," in teaching us how we should please you.

BLAZES.

More points for the Rather Fleet Older Man. Do you agree with Blazes, girls? Come on, family, let's have your opinions.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Just a chuckle of amusement from that spineless creature, Flippy.

Isn't it a little absurd, when you consider the countless demands any marriage makes of man and wife, to get hysterical over the trivial question of a man's right to demand that his wife stop smoking?

Personally, I think he has every right to do so, if a request fails!

If he chewed tobacco—and is there a

worse way to use the stuff?—I'd demand that he quit. And, what's more, he would!

We have a happy marriage. Squabbles, of course, but they end like all lovers' quarrels should. Our marriage has been going strong for three years. Not so awfully long, but long enough to see some of our theories work out.

Frankly, Mrs. Brown, do you really think there is such a thing as an absolutely fifty-fifty marriage? I don't. One mate usually dominates, through deeper knowledge of life or through sheer weight of personality.

My husband is the head of our household. I guess I'm one of those ladies who despise a man they can dominate. Funny? Even though we are too civilized to like cave-man tactics, we women prefer our males to be masculine.

So you'd better abandon hope for me. I'm just a downtrodden slave to century-old tradition, and, strangely enough, I love it!

FLIPPY.

Are there any more downtrodden slaves to century-old traditions who enjoy it? But I'm glad you are happy, dear Flippy, and hope nothing ever mars your contentment.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have read your delightful column for many years, but I never felt the urge to make any comments until I saw that most despicable letter of A Rather Fleet Older Man.

Does a man prefer a nice girl? What a ridiculous question to ask! Of course he does, and any man who doesn't prefer a nice girl is no man. We call them swine. All the boys whom I go with go out with decent, respectable girls. By a nice girl I don't mean a prude who has never kissed nor smoked. But I infer by that remark that she be modern, well dressed, intelligent, pleasing, healthy for sports and dancing, and a darned good chum.

In our crowd we don't have boys and girls who do nothing else but attempt to degrade their own records. We have a real, wholesome bunch, and none of us would ever think of doing anything that would result in any disrespect for his or her friend.

This correspondent, in my opinion, just wanted to let his mouth go off, and I'll say, for one thing, that he turned on the hose in the wrong place. Certainly, there will be many more of your friends denouncing his so-called bunk "theories."

Me? I'm only a kid, twenty-one years of age, but I've gone out with at least thirty

girls in the past three years, and I have this to say: They are all a darned nice bunch. Fleet Older Man's been sailing his boat the wrong way, bucking the wind just to be obstinate. A fellow who demands payment on every date.

It makes no difference to me, Mrs. Brown, if you publish this letter, because, after all, I wanted to enlighten you as to how I felt about the matter. If you care to, then pass it on to your readers. They may delight in my constructive criticism of this so-called man.

ALFRED.

And here is another letter for "Fleetie," giving us the man's opinion.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have written to you before about trivial matters. Now I feel I have a real problem and need your advice.

What do you say about this thing called love? Is it worth all the suffering and pain some people go through? I wish I could answer this myself. Can you, can any one? Sometimes I think yes, and sometimes I think not. What is the answer?

I am nineteen and in love with a wonderful boy of twenty-three. He loves me and wants me to marry him soon. I'm afraid of love. I'm afraid of marriage and all the troubles it brings. I have heard and read much about unhappy marriages, even in your column. My mother is against marriage, but my boy friend's parents are for it with all their hearts.

I often thought it would be nice to be married to him and have a home and children; but—I'm afraid. Some of my married women friends tell me not to marry. Is true happiness to be found in marriage, in spite of all the hardships? I would appreciate some advice from married women.

AFRAID.

Is love worth all the suffering and pain it causes sometimes? I'll say it is, and how many of you agree with me? Life is a grand affair, and love is the brilliant, scintillating jewel that can enrich us if we are ready to face our great adventure and consider the serious sides of life without fear.

Because some of your friends have found marriage a hardship, it doesn't mean that your marriage will be a counterpart of their venture. Is true happiness to be found in marriage? Well, we'll have to have some of the happy love birds speak up and tell us about it

if they will. But just because your friends have not found marriage very satisfactory, are you going to let them frighten you into the belief that your marriage will be equally unhappy?

Marry the boy you love, dear child. Discard all fear from your mind and heart. Your boy friend's parents have the right attitude; you might listen to some of their viewpoints. You might keep in mind the fact that one gets out of life exactly what one puts into it. If you face life and love without fear, you cannot help but capture some happiness. If you face marriage with doubts and constant thoughts of failure, what can you expect?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: No doubt you will think this is another silly letter from a love-sick child, but I'm going to fool you.

I am a very sensible girl of nineteen years, and very peculiar, too.

That's my very worst failing. I am considered rather nice-looking, and many boys want to know me, but I'm not that type.

Some—very few, in fact—appeal to me for a few weeks, and then just bore me to death.

I would rather go to a movie alone or stay at home.

I have had three proposals since I was sixteen, but I just laugh them off, and I know they were meant seriously, but I can't take them that way. The funny part of it is that I want a cute home of my own, but I couldn't live a lifetime with any of the boys I have gone around with. I guess my home will be an apartment and a parrot.

Do you think I would appreciate my friends if I went to a different city, where I didn't know any one, for a few months, or am I naturally this way?

I couldn't possibly marry any one around here and ruin his life as well as my own.

Hope you can help me, as you certainly give wonderful advice to every one.

Lots of luck.

STERLING.

My dear girl, you are not at all peculiar; you simply haven't met the boy you could love, and don't be so sure that your years will be spent cooped up in an apartment with a parrot for companion. I suppose, at nineteen you feel very aged. But the moment you find yourself in love the world will seem a

magically changed place. You will no longer find yourself bored, and you'll just ache to be with the object of your affections. And when one is happy one is apt to become terribly greedy, so that a lifetime of loving seems to be much too short.

In the meantime, amuse yourself as best you can. Going to a different city may be interesting; but keep in mind the fact that we cannot run away from ourselves, although we can run away from our surroundings. A visit to another city might prove interesting to you, and if you can take a vacation, by all means do so.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I've been a constant reader of your corner for some years, and I find it consoling.

My troubles aren't what one would call real terrible, but I do get to the place where I don't know what will happen next. Here's my story, Mrs. Brown, and I hope I don't sound too impossible.

I don't know whether or not I am in love; if not, I've surely fallen hard. I've been going with R. about four months or more, and I've never had a better time in all my life, except for this little trouble. We have usually one date a week, and he's so considerate of me and says he loves me. But, Mrs. Brown, when we are with a crowd and something is said about love or marriage he always sneers and laughs about it. Says he isn't going to tie himself down. Of course, I act the same.

Mrs. Brown, why I believe he cares a little is this: The girls I ran around with when I started going with him have drifted away from me, and now, or the last time I was with them, they had changed so. For the worse, I mean. Mrs. Brown, it sickens me to see a girl lower herself so as not to care what she says and does in front of a boy. R. asked me to discontinue running with them. I did, but not just because he told me to. I'm eighteen and love girl friends, but for the last two years I haven't

had a really heart-to-heart girl friend, something I've never been used to.

I know that I am getting to like R. more every time I am with him, and sometimes I am sure of him, while other times I'm not. Tell me whether I should pretend not to care or to let him know how I feel. Once or twice something has been said about the future.

Here's another sign why I think I'm in love: I can't seem to find fault with him in anything. He's always saying, if some good-looking girl goes by, "That's my girl," and that he would like to meet her. I joke back because I don't want him to know my real feelings. But in no time I've forgotten his cracks because he is so sweet. When I get to thinking of him I just know I love him, but he seems just out of reach for me.

Tell me if you think it's love I feel for him, please, as sometimes I am really worried. Do you think eighteen years of age is still too young to think of real love?

EIGHTEEN.

At eighteen a girl is not too young to think of love, although she has plenty of time ahead to consider it; but with a boy it's a different matter. You are probably very fond of this boy, but only you can tell if what you feel is love, my dear. A boy of eighteen matures mentally much more slowly than a girl of his own age.

Your boy friend probably feels embarrassed when the subject of love or marriage is brought up; that is why he makes some foolish remark. You are wise not to let him know how fond you are of him, Eighteen. Once a boy—or a man, for that matter—is sure of a girl, she no longer is unattainable property. It is best to remain a little reserved, poised, and somewhat mysterious, and not let him think exactly what it is you think of him or how you feel about him. Be gay and friendly, but a little remote.

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.

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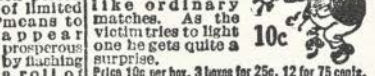
A wonderful little instrument producing optical illusions both surprising and startling. With it you can see what is apparently the bones of your fingers, the lead in a lead pencil, the lever opening in a pipe stem, and many other similar illusions. Price 10c, 3 for 25c.

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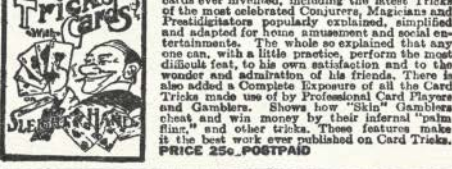
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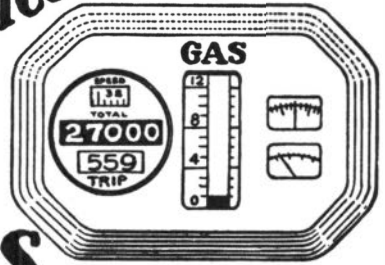
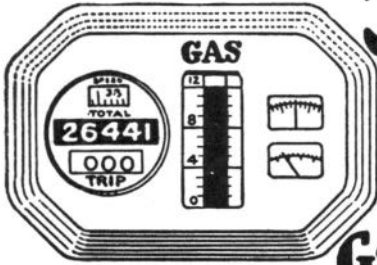
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