

BROADWAY NIGHTS

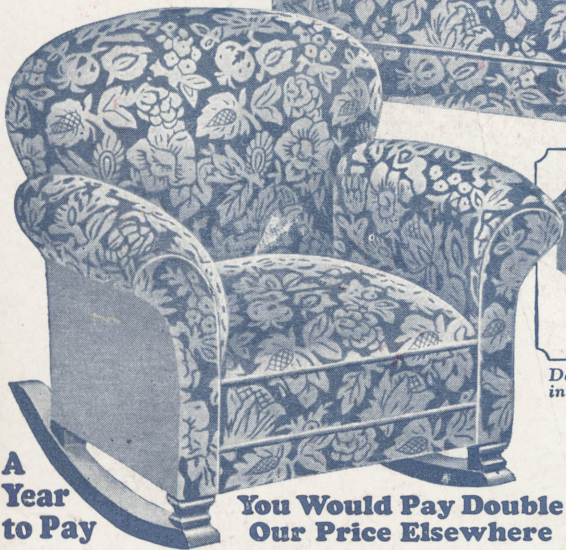
November

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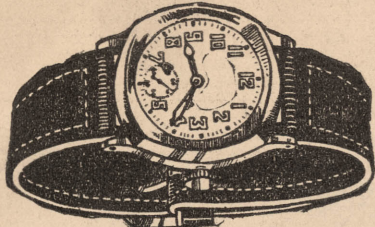
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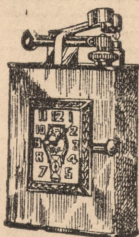
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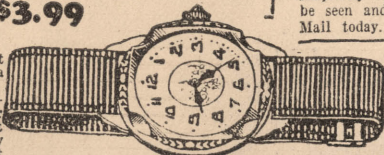
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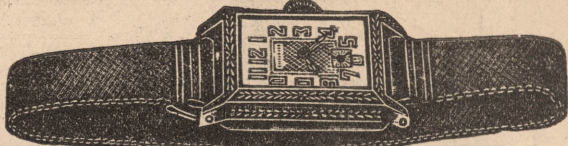


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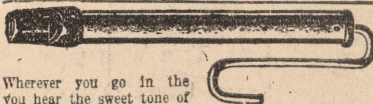
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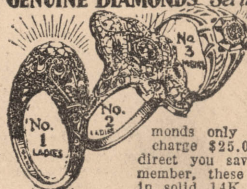
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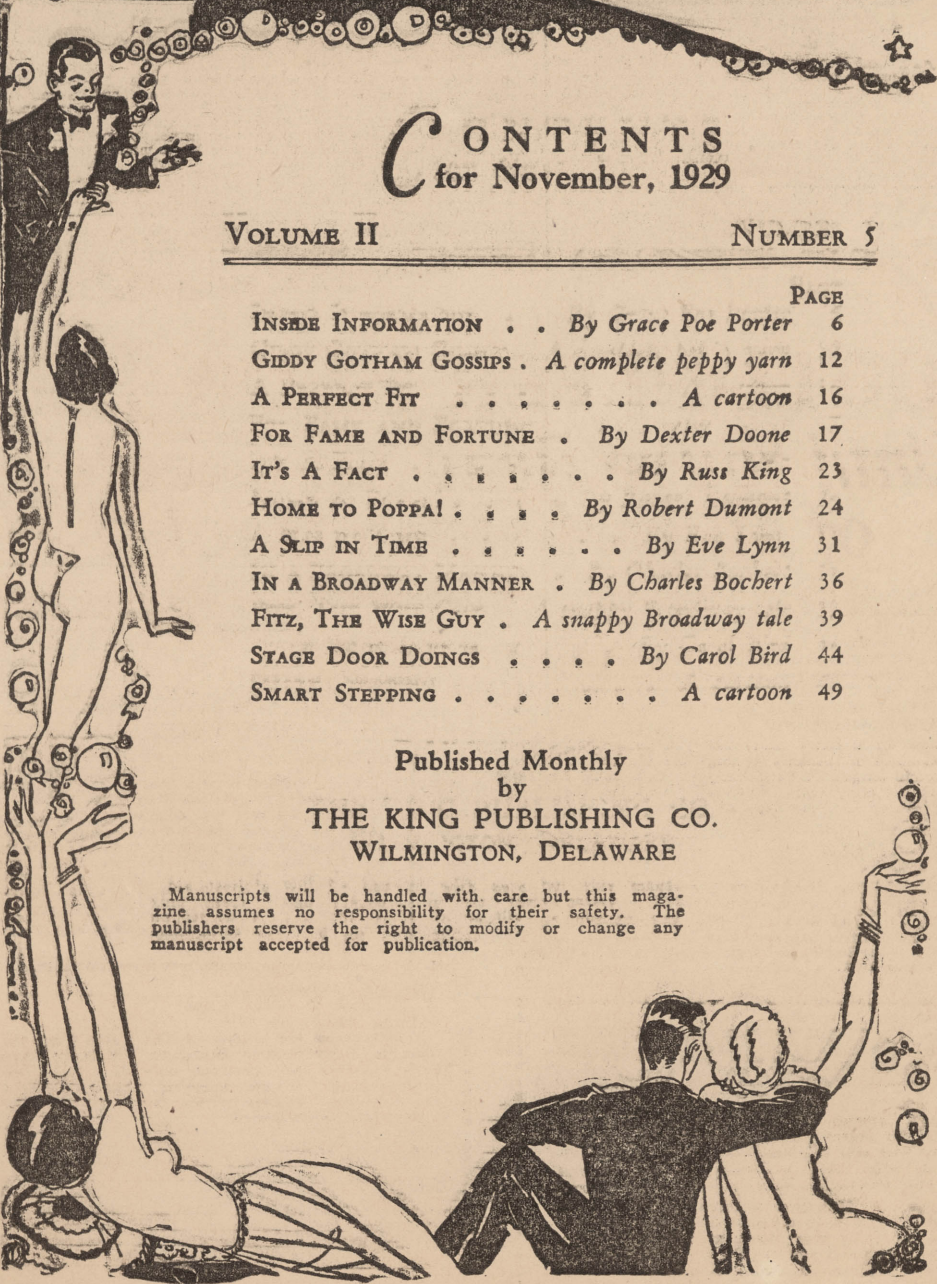
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Inside Information

By Grace Poe Porter

She was a part of the mad whirl which was Broadway's Underworld. Then love came to her and----



BONNIE MILLAY looked narrowly at the bathroom door when the telephone rang. Bert Gilson was in there shaving. Bonnie pursed her vivid red lips as the bell continued to shrill. Abruptly then the bathroom door was jerked open. A face white with lather looked out.

"What's the matter—crippled or something?" Gilson growled. "Get that chickory and if it's Paulie—or

anybody for me—tell 'em to call back in an hour."

To her relief Gilson slammed the door. With a breath Bonnie unhooked the receiver and spoke. Even before the caller replied some deep, feminine intuition told her it would be Alf Deland, the slim, good looking boy who had applauded her so gustily from his table at the Kentucky Club the previous night.

"I was just wondering," Deland pronounced slowly, "if you'd like to come and have lunch with me, Bonnie."

Over her shoulder she looked at the shut door down the hall.

"I'm terribly sorry but I have a date."

"I'll be at the club tonight," Deland went on, after a pause. "Perhaps we

kitchenette. The aluminum coffee pot bubbled noisily, the rolls she had set to warm in the oven gave out a crisp, inviting aroma.

"How long are you going to be, Bert?"

"Coming," Gilson retorted, and emerged clad in a voluminous bathrobe and reeking with some shaving lotion.

He discarded his cigarette, slumped down before the bright yellow cloth on the gate legged table and raked Bonnie's pretty face with his cold, shrewd, grayish eyes. Since that first night in Chicago, Gilson had put on considerable weight. Long ago he had lost the youthful slenderness that had first attracted Bonnie. He had become now a rather bulky, ominous person whose racket took him into the world of Broadway with a flat automatic in a scabbard under his left armpit.

"Who was that on the chickory, kid?"

Bonnie's blue eyes met his cold stare placidly.

"One of the girls from the club," she answered evenly. "She wanted me to go to lunch with her."

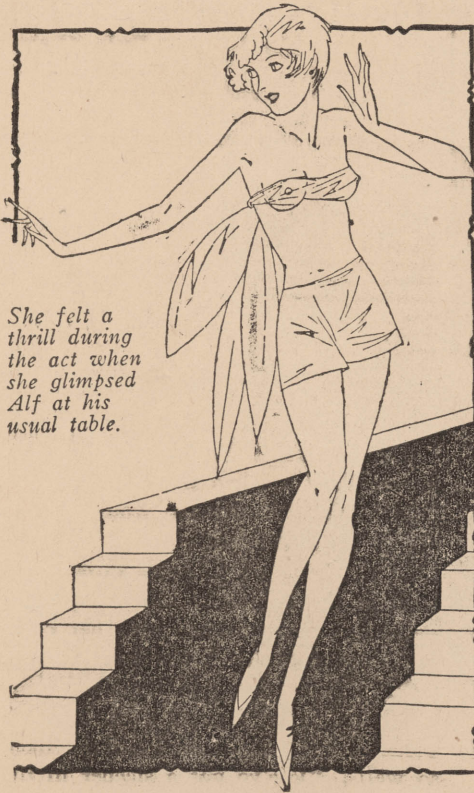
Gilson drew the cup of coffee she poured closer to him.

"I can't figure a dirty-neck wanting to treat."

"She didn't," Bonnie smiled blandly. "That's why I passed her up."

"I thought maybe it was some man," Gilson murmured in the apologetic tone he invariably used when he was slightly suspicious. "Some jobbie who got suddenly stuck on you and wanted to make dates and things. Somebody like that Cameron bird last winter. Remember him?"

Though she continued to smile coolly, Bonnie shuddered inwardly. It



She felt a thrill during the act when she glimpsed Alf at his usual table.

can step out after you've finished your turn. Think so?"

"Maybe," Bonnie replied guardedly. "It depends—"

"On what?"

"A lot of things. Thanks for the invite."

He repeated his expectancy and after a minute rang off. Thinking of Alf Deland, Bonnie went back into the



She knew a little flutter of excitement when his message was delivered.

was not hard to remember Ray Cameron. He had been one of her most ardent admirers and he had disregarded completely her warnings. She had tried to keep it from Bert—she had pitied Cameron more than cared for him. But Gilson had learned in some clever way and one mid-winter holiday night Cameron had been picked up battered, bruised and well beaten.

"Why should you think it was a man?" Bonnie demanded.

He shrugged.

"I don't know—I'm funny that way. Look, Bon. If it was some baby out to make you, you'd better give him a quick steer. I don't use brass knuckles anymore. I deal in lead now, understand? So don't go and get any crazy ideas. Keep your yen for me and nobody'll get hurt."

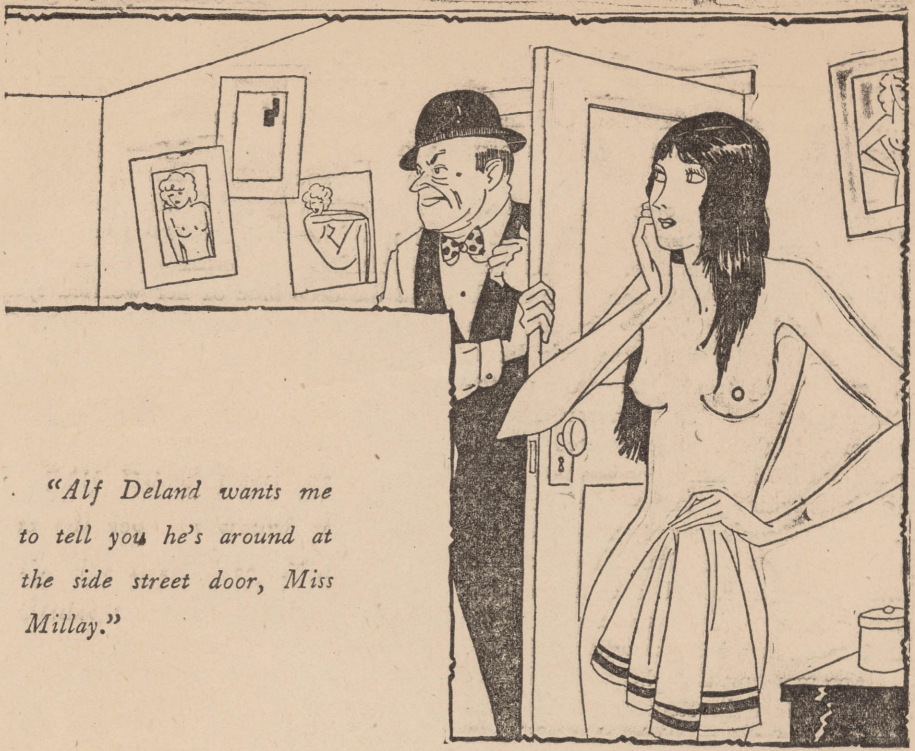
Bonnie laughed under her breath. She realized she had said enough. To launch further denials would be to arouse his full suspicions. It was possible that one of Gilson's crowd had been at the Kentucky Club last night—possibly someone had seen her coming home with Alf Deland in the taxi.

"I'm going down to Jamaica," Gilson stated, after he had dressed in the form-fitting gray flannel suit he liked so well. "We've got a sleeper in the fourth frame. We're sending the family heirlooms in on the turtle."

"I hope it clicks," Bonnie murmured absently.

"If it does you'll be wearing another diamond handcuff, kid. Come on, kiss pop good bye. He's shoving off right now."

She raised her lips obediently but



"Alf Deland wants me to tell you he's around at the side street door, Miss Millay."

there was no warmth, no fervor in their surrender. It was about the time of the Cameron affair that she first seemed to realize how fragile her fascination had been for this man whose thick arms embraced her. In Chicago he had represented a way out, the promise of brighter and better things. In a measure he had fulfilled them; at least he had brought her to the thirteen mile metropolis; he had gotten her into the Kentucky Club at a salary of one hundred dollars a week. He had been generous enough and kind in his rough, uncultured fashion.

The shadow of affection had been replaced by fear. Bonnie knew that Bert Gilson had gone across the dead-line. He had said nothing but the newspapers coupled with things he dropped at various times made her per-

fectly familiar with some of the man's "adventures." She was sure, for example, it was Gilson who had been the brains of the taxicab band who had stuck-up the payroll clerk of a Bronx bread factory. It was Gilson who was wanted by the police under his many aliases. That he had kept clear of the law's dragnet, Bonnie believed, was due entirely to his superb nerve, the confidence he had in himself and his clear, intelligent mind.

After he had gone, Bonnie carried her cigarette into the tiny living room of the Forty-sixth Street apartment. She thought of Deland again, dreamily and wistfully. He was an actor "resting," as the Rialto expression went, and she wondered what there was about him that so appealed to her. She had glimpsed him off and on along the

Alley; he frequented the Kentucky Club but it had been last night and his nearness in the taxi that had made her so familiar with the innate charm of him.

Bonnie stared out of the window. She needed no feminine intuition now to realize Alf Deland was not for her. She was one of those destroying angels who would only bring disaster upon those she cared for or especially liked. It was so easy to remember the youthfully impetuous Ray Cameron. Bonnie shivered slightly. She wanted no repetition of that affair—it was not worth illicit, ravishing kisses—the constant fear of Gilson's surveillance—the danger and threat of him. She discarded the cigarette, looked once more into the golden gulf of the street below and shook her head slowly, decidedly.

The morning thoughts were all with Bonnie when she stepped into the amber ring of the spotlight that night on the polished floor of the Kentucky Club to sing the first of her three ballads in a sweet, childish and untrained voice. During the first acts of the entertainment she had glimpsed Alf Deland at his usual table on the south side of the room. She could not see him now but she could feel his presence there, his gaze. She tried to decide what she would say when he came to her, wanting to take her further down Broadway to some other night club. She would have to be very firm, very strong and very resolute about it.

One of the waiters knocked discreetly on the door of her dressing room when Bonnie, stripping off the rhinestone miracle she wore for her turn, changed to the little silken dress she had worn down. She opened the door and looked into the waiter's battered countenance.

"Alf Deland wants me to tell you he's around at the side street door, Miss Millay."

Bonnie nodded.

"Thanks, Joe."

She stood before the mirror, troubled and apprehensive. The glass gave back her radiance—the slimness of her deliciously curved figure, the tawny glory of her hair, the splendor of her complexion, the crimson of her lips and the deep blue of her worried eyes. After a minute she picked up her handbag and gloves and let herself out.

Alf Deland sat on the top step of the side door through which the Kentucky Club received its bootlegged liquors and those blackbirds whose nefarious errands forbade the lighted entrance on Broadway. Deland stood quickly at her approach. He was tall, nicely built, handsome in his youthful manner. Bonnie liked his poise, his air of detached confidence that had nothing in common with Gilson's smug egotism. Alf Deland was just a nice, clean boy.

"Say, Lou Rosenwitz will be charging me for wearing out his back doorstep, Bonnie. I've been camped out here since the world began. But it's worth it—now that you're here."

His hand closed over hers and she trembled oddly. Once more she recalled Ray Cameron and that shadowed street out of which he had been carried.

"Get a taxi, Alf. I want to talk to you," she said abruptly.

He looked at her quizzically but made no comment. A cruising cab drifted by and Deland handed her into it. In the gloom only his eyes and the white smear of his evening shirt front were visible.

"Where'll I tell him to go, Bonnie?"

"Up and through the park. Close the glass partition. I don't want," she explained, "his ear in here with us. Alf, I've got to talk to you."

Deland lighted a cigarette and gave it to her. He kept his silence while



"I'm in love with you—I want to marry you!" he cried.

"I—I love you too, dear," she murmured.

they awaited the change of the traffic lights and presently penetrated the dark wilderness of Central Park. Bonnie urged herself closer to him and sat very small and very earnest at his side.

"You've got to cut out seeing me, Alf. It isn't a question of whether I want you to or not. Let me tell you. My—my brother is funny that way.

He has an idea that every boy who wants to take me out is trying to play tricks. He's almost a nut on the subject and last winter there was an awfully nice chap. His name was Cameron, Ray Cameron, and I told him, I begged him to keep away. He wouldn't do it and—"

(Continued on page 64)



*And here's a weep or two for you just
in case you may have forgotten that
Melody Lane is not always merry
merry.*

EVERYBODY along Broadway knew Trinket Keil as a hard working, decent little regular, who had never been in a jam and who deserved the best sort of break. Trinket was a sweet faced blonde, with large, soulful brown eyes, a complexion like peaches and cream and the disposition of an angel. She had jumped from telephone switchboard operating into the rowdy, confused world of revue.

A girl she had known in the hotel where she had worked whispered something into a stage director's ear and

Trinket signed a contract and became a chorus girl.

The show was called *Autumn Scandals*. It opened at the Apollo in Atlantic City, jumped to Philadelphia for a fortnight and marched into Manhattan to wow the critics, paralyze the wisecracs and delight the ticket brokers. They promptly took the first eighteen rows for sixteen weeks.

Of course, the blonde Trinket was delighted that her first theatrical venture was a box-office smash. She was also flattered and quite overcome by the

attention she received. Every night men in the audience singled her out and sent notes, invitations and flowers backstage to her.

But Trinket was cautious. Her pal in the show, Opal Esscent, as she called herself, had put her wise to what any chorus girl might expect at the hands of a rich admirer. That type of man—so Opal warned—was a hungry wolf who feasted on virtue and destroyed innocence. Trinket listened, believed and paid no attention to the rash notes and invitations.

Most of all she didn't wish her own virtue and innocence to be sacrificed on the altar of any man's flaming passion.

There came a night, after the show had played several weeks, when the bars were lowered for Trinket. The occasion was a glittering ball in the Pagoda Room of the Hotel Trinidad on the south side of Longacre Square. Girls from all the Broadway shows attended in festive attire and there, toward midnight, Trinket met her Prince Charming.

His name was Austin Fair and he was the son of an immensely wealthy member of the Produce Exchange. He was a slim, handsome, careless boy with the eyes of a merry Pan, the laughter of all creation in his tone and the joy of life in his face.

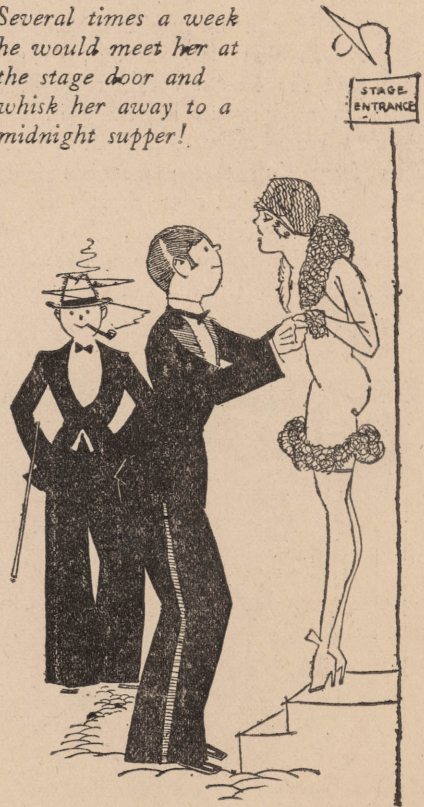
Trinket could no more resist him than she could stop the sun in its westering course or cause the tides to stand still. Before she had danced twice with him she knew that the love that had always escaped her had placed glamorous chains about her young, wondering heart.

And when Austin Fair said, "I love you!" to her she felt that she had reached the supreme heights of happiness.

Toward three o'clock in the morning they left the scintillating ballroom.

Austin's chauffeur piloted them to a select neighborhood in the vicinity of the East River and the young man's bachelor apartment there. Trinket had never seen such luxury. Neither had she tasted such delicious wines nor listened to the throaty phrases of love that were for no one in all the world save herself. She tried to remember Opal's varied warnings but the effort was in vain.

Several times a week he would meet her at the stage door and whisk her away to a midnight supper!



How could she think of anything with music in her brain—with soft lights bathing her—with the handsome young Austin Fair worshipping her with his gaze? Besides, she told herself, it was different. She loved this

splendid boy with all her heart. Under such circumstances passion was no degrading thing. It was sanctified and made beautiful by all that welling up in the depths of her soul.

So it happened that when Austin Fair took her in his strong arms and carried her across and into another room she surrendered herself joyfully—gladly—body and soul!

She saw Austin several times a week for the first month of their acquaintance. He would be waiting at the stage door of the theatre. They would slip away for a midnight supper together. Trinket was radiant, so radiant that she forgot completely there was such a thing as marriage in the civilized world they inhabited.

In forgetting this paramount issue Trinket's shock that came shortly afterwards was doubly severe. Suspicion became reality and reality a dreadful secret. A secret she did not even share

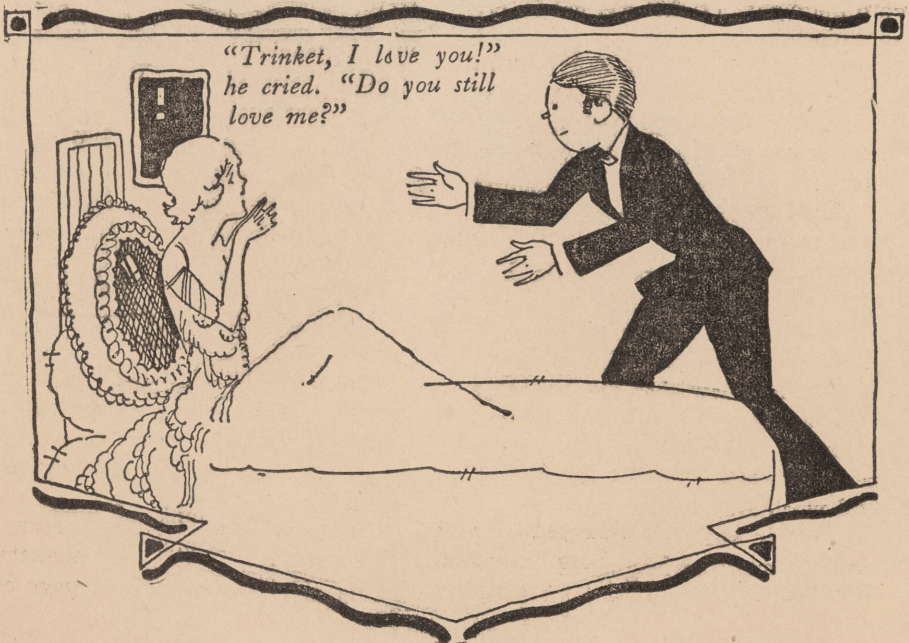
with Opal. A secret that had its being in the dusty leaves of the calendar that hung beside her bureau in the hall bedroom of her boarding house!

The night of her revelation Austin Fair was not at the stage door of the theatre as he had promised to be. Trinket went around to the corner drugstore and telephoned his apartment.

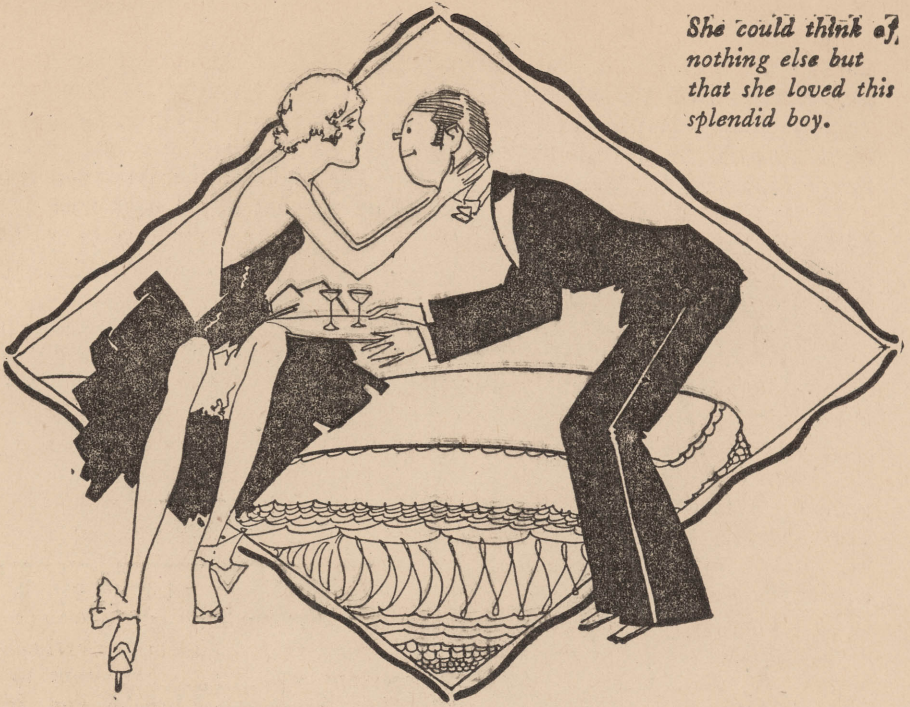
"Mr. Fair," the cold, metallic voice of the youth's valet informed her, "sailed for South America on his father's yacht this noon, Miss. No, I do not know when he expects to return."

And Trinket, restoring the receiver to its arm, saw blackness swirl before her eyes in a great, dismaying wave.

She could not bring herself to believe the laughing boy had left her without even a good-bye. Perhaps the servant was lying. She went to the East River neighborhood and found Fair's bachelor apartment had been



*She could think of
nothing else but
that she loved this
splendid boy.*



closed. She waited word from him, some message, and when none came she gradually allowed herself to believe that all the love he had vowed had been a snare and a delusion.

Passion had not been sanctified. For her it had been a red, destroying monster!

Opal noticed the change in her face and spoke of it, but Trinket evaded the truth. The other girl shook her head.

"Gee! I didn't know you had such a case on that hotsy. Babe, I hope to goodness you remembered all that stuff I poured into your pretty little ears. I do trust you didn't let Handsome play fast and loose with you."

"Oh, no," Trinket lied, "nothing like that!"

"Well, then," Opal advised her philosophically, "buck up. Forget him. He isn't the only boy friend in the pigeon-

toed world. Look 'em over tonight at the stage door and hand pick 'em. There's just as good fish in the sea as Fair, Junior."

Time slipped relentlessly past. The show world of Broadway was in full blossom. The *Autumn Scandals* still stood them in the aisles. Plays came in and flopped or registered solidly. Nothing, Trinket decided, was changed except herself.

Daily she looked at the calendar. Questions haunted her mind. How long now? *How long—*

Presently October married November and Indian Summer was over. And presently Trinket handed in her notice to the management. Opal was astonished.

"Quitting the job, Babe? Have you gone ga-ga or apsay or something? What's eat- (Continued on page 62)

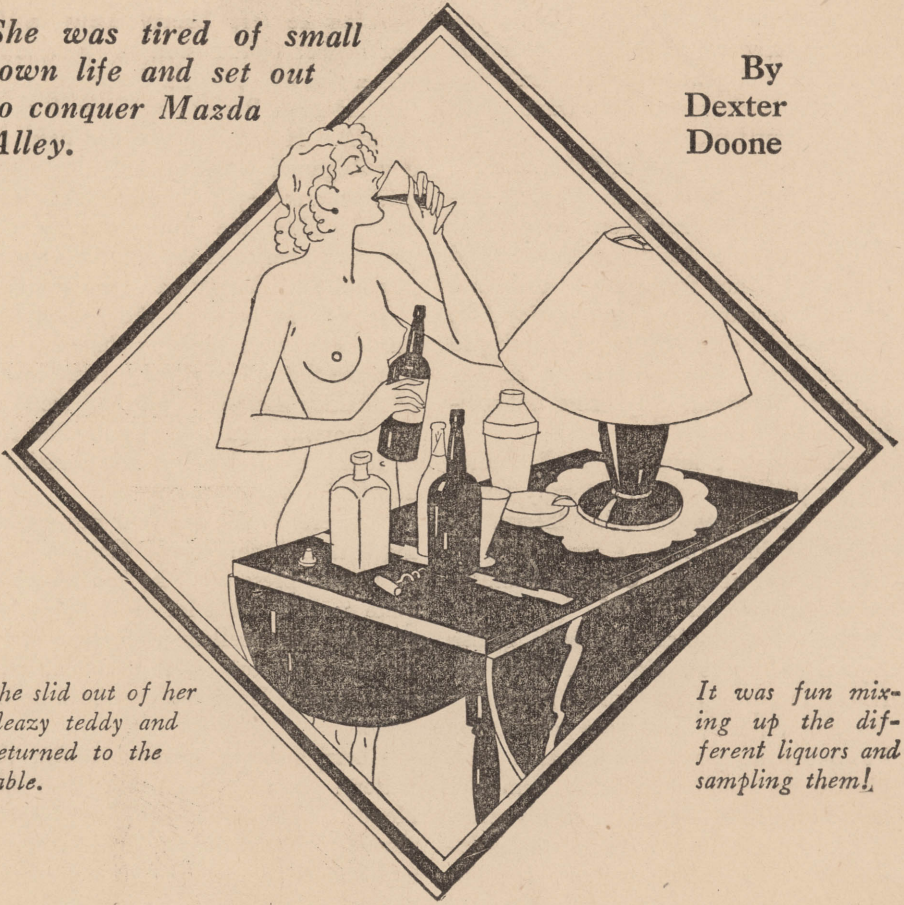


A
PERFECT
FIT

For Fame and Fortune

She was tired of small town life and set out to conquer Mazda Alley.

By
Dexter
Doone



She slid out of her sleazy teddy and returned to the table.

It was fun mixing up the different liquors and sampling them!

CHERRY CHESTER undid the last snap of her brassiere and smiled as she flung it carelessly on the chair next to the dressing table. She stepped out of the panties which with the scanty brassiere formed her costume for the nightly frolics which the Club Dansante featured.

"And that's that for tonight," she murmured to herself as she slipped on a gossamer whisp of teddy. In front

of the dressing table she applied cold cream to her face and then removed it with a soft cloth. It was just after the final traces of grease had been removed that she noticed a figure standing in the doorway of her dressing room.

"Cherry, why are you so long?"

"For heaven's sake Roger, how many times have I told you not to come sneaking in on me like this?" she flared.

"I won't have it. You act as though you have a claim on me and you haven't."

"Sure I have a claim," Roger grinned ignoring her anger. "Didn't you give me the claim? Didn't you tell me only six months ago that you loved me and always would? Isn't that reason enough for me to want to be with you and see you?"

"But that, you forget," she mocked, "was before I became an actress. Before I realized that there were other things for me besides a house and babies. It's not fair for you to hound me so. I'm young, I want to enjoy life. I want—oh! so much Roger, won't you release me? Let me free of an engagement that can only bring unhappiness to both of us?"

"If I didn't love you so I would. I'd let you find out all the ugly truths you're after but I can't Cherry. I love your innocence. I want to keep you this way always. Can't you understand—a little, darling?"

His arms cradled her soft girlish figure. She was a tiny morsel of delicious femininity. He kissed the top of her hair tenderly and then caught her lips in a mad, glamorous kiss as if with his kiss he would bind her to him and keep her always there safe in his arms.

Cherry, too, must have sensed his desire for of a sudden she tore her lips from his and sprang from the chair.

"You're selfish, Roger," she cried. "Just a beastly selfish man who judges everybody by his own standards. You know that you'd want me right now. You'd do to me all the things that you insinuate other men want to do. It's just your own rotten mind, that's what it is!"

They stood glaring at each other. Roger turned first scarlet and then white. "Cherry Chester," he said through clenched lips, "you've said about the worst thing any girl could

say to a fellow who loves her as I love you. Some day you'll understand the difference between love and lust and when you do you'll realize how you've wronged me. Good-night."

After he left Cherry drew on the rest of her clothes slowly. Her mind was a riot of thoughts. Six months ago she had been Roger's secretary back in Averill. How happy she had been the day Roger proposed to her! He was a coming attorney and quite a catch in town. Then the Junior League had put on a charity show for the Orphan Asylum and Cherry had been the star.

It was in between the second and third acts when she was changing her costume that Cherry had become aware of Stanley Lamont. He had stood in the doorway and just stared. She had snatched up a dressing gown and ordered him out of the room.

"Where do you get your nerve coming back here this way? Get out!"

"I will presently," he had answered quite coolly. "First let me congratulate you on your excellent performance. It's really much too good to be actually amateurish. Have you ever been on the stage?"

Cherry's heart warmed under this flattery. Stanley was tall, slim and blonde. He wore faultless English clothes, spoke with an English accent and seemed not at all put out by her recent outburst.

"If you'll just sit back there and let me get dressed I'll try to talk to you. You see I've only a few minutes to make my change," she smiled, her good nature coming to the fore.

"Don't bother," he answered. "You and I are going to have a great deal to say to each other. I'll come back after it's all over."

Cherry felt it in her bones that Stanley was some theatrical magnate. She went through the last act in a trance. Oh, if only he would give her



Still in a dream, she felt his caressing hands and his lips on her throat.

a chance. The gaiety and excitement which the theatre offered thrilled her. Roger had laughed and indulged her desire to study dancing never realizing how serious it was to her.

And after the show when Stanley had come to her with promises of success and an opportunity to appear in his new floor show—the wonder of it!

Roger had come in just as they were shaking hands on their agreement. Even then right from the start he had been nasty. Didn't even shake hands and laughed about her going on the stage. Said he had the stage all set for her already and didn't need any outside interference. That had angered her so that she had accepted Stanley's offer

immediately instead of thinking it over as they had previously agreed.

Then had come long hours of practicing with Stanley, a veritable Simon Legree. If it hadn't been for Roger and his cheery company in those early days she'd have been discouraged. Stan-

to nag. He wanted her to come home. He wanted her to quit the stage and settle down.

Cherry left the Club by herself that night. She stopped at an open-all-night restaurant and had a sandwich and a cup of coffee. Then she



"Didn't I tell you not to sneak in on me when I'm in my teddy?" she cried.

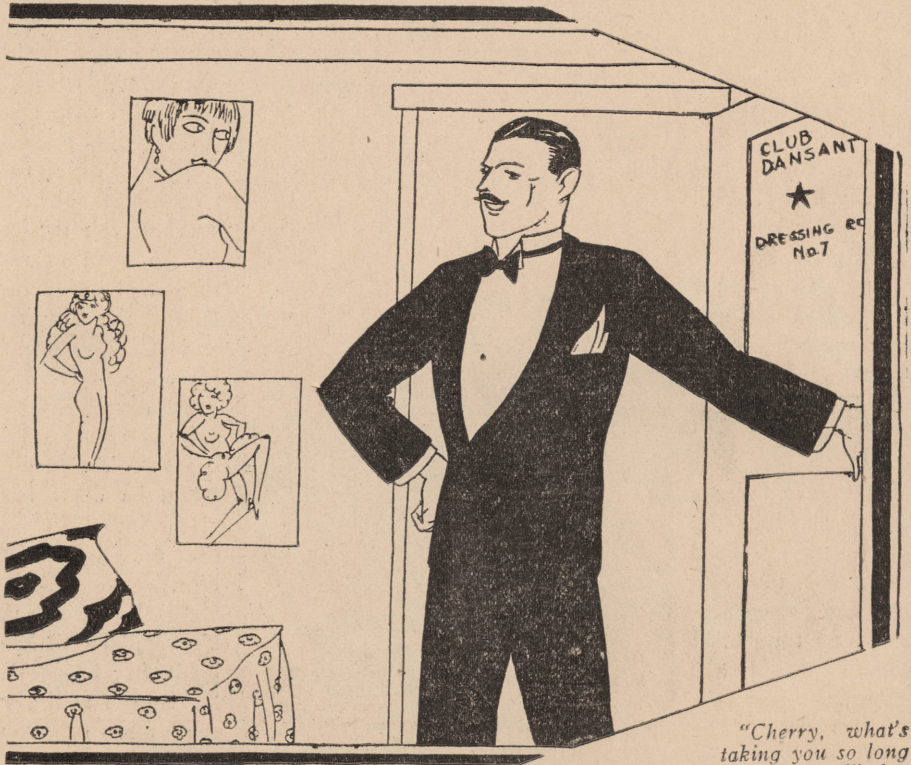
ley didn't even notice her outside of complaining if she made a mistake or didn't keep time. Roger had said that two months would cure her and she would come back home. But once the show was started everything had been different. Stanley got her a job with the Dansante. She did a solo there with him and made more money in fifteen minutes a night than she had made in a week back home. And instead of being happy Roger had begun

hailed a taxi and went home. The apartment she shared with another chorine in the early sixties was deserted. She switched on the lights and went into the bedroom. Flo wasn't home yet. That meant that she'd be in along dawn, pie-eyed and anxious to talk. And how Flo could talk when she was lit! Cherry shuddered. Tonight she couldn't stand it. Her nerves were all shot to pieces. She wanted sleep and lots of it.

In the living room she went to the cellarette which Flo's boy friends always kept well stocked. There was a telephone message propped up where she couldn't miss it. It was from Flo and said that she wouldn't be home. Cherry felt a tremor of happiness.

struck two.

It was Flo. "Cherry," she shrieked, "what are you doing? You must come over. We're having the swellest party and one of the girls passed out. Don't be a spoil-sport. Get a cab and hurry up. There's a particular friend of



"Cherry, what's taking you so long to dress?" he asked.

Hurrah for one night of freedom! It was good to have the apartment all to herself. She mixed herself a drink and drank it down in one gulp. She didn't feel quite so tired. She undressed and returned to the living room. It was fun mixing up all different kinds of liquids and sampling them. Who said she was lonesome or blue? Her blood began to tingle. There was excitement in the air. The telephone rang just as the clock on the night table

yours here and he's asking for you."

Some of Flo's hilarity must have communicated itself to Cherry. She knew it was crazy to go breaking in on parties at two a. m. but she was just gay enough to welcome the excitement. She slipped into a shimmering green lace frock which set her golden blonde hair off to perfection. She snatched up her cloak and walked out of the apartment.

Once in the street the night air

mocked her foolishness but she was determined not to turn back. She got into a cab and gave the driver an address on Sutton Place. A sleepy-eyed elevator operator carried her up to the eighteenth floor. The door opened and Cherry stepped inside. The handsome cynical face of Stanley Lamont greeted her.

For a moment Cherry didn't understand. She looked beyond him to the next room expecting to hear excitement and noise. A deep silence was all she heard. Still she doubted—

"Hello Stanley, where's everybody? Flo called me and said there were big goings on."

"There are. Flo was so tight she didn't recognize that I gave her the wrong address to give you. I skipped the rest of the gang and came over here to meet you. I thought you'd like it better just the two of us. The rest of that gang's all under," he replied smoothly.

"If you wanted me to go with you, Stanley, why didn't you ask me instead of doing it this way? Why should you feel that I wouldn't want to step out with you?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, Cherry," he said, "I've been wanting to ask you for a long time but you've been so aloof I didn't think you would. Then Flo said you were probably home all alone and I suddenly realized how much I wanted you. I thought if I called you at this hour you'd refuse to

come and I had to see you."

He took her wrap from her and for just a minute let his hands rest caressingly on the upper part of her arms. Then he put his arm about her and led her into the living-room. They sat side by side on a sofa before which stood a table with glasses and a cocktail shaker. Stanley filled the glasses and handing one to her said—"To us."

She drank hers and no sooner did the contents reach her throat than that same wild pounding and urge for excitement which she had felt earlier in the evening returned. Stanley refilled the glasses and Cherry heard his voice as from a great distance. She felt warm and comfortable and when he drew her closer into his arms she did not resist him.

"I love you, Cherry," he whispered in her ear. "I've been mad for the feel of you

ever since that day so long ago when I first saw you. You're like an elf. So cold and stand-offish on the outside but a seething volcano within just waiting to be released. Let me love you, Cherry."

Still in a dream Cherry felt his hands on her body. He touched her firm young breasts and sent a shiver through her. Lazily Cherry wondered whether she was angry or happy at his boldness. She had often wondered what it would be like to be loved by Stanley. He was so superior. Wo-

(Continued on page 60)

If You Must--



*ET me up, lover
Or someone will see
How you are taking
Advantage of me.*

*You stole up behind me
And whispered, "My Circe":
I've hardly a stitch on,—
O, won't you have mercy?*

*So stop your caressing
And let me go, lover,
Or if you must kiss me,
Let's steal under cover!*

—BY BOB OLSEN.

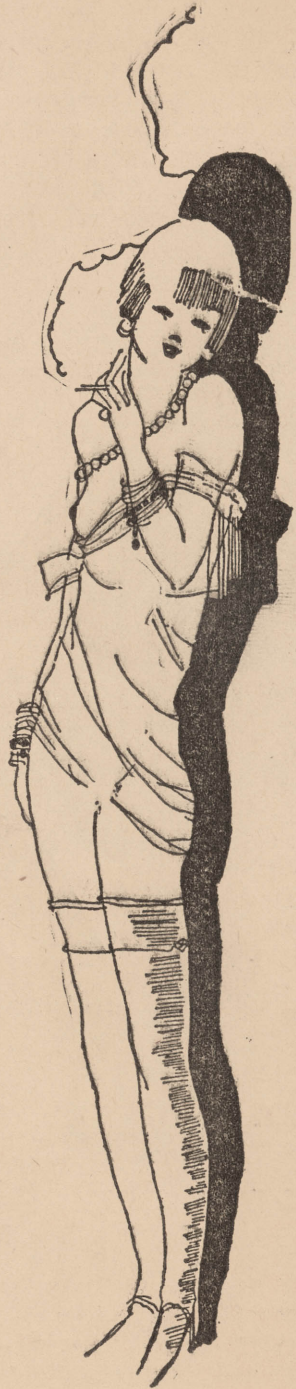
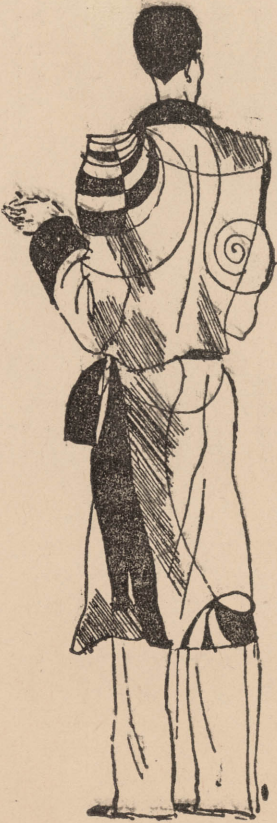
IT'S A FACT

By Russ King

Lady standing at the
curb,
In the midday glow,
I know all about you
That there is to know.

I have taken in your
charm,
Of knee and thigh and
breast;
I couldn't know you
better
If you were all un-
dressed.

Strange that I can
leave you
Without a single pang,
I've seen so many like
you
That I don't give a
hang!



*She leaned over
close to him, her
lips puckered
invitingly.*



Home To Poppa!

THE Great White Way was pulsating to the fun that is its breath of life and over in the Club

Entre Nous, brazenly holding forth where Broadway's pulse beat is hardest on hardened arteries, three o'clock ri-

By Robert Dumont

*It was Broadway
versus a home and
babies. Could
Verna be happy
without either one?*



baldry was at its height. The peppy orchestra had just completed a mean dance piece. Bald-headed old bozos, jaded and satiated, and flushed strip-lings, drunk as much with the wine of life as with the cider-champagne they had imbibed, leaned forward expect-

tantly. It was time for Verna de Valente to make her single nightly appearance.

The plum-colored curtains gathered in folds at their upper corners, and a spotlight flashed a golden puddle in the center of the stage, revealing an enor-

mous lily. Slowly it came to life, bending forward until its center appeared as the golden swirl of a girl's bob. She lifted her face and flashed a dazzling smile at the spectators. Applause filled the place.

One by one, Verna allowed the snowy-white petals to fall, until her satiny arms and shoulders gleamed goldenly. From her thighs up, her shapely body was bare except for a bejewelled jade-green strap over her breasts. Then, as she whirled around and around on the tips of her toes, the filmy green stuff that had been wound around her legs to form the lily's stem floated in graceful spirals about her. Finally, she stood free of it, her beautiful legs bare with the exception of a sarong like, bejewelled green covering about her thighs.

She commenced a spirited, Pan like dance. Her sinuous, voluptuous figure made practically every man there lean forward avidly in his chair, for Verna was one of the reasons why arteries harden.

Paul Chatham, seated alone at one of the ring-side tables was one exception. He had given vent to a low gasp of astonishment when he had first glimpsed Verna's face, and now he was staring at her as if he doubted the evidence of his own eyes. As Verna floated gracefully down the velvet-carpeted runway that led to the dance floor, all doubt vanished from his face. His strongly molded lips curved in a jocular smile.

The lights came on, and Verna capered about the dancing space in the wild spirit of abandon suggested by the music. At a point opposite where Paul was sitting, she flung her hands over her head and leaned back until her face was quite close to his. Her lips puckered invitingly.

It was a stunt that usually brought down the house. Either the sap she

selected as the butt of it would dart eagerly forward for the promised kiss only to find her frustrating yards away, or he would be of the timid kind and would squirm and redden while the mob cackled in glee.

Verna had scarcely looked at her victim this time. She had merely observed that he was sitting alone and that he seemed as if he didn't quite belong there. But when her eyes met his, that was something else again.

"Verna!" Paul cried. "It—it is Verna!"

And while the girl stood there, inert with astonishment, his lips darted forward quickly and pressed hotly against hers.

"That was just like old times, darling!" he whispered close to her ear before drawing back.

Verna straightened up like a released spring and spun around to face him. The applause was so boisterous that she knew Paul couldn't hear her, so she signalled for the musicians to go on with the dance music. She slipped her arms about Paul's neck and kissed him. Then she sat down in the chair beside him.

"Well, if you're not a sight for sore eyes!" she cried. "What brings you here? And how are all the folks back home? And are you still selling radios and tinkering around with them? And did the cow have any kittens lately? And—oh, everything!"

Paul's laugh held a deep note of joy. His deep-set gray eyes roved like a warm caress over her swirling ash-gold hair, the pretty face as yet untainted by the toll that night-life exacts, down the slender, graceful column of her throat to the budding breasts and full thighs. He caught his breath sharply.

"You're so pretty it almost hurts me to look at you!" he said. "That was mostly why I came—to find out if I was really still crazy about you. I



Pensively she sat on the edge of the bed, remembering his kisses, his ardent love-making!

haven't been able to forget those days when we used to be crazy about each other, baby. Remember?"

Verna's eyes hazed over with memories. How madly in love they had been that year in Oakdale! He had

been so strong and his love-making so ardent! She had swooned with the throbbing rapture of his kisses. She had responded in a feverish, unmistakable manner that at first he hadn't dared understand. But in the end his desire

had lashed him into accepting the blissful gift she had offered. Then, months later, their searing tears had mingled when Oakdale's monotony had stifled her restless, will-o-the-wisp spirit and she had left, intent on flitting about the blow-torch dazzle of Broadway.

"It seems so long ago that it must have happened during the stone age, Paul," Verna sighed. "But I can still smell the hay and hear the birds sing. You've brought it all back. Now you've made me want a long chat with you, so let's go to my apartment."

Her long tapering fingers rested lightly, caressingly against his cheek for an instant. Paul seized her hand, turned it over and pressed his lips against the soft pink of her palm.

Once in Verna's tiny but luxurious apartment, his bulk and virile masculinity made him seem incongruous. Verna, a dream of desirable loveliness in a cobwebby negligee of black lace, leaned back felinely on the divan and gazed through half-shut eyelids as he talked of "back-home" things. She scarcely listened to what he was saying.

She was wondering how the crush of his arms would feel, if the flame of his lips still had the power to ignite her emotions to white heat. Suddenly, she decided to find out.

She arose and snuffed out her cigarette on a tray. Instead of returning to her place on the divan beside Paul, she sank into his lap. Her soft, bare arms went about his neck in the old, well-remembered way. There was the clinging, pulsating quality to her kiss that a woman employs only when she has belonged body and soul to the man she is kissing.

Paul held her loosely at first, but as the rapier like flash of desire aroused by her lips and her pliant, warm body pressed with abandon against his coursed through him, his arms crushed

her closer. He kissed her again and again.

Presently Verna drew away from him a little and removed one arm from about his neck. She pulled impishly at the end of his bow tie until it became unfastened, and slipped it out of his collar. Then her deft fingers fluttered about the button at his throat . . .

Three days later, Paul was pleading with her to marry him.

"Be yourself, Paul, heart's desire!" Verna said, but there was a wistful note in her voice. "I can't see myself in a gingham apron juggling pots and pans and feeding the chickens. And the excitement of the weekly sewing circle and the bridge game would be more than I could stand after the peace and quiet of this bromo-seltzer zone. No, Broadway's my playground and I guess I belong here, honey."

"*Plaything* is right!" Paul said tensely. "And after it's burned you up or sucked you dry, it dumps you on the trash-heap. That isn't real, Verna. It's like gilt compared to the gold of real life."

Verna laughed hollowly. "Hear the silver-tongued orator!" she jibed. "You've been listening to your radios too much! Let's forget about the book, bell and candle and just think of love. You mustn't forget this is your last night here."

Next morning, Verna, a ravishing little figure in black silk pajamas, lay in bed staring fixedly and solemnly at the old rose ceiling. Paul would be on the ten-thirty train, she was thinking, bound for the land of the hick and the hay. He would take up his old routine at his music store and tinker with radios, always with the hope that some day he would hit upon some improvement that would put him on easy street, just as he had always done. Oh, gosh, she would probably never see him again. *Finis* had been

written to that part of her life.

She looked about the effete little boudoir with brooding eyes. How his presence had seemed to fill it, to lend it a homey touch! What a cosy little love-nest it had been for them! Her heart beat quickened at the memory of

his corded arms, his ardent love-making, the kisses that had thrilled every atom of her being.

"Oh, hell!" she said, suddenly flinging aside the covers and inserting her tiny pink toes into tufted slippers. "Damn it, (Continued on page 59)"

*One by one she
let the petals
fall, until her
beautiful arms
and legs gleamed
goldenly.*



Sailors are lucky fellows, says Flapper Flo, they have the freedom of the seize on land too!



Leading Lady: "For twenty years I lived a life of shame."

Her Understudy: "And now you've reformed?"

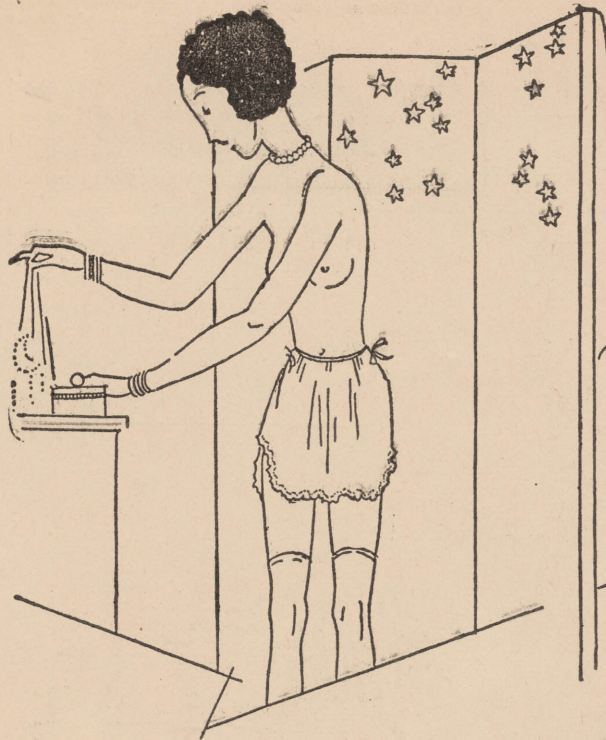
L. L.: "Oh, no! I simply got over being ashamed."



LONG AGO THE GIRLS' SKIRTS USED TO HIDE THE ANKLE, TODAY THEY SHOW THE KNEE. AND SOMETIME, WE HOPE, THEY'LL REACH THE HIP-HIP-HIP-HOORAY!

Helen: "I wonder if there's a hole in my stocking?"

Henry: "Well, not as far as I can see!"



Hurriedly she changed her costume and got into her street clothes.

By Eve Lynn

A Slip in Time

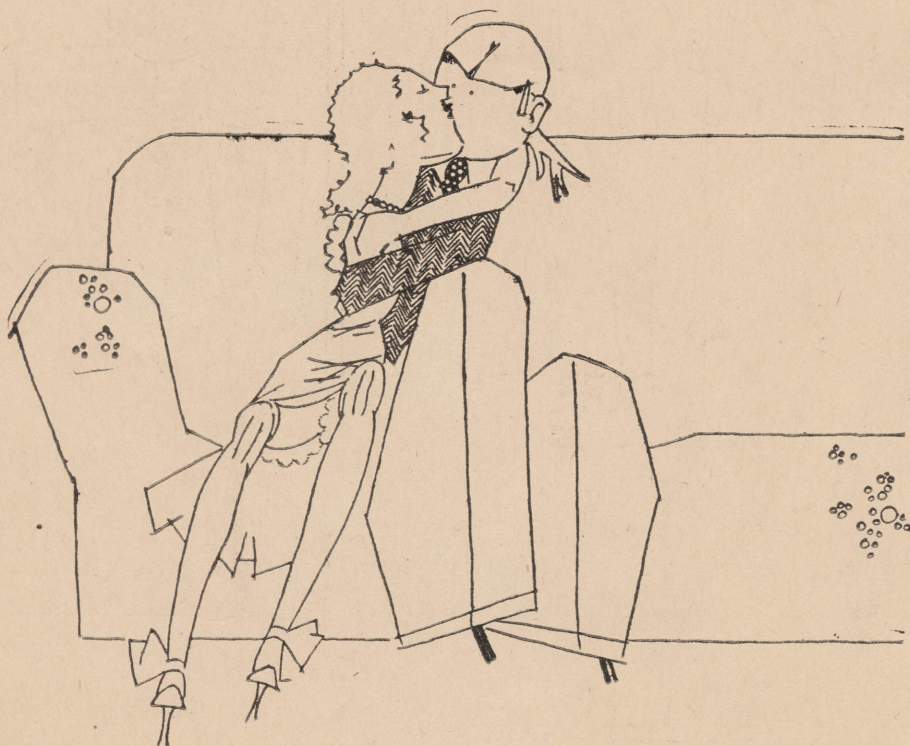
Never wait until you've lost him. Bring him round before the damage is done.

NELLA LEE swung a mean torso at the Claret Clown Cafe. Standing on the raised circular platform, beneath a huge, claret-shaded spotlight, her lovely white young body shivered rhythmically to the tune of the newest Blues, and Nella's vivacious little face flaunted two of the best-

loved dimples on Broadway. But, having given the enthusiastic crowds her last encore, her dimples disappeared as if by magic and back in the dim, shabby dressing room, she faced a glum, unsmiling visage in the long mirror. And when a girl frowns at herself, *cherchez l'homme!*

The man was Rich Bennet, and he had been her husband for five months. Strangest of all, she still loved him! They had met, just six months before when Rich, "seeing the sights" in New York, had happened into the Claret

masked an ardent nature. She had thought the fires were merely banked and waiting. It disappointed her to find they had either gone completely out or else had never as yet been lit . . . Too proud to make the slightest advance



Clown. He had been delighted and not a little flattered when Nella, seized by a sudden caprice, ran down from the platform and sat at his table. That was just the beginning of a month's feverish courtship. He was blonde and young and very serious. They were married and Nella after much effort, finally persuaded Rich to allow her to continue her act at the Club.

But that disagreement was only a minor wave in their matrimonial sea. Before their marriage, she had thought that Rich's reserve and quiet manner

herself she had striven to seem as cold and indifferent as he.

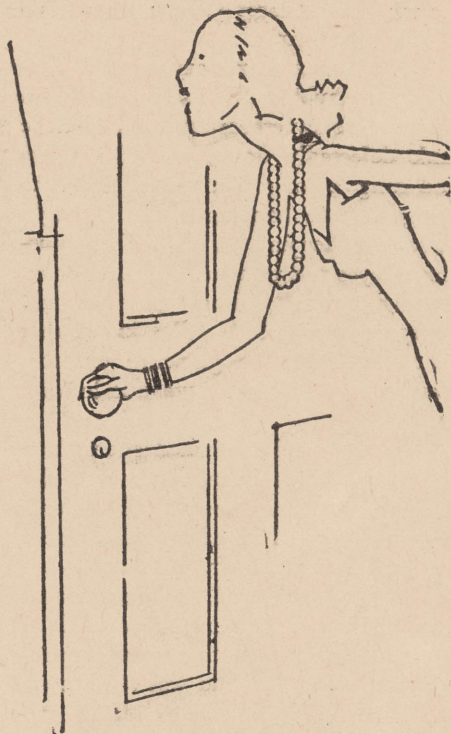
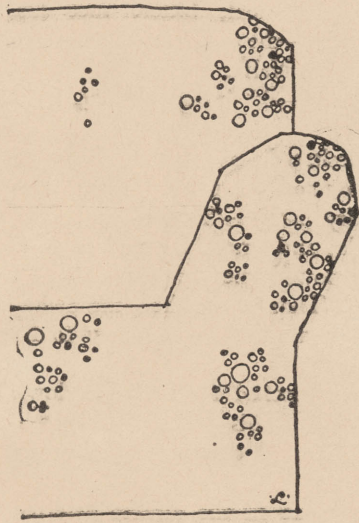
Three weeks after their marriage she had her own bedroom, alone. He made no protest. She almost thought he was relieved. And yet, despite her scornful contempt of his behavior, she loved him madly. Other men found her desirable—why didn't he?

One night, she blew farewell kisses to the patrons of the Cafe and gracefully danced backward out of the lighted hall. Tugging at the snaps on her brief-skirted costume, she ran

along the corridor, up the wide stairs, toward her dressing room. The upstairs hall was dim and narrow and Nella was carelessly preparing to step

worked in the same place with him for nearly a year, but she had never spoken to him, nor even watched his famous act.

Softly she opened the door and was stunned to find Marie in his arms, kissing him passionately!



out of the short white silk panties when a masculine voice startled her.

"Being a gentleman, I realize that I ought to cough several times to warn you of my presence—" Wheeling swiftly around she saw the short, stocky figure of Mart Manns, the Claret Clown. He was wearing the familiar, claret-colored satin clown suit with its rows of fluffy white pom-poms and his face was grotesque with chalk and paint. It was his act that had put the Cafe on Broadway's list of Most Popular Night Clubs. Nella knew him by sight, of course, having

Holding the white shorts tightly around her hips she smiled coolly at him. "They're waiting for you downstairs," she said, briefly.

"Let 'em wait! Gotta new trick tonight, worth waiting for! If you weren't in such a hurry, I'd ask you to hang over the balcony here and watch me. Like to know what you think of it."

"I wasn't in any particular hurry," she admitted slowly, "I'll—wait."

Their eyes met and—clung. He swayed forward a little and she, frightened, stepped back. The moment

was over and both were rather embarrassed. The orchestra, playing his cue over and over, served as an excuse for his sudden departure. Breathless, Nella leaned over the balcony and watched the Claret Clown tumble up in the platform.

His act was a pantomime and during it, the hubbub always ceased. When the clown's sweetheart refused him, he sank dejectedly down upon his knees and sang a song that never failed to bring out the handkerchiefs. Tonight he sang it, keeping his mournful, paint-ringed eyes riveted upon Nella, upstairs, leaning over the railing. She was half angry, half pleased. She knew that everyone would be glancing up, too, wondering what the clown was looking at.

The "new trick" turned out to be a chorus of what Mart afterward described as "heart-breaking laughter." He was supposed to be laughing while his heart was breaking. Old stuff, but he managed it so well that the applause was deafening, insistent, sincere. Even Nella, used to good acting, clever stunts, grew enthusiastic. She was still hanging over the railing when Mart ran up the stairs.

"How was it, kid?" he asked, moping at his painted face with a huge white handkerchief.

"Not so bad," she laughed, going along the narrow hall beside him, "not so bad. I've done worse myself."

They laughed and she felt friendly toward him.

She pushed the door of her room open, went in, scarcely realizing that he followed. She indicated a chair with a casual nod and he sank gratefully into it. Behind a tall, thick screen she pulled off the shorts and hurriedly dressed in her street clothes.

Mart, noting a glass fruit dish heaped with oranges, bananas, lemons and even pineapple, sighed wistfully.

"If you only had a piece of cinnamon bark, now—what a slick cocktail I could sling for you!"

"But I HAVE!" she told him, amused, and pointed to a small bag on the dressing table, "help yourself."

He rolled his eyes blissfully and began cutting lemons. Sometime later he poured a brilliant red mixture into two tall glasses. "This," he explained proudly, "is my own original cocktail—The Sensation."

"Pretty to look at," she admitted, "let's see how it feels." Slowly she lifted the sparkling liquid to her lips. Her eyes, ironical, bitter, met his. "Here's to—the Great American Curse!" said Nella.

"Which is—?" he questioned, scrutinizingly.

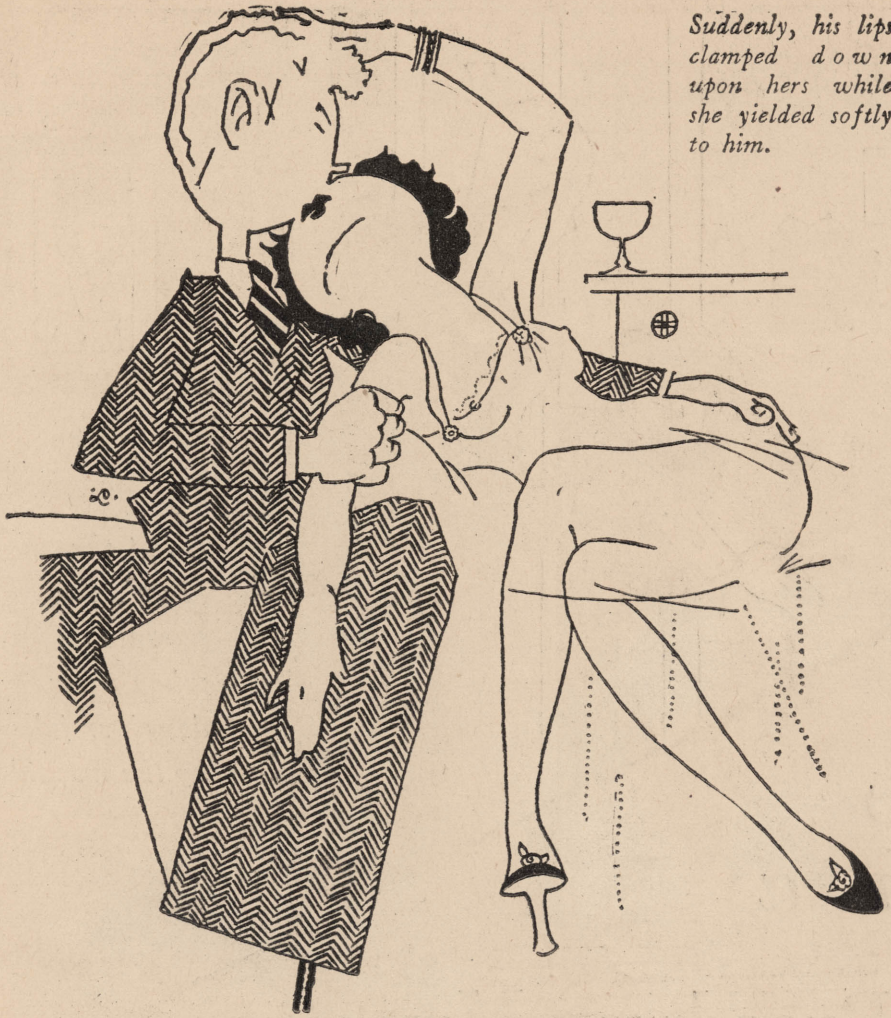
She hesitated, as though debating whether or not to explain. Then, with a little dry laugh—"A cold husband," said Nella, and drank the Sensation.

"And now," she said, quickly, "I must go. Thanks for the—the Sensation. You must show me how to fix it sometime."

He rose, reached for his high clown hat that lay at his feet. "Thanks—I will," he said quietly and then he left.

Going home in the almost deserted subway, Nella recalled the man's dark, blazing eyes, his huge, warm hands. He was decidedly not the type she preferred, but he held a great fascination for her. Doubtless it was nothing but sheer animal magnetism drawing her to him. Both were young, vital and attractive. If she saw him often, there could be but one result . . . She decided recklessly, that she WOULD see him often!

Two nights later she finished her dancing at the Claret Clown and ran upstairs to her room. She pulled off the tight little costume and slipped into a kimono. She was leaning back on



Suddenly, his lips clamped down upon hers while she yielded softly to him.

the lounge, smoking when the door suddenly opened and Mart entered. Nella hastily drew the kimono together, but too late to do much good.

"Why don't you cough before entering?" she said sarcastically, annoyed at herself for blushing. "You claim to be a gentleman."

"I am," said Mart, "but—I'm a man first!" Then, as she said nothing, he apologized, but though his voice said he was sorry, his eyes said he wasn't. . . .

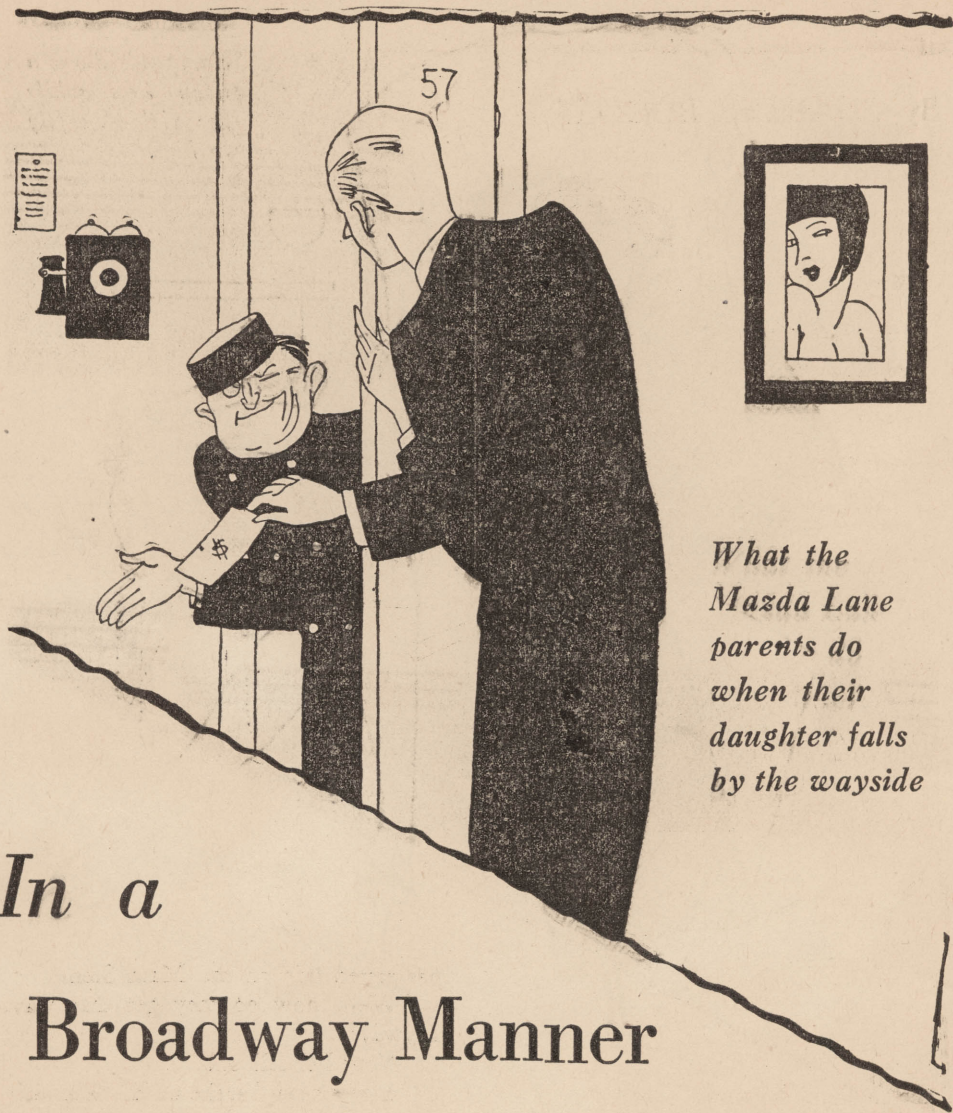
"I wanted you to try this," he said, holding out a glass of a curious pale green liquid, "just invented!"

She accepted it, smiling at his enthusiasm. "Has this got a name, too?" she asked lightly.

"Well yes—but I don't think I'll tell you!" he retorted.

She drained the glass. "Nice," she commented, "awfully nice, Mart. Sit down, won't you?"

Instead of taking the chair toward
(Continued on page 57)



*What the
Mazda Lane
parents do
when their
daughter falls
by the wayside*

In a

Broadway Manner

SAID a Red Hot Mama to her Sugar Daddy: "Our Jazz Baby has stepped out of her character."

"Let her foot slip?"

"Gosh, you catch on to things quickly."

"Who is it that ain't done right by our Nell?"

"That Oil Can who has a permanent address on the Double-Cross Roads

of The World."

"The one with the Shoe Polish Hair?"

"That's the bird."

"What'll we do—sue him?"

"He hasn't enough money to pay a cover charge at an automat."

"Maybe we should bump him off—any of the boys would take him for a ride for the bare expenses, including

By CHARLES BOCHERT

*Many a life
was wrecked
without the
aid of an
over-night
bag!*



cartridges."

"And take a chance on burning at the state's expense? That Jasper isn't worth it."

"What can we do about it—why didn't you stop the Kid when she started paling with all those Sun Dodgers?"

"Use your bean—what control has a mere mother over an offspring who

has tasted life on the Main Stem?"

"Well, how do they get that way, anyway?"

"Now I'll tell one."

"Every time I spoke up the Kid said, 'Put on your chains, Pop, don't try to tell your baby girl anything—it isn't being done this season'."

"Oh, Precious knew all the answers."

"—and all the songs and funny sayings, too."

"But getting down to hardpan—do you suppose we could applesauce this guy into donning the ball and chain?"

"Double harness with our Nancy?"

"Another Bull's Eye for intelligence!"

(Continued on page 54)



HITTING THE HIGH SPOTS

Sensible Susie's the kind of girl who puts on more style so she can put off more fellows!

* * * * *

TINA: "YOU'RE JUST THE KIND OF A MAN A WOMAN CAN TRUST."

TINO: "SAY, HAVE WE MET BEFORE? YOUR FAITH IS FAMILIAR."

Over the telephone:

"Darling," he pleaded, "I've simply got to see you tonight. I haven't had a bite for a week!"

* * * * *

Blonde: "Oh, Doctor, I just HAD to come. Will you please take a look at my figure?"

Doctor: "Why, there's nothing wrong with it that I can see."

Blonde: "Oh, I know, but don't you think it's a wow?"



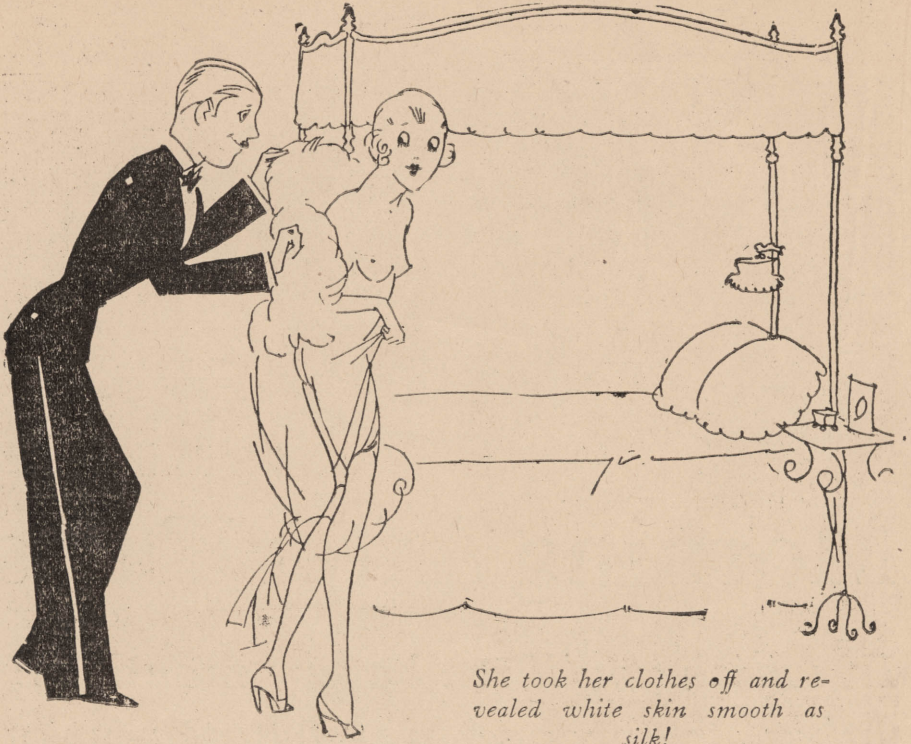
Morning After Tales

In which you'll read every month another story concerning what went on the night before. Today you'll hear about FITZ, THE WISE GUY.

I'M HERE to tell you, Broadway is the Main Stem, Robbers' Route, Mazda Lane, the Gold Belt, Suckers' Highway, the Great Blight Way and Boobs' Ditch. My Broadway is mashed between the Great Divide, Forty-second Street, and Childs' on Columbus Circle. I've ankled up and down this rib of New York since the age when Sophie Tucker had a waistline. I've met the cast of characters that clubs on the sidewalks twenty-four hours a day. They're louder and funnier than a summer's headliner at the Palace. They're cock-

sure of three ideas. They know it all. If they aren't where they want to be, they'll get there. Any city outside of New York is Bridgeport.

I'm here to tell you about the moll buzzers, the stemmers, the chiselers, the chatterers, the Dixieland men, the bootleggers, the hijackers, the racketeers, the lounge cruisers, the pop song writers, the hoofers, the canaries, the pansies, the stars and the dust. I'll try to give you the highlights and the lowdown on the people called that way by the wise guys. I'm not under wraps to call a spade a calla lily.



She took her clothes off and revealed white skin smooth as silk!

Facts are facts and they're going to be called by their right names.

I'm here to tell you about the guys and the skirts who come to Broadway without the dough and scheme to make cake out of nothing. Item also: The chorines, the adagio dancers, the dance hall girls, the cigarette girls, the cloakroom girls, all the little girls with skins Broadway loves to touch with a great big hand, all the little girls who make hey! hey! while the moon shines, all the little girls who this and that with promoters, customers' men, diamond smugglers, stool pigeons, traders, brokers, night club owners, gunmen, all the little girls who pay and pay to the playboys of Broadway who can repay and repay with compound interest and diamonds as big as the Paramount Building. I'm here to tell you

of payments and pay-offs.

As the calendar tears, it's only a short while ago since I regularly and for nothing got into a certain dance joint high up in the Forties. I knew the big cheese who owned the dive. We were on such good terms that it was as pleasant as a major operation for either of us to tongue "How's tricks?" to the other. But that didn't cut ice with the business end. I was connected with a news rag and the joint was getting plenty free space from me. I didn't like the tall swiss to whom it belonged but the boys and girls who were making their living working it needed a boost. I helped through the paper I was signed with. One or two of the kids were friends of mine. That includes Frank Fitzroy.

Frank Fitzroy wasn't his name. It would be telling you too much to give him away. Well, this Fitz was the leader of the band that played hot music at the hall. He wasn't good. He wasn't bad. The best that you could say for him was that he would hold down his job. And that isn't a bouquet from a box, I'm here to tell you. The only sort of position the joint had was in the telephone book. There was no past, no present, no future in it for Fitz. But he was primed to stay till rheumatism in the elbows and fallen arches cramped his style and old age cooled him off.

He was set to lead the cheap little music fakers in the band forever because the place gave him one thing he wanted more than anything else in the whole damned world. You're right. Women. And for Fitz too much wasn't enough. Half of the dames in the dump he'd make. The other half would make him. It was a fifty-fifty proposition. He had a thousand candle-power smile that brought results. Up there on the band stand, he flashed it like a beacon. When he found his woman his speed was seventy horse power. And he went to the finish. The finish was the end. No woman could hold him much after the finish.

I spoke to him one night during an intermission. I had a good break for him. A hotel around the Seventies had an opening for a bright young fellow with

plenty of personality and pep to conduct a band there. It was the favorite hang-out of the gold coated mamas in the neighborhood, not so young, not so slender, but not so cold and willing to pay the simoleons for value received. I gave him the lay of the land from every angle.

"Nothing doing," said Fitz. "I'm no gigolo for that kind of delicatessen. And if I was, I wouldn't take the job. This dump is my style. And, besides, I'm after a femme who's been hanging around here lately. She looks the kind who don't know any street above



the Circle. I've got some yen for that baby, believe me."

He poured the electric smile over me and in a pretty self-satisfied way slicked his hair. He wasn't cock-eyed about himself, but things like that had either come his way or he had caught them before they went. He was a great sexcess. I questioned if the girl knew he was that way about her.

"Not yet," Fitz end-manned. "But it won't be long."

Fitz had to get back to his work after that.

I took a seat near the dance floor rail and watched the hundreds of feet dancing, trotting or just shoveling on the waxed maple wood. They were the crowd washed on Broadway by the feeling that all they needed to make themselves forgetful and whoopee was a saxophone, a slide trombone, a violin, a banjo, a kettle drum and a piano all harmonized by a band leader, and a place as big as a zoo to dance to the latest pop songs plugged. All they got for their money was a lot of their own perspiration. They thought they were happy. They were suckers.

Now and then I took my peepers away from the dancing bunch and eyed Fitz doing his stuff on the stand. He wasn't working in the usual way. His back was turned on his men. His arms were swaying as if he were giving the boys their time. It was a stall. His mind wasn't on business. He was playing his smile for all it was worth

against a girl near one of the posts. If I had the nerve, I'd say he was conducting his own heart beats. I'd say it anyway if I thought he had a heart.

The girl was a Broadway type on first sight. She belonged to the doll department of types, if you get me. I mean she looked too pretty to be a salesgirl, too dumb to be a stenographer, not pretty enough to be a chorus girl. So I guessed she was a manicurist. She had a silken mop of hair the color of a yolk of egg, big blue eyes staring back at Fitz, a little nose with a thick coat of powder on it and cupid lips painted a gaudy red.

She was short, not stumpy though. She had a good figure and good legs. She wore no stockings and exhibited a skin that looked gold-dusty. In other words, she wasn't different in looks from a mob of others who had been winning beauty contests in their home

towns but find dozens like themselves in every booking office and on every corner of Broadway. She looked easy. Fitz would make her hands down.

I decided that was that and lost my interest. I quit the scene and heeled into the office of the big limburger who was responsible for the prize joint. He was out. It was exactly where I thought he would be. But exactly where I thought it would be was a bottle of cognac and before you could slap my wrist a swig of the liquor went the way of all very good cognac. Then I went out and found Fitz talking to

A Toast--!

HERE'S to the game girl,
The girl who likes to kiss
Because there's not a step in
love
That she would want to miss.

And as for the cold girl
Whose heart is made of stone,
She has earned her fate, so
Let her sit alone!

—BY ROY KLING.

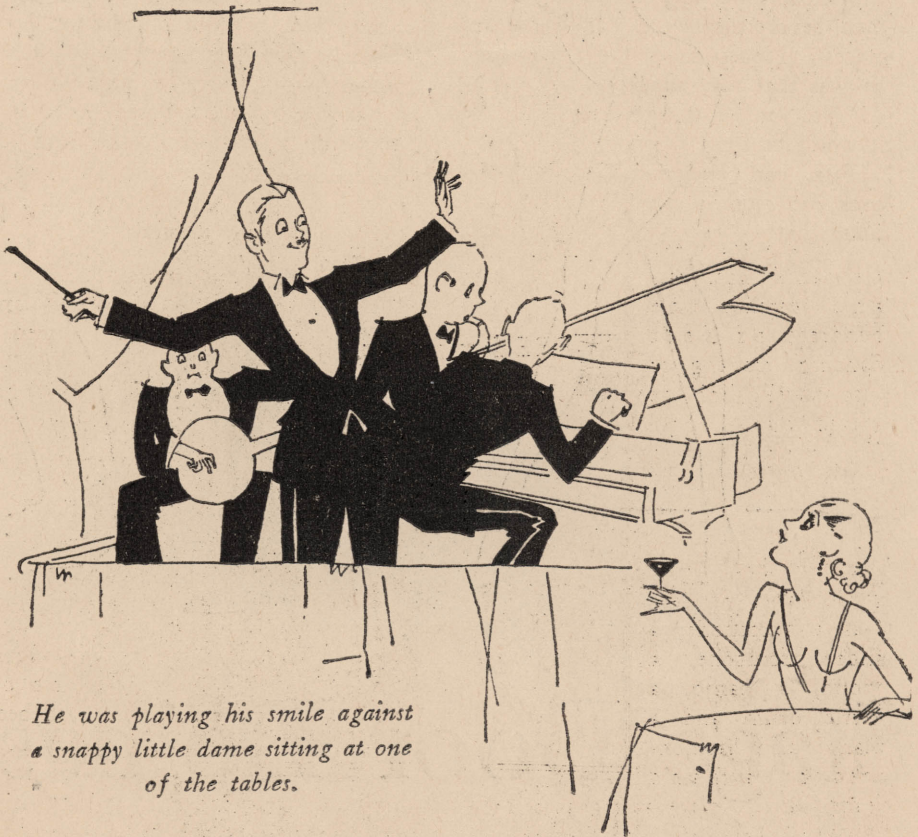
a song plugger who wanted to megaphone from the band stand his publishing house's idea of the latest musical wow.

I gave Fitz a loophole to get rid of the germ by coming closer.

influence her in any way."

All this was as clear as Automat soup to me. So I asked him to cut out the prelude and come to the chorus.

"Alice," he favored me, "Alice Lee, that's her name, came over to me. She



He was playing his smile against a snappy little dame sitting at one of the tables.

"Sorry, brother," he said to the plugger, "I can't talk to you about that now. I'm busy with this other guy, see? Come around some other time." The plugger faded.

Fitz dropped his head to his chest and let me have a wise covered smile, a grin, you know. "It's fixed," he said. "And I didn't do a thing. I gave her a couple of signals, sure. But that means nothing. I didn't give her anything she had to take and I didn't

wanted me to play a number she liked. So I took no chances and asked her if she lived with her folks and if her brother was a cop. She said he wasn't and she didn't. I was damned glad to hear that. The kind of a girl I like is one with plenty of self-reliance, see?, I mean the kind of a girl who isn't afraid of what a house detective will think when he sees a guy coming out of her room.

(Continued on page 52)

"You have stolen my wife," he shouted.
"Your wife?" Spandrell cried, amazed.



By
Carol
Bird



Stage Door Doings

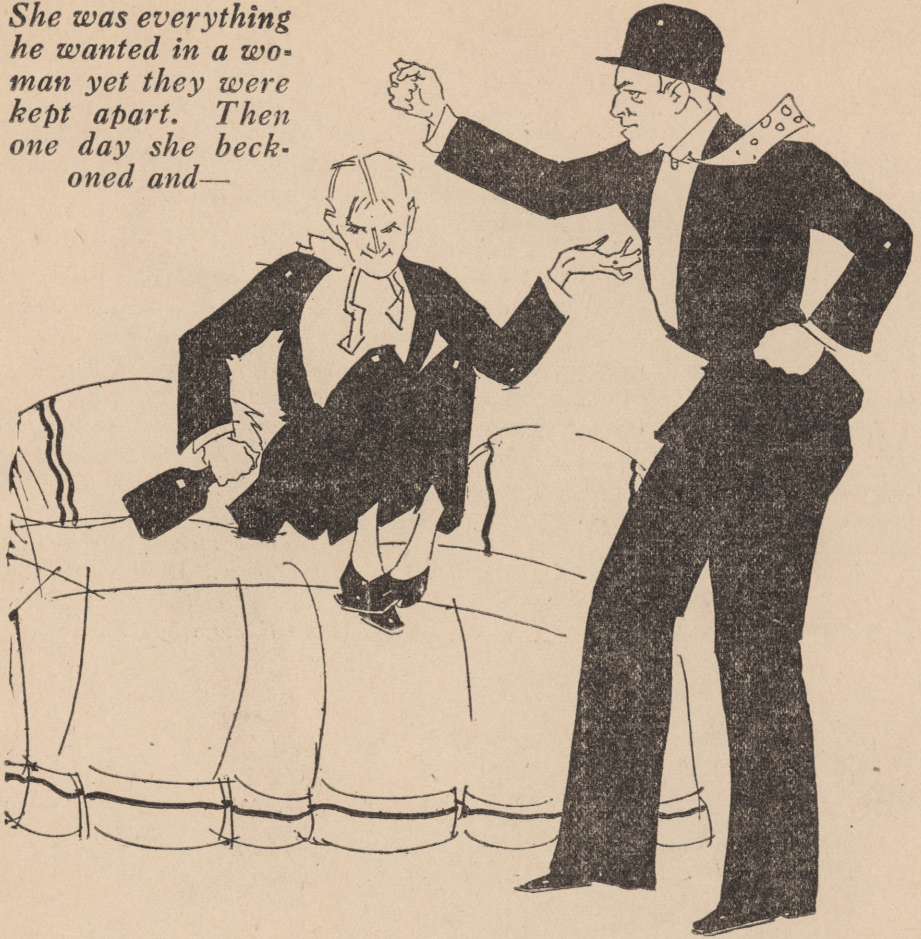
BARTON LESTER SPANDRELL was a hard-boiled newspaper critic, and so he should have known better. He should have been too wise to fall in love with a tap-dancer, and particularly one who was the wow of the *Heydey-Ho Blues*.

But Barton was very weak and highly susceptible when it came to en-

chanting girls of the theatre. And little Lolly Corwyn was sweet enough to eat! She had big Alice-in-Wonderland pansy-purple eyes, a moist red little mouth, a heart-shaped face, tricky little legs, velvet, dimpled knees, and a small, peppy little body just bubbling over with energy.

When the show opened, Barton Lester Spandrell devoted half of his

She was everything he wanted in a woman yet they were kept apart. Then one day she beckoned and—



review to the charms and talent of Lolly. Spandrell thought he was doing his favorite a favor by playing her up. Whereas, in actuality, his high praise got her fired! The stars got furious and jumped on the manager with their claws, so what could he do but fire her?

However, Barton Lester Spandrell did not know this. When *Heydey-Ho Blues* finally closed in Carson City, and Barton Lester Spandrell could no longer sit down front and watch his idol do her numbers, he was disconsolate. All of his friends shivered when they saw him toy with his razor,

before a shave.

He mooned the days and nights away and all his friends were victims of his sorrow. The greatest sufferer was his room-mate, Red Kittridge. Red was a police reporter for the *Gazette*, and he soon got fed up on all the love stuff.

Once, after he was awakened by the screams of Spandrell, in the middle of a nightmare, he shouted to the chagrined Barton when he finally came to:

"For-the-luvva-mud, why dontcha go and marry the gell, and be through with it! This damned moon-calf stuff

is disgusting."

This caustic comment acted indirectly as a suggestion to Spandrell. The next day he wrote a note to Miss Lolly Corwyn, in care of the *Heydey-Ho Blues* company, declaring himself, and asking when and where he could see her. Unabashed and uninhibited, the poor, lovesick youth told the dancer he would meet her in any city from Carson to the coast or all points east.

Abstracted, deep in his love obsession, he forgot to mail the missive. Months later it was found, slipped back behind the radiator, cobwebby with dust.

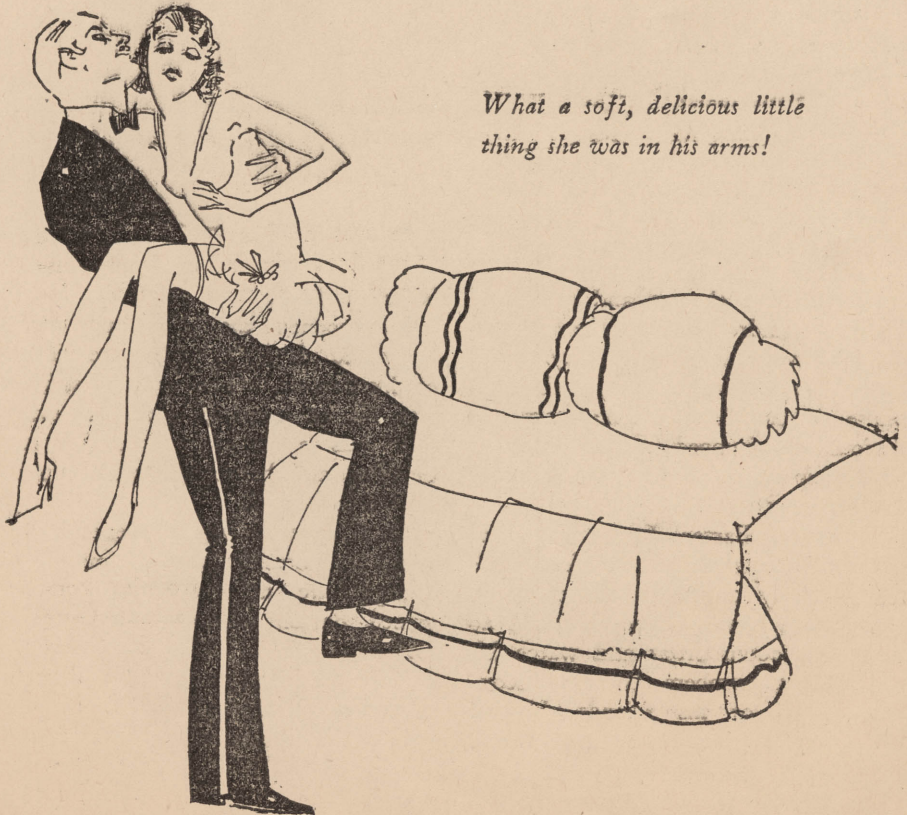
But this was not altogether a disaster. For, two days later, he received at his office a scented note. It was

from Lolly. Even in the midst of his joy, he realized that the one who receives a letter making the first advances is always at an advantage.

The note read:

"Dear 'B. L. S.':

This is to thank you for the perfectly lovely write up you gave me in the 'Clarion' not long ago when our show Heydey-Ho Blues, played Carson City. I'm so glad you liked my work. I'd like most awfully to meet you and thank you in person. Luckily I will be able to do that soon, for I am leaving the show. Write to me care of General Delivery, Carson City, and tell me when I am to



What a soft, delicious little thing she was in his arms!

have the pleasure of meeting you.

Sincerely,

Lolly Corwyn."

"Hot puppies and still hotter tabbies!" exulted Spandrell, when he finished reading. He immediately sat down and answered her:

"My dear Miss Corwyn:

I was delighted to receive your letter. It will be my great pleasure to make your acquaintance when you arrive in Carson City. As soon as you receive this note, please telephone me at the 'Clarion' office and we'll arrange a meeting place.

*Very sincerely yours,
Barton Lester Spandrell."*

One day he finally received a phone call.

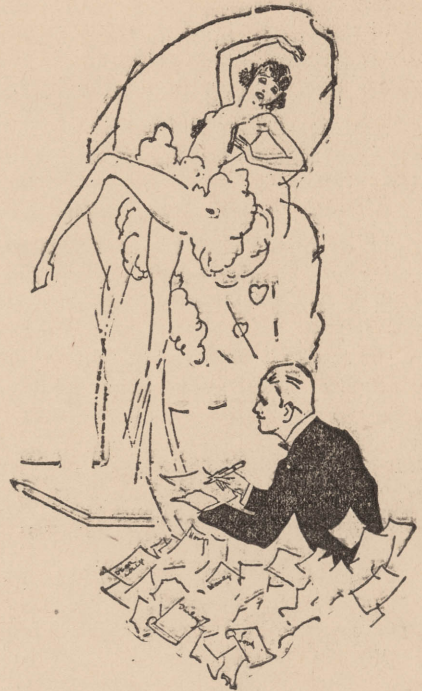
"Hello, Mr. Spandrell," said a divine voice over the wire. It made his hair crinkle, and electric thrills run through him. "This is Lolly Corwyn speaking. It's nice to hear your voice—even over the phone."

Barton Lester Spandrell, determined to lose no time, arranged to take the young lady to dinner the following night in the grill room of the Carson Hotel. They were to meet in the lounge room at seven.

Precisely at 7:05 he made his appearance in the lounge room at the Carson. Lolly Corwyn, in a dainty sleeveless chiffon frock of green and white, arose from the depths of a cretonne-covered couch. Her black curls spiraled from beneath her hat, her purple eyes glowed, her lips were extremely inviting.

Soon the proud and elated Spandrell felt her round little knees which had cut such cute capers in *Heydey-Ho Blues* pressed against his own under a table in the grill room.

"Why did you leave the show?" asked Spandrell, sympathetically, when they had arrived at the entrée. By



He sat hours writing one letter to her, her gorgeous figure always before his eyes!

now he was head over heels in love with the little dancer, in whose lustrous eyes there shone a promise. He felt that little Lolly would never be niggardly with her affections. He suspected that she was as hot a little petter as she was a dancer.

"Why did I leave the show?" repeated Lolly, and her cherry-red lip trembled. "Why? Because I'm in trouble."

"In trouble!"

"Yes, trouble, terrible trouble," continued Lolly. "You see, a man keeps following me every place I go. That—and another reason—is why I left the show. Oh my—isn't this terrible." —Lolly's smiling little face froze into a look of horror—"There he is now! Oh, oh, what shall I do? I'm so afraid."

Spandrell reached over and patted her little soft hand which clutched in terror at the table-cloth.

"Calm down, dear little baby, my sweet little Lolly," he whispered, "and tell me where he is, wonder-child. Where?"

Lolly nodded over at a table to the right of Spandrell. He looked across, and saw a slender youth, dapper, dark, with a strange glitter in his eye, staring at him.

"He looks like a maniac," said Spandrell. "Shall I have him arrested?"

"Oh, no," said Lolly. "How could you, anyhow? He hasn't done anything—yet. Just follows me. He shows up in every city I appear."

"It's an outrage!" Spandrell said furiously. "But don't you worry, little Lollypop. I'll take care of him! He won't follow you out of Carson City! But, in the meantime, let's go to my apartment and talk things over. Why I've just met you, my darling. It's too wonderful! I want to be alone with you. How about it?"

Lolly nodded eagerly.

"Any place," she said. "Any place to get away from those boring eyes over there."

They got into a taxi, and, alighting, Spandrell made sure they were not followed. At any rate, he saw no one, nor any pursuing cab, so they made their way up to the apartment.

While Spandrell was helping Lolly off with her hat, he was almost overpowered by the heavy odor of French perfume that emanated from her. Dizzily, not realizing what he was doing, he clutched her to him, bent her head slightly backwards, poured hot kisses over her arched throat. The transparent chiffon of her frock only accentuated her well developed little figure, and his roving hands soon assured him that she was not encased in

heavy armor. He hazarded a guess that all she wore under her sleazy frock was, perhaps, a little pair of abbreviated whoopee panties and a silken ribbon for a brassiere.

Then his imagination running riot, he picked her up in his arms, carried her over to the couch, and laying her tenderly among the cushions, he began to rain kisses all over her.

When the little dancer managed to release her arms she pushed him away from her.

"No, no," she said. "You musn't put on a performance like this the first time we meet. It isn't right."

Spandrell managed to control himself. He realized that Lolly was a soft, yielding little thing, and that she would never hold out for long against his blandishments.

Now, however, he decided that it would be best to wait a day or two. Consequently he apologized for his exuberant lovemaking, and made a dinner engagement for the following night. They would go to Giovanni's, the Italian's, for dinner, and then have a special midnight supper up here in the apartment, a Dutch fest, cold sausage, potato chips, pickles and real beer. The girl was delighted with the idea. At eleven he escorted her in a cab to the hotel where she was staying.

"Stay with a boy friend tomorrow night—I mean tonight, will you, Red?" asked Spandrell when his roommate came in at two the next morning.

"I haven't got a boy friend—not since I lost you to the dancing dame," retorted Red.

"Aw, go on, Red, be a sport, clear out, just for one night, will you, huh?" Spandrell pleaded.

"All right. I'll be a wandering boy tonight."

"Wander—and be damned—but don't wander in here, Red, or I'll bust

(Continued on page 50)

SMART STEPPING



Stage Door Doings

(Continued from page 48)

you right in the nose!"

After dinner Spandrell and his Lolly returned to the apartment. She relaxed limply in his arms like a drooping flower, while he kissed and caressed her.

In the midst of their love-making Spandrell heard Red's drunken, maudlin babbling outside the door.

"S'fine thing to lock a fella outta his own house," he was muttering, tears in his voice. "Open door, Span."

Spandrell went to the door and flung it open. Red stumbled in, followed by the mysterious black-eyed stranger, Lolly's shadow!

"So," hissed this gentleman. "So! You are the man responsible for the perfidy of my wife!"

"Your wife!" exclaimed Spandrell. "How the devil do I know who your wife is or where she is, or anything about her?"

The dark-eyed gentleman pointed:

"There's my wife now."

Spandrell turned around, and there was Lolly.

"Luigi!" she cried. "Luigi! How ever did you trail me here?"

"And now," continued the dark gentleman, "if you want to avoid a lot of scandal and publicity you can come through with one thousand dollars and we'll call it quits."

Spandrell turned to Lolly.

"A blackmailer, eh! So that's your game! Why did you tell me this man was following you?"

"He is always following me—after the fashion of husbands."

Spandrell walked over to the desk, wrote a check for one thousand dollars and handed it to Luigi.

"Clear out, you crooks!" he shouted at them. "Beat it before I call the police!"

The door banged after them, and as Spandrell turned around, he thought he had suddenly lost his senses. From under the couch crawled Pat Mulcahy, Bruce Farmington, and Tom Masson.

"What the Hades—" began Spandrell. Then, a light dawning: "A frame-up, what?"

Tom Masson acted as spokesman.

"Right-o, my boy! We were all fed up on your mooning over stage babies. So Red decided to teach you a lesson. He had Lily Jensen, the telephone operator at the 'Gazette,' write the letter which was supposed to come from Lolly Corwyn. She called for your answer at General Delivery. Lolly Corwyn was fired after your damp-hool eulogy. Bruce knew her and her actor husband, and telephoned the plot to 'em long distance. They were both sore at your well-intentioned meddling, and were game to play the game."

Spandrell suddenly remembering his thousand dollars said, bitterly:

"That was a damn expensive joke for me, wasn't it? One thousand dollars worth."

At this sad remark, Red, the moving spirit of the whole trick, weakened.

"G'wan, be a sport, Span," he urged. "Look behind you before you yowl."

Spandrell, glancing back, saw the check which the departing conspirators had slid under the door. With it was a slip of paper, and on it was traced.

"Bye, B. L. S.! Love and kisses from Lolly and her Luigi."

"I'm damned," murmured Spandrell, sheepishly, "I'm damned well cured."

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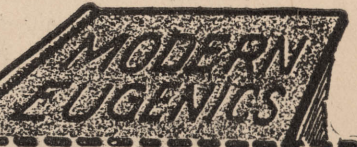
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Fitz, the Wise Guy

(Continued from page 43)

"I had the boys play the number she wanted. But hot! When we got through with it she came over to thank me and I told her to save that till I was through working. She said she'd stick around and, kid, it looks like it's going to be jake for Fitz and Alice tonight."

She ambled over presently and, after Fitz did the right social thing and went back to his jazzing, we gossiped like cousins in Maine.

Was I glad when Fitz passed the finale! I don't mean he wasn't either. He had a good reason and he and the good reason left presto for a hotel unknown.

When P. M. came around the next day, I went to the dance schloss to hunt inspiration for my column in the paper. The band was piping hot. Fitz was giving it his exclusive attention. His back was coldly turned on a pack of beautiful babies dancing in the place.

"So what was?" I heebed when he finally approached.

"Nothing like it ever," Fitz chirped. "The dame had no inhibitions in the taxi. Every drop of the meter was a drop of a moral. It was enough to roast a guy. She had red hot lips and I sort of knew I had picked a winner. She got into her room. She took off her clothes. Her skin was as smooth as silk. She got into bed and turned the lights out. No time was wasted because she had to be at the barber shop where she manicures early in the morning. Good enough so far?"

"Enough said," I answered. "Why the blues, Fitz?"

"Because," he said deliberately, "I wasn't in that room. She lives at a Y. W. C. A. She never told me."

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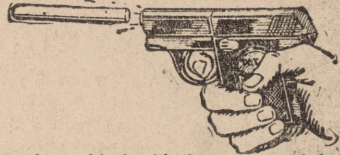
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PEPPY POETRY

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"Moses," said I ready to break into a cascade of giggles, "that's a good address!"

"Wasn't that a dirty trick?" Fitz complained.

"I had a hunch," I murmured.

In a Broadway Manner

(Continued from page 37)

"A pretty idea, if not brilliant."

"What's to hinder the idea from becoming unanimous?"

"The City Chap with the Store Clothes is willing, but our Nancy acts like a Country Vamp with dye in her hair and zinc in her teeth."

"What did she say when you suggested the Straight and Narrow?"

"'Banana Oil'."

"The boy's a fair Hooper. He's good for three squares a day and a comfortable flop. What's the big idea?"

"She said life's too short to be annoyed with a POOR husband, that it might cramp her style."

"What do you expect me to do about it?"

"Use your influence—Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party."

"Say, I'm only a Poor Fish in this family—don't expect anything of me. Has the Daughter Fair any plan of her own?"

"She says she has—to let nature take its course."

"She's an optimist—maybe she knows where there's a market for used wives, same as used cars."

"It's always darkest just before dawn—maybe it will work out all right."

"Yes—and maybe we'll have Ice Cream."

"Well, it could be worse."

"And how! Suppose she had gotten

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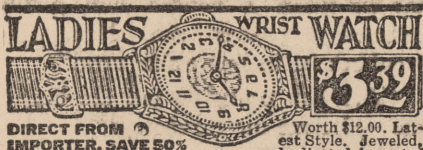
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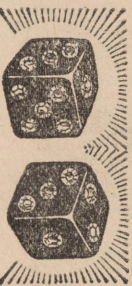
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mixed up with a Chinaman?"

"Don't be sil."

"Anything's possible."

"The Kid's more to be pitied than censured—she's a victim of that New-Day system——"

"You said it—try anything once."

"Well, Steve Brodie took a chance, didn't he, and——"

"Yes—and got all wet—And it looks like our Kid's all wet, too."

"Be reasonable—let's talk this thing over—Rome wasn't built in a day."

"No, but it was burned over night and many a life was wrecked without the aid of an overnight bag."

"You don't mean to insinuate this thing's in the bag?"

"It's all over but the shouting."

"The girl herself isn't making a squawk."

"That's what slays me."

"If you had made that dude take the air when I noticed him getting steamed up over our Nancy we wouldn't be in this pickle now."

"Are you trying to put the bug on me—give me the razzberry?"

"Not tonight, Josephine, said she—laughing excitedly."

"What do you say we can the whole matter? It's the Kid's problem."

"It's K. O. with me. Is it all Jake with you?"

"Is that a threat or a promise?"

"Both."

"Now that that's settled, let's get down to cases—are you going to Reno and do I get my divorce?"

"The divorce is In The Pan—but why not Paris, Honey? You know—Fifty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong—not ALL wrong."

"Just as you say, darling, and always remember that it is for your sake I am doing this."

"No matter how you cut it, it's still bologna."

A Slip in Time

(Continued from page 35)

which she waved he came over and sat on the edge of the lounge. He took both her hands. "Nella, don't let's stall. You said, the other night, that the Great American Curse was a cold husband. There's a worse curse—and I've got it. You know my wife, that tall girl with the Rose dancing team." "She's beautiful!" said Nella, sincerely.

"Yeah—a beautiful hunk of ice! Nella, you know I'm crazy about you! Gimme a break, Baby! You're just my kind—and I'm yours. You know it!"

His mouth closed hotly, possessively upon hers. Then, as his hands slid under her, pressed her close against his breast, she suddenly went limp in his clasp, and her lips parted . . .

Less than a month later Rich began to spend his evenings at the Claret Clown. Naturally, Nella was alarmed at this unexpected turn of events. Was he suspicious of her? Had he heard anything about her and Mart? The possibility frightened her, for, despite the pleasure she found in Mart's arms, she still loved Rich. Mart administered to a very real and urgent need of hers, but she did not, nevertheless, love him as she did her husband. She wondered, panic-stricken, if Rich intended to get the "goods" on her and then divorce her. Not that, God, not that! If only Rich had Mart's passion, fire!

She cautioned Mart against being indiscreet while Rich was around and, reluctantly, he promised to behave. One night after her part in the evening's entertainment had been finished she went as usual to her dressing room. The cold cream that she used to remove the

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heavy grease paint was missing, having been "borrowed," she suspected, by one of the other performers. Rather impatiently she went in search of it. Probably the Rose sisters had taken it, she thought. At the door, her hand on the knob, she paused. A familiar voice smote her startled ears. Rich! Her face pressed tightly against the door, she listened intently, breathlessly.

"—not her fault, I guess. Some women just don't care about love . . ." he was saying.

And then a woman's voice, low, caressing. "You need a woman who will meet you halfway, Rich. You're shy, sort of."

"Well, you're not!" thought Nella viciously. In the significant silence that followed she carefully opened the door, peered in. Her worst suspicions were immediately confirmed.

"You—you're wonderful!" the feminine voice cooed, after a moment, "I didn't know there were men like you! Mart is so different. He is very realistic as a clown isn't he? Well, you have no idea what a really clever impersonation of an iceberg that man can give!" She laughed bitterly.

"Let's forget them," he said. Silence again. Then the man's voice, low and throbbing with emotion . . . "Oh Marie . . . Marie . . . Marie!"

Only one woman in a million would have acted as Nella did. She softly closed the door and tiptoed down the hall. From below, the heartbreaking laughter of the Claret Clown floated up, but she didn't hear. Laugh, clown, laugh. Nella has already forgotten you . . .

In the dressing room again, she faced her reflection in the three-paneled mirror above the low table. Yes, she was just as pretty, just as desirable as Marie. A little tremor shook her at the remembrance of Rich's voice, murmuring "Marie, Marie, Marie." Closing

Broadway Nights

her eyes sensuously, she imagined that same beloved voice whispering "Nella . . . Nella . . . Nella . . ."

So! He needed a woman who would meet him "halfway," did he? Well, well. An odd little smile curled her lips up at the dimpled corners. She decided, reaching for a lipstick, to cancel the date that evening with Mart and to spend the night at home. With her husband.

Home to Poppa!

(Continued from page 29)

"I'll see only the gilt now!"

Paul sat gloomily looking out of the Pullman window. His train was due to pull out in five minutes. Several times he had decided to leap up and rush back to Verna to tell her she had won, that happiness for him could only be where she was. But every time he had sagged back into his seat. It just couldn't be done. He couldn't share her with the blare and glare and fanfare in the midst of which she loved to scintillate.

Suddenly, he became aware of the soft rustle of feminine garments beside him, and his nostrils caught the elusive scent of a dearly familiar perfume. He turned quickly, his heart in his throat.

Beside him, primly demure, but lovely and unsophisticated as a little woodland flower in a pale blue dress and plain close-fitting straw hat, gazing straight ahead of her as if she were entirely unaware of his presence, was—Verna!

Paul murmured her name dazedly and caught her hands in his as if to make sure she wasn't a vision that would vanish into thin air. Verna turned and smiled at him in a way that made his brain whirl. It spoke of surrender, of a meek willingness to follow the man she loved to the end of the earth if need be.

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"You win, Big Lover," she said. "Do you think it will take me very long to learn how to milk a cow?"

Paul laughed low and tremulously. "Answer this one, instead," he retorted. "Are you subject to sea-sickness?"

Verna's eyes filled with puzzlement. "You see, I've changed all my plans," Paul explained. "We'll go to Paris on our honeymoon."

"Oh, Big Lover!" she cried. "You and Paris and—everything!"

It was fortunate that they were occupying the last seat in the coach. Otherwise, the other passengers would have witnessed the most torrid clinch and kiss in history.

For Fame and Fortune

(Continued from page 22)

men were wild about him. The minute he appeared on the dance floor or stage they ogled and worshipped him. His hot breath awoke her. He was kissing her face, her arms and her throat. His lips were searing and branding her.

"No, no!" she cried pushing him from her. "You mustn't, don't! Oh, you must be mad, insane! I guess I was crazy! It must have been the liquor. Let me go Stanley, please!"

"Don't be a fool, Cherry," he said angrily. "Why do you suppose I got you here? It's about time you came across after all I've done for you. It might as well be I as anybody else. A girl with your looks and shape isn't going to remain pure very long in this racket."

He jerked her to him roughly and forced her down beside him. She felt her heart pounding furiously. Her body was tense and rigid. Never before had she prized her virtue as she did now. With all her strength she prayed for the power to resist this sex-mad man. She held back the tears of

Broadway Nights

shame and sorrow which flooded to her eyes. If only she could elude him.

Lamont was afire with drink. His senses reeled and Cherry's resistance served only to set him more aflame. Her smooth ivory skin where the shoulder strap had fallen away gleamed in the firelight. He sunk his lips into the softness of her and with his hands pressed her closer and closer to him.

Cherry felt her senses reeling. She seemed to be tossed in a deep angry sea. The waves were tugging and pulling at her and she had no strength left to combat them. Down, down, down she was falling. Suddenly there was a ringing in her ears—

"Some day you'll understand the difference between lust and love—" over and over again these words kept ringing, then with a start she awakened from her stupor. There were voices in the foyer. They were angry and menacing. She recognized Roger's voice and with a cry she rose and tried to reach him. The effort was too great for her and this time Cherry gave herself up to forgetfulness.

It must have been many hours later when Cherry opened her eyes. She was lying in her bed and Roger and Flo were sitting at either side holding her hands.

"Cherry," they breathed together, "we thought you'd never come to."

Cherry squeezed both their hands and shut her eyes happily. When next she opened them it was night again. Roger was still beside her. His anxious eyes held for her a caress.

"Roger," she whispered, "your Cherry is a very naughty girl but like all naughty girls she wants a chance to reform. I think I'm more than the average dumbbell and what I need is your guiding hand always."

It was Flo who acted as maid of

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honor and what a proud maid she was.

"Cherry, are you sure," she had asked, "that you wouldn't want somebody else to stand up for you? This old souse is dying to but maybe you'd rather have—"

"Oh, shut up," Cherry had laughed, "if I could I'd have you for six maids of honor. Flo, I shudder to think what might have happened if you hadn't realized about giving me the wrong address. And what if you hadn't managed to get in touch with Roger! —Ugh!"

So back to Averill Roger and Cherry went and if ever she hankers for the glamour of Broadway—oh well, Cherry's discovered that a lot goes on at the country club that makes a Broadway night seem mild. And then after all, Cherry at thirty feels that a successful husband is nothing to snicker about.

Giddy Gotham Gossips

(Continued from page 15)

ing you? You haven't been the same since the ball up at the Trinidad the night you met that Fair bolognie."

"I'm just tired," Trinket murmured listlessly.

"Tired? Whoever heard of a chorus girl getting tired? Honey, are you keeping anything from me?"

Trinket forced a disarming smile.

"Don't be silly, Ope," she laughed.

What money she had saved melted like the first snow of the month. Trinket was desperate. Soon she would need money, quantities of it. *Soon*—When she looked at the musty calendar she shivered. What would happen when the last week fell from it like a leaf from the tree of Fate?

There came a night when she believed she was going mad. The small bedroom was like a prison. It was miserably cold and she felt ravished. After a long time she slipped a hand

into the top drawer of the bureau and drew out an envelope containing four tablets. They resembled aspirin but at the sight of them Trinket's breath caught in her throat.

"Just one or two," she heard herself saying, "and then sleep—"

There was someone coming up the stairs. Probably her landlord to row about her back board. With a little gesture Trinket dropped the tablets back in the bureau drawer and stood as a knock sounded on the door.

"Come in!" she said defiantly.

The door opened and the next minute Austin Fair's arms were tightly about her. To Trinket darkness came. When she opened her eyes again she was on the bed and he was chafing her wrists. She touched his face with an exploring finger.

"Then you are real!"

"It was my father's doing," Fair whispered huskily. "He threatened to disinherit me if I did not take the trip on the yacht. I wrote you a long letter. I told you I would come back to you. Foolishly I gave the letter to one of the girls in the office. Instead of mailing it she took it to my father and he—he destroyed it. When he told me that I came straight back."

"It's all right," Trinket heard herself saying.

"It isn't, but it will be!" Fair promised. "Trinket, I love you! Do you still love me? Enough to—"

Her arms slipped about his neck and then she was crying softly, her tears the tears of gladness.

They were married the next morning at the Municipal Building. They had their wedding breakfast at a table in the Hotel Trinidad that looked out on the colorful land of the Rialto. And then they left for Canada and a honeymoon that same night.

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Broadway Nights

blue-eyed, pink-cheeked girl.

"What shall we call her?" Austin wondered.

Trinket smiled up at him meditatively.

"Oh, that's all settled. I had a name months and months ago."

"What name, sweetheart?"

Trinket smiled.

"Opal! It isn't bad luck—it's good luck!" she told him.

Inside Information

(Continued from page 11)

"I'm not afraid," Deland interpolated. "Why not let me meet your brother? I think I could convince him that I'm not up to any tricks. Bonnie, this is straight stuff. I'm in love with you—I want to marry you!"

She shrank against the unholstery, her red lips parted and her eyes wide in amaze. A park light swam by and in its momentary glimmer she glimpsed Deland's handsome face and the serious expression engraved upon it. She knew the wild, almost frantic beat of her heart, the thrills that surged through her for one emotional minute.

"You don't—you can't care—that way, Alf!"

He found her hands in the dark and folded back her fingers tightly.

"I do! I fell in love with you the third time I ever saw you! I've been in love with you since and I always will be! You're sweet, Bonnie—"

"I haven't been good!" she broke in, her voice stricken.

"If you haven't it's not your fault, it's life's! Don't you suppose I know you, Bonnie! I'd stake everything I have on you! I'd play you to win and win only! Let me meet your brother and tell him how I feel. Give me a break, Bonnie, because—because I'm sure that you care a little for me, too!"

His pleading voice was hard to re-

sist. Deland's eyes were like strange stars before her. All at once Bonnie seemed to realize that she did care, did love him! It had been growing secretly like a flower in the dim, hidden garden of her heart, needing only the showers of his confession, the pleading note in his voice and his touch to bring it to a full, vivid bloom.

The wave of happiness that washed her turned to futile despair. Again, the thoughts of the morning marched ironically back. In fancy she saw Bert Gilson across the bright yellow cloth of the breakfast table—his cold, warning gaze and heard his apologetic, purring tones. Fate stood between Deland and herself, a relentless, remorseless fate. She had thrown in her lot with Gilson and she would have to keep steadfastly to that path she had chosen to traverse. Her lips were cold when Deland kissed them, she lay limp and passive in his arms, a dreamy figure drifting ghostlike through a dark, mysterious world.

"You do—love me?"

"Yes," Bonnie whispered.

"You'll let me come and see that brother of yours tomorrow?"

"No!" She straightened up quickly, with a jerk. "Don't ask that! You don't know him—I do! He's dangerous—he wouldn't understand! No, promise me you won't try to see him! Alf, do it for me. Surely you must understand how upset and terribly troubled I am. Everything's all mixed up and I—I'm afraid. Promise!"

"All right, I will!" Deland returned shortly.

She allowed her head to rest against his shoulder and neither spoke for a time.

"What can we do?" Bonnie asked suddenly.

His arm tightened about her.

"You won't laugh if I tell you? You won't think it's a crazy notion of

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Broadway Nights

mine?" He leaned closer and she felt his breath touching her tawny hair. "There's a fellow across town. I have his card. His name is Yogi Sardi and he reads a crystal ball. I know there are a lot of people who don't believe in that sort of stuff but I do. I do, because he's told me some things that have come true, helped me in many ways. Will you believe me when I say that three months ago Sardi told me you were going to fall in love with me?"

Bonnie looked up at him. She had always had a weakness for seers and fortune tellers. In Chicago she had patronized an unprepossessing, warty gypsy palmist. The woman had told her that a tall, dark man was coming into her life and a week later she had met Bert Gilson. Someone else had predicted the pilgrimage to Manhattan—not all of these soothsayers were charlatans.

"I do believe in them, Alf."

"And you'll go to Sardi's for advice?"

Bonnie raised her eyes to his.

"On one condition. That you do as I ask you to."

"What do you want me to do besides not calling on your brother?" Deland inquired.

"Drop me off at the Fifty-ninth Street entrance to the Park and let me go home alone. Will you, Alf?"

He held her close for one throbbing, passion-filled minute. In that instant Bonnie knew an eternity of mad, tempestuous delight. It was over in another breathtake. Suddenly she went cold, thinking of Gilson—the future—love and—danger.

"Here's where you want to get off, sweetheart!" Alf Deland said out of a thick, enfolding silence.

Does her visit to the soothsayer bring promise of happiness or despair to Bonnie?

See December "Broadway Nights."

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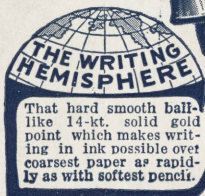
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