

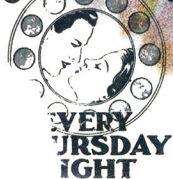
STREET & SMITH'S LOVE STORY★

EVERY WEEK **MAGAZINE** AUG. 27, 1932

BEGINNING - *When The Parrot Screamed*



ON THE AIR

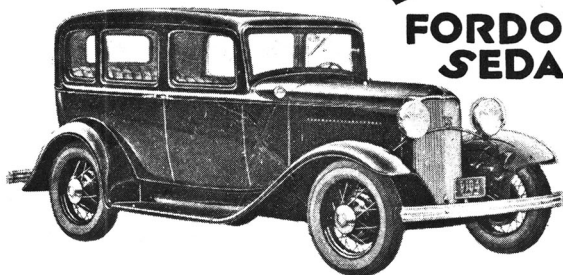


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ROBERT STEIN

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CASH**



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SEDAN**

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IT ISN'T often you have an opportunity to win a splendid prize like this without being required to buy or sell something. To win this prize nothing is necessary but the time you spend working on the puzzle. Can you tell big numbers from little numbers? Can you draw a line connecting the biggest numbers? If you can you may win \$600.00 Cash, or a brand new Eight-Cylinder Ford Four Door Sedan, to be delivered to you by your nearest dealer. All you will have to do to win is to connect up more large numbers in accordance with the rules than anyone else. It sounds easy, doesn't it? But that's all you have to do and you will find it lots of fun; just try your hand at it.

WHY WE GIVE THESE PRIZES

We offer these Good-Will prizes free just for advertising purposes. We sell the well-known Hollywood Marvel Products. We want you to see our new catalog which we are going to mail to everyone who registers in this contest. We feel sure we will receive enough business through the distribution of this catalog, and exceptional offers we make, to more than offset the cost of these prizes. Now remember, it is *not* necessary for you to buy or sell any of these goods to win this prize. The offer is open to everyone and absolutely FREE.

CONTEST RULES

Complete rules and instructions will be sent on receipt of the registration blank. Final date for registration November 30, 1932, but if winner of first prize has mailed registration blank within time specified thereon, \$200.00 extra will be added to first prize. Final date for submitting official puzzle January 30, 1933. Contest restricted to continental U. S. Only registered contestants may take part. Employees of this company and their relatives are excluded. Ties, if any, will be eliminated by means of additional puzzles of the same nature, but larger, which will be mailed registered contestants immediately on receipt of registration blank. At the same time we will mail you a dozen EXTRA COPIES of the Marvel Path Puzzle to practice on. Prizes will be awarded according to official standing of contestants after ties are eliminated. Duplicate prizes will be awarded in case of final ties, as provided in rules on official puzzle blank.

\$200 EXTRA For Promptness

No need to rush about drawing your Marvel Path. You can do that later. The thing to do RIGHT NOW is to DECLARE YOURSELF a contestant by mailing the registration blank below. \$200.00 extra cash will be given first prize winner if he or she registers PROMPTLY. This makes \$800.00 in all, or the Ford and \$200.00 cash extra. SOME PRIZE just for drawing lines between numbers. So mail this registration blank IMMEDIATELY. Be ahead of time so that you can get ALL there is to be won. To step into this car, to know it's yours—to know you don't owe a penny ON it, and haven't paid a penny FOR it—that's worth while. But when, besides this, there will be in the bank two hundred dollars extra, you can be sure your BIG CHANCE has come. RIGHT NOW is the time to say you're going to WIN!

HERE'S THE WAY TO SOLVE THE PUZZLE

Above is a Marvel Path Puzzle—the simple puzzle which decides the winner. All you do is take a pencil and draw a line or path through 40 of the numbers in the square as shown in the sample path at the right. In drawing your line or path, you want to include the MOST big numbers, and the FEWEST small numbers, as per the following rules. That's all.

- (1) Your line must be ONE CONTINUOUS LINE but may turn as often as you wish. You may start at ANY NUMBER IN THE SQUARE and stop at any number. When finished your line must contain 40 numbers.
- (2) Your line must go straight up or straight down, straight right or straight left—diagonal (slanting) lines are not allowed. See Sample Marvel Path at right.
- (3) From the number you begin with you may go in a straight line until your line contains 4 numbers. Then you MUST turn because 4 numbers are all that are permitted in a straight line. If you wish you may turn when your line contains 3 numbers. But LESS than 3 numbers in a straight line are NOT PERMITTED. Observe this rule throughout—NEVER LESS than 3 numbers in a straight line—NEVER MORE than 4.
- (4) Your line must never touch or cross itself. When your line contains 40 numbers STOP. Add up the numbers in your finished line and put down the total. The path that adds up to a bigger total than anybody else's WINS.

We have drawn a sample path in the small puzzle above to show you how to do it. You may start at any number in the puzzle. The numbers in our path add up to 189. See if you can beat this path by starting at some other number. Try it. If you do and your path adds up to a bigger total than anyone else's, you win, and the prize you win will be \$600.00 Cash, or a brand new Eight Cylinder Ford Sedan. That's some prize for taking a pencil and drawing a line, but don't stop to solve the puzzle now—mail your registration blank first! Be in time to get the extra \$200.00 that goes to first prize winner, for promptness. Copyright 1932. Hollywood Marvel Products Co.

9	2	6	7	3	9	4	7	4	3	9	4
4	8	3	5	6	3	8	5	5	7	3	7
5	3	8	2	6	6	5	7	2	6	5	5
7	5	4	8	3	5	6	3	9	2	5	7
3	6	5	2	9	3	5	6	4	8	3	5
9	2	7	5	2	9	3	6	5	2	9	3
2	8	3	6	6	2	8	4	4	6	4	7
7	4	8	2	6	6	4	7	2	5	6	3
5	6	3	9	3	5	6	4	8	3	6	7
3	7	7	2	8	3	5	6	3	9	3	5
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9	2	6	7	3	9	4	7	4	3	9	4
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5	3	8	2	6	6	5	7	2	6	5	5
7	5	4	8	3	5	6	3	9	2	5	7
3	6	5	2	9	3	5	6	4	8	3	5
9	2	7	5	2	9	3	6	5	2	9	3
2	8	3	6	6	2	8	4	4	6	4	7
7	4	8	2	6	6	4	7	2	5	6	3
5	6	3	9	3	5	6	4	8	3	6	7
3	7	7	2	8	3	5	6	3	9	3	5
9	3	5	5	2	9	3	6	6	2	9	3
4	7	2	7	7	3	8	5	6	6	2	9

REGISTRATION BLANK

HOLLYWOOD MARVEL PRODUCTS CO.,
1023 N. Sycamore, Dept. 404
Hollywood, Calif.

My total is.....
Without obligation to me, register my name in your Good-Will Marvel Path Contest. Send me full information, the Official Rules together with the official puzzle blank, and 12 extra copies for practice. I expect to submit a puzzle in this contest. It is understood that I may win first or any other prize listed above, without paying you one cent for goods or service.

Name.....
Address.....

WE'RE TALKING TO MEN WHO HAVE THE COURAGE TO FACE

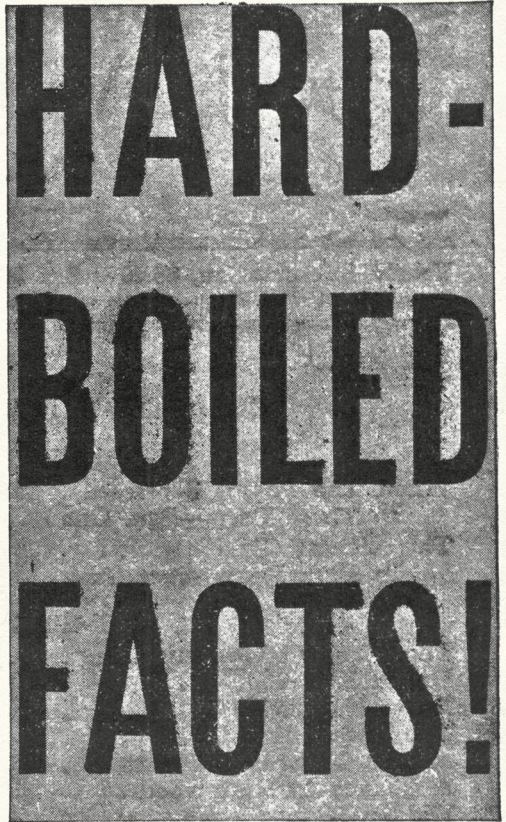
MONEY comes hard these days. Promotions are few and far between. Other men have their eyes on your job. Most of them would be willing to take it for less pay than you're getting. Their propositions are tempting to employers forced to think of reduced overhead expenses. And these employers are studying more carefully the ability and training of the men on their payrolls.

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Vol. XCII

EVERY WEEK

No. 3

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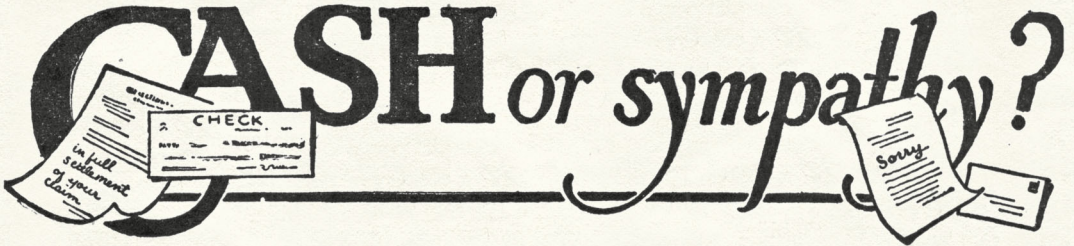
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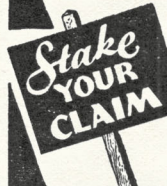
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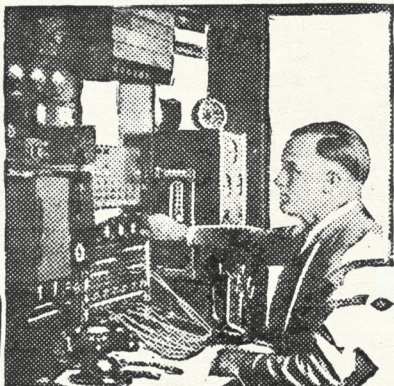
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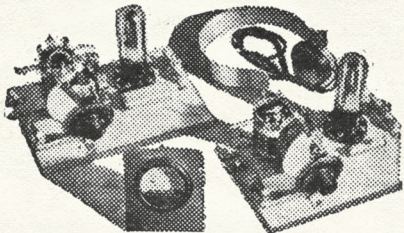
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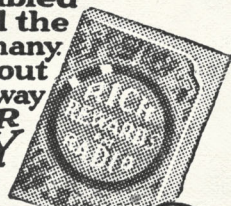
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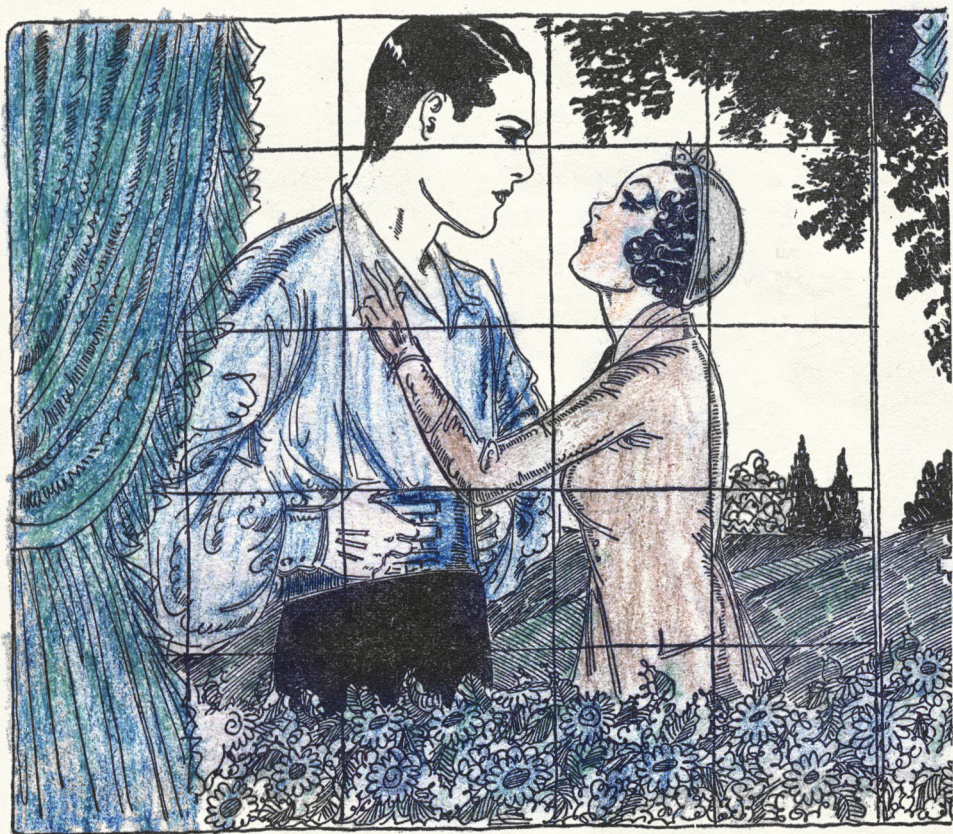
The Dance

By BERT COOKSLEY

GIRLS were pretty things, I said,
But only made for fairest weather;
Like orchids, they were quickly fled—
And then, my dear, we danced together.

Love, I said, was sweet and fair,
But all too closely like a feather,
Helpless in the rainy air—
And then, my sweet, we danced together.

Marriage was, I said, a yoke,
A subtle and all-binding tether
Making liberty a joke—
And then, my love, we danced together!



When The Parrot Screamed

CHAPTER I.

THE hardest thing Kit Carson had to do—and none of his work was easy—was to meet the desperate, pleading eyes of men and girls who were willing to risk their necks for a day's pay, and refuse them the chance to work. He thoroughly disliked it.

To-day had been the worst he

By
Jane Littell

A Serial

Part I.

could remember. Five Arts had sent out a call for a hundred men and girls to ride in a Western picture, and Central Casting had sent the hundred men and girls all right. But most of them had never touched a horse. And the

sort of riding that Westerns require cannot be done by untrained people.

Out of the hundred that had re-



"Oh, be your age, Lotta!" said Kit. And Lu An, peeking around a curtain, could see Lotta Prentice holding up her lips to be kissed! "I don't want to kiss you," growled Kit.

ported, Kit found five who could ride. That meant that he had looked into ninety-five pairs of desperate, pleading eyes and refused ninety-five people work.

As long as the cash on his person had lasted, he had dug into his pocket and slipped a bill to those he refused. That was all he could do. He couldn't O. K. them for the hard riding the picture called for when they didn't even know how to mount a horse. There wouldn't be an unbroken neck left in the outfit.

That Churchill youngster had been the hardest to refuse. Her thin

little face was dead white, and her big brown eyes had been like bruised pansies. And when he came to her name on the list he hadn't a cent left in his pocket. He had especially wanted to help her.

But the poor youngster didn't even know which side of the horse to mount, and even the bored nag he was using for the tests wouldn't stand for her mounting on the right. There had almost been an accident. There would have been if Kit hadn't touched a spur to Dixie Belle and scooped the girl up away from the annoyed mare's heels.

Even then the youngster tried to bluff it out, and wanted to try again. Nervy little thing!

"It's only that I've forgotten, Mr. Carson," she pleaded. "I've ridden. Lots. It'd all come back the minute I got aboard a horse."

Aboard a horse!

"Sorry," he said briefly. "Next!"

He noticed that she didn't leave the lot, though. She stood around and watched, with eyes that were so much too big for the pinched little face. He'd have to watch out for her. She might learn just enough to fool him, and it would be like signing her death warrant to let her slip into that Western outfit. He couldn't afford to have that happen.

And the next day would be another day just like this! And tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, unless Central Casting did better by Five Arts than they had this day.

No wonder the man sat slouched in his saddle, head bent, reins loose on Dixie Belle's neck, at the end of the day, as he rode across the back lot toward the corral of his ranch on the hills adjoining.

Raising, breaking, training horses for use in moving pictures was Kit's life. This selecting people who could be trusted to ride them was the worst of his hardships. Recently he had been forced to add to his other activities a riding school, but even that hadn't helped much. Horsemen are born, not made. And even born horsemen aren't trained overnight.

Dixie Belle arrived at the stone-walled inclosure that was Kit Carson's private part of his grounds, and because the reins did not tighten and the command to jump the wall did not come, she turned and ambled along it to the gateway, picking her way daintily along the lush green

that bordered the roadway, her specially shod feet making no sound.

That was why Kit heard it before he saw it. A low, sobbing sound, with a little moan of pain at intervals. And then the most pathetic sight in the world met his eyes.

There at the end of the low wall was Lu An Churchill—practicing mounting a horse. Barefooted, stockingless—because stockings were too precious to tear on the rough stone—her skirt rolled up and tucked into her belt, Lu An was putting her hands on the top of the wall as she had seen hands laid on a saddle, and trying to swing astride the rough stone.

No wonder that little whimper of pain broke through her low sobbing. Her bare knees were red and bruised. She hadn't the strength to lift her too thin body the height of the wall. But she kept on trying until Kit came up to her.

"Listen," he said gruffly. "If you want to learn to ride that badly, stop skinning your knees, and I'll teach you. Here," he said, sliding off Dixie Belle. "You ride her up to the house. I got to have something to eat and then we'll have a lesson. What?"

"Oh, Mr. Carson!" breathed the girl, the shamed crimson ebbing away and leaving the pinched face its usual dead-white color. Then she turned away, laid her folded arms on the wall and hid her face in them. The slender body shook with sobs, but there was no sound. Courage there, thought Kit, his face twisted with pity.

"If you—only would!" came her muffled voice. "You don't know—what it would mean. I can't—pay for lessons now—but if you'll trust me——"

She was fighting the words out between strangled sobs.

"Pick up your things and come here," he commanded, his voice gruffer than ever to hide his pity.

Lu An scrambled together her shabby shoes, stockings, purse and hat, and came around to stand beside him with them in her arms—obedient, trustful, grateful.

But when he lifted the slender body up in the saddle, Kit found that the silent sobs had not stopped. Twice the girl tried to choke down the muscular spasm as she was choking down the sound, before he got her settled in the saddle.

Then, without a word, he led Dixie Belle with her new burden up the drive to the house.

"Hi, Kit! 'Bout time! 'Bout time, Kit! Hi, Kit!" a raucous voice greeted them as they came abreast the veranda.

A big green-and-red parrot, chained to his perch, was all agog with excited greeting.

"Sure is, Fella," agreed Kit.

"When do we eat? When do we eat? When do we eat?" the bird wanted to know over and over and over again until Lu An thought she would scream herself. It had been two days since she had eaten.

"Right here and now, Fella," Kit told him, leading Dixie Belle to the edge of the veranda.

"'Bout time! 'Bout time! 'Bout time!" shrieked the bird.

Kit laughed and made a threatening gesture toward the parrot.

"Cut it! Cut it! Cut it!" ordered the bird happily.

"That's my daily greeting," he told Lu An. "Now here's your first lesson. Kick your right foot out of the stirrup. Put your weight on the left foot, and swing your right leg up over the mare's rump. There. I've got you."

And he set her bare feet on the ground.

"Come on in. There's a guest room off the living room. You can wash up and get your shoes and stockings on. Would you mind if we grabbed a bite before the lesson? I didn't get any lunch. Never do, as a matter of fact. But there's always something ready when I get in."

That shamed crimson surged up over the girl's face as she thanked him. Could he see that she was starved? Was he just being kind?

She turned into the house, and Kit's voice floated after her.

"Better fix those knees," he advised. "There's stuff in the bath room."

Her knees needed it, too. She had been so desperate in her attempts to learn to mount that she hadn't cared what she did to herself.

But it didn't take long to get herself ready for the meal Kit promised her, a cold towel on her eyes to hide the tear stains, a touch of powder and a dab of rouge. First aid to the battered knees. Stockings rolled down so they wouldn't get stained from the medicine. Shoes—and she was ready.

So was Kit. His Chinese boy had laid the table on the veranda. A great tureen of steaming soup and a great platter of sandwiches. Enough for six people it looked like when they sat down, but there wasn't much left when they finished. Fella got his share of the sandwiches, too.

"I feel better," said Kit with a smile, when they had finished their almost silent meal.

"So do I," admitted Lu An with a tiny trace of color in her cheeks. "Don't know when I've been so hungry."

"Ah Sing gives me a real meal after the evening chores are done. Why don't you stay and eat with

me? I'll drive you home then. I'll be too busy to do it till after dinner."

"I—why—I—— she stammered, shame-suffused again.

How could she tell him that she hadn't any home to be driven to? How could she admit that she hadn't even any bus fare to get back to the lot to-morrow if she did let him drive her into town? She couldn't bear to admit the awfulness of her situation. She couldn't!

She looked up to find his black eyes watching her closely, shrewdly speculative. Kit Carson had been in Hollywood ever since the studios were bare board shacks and Hollywood was a village separated from Los Angeles by fields and orchards. He wasn't easily fooled.

"I—I couldn't think of imposing," she managed. "If—you'll just give me that riding lesson it'll be all right."

"Come along," he said, not knowing how he could help her if she wouldn't admit that she needed help.

He showed her how to mount first, but he didn't make her repeat that effort. He knew she didn't have the strength. But once mounted, they rode away side by side at a walk, to let her get the feel of the horse. Out through the trees they went to the corral and the barns. There was a bunk house for the horse wranglers. There were the barns, a string of them. Over yonder was the riding track. This way were the jumps where the trick horses were trained and exercised. Everywhere there were horses, horses, horses.

"How many horses have you?" Lu An asked, wondering.

"About twelve hundred here. Got a breeding farm down in Mexico, and it's about time I hopped down there to look over this year's crop of colts, too," he told her.

"Where in Mexico?" she wanted to know.

"Just across the Arizona border, below Nogales. In the hills. Gorgeous country. Plenty of mountain streams for water. I'm going back there to live some day. I've been a non-resident *hacendado* quite long enough."

"What's that?"

"*Hacendado*? Property owner. Incidentally, mine are two of the most profitable alien owned haciendas in Mexico."

"Alien owned!" she echoed. "I always thought you were a Mexican."

"A Mexican named Carson?" he laughed.

"Names don't mean anything in Hollywood." She defended her mistake with a tinge of embarrassment.

"It's a natural mistake, I suppose, since I always wear the costumes of a *charro*—a ranchman of the hills," he smiled in explanation. "I was born there, but Grandfather Carson settled in Mexico when Mexico covered a lot more ground than it does now. You know all California belonged to Mexico once."

"Did it?" she asked, not at all interested in history. "But you're so dark. That's why I thought you were a Mexican."

"Haven't you ever seen any black Irish?" he asked. "And don't you remember old Kit Carson of frontier days? He was my grandfather and I'm the only one of the name left. My only sister married a Mexican named Gamio. They live way down in Oaxaca. Below Mexico City. Boy, what country that is! Her husband runs my coffee *finca*——"

His voice trailed away. Lu An, turning to look at him, saw that his eyes were on the southern horizon, and that they were wistful with longing.

"Why, you're homesick!" she burst out.

His dark, stern face turned to her quickly, and then crinkled in a smile that showed his even, white teeth.

"Always," he admitted.

"Why do you stay here, then?" she demanded. "You're rich. You don't have to stay."

"It's hard to explain, Lu An," he said. "It's a feeling of responsibility that keeps me here, more than anything else. Who would supply horses for the pictures, if I



"Listen," he said gruffly. "If you want to learn to ride that badly, stop skinning your knees on that stone wall, and I'll teach you."

didn't? This place has been for sale for ten years, but the people who would like to buy it wouldn't know how to run it. And with Westerns so popular again, I haven't got the heart to let the studios down."

He led the horses out onto the track, and urged them into a gentle trot, and showed the girl how to meet the motion of her horse. Once around the track, and he decided that she had had enough. She looked exhausted.

They rode back to the veranda, and he picked her out of the saddle.

"You stretch out in the swing, Lu An, until I take the horses to the corral. I won't be very long, and then we'll see about dinner and getting you back to town."

"Please!" she begged. "Do you think—I mean, will you put me in the picture? If you gave me a lesson every day until they start shooting, couldn't I ride well enough by then? I—I—I've just got to have the job, Mr. Carson."

"We'll talk that over later."

"Please, now!" she begged. "I—I can't wait for dinner. I—I——"

"How are you going to get back to town? It's three miles across the Five Arts lot to the bus line."

"I—I don't mind that," she told him desperately. "If you'd only give me a lesson every morning and every night so I could work in the picture. Why, it'll be three weeks' work, Mr. Carson. And I'd do almost anything for three weeks' work."

He shook his head slightly—not in refusal, but in protest at the fate that would make life so awfully difficult for people who asked only the chance to work. But Lu An thought he was refusing her.

She didn't plead any more. She just closed her eyes and twisted her folded hands together against her heart.

"Tell me how bad things are with you," he asked her gently.

"They couldn't be any worse," she told him, with a shamed drooping of the head. "I—I——"

"Got locked out of your room because you hadn't paid your rent, and haven't eaten for a week, I'll bet," he cut in.

Her silence, the head that bowed itself even lower, told him that his guess was right.

"Why don't you go home? Get out of Hollywood. I'll buy you a railroad ticket. This picture game is a tough one to buck and you're a frail little thing."

"I'm not," she flashed in protest. "It's only—only——"

"That you're starved," he finished. "I know. I've been in Hollywood a good many years. Well, will you go home?"

Mutely she shook her head.

"Why not?"

"I can't. I—I won a beauty contest—and the town sent me away with a lot of ceremonies."

"Well, why don't you get a job?"

She made a choked little sound that probably started out to be a gallant little laugh. It ended in something more like a sob.

"Here, in Hollywood?" she asked.

"There are a hundred people to every job."

"Would you take a job outside of pictures if I found you one?" he asked.

"Of course!" she cried hopefully.

"Oh, do you know of something?"

"I need a girl out here to act as hostess to the people who come out for riding lessons," he told her. "There isn't a woman on the place, and sometimes we need one rather badly. The hours would be tough. Lessons—especially for the people who are working—begin at six in the morning. But there's a lull during

the day, and you could catch up on your sleep here on the porch."

"You're just—just being kind," she accused him, but her eyes were big and shining with gratitude.

"No, I'm not," he said. "Now look here. There's a house down the road where you could stay. And you can have your meals with me. I'll pay you forty a week and teach you to ride. What do you say?"

"That you're the kindest man in the world—and that your offer is nothing but charity," she told him, catching his hand and carrying it to her cheek in an impetuous gesture that embarrassed Kit Carson more than he had ever been embarrassed in his life before.

"Then you stretch out and rest till I get back," he said, hurriedly loosening her fingers. "We'll settle any other details over dinner. Will you?"

"Of course," she sparkled at him, her big brown eyes no longer bruised pansies, but great, glowing jewels of light. "Oh, if I can only be useful! If I can, I'll stay. If I can't—well, I won't be an object of charity, that's all."

"You'll earn your salary," he told her, with an embarrassed little grin, as he turned away.

She would earn her salary, he was thinking, if she didn't do anything more than just stick around and protect him from Lotta Prentice. It was really Lotta's making such a big nuisance of herself that gave Kit the idea of installing a woman to act as chaperon, hostess, or maid. Anything to have a woman on the premises.

He had intended to get somebody older than Lu An, a middle-aged, housekeeper type of woman, who could live in the ranch house. But, if he got Lu An a room in that farmhouse down the road, he could man-

age to keep her around most of the time he needed protection.

Lu An was such a nice youngster. He had dreaded having a fussy, middle-aged woman in his very masculine establishment. Ah Sing wouldn't like it. Ah Sing hated women, and Ah Sing had to be kept happy. Such a treasure of a cook had to be pampered.

But Ah Sing seemed to like Lu An. He had actually brought her a glass of milk without being asked to. Ah Sing, who usually turned the absolutely expressionless mask of the Orient to all feminine visitors, had actually smiled and rubbed his hands with pleasure as he watched Lu An swallow down his delicious sandwiches.

And Fella had walked up and down the back of her chair while she ate. Fella who had to be chained to his perch behind the kitchen when visitors were around, to keep him from screaming profane insults at them.

Yes, it looked as if Lu An would fit into Kit's household all right. And what a world of good a weekly pay check and three square meals a day would do her!

Kit would teach her to ride, too, so that she would have that accomplishment tucked away against the time when pictures drew her back. For they would. One taste of Kleig lights and the appetite is established.

Well, three meals a day, and the exercise of riding would build the youngster up in no time.

So Kit was thinking comfortably, while Lu An lay flat on her back on the porch swing, her arms behind her head, and tried to realize that all her troubles were over. She tried to believe that Kit really needed her, too, that he hadn't just created this job out of the kindness of his heart.



She made a vow right then that she would be so useful that she would make him need her, so she could show him how whole-heartedly grateful she was to him for giving her this chance to get on her feet again. It meant more to her than he would ever know.

He shook his head and Lu An thought he was refusing to give her the job. She didn't plead any more. She just closed her eyes and twisted her hands together against her heart.

Kit Carson was everything wonderful! And she had always thought, when she saw him at work

on the lots, that he was the sternest, most unapproachable man she ever saw.

Why, he could wear a mask of sternness as blank as Ah Sing's face had been when he first saw her. Probably that was the reason she had supposed he was an Indian, why all Hollywood spoke of him as an Indian. She wondered why he never took the trouble to deny it.

Maybe he would rather be thought an Indian than have it known that he was the grandson of that old outlaw, the first Kit Carson, who had taken refuge from the Texas Vigilantes in old Mexico so long ago. That was the story she remembered. She must remember to look it up the next time she went to the library.

Not that it mattered. It was what Kit Carson stood for in Hollywood to-day that mattered. And in spite of it all, he was always homesick, he had admitted to her, for the wooded hills of Mexico. Poor Kit!

A tender sympathy rushed over her as she lay there. Homesickness means loneliness. Lu An had never heard his name coupled with any woman's. In fact, whenever she had heard Kit Carson's name it was in connection with his horses.

Kit Carson's horses were far more important in the making of Western pictures than the actors. The girl lay there trying to remember when she had heard Kit Carson's name connected with any one's—man or woman. She was sure she never had.

Well, she'd give him friendship, and she'd be delighted to. She didn't care if he was an outlaw's grandson. He was a whole lot nicer than a lot of men she knew who claimed Pilgrim ancestors. Maybe she could make him her friend, and not have him think of her entirely as an employee. She would try.

So she lay there relaxed, resting, planning happily on the future that seemed so safe now that Kit had taken charge of her affairs, when Fella dropped down from his perch to the back of the swing, dragging his chain along impatiently, and making a funny, angry, growling sound in his throat.

"What's the matter, Fella?" she asked lazily, and as if that were a signal, he hopped back onto his perch to march up and down and scream out angrily:

"Get t'ell out! Get t'ell out! Get t'ell out!"

Fella had been screaming and protesting for fully a minute before Lu An caught the gleam of headlights in the growing dusk, and heard the motor of the approaching car.

"Kit! Kit! Help! Murder! Get t'ell out!"

That voice must carry a mile, thought Lu An, as the electric lights strung about the grounds were turned on, and Ah Sing came rushing through the house to see what all the racket was about.

Kit must have heard Fella, too, for Dixie Belle came loping across the lawn just as a great cream-and-nickel car—the sort of car that never means anything but movie money in great chunks—came to a stop beside the veranda.

"Take that horrible bird away, boy," commanded the girl at the wheel. "It makes me quite ill. I can't stand it."

Ah Sing carried the parrot away, growling and protesting in chorus with Fella, just as the slender dark girl in the last word in riding clothes, stepped out of the car and turned to greet Kit.

"Hello, Lotta," he said quietly. "What do you want?"

"What do I usually want, you big

handsome?" she laughed up at him. "My riding lesson, of course."

The visitor was Lotta Prentice, Lu An discovered, by raising herself on her elbows. She didn't know whether to get up and call attention to herself, or to lie perfectly quiet. Kit knew she was there, anyway, if Lotta Prentice didn't.

"It's too late," said Kit curtly. "Almost dark."

"Well, I can't help it if they work poor little me almost to death," she pouted. "I came straight from the studio."

"Then I'm sure you're too tired for a lesson, Lotta. I know I am. Run along."

"Please, Kit!" she pleaded. Lotta Prentice, the worst star in Hollywood to work with—temperamental, imperious, pampered, powerful! Lu An was so astonished she could scarcely believe her ears.

"Oh, Kit! Don't be so horrid to me. Does that give you any pleasure? Be nice to me for once. A little canter will relax my nerves. And you know what I have to go home to. The track is lighted. What does it matter if it is almost dark?"

There was silence for a moment. Lu An, still on her elbows, could see Kit's face. It was stern and unsmiling. There wasn't a trace of gentleness in it now.

"All right. Come along," he said. "We'll thrash this thing out once and for all."

He wheeled Dixie Belle, leaving Lotta Prentice—the pampered star—to find her way on foot across the lawn to the corral! And the amazing part was that Lotta tramped along without the least sign of petulance. She seemed to accept Kit's treatment without a bit of resentment, for she actually hummed a song as she swung along.

Lu An lay wondering about the funny little thrill of triumph that slid over her. Kit had been mighty nice to her, an unimportant little extra girl, and he was being anything but nice to the important Lotta Prentice.

Then a little stab of fear followed the triumph. It certainly wouldn't do to let Lotta know that her humiliation had been witnessed. Her dignity would demand that she punish Lu An for being an innocent bystander!

So when she heard the horses returning, Lu An slipped into the house, and out of sight. But she stood by the open window and watched. She couldn't resist doing that.

She had begun to wonder, with a sharp, insistent need to know, what lay between Lotta and Kit that had to be thrashed out. Lotta was certainly making a play for Kit, and he wasn't giving her any encouragement at all, that Lu An could see.

Their talk was all mixed up with the clatter of horses' hoofs until they drew rein beside the veranda. Then Kit slid to the ground and stepped over to help Lotta down, and their words came to Lu An sharply and distinctly.

"Oh, be your age, Lotta!" And Lu An, peeking around a curtain, could see Lotta Prentice holding up her lips to be kissed! "You're a picture star and I'm a riding master, and you've got a perfectly good husband besides. Stop it!"

"All wrong, big boy," came the star's throaty voice caressingly. "He's the world's worst husband, and the man who owns every horse in Hollywood can't very well be called a riding master, even if he does let himself be persuaded to teach poor little me how to ride like a lady."

"Well, I don't want to kiss you, anyway," growled Kit.

"But I want you to," came plaintively from the pursed lips.

"What do you think my girl friend

"Sure has. And how! Oh, Lu An," called Kit. "Where are you?"

Then Lu An did know a little sharp spasm of fear. Lotta never would forgive her for this. If she



The visitor was Lotta Prentice, Lu An discovered, by raising herself on her elbows. She didn't know whether to get up and call attention to herself, or to lie perfectly quiet.

would say if she saw it?" asked Kit then in a well-controlled voice that emphasized every word.

"Has somebody made you, when I couldn't?" demanded Lotta, her voice losing its cooing, purring note and becoming the sharp-edged tone Lu An had heard on the movie sets.

ever stepped a foot on Lotta's set again—

"Lu An! Come here!" came Kit's voice again, more sharply this time. It was the voice of a man used to being obeyed.

There wasn't anything to do but show herself, but it was with a vast

reluctance that Lu An stepped out onto the veranda.

"Come here—you," commanded Lotta insultingly, catching the girl by the arm and dragging her around in front of the car's headlights.

"And you prefer—that—to me?" she asked Kit in furious contempt.

"I certainly do," said Kit, stepping over to slide an arm about the worried girl. "I'd rather have one Lu An than a million of you. Now go home, before that jealous husband of yours comes looking for you with a gun."

The very silence that descended upon them seemed to throb with the star's furious rage.

"That white trash! Look at her!" Lotta burst forth. "Knees all skinned up. Look at those legs! Those clothes! Oh, and you could have had me! Me!"

And she broke into a scream of half hysterical laughter.

"Outlaw blood—and white trash!" she spat at them as she got into her car. "But you'll pay for it! You can't lead me on, and then make a fool of me, and not pay for it! I'll make you both pay!"

Gears clashing almost drowned out the last words, as the big cream-and-nickel car plowed recklessly across Kit's smooth lawn in a great circle, leaving deep ruts.

Kit sighed, as the sound of the motor died away.

"Well, that's that," he said, giving Lu An's shoulder a gentle little pat before he took his arm away. "Now do you think there's any doubt about your earning your salary?"

"Do things like that happen often?" she asked slowly.

"Oh, I'm not besieged by women," he laughed down at her. "But every time Lotta's husband can't find her, he fills himself with bootleg liquor and comes over here looking for her.

So far he's missed her. He'll probably kill her some day. And I sure don't want it to happen in my house."

"That's awful," said Lu An slowly. "Enough to scare you away?" he asked.

"Don't be silly," she told him with a quick smile. "You'd protect me, wouldn't you?"

"Do my darnedest," he said, returning her smile. "Wonder when we eat."

"Light now, Mist' Kit," came Ah Sing's voice. "Light now."

It seemed to Lu An as they sat over Ah Sing's delicious dinner, that the Lotta Prentice episode had wiped away all the barriers of strangeness between her and Kit. It just didn't seem possible that this was the first evening she had ever spent in his house. It was like coming home, after a long and arduous journey, to find things just as she had left them æons ago.

The living room was completely Mexican. The chairs were of cowhide and split roots, laced together with leather thongs. The floors were covered with rainbow serapes. The walls were decorated with mounted heads of animals, and huge plaques of Mexican pottery. Even the table was set with that blue Mexican glass, sown with air bubbles, still made in the State of Puebla by methods handed down from father to son for hundreds of years. The table pottery, Kit told her, he had brought from Oaxaca on mule back more than a thousand miles.

There were lacquered gourds and wooden trays, water jars and unglazed jugs, embroideries and baskets, all very beautiful.

Lu An felt as if she recognized every item of it, although she had never been south of the Rio Grande.

Kit Carson fitted into the background perfectly. He always wore the tight whipcord trousers of the Mexican ranchman of the better class—called *charro*, he told her—and the huge brown felt sombrero embroidered in gold flowers. But instead of the typical sandals of laced leather thongs, he wore English riding boots, and instead of the short embroidered Mexican jacket, a shirt of beautiful heavy silk disfigured by the words embroidered across the back—"Carson Rancho."

Every man who worked for him had those words embroidered across the back of his shirt. It was to distinguish them on the movie lots from the actors. Nobody in Hollywood would fail to recognize Kit Carson, but he wore the name of his rancho across his back just the same.

"Would you mind dressing the part?" he asked Lu An, across their comfortable new intimacy. "Riding breeches and boots and sombrero and one of these shirts?"

"I'd love it," she said enthusiastically.

"Good," he said. "Then let's measure you, and I'll telephone the tailor to-night. Ah Sing, a tape measure, please."

Kit was perfectly businesslike about that measuring. Neck, arm length, chest, waist, hips. It wasn't anything he did that made a little pulse beat in Lu An's throat. It was just his nearness, his dearness.

Oh, she mustn't fall in love with him! Just because he was the kindest person in the world. She mustn't take seriously his alibi to Lotta Prentice that she was his girl friend. She must keep her gratitude under control. She mustn't mix it and the friendship she wanted to give Kit, with anything more emotional. She must remember that Kit was the grandson of a famous out-

law. Although she didn't see why that should make any difference. It certainly didn't to Lotta Prentice.

And then Kit, turning back to her from the telephone, said something that showed her he had been thinking along the same lines, and her heart felt as if it were turning a cart-wheel.

"Did you mind my telling Lotta that you were my girl friend?" he asked, with something that might have been apology in his slight smile. "You needn't be afraid that I'll take advantage of the situation."

"Mind it!" Lu An repeated, with a tremulous confusion. "I was flattered—delighted to be here when you needed me. But it will make Lotta hate us both forever. No woman can stand losing out to an inferior, least of all an imperious woman like Lotta."

"Well, if it makes her stay away from here, I'd rather have her hate us than have to shoot it out with that crazy husband of hers some day. Not that I'm admitting you're her inferior."

"Now, listen," he went on. "We've got to get you organized. Let's drive down the road and see about where you're going to live, and then go on into town and get your things."

The house down the road had a sitting room and bedroom on the ground floor for rent. A Five Arts writer had just vacated it, and it looked like a palace to Lu An. An hour later she was installed there with the baggage Kit had retrieved from her last landlady, and the bills were to be sent to Kit!

"You're paying me too much," she protested.

"Wait and see," he smiled down at her. "Breakfast is at six. And Ah Sing is fussy about serving it on time."



"Did I mind your telling Lotta that I was your girl friend?" Lu An repeated with a tremulous confusion. "I was flattered—delighted to be here when you needed me."

"I'll be there," she promised gayly.

And she was, in spite of an almost sleepless night. She had spent the night before and had expected to spend a good many nights to come in the haymow of one of Kit's barns,

and she felt as if she had arrived at a snug harbor at last after a rough passage over a vast and stormy sea. To be sure of three square meals a day, a place to sleep, and forty dollars a week was like having heaven laid at her feet.

After months of being unwanted and unnecessary, it was wonderful to find a place where she could be useful. And she had to be useful. She had to prove her undying gratitude to Kit by making herself so useful that he could never get along without her again. If she could only manage to do that!

Hour after hour she lay staring up into the darkness, in wide-eyed dreaming. There were dreams of learning to ride so well that she could spend her days in the saddle beside Kit; dreams that were motivated by that breathless drum-beat of her heart when he was meas-

uring her for her new riding clothes; dreams that got entirely out of hand and made her raise her arms in the darkness to put them about the neck of the man she was dreaming about; dreams that were so thrillingly vivid that after a while she sat up with burning cheeks and a shamed warning. She couldn't let dreams run away with her.

"You'd better watch yourself, Lu An Churchill. Remember you're a charity case to Kit and don't fix up a lot of unnecessary heartbreak for yourself—although it's probably too late now."

And it was.

TO BE CONTINUED.



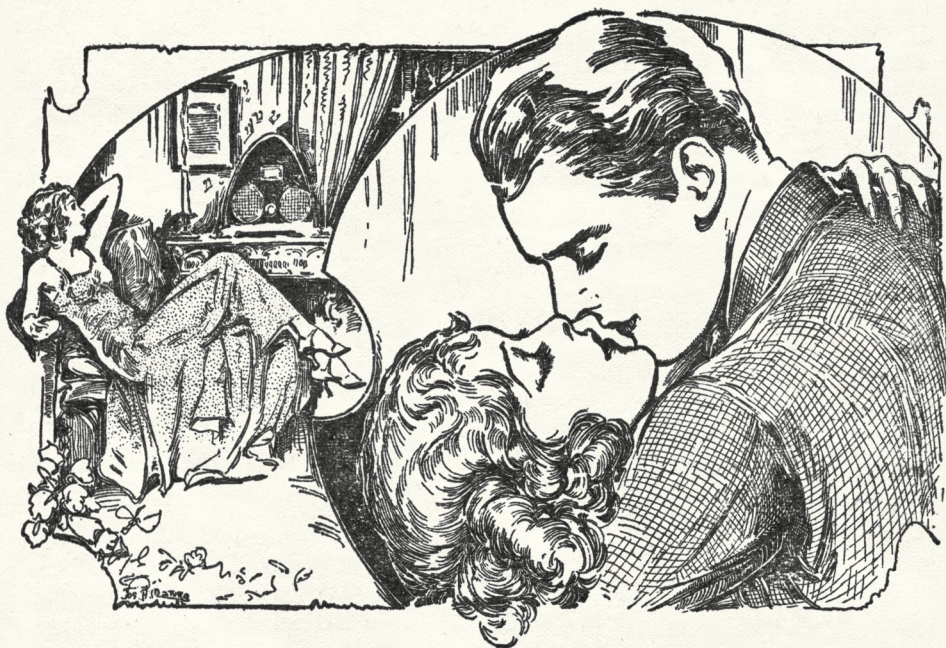
EVER AND FOREVER

DISTANT as the morning star,
Close as roses stand together—
Doesn't matter where we are:
I love you ever and forever!

Winter, summer, night or noon—
Sure as dew comes to the heather,
Sure as there's another moon,
I love you ever and forever!

Don't care where the long road goes,
Doesn't matter what the weather—
Only that the whole world knows
I love you ever and forever!

GLORIA BERTHALL.



The Diamond Wedding Ring

By

Myra Gay

IT'S an excellent bargain, Miss Thomas." The real-estate agent was becoming a trifle out of patience. "I don't see why you hesitate. You couldn't find another apartment like this in all New York City. The furniture is really beautiful. If this weren't the summer season, you could never have found such a charming place."

"I—I'll take it," said Gay with a little gasp. Mentally, she was counting the money she would have left after paying the two months' rent. She had no business taking the apartment, but she couldn't resist the teakwood table and the thick Chinese rugs on the polished floor. It was exactly the apartment she would have had for herself, if the

accident of poverty hadn't intervened.

It was getting dark when she left the agent's office with the lease in her pocket. She went immediately to the hotel and got

her two suitcases. She got a thrill as she fitted the key in the lock of Apartment 1A. Her very own apartment for two whole months! Time enough to find a husband!

That was the reason Gay Thomas had journeyed to New York from her little up-State village. She had resolved that she wasn't going to be an old maid. She was going to find a Prince Charming and marry him. Other girls went to New York to write books or paint pictures or go on the stage. Gay had no talents except those of home-making. She

could keep house beautifully, and she was a fine cook. Why not go to the big metropolis and find a husband?

At first the idea had taken her breath away. Then, when she thought about it again, it didn't sound so absurd. And now here she was.

She motioned for the elevator boy to put the suitcases on the little rack in the bedroom. The apartment seemed to have everything, she thought with a warm little glow. She gave the boy a tip, then fumbled for the light switch, found it, and pressed the button. Nothing happened. The boy lingered at the door and gazed appraisingly at her blue silk suit which had looked so smart in her home town and so very dowdy here.

"Did you have the gas and electricity turned on?" he asked interestedly. "I'll bet you didn't."

"Why, no." Gay looked aghast. "I didn't know anything about having gas and electricity turned on. I thought they just—just were! Nobody told me," she added, thinking resentfully of the aloof agent.

"Well, never mind," comforted the boy. "You can get them turned on to-morrow. Sorry I can't do anything about it. I'll find you a couple of candles, though." He dodged out and came back a few seconds later with one yellow candle, reminiscent of Halloween, and a bright-pink one with a break in the middle, probably the last remains of a now forgotten birthday.

When the boy had left Gay to her new domain, she lighted the two candles and beamed at the apartment. It was such a lovely place! What if it had cost so much that she wouldn't have enough money left to buy the devastating clothes with which she had planned to daz-

zle New York's masculine population? "It's lots more important to have a nice apartment than to have nice clothes," said Gay to herself in her inexperience.

Contentedly, she went about, candle in hand, feeling like a princess in a fairy tale. The apartment was so complete! There were even beautiful dresses hanging in the closets. Gay couldn't understand that. She racked her brains to remember what the real-estate agent had said. The tenant had left that same morning in a very great hurry. She had taken the key to the renting agency on her way to the station. She was very anxious that the apartment should be rented immediately. That was why she had been willing to take such a cut in the rent, which had seemed so exorbitant to Gay.

"I'd never go away from this adorable apartment. Never!" said Gay, aloud.

There was a radio—a small battery set—over in the corner of the living room. Gay turned the switch, and immediately coaxing strains of a dreamy waltz came to her ears. She sank back in one of the easy-chairs, and began to dream about the Prince Charming who was coming to claim her.

She shut her eyes, and, aided by the lovely, melting cadence of the music, he seemed to come right over and stand before her and smile. That smile was the nicest thing about this dream man of hers. As for the rest, he was miles tall, his shoulders were broad, he carried his height as a prince should, and he had blond hair and eyes as blue as the sea. Gay had dreamed all those things so often that she took them for granted.

But to-night, aided by that marvelous, soothing music, he seemed to speak to her. His deep, com-

elling voice stirred Gay as she had never been stirred before in all her starved little narrow life. He was saying all the adoring things she had read in books.

The music broke off in the middle of a gliding, dreamy bar, and a hurried, crisp voice broke in.

"A dangerous criminal has just escaped the custody of an officer who was taking him to the police station," said the voice in a prepared manner which showed he was reading the announcement. "This criminal is tall and well-built, height six feet one, weight two hundred pounds. He has blond hair and blue eyes; slight scar at left side of mouth. Has dangerous, homicidal tendencies and a mania for marriage. He married and killed three trusting girls within the last four months. The man is decidedly unbalanced mentally, although he gives the impression of being quite normal. Any one giving any information to the police concerning this escaped prisoner will be liberally rewarded. The man answers to the name of Marrying Mike."

The voice ceased reading as abruptly as it had begun, and the soothing music of the orchestra came back on the air. But for Gay, the spell was broken, especially as the pink candle suddenly went out. She found a match and lighted it again, looking around fearfully as she did so. One of the windows which gave onto the street was open, and a swift gust of air had put the candle out.

Gay gave a little sigh of relief, and closed the window. She wished she hadn't heard the radio announcement about the horrible creature who married girls only to kill them afterward. She wasn't a bit the timid sort of girl, but even she felt a bit spooky at being alone in

a strange ground-floor apartment with no lights. She looked at the telephone. Silly to be afraid, with a telephone right in the room. All she would have to do, was to take down the receiver and say: "I want a policeman."

Clutching her candle firmly, she went into the kitchen and foraged about. She found a cake, uncut, and some fruit. There was no use leaving them to spoil. She ate heartily, and then, worn out with the excitement of the day, went into the dainty pink-and-green bedroom.

Gay decided to put on her best nightgown, the one with the whole top made of lace and edged with tiny rosebuds. The bed was so comfortable that she was almost asleep by the time she realized that she hadn't blown out the candles, and that the radio was still on. Blinking with sleep, she regarded the candles. They couldn't do any harm anyway. As for the radio—Gay was asleep before she found an excuse.

She woke with a start, and lay gazing straight at the flickering candle. It had burned down to the very end. The other candle was out. What had awakened her? She tried to marshal her thoughts.

A scream of terror welled in her throat. A man was in the room—no; four men! The one who appeared to be the leader was tall and broad-shouldered, and blond, and blue-eyed. She realized all of that in one terrified, all-encompassing glance.

The blond man bent over the bed, and just at that instant the candle went out. One of the others—a slight, dark man—gave a squeak like that of a frightened animal. But the blond giant was gripping Gay's hand so tightly that she could not move. "You thought you could get

away with it, didn't you, Gabrielle?" he demanded.

Gay gave a little frightened gasp. He knew her name! True, nobody ever called her anything but Gay, but nevertheless her name was Gabrielle. His voice was deep and compelling and marvelous, the voice of her dream man!

"This time you're not going to get away with it, young lady," went on the blond giant. "You broke my best friend's heart. He killed himself two months ago. Yes, I thought that would make you flinch!" Gay had made an involuntary movement of denial. "My best friend on earth was Godfrey Dent, and you made him love you, just as you've made dozens of other men love you. And then you laughed at him and sent him away. He came to me that night and poured out the whole story, and then"—the deep voice grew still sterner—"he drowned himself. You didn't even show any remorse when they asked you to identify his body. That decided me! I resolved then that you should pay. And to-night that payment begins. Come on, Frank; do your stuff!"

"Geoff, I don't like this," quavered the small man. "I don't like it at all. I——"

"Shut up! I've told you there's nothing wrong about this marriage, Frank. I've a license and everything. Marry us and be quick about it!"

For the first time, Gay came to life. She sat up, and snatched her kimono from the bottom of the bed, slipping it about her shoulders. A ray of moonlight shone across her white throat, and made a halo of her dusky, disordered hair. "There's some mistake!" she gasped. Now she was beginning to realize everything. They wanted the girl who

was the real tenant of the apartment. "I'm not——"

The blond giant leaned forward and set his lips on hers in the sort of kiss that every girl dreams about and seldom gets. Thrills of ecstasy went through Gay. Geoff's arms closed tightly about her. He crushed her to him. His arms were bands of steel. He kissed her again.

"You're beautiful and—and seductive!" he cried, holding her close. "I can see why Godfrey went mad for love of you." He bent and kissed her again.

Gay went limp in his arms. She forgot everything except that her most beautiful dream was coming true. She was being kissed by the one man in all the world for her. She was savoring the heights of love. His lips left hers lingeringly. His arms slackened about her shoulders.

"Get on with this, Frank!" he said harshly to the small, frightened man, and nodded to the other two who were evidently witnesses.

Frank began to mumble words in a terrified monotone. He paused. "I do," said Geoff firmly.

Frank mumbled some more, and stopped. "Say: 'I do,'" Geoff prompted Gay impatiently.

"I—do," whispered Gay. She couldn't think, couldn't plan, couldn't realize. She was swept away on the tide of love created by Geoff's kiss.

Geoff fumbled for Gay's hand, and found it. A flame seemed to leap from her fingers to his and back, like a never-ending current of electricity. Gay trembled. He was pushing something on to her ring finger, a slender circlet.

He caught her close again for a final embrace. "I'm a fool," he whispered harshly in her ear. "Love hasn't been kind to me, so I resolved

never to marry. I saw this chance of avenging Godfrey's death, and I took it. Now you can never marry any other man, for I'll never give you grounds for divorce! I have planned it all out. But the thing which makes me a fool is the fact that, knowing all I do know about you, I still feel your spell. You draw me to you as compellingly as a magnet draws a piece of steel."

He kissed her again passionately. Gay returned his kisses with all the pent-up ardor of her nature. He kissed her eyelids, her little shell-like ears, her soft neck.

His arms crushed her close. Then abruptly he released her. Gay sank back against her pillows.

"You can't marry the man you were planning to marry to-morrow," said Geoff hoarsely, "the one man on earth you really care for, or so I've heard. But how could you care for any one else and kiss me like that?"

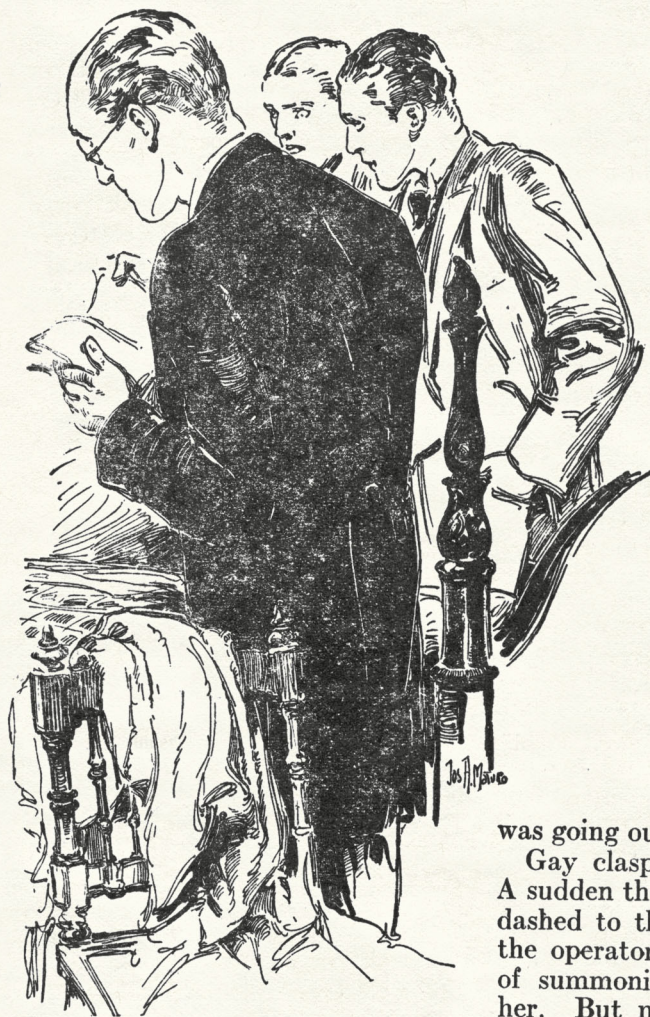
"Sign this!" broke in Frank, pushing a pen into her limp hand. Somehow or other, in the dark, with



"Say:
'I do,'" *Geoff*
prompted
Gay
impatiently.

just that eerie lane of moonlight illuminating the paper that she knew was a marriage certificate, Gay signed. But she knew that her signature was too trembling and scrawling for any one to decipher. She looked at Geoff's blond head with the moonlight shining across it.

"I'm not the person you think!" she cried wildly. "You've made a terrible mistake!"



"Yes, I have made a mistake, and that was kissing you. I've married you, and so had my revenge. But, Heaven help me, I've wrecked my own peace of mind forever!" Geoff turned and went out of the room, followed by Frank and the witnesses.

"Oh, wait!"

The sound of a window closing came to her ears. "Geoff!" she cried. "I love you. Come back to me!"

And then the radio, still patiently grinding out jazz tunes from an all-night dance rendezvous, blared out, and her voice was drowned in the clamor.

She tumbled out of bed and dashed into the living room. She ran to the open window. Four figures strode down the street; a giant, a smaller man, and two others, all obviously in great haste. As she looked, they turned the corner.

Gay stood quite still in the middle of the room and tried to think. She was married to the man she adored, married to the man with whom she had fallen in love at first sight, the man of her dreams. And he thought her unworthy. He despised her. He

was going out of her life forever.

Gay clasped her hands together. A sudden thought came to her. She dashed to the telephone and dialed the operator. She had a wild idea of summoning a policeman to aid her. But nothing happened. The telephone, too, was disconnected.

Sitting in the easy-chair where she had dreamed earlier in the evening, she burst into wild sobs which shook her and seemed to tear her heart to bits.

Seven seemingly endless days went by. Gay might have thought she had dreamed that whole strange, thrilling night, if it hadn't been for the tangible evidence of the wedding ring. She had taken it off her

finger and hung it about her neck, inside her dress. A diamond wedding ring, just what she had always dreamed about! A dozen times a day she took out the ring and feasted her eyes on its gleaming circlet of stones.

Gay racked her brain to think what she should do. She finally put a guarded advertisement in the personal column of a newspaper, but she got no answer.

She went to the real-estate agent for information. He could not tell her Gabrielle's present address, but he did tell her the rest of Gabrielle's name. It was Travers.

Geoff wouldn't know the difference though when he looked at the marriage certificate. "Gabrielle Travers" and "Gabrielle Thomas," written in a perturbed, trembling hand in the semidarkness, wouldn't be so different.

A hundred times Gay reproached herself for not blurting out the truth to Geoff immediately. But she had been so taken by surprise, so swept off her feet by the fires of love, that she had not been able to summon sufficient composure to explain who she really was.

On the morning of the eighth day, Gay had just finished dressing when some one rang the doorbell. She paused just long enough to put a dab of powder on her nose and a little rouge on her lips before she ran to answer. Perhaps it was Geoff! Her heart raced at the very thought.

It wasn't Geoff. It was a dark-haired young man with bold, merry, brown eyes which twinkled at her.

"I'm a culprit," he said. "I've come to crave your humble forgiveness, fair lady. My dog tipped over your milk bottle and drank most of it. You see, I live just across the hall in 1D."

Gay was lonely. She knew she ought to tell the young man that it was quite all right about the milk, and then close the door decidedly. But she didn't. She smiled her sweetest. "What kind of dog have you?" she asked.

For a second the young man looked nonplused. "He—he's a—fox terrier," he stammered. Then he added almost immediately: "Don't think me awfully presumptuous, will you? But I haven't been in New York very long, and I'm terribly lonely. I wonder if you'd let me make up for my dog's upsetting the bottle of milk, by going out to dinner with me this evening. I'd be awfully glad if you would."

Gay hesitated. She had the impulse to say "No." Then she thought of how lonesome and blue she had been that past week. She mentally turned her back on her New England conscience. "I'd love to!" she said in a clear tone that surprised herself. "I think that would be delightful. What time shall I be ready?"

"It's great that you'll go," said the young man as though he were vastly relieved. "Shall we make it sort of early? Say—about six thirty?"

"That will be all right," said Gay primly, frightened now that she was committed to this adventure.

He turned to go. "My name's Dick Davis," he said, laughing, "just in case anybody should ask you."

"And mine is Gay Thomas."

"Pretty name," said Dick.

At noon the telephone jangled. It was the first time it had rung since Gay had had the service resumed. She started nervously, and couldn't think what it was for an instant. Then she darted to answer. Maybe it was Geoff!

"Is this Miss Gay Thomas?"

inquired a woman's high-pitched voice.

"Yes," said Gay wonderingly. She knew no one in all New York. Who was this woman?

"I called to give you a little advice. Be careful how friendly you get with casual strangers. It's not at all safe in a big city!" There was a decisive click of the receiver. The woman had hung up.

Gay blinked. What an extraordinary conversation! Slowly she replaced the receiver on the hook, then went back to tidying the apartment, which she kept in apple-pie order. What had the woman meant? Surely she couldn't have been talking about Dick Davis! Gay's mind buzzed with numerous unanswered questions.

A huckster outside was selling strawberries. Rashly, Gay bought three boxes. After she had paid for them, she berated herself for her stupidity. Here she was, invited out for dinner, and she had bought strawberries too ripe to keep. She gazed at them. In her mind's eye, she saw a delicious shortcake, heaped high with whipped cream.

She hated to leave the apartment anyway. She was so afraid Geoff might come while she was gone.

When Dick Davis knocked at the door at six thirty, a lovely, flushed, smiling Gay greeted him. She was clad in a crisp yellow house dress that made her look prettier than ever, and she had on a dainty organdie apron. He blinked at her in obvious admiration. Then he seemed to realize that she wasn't dressed to go out.

"Come in," said Gay hospitably. "You're going to have dinner with me, instead of our going out somewhere. It all happened because a peddler came along with some strawberries."

"But I wanted you to go out with me. I—I can't——" Dick looked absolutely aghast.

Gay smiled. "I know. But you just wait till you see the dinner I've cooked for you!" She drew the protesting Dick into the apartment and took his hat. "Just sit down by the radio for half a minute till I get something out of the oven."

How was Dick to know that she was playing a tremendous game of pretense? She was imagining that Dick was Geoff—big, blond, compelling Geoff. She was pretending that Geoff and she were really married, not a spite affair, but a marriage built on the firm foundation of real love. She had gotten dinner for Geoff. She had set the table for Geoff. She had dreamed about Geoff all afternoon. Perhaps that was why she did not see the absolute panic in Dick's eyes.

The dinner went off very well. Everything tasted delicious. Dick, horribly ill at ease at first, gradually thawed to the delight of a perfectly cooked and served dinner. He became quite mellow after his second lavish piece of strawberry shortcake.

"I didn't know there were any girls left like you in the world," he said abruptly. His eyes didn't look so bold now. His face looked, oddly enough, as though he were sorry for her.

Gay flushed. "What if Geoff had said that to me?" she was thinking. But how was Dick to know that?

"You're pretty, too." Suddenly he left his place at the table and came over and put his hot hands on her shoulders. He kissed her, and his kiss, unexpected as it was, seemed a desecration after Geoff's wild caresses. He kissed her again. "Good heavens, I'm falling for you!"

he said in a tone of wonder and as if he were thinking aloud. "Me, old-timer that I am, falling for a girl like you!" There was something like self-disgust in his voice.

Gay got up hastily. "You shouldn't do that!" she said, breathing fast.

He caught her close. "Do what?" he asked. "Kiss you? Why not?"

She tried to jerk free, and, in the scuffle, the ring hanging about her neck swung free. Dick gave a low whistle of surprise. He curiously picked the ring up between his two fingers. "Married, as I live!" he said. "Where's your husband? Liable to come in at any moment?"

"Yes," lied Gay. She was truly frightened now.

"I don't believe you." Dick's eyes were inscrutable now.

Gay was edging around the corner of the table, away from Dick. He came right after her, with an inexorableness that terrified her. She gave a little scream as he caught her closely.

There was a little sound in the kitchen. The door opened, and a gorgeous girl walked into the room. Under the smart white hat the girl wore, Gay caught a glimpse of two reddish wings of hair, flattened against a face of incredibly flawless loveliness. But it wasn't her beauty which held Gay spellbound; it was her fury. Never had Gay seen any one more flaming with anger.

She walked up to Dick and slapped him across his face. It made a horrid, stinging sound that lingered terrifyingly in Gay's ears for a long time afterward. Then she turned to Gay: "You won't take a warning? Very well. We'll play my way then!" Gay recognized her voice as that of the woman who had telephoned.

"Gabrielle, I swear this was all a mistake!" said Dick, cowering.

Gabrielle! Gay's head went up with a jerk when she heard that name.

The red-haired girl was saying crisply: "It certainly was a mistake for you, Dick Davis. Didn't I tell you no monkey business this time? I've stood enough from you. I was a fool to love you. I, for whom men have killed themselves!"

"I tell you, it wasn't my fault, Gabrielle," reiterated Dick sullenly. "She made me come to dinner. I was going to clear out so you could get into the apartment later and get the——"

"I suppose it was her idea that you kiss her, too?" Gabrielle sarcastically interposed. "Try your excuses on some one who's interested. I'm not!"

Dick crossed to her side. "Gabrielle, it wasn't my fault! I love you and you only." His voice had the ring of truth. "I admit I was carried away for the moment by this girl, but you know how such things are. It didn't mean a thing to me. You're the one I adore. Why, Gabrielle, you're all the world to me!"

"Yes?" There was a nasty inflection in the red-haired girl's voice, and she tapped her well-shod foot impatiently on the floor. She looked at Gay, and her glance seared. "I don't allow women to interfere with my men. There was something I wanted in this apartment, something I forgot when Dick hurried me away. So I told him to scrape up an acquaintance with you and get you out of the apartment at dinner time. I thought I'd better warn you with that anonymous telephone call not to get too friendly with him, though."

Gay found her voice. "Why didn't you ask me for—whatever



you wanted?" she asked timidly. "After all, this is your apartment, isn't it?"

"It is," snapped Gabrielle. "And I didn't ask you because I didn't want you to know anything about it. Is that clear enough, or must I diagram the situation to make it clearer?"

"If you came for something, why don't you take it and go?" asked Gay, at the end of her patience. "After all, I'm subletting this apart-

Gay stared at the jewels as if she had taken leave of her senses. "But," she gasped, "I never saw those things before in all my life!"

ment, and for two months it's mine."

"She's right, Gabrielle," said Dick.

"So you'd side with her, would you?" Gabrielle strode over to the center table. On that table sat a Chinese god, placid and smiling. Gabrielle pressed a spring, and a little door sprang open in the side of the figure, disclosing a secret cavity. Gabrielle put her hand inside, then slowly withdrew it.

"So!" Her tone dripped venom. "You got them first, did you? You got my jewels—my pearl necklace and my jade bracelet that G. D. gave me and my diamond-and-emerald pin from Ray!"

"But, Gabrielle!" began Dick.

She whirled on him, silencing him with a look.

"Let me handle this in my own way, if you please!"

She marched to the telephone and, after a little delay, got in touch with the police station. Quickly she outlined the story and asked for a policeman to help her search the apartment.

"But I don't see why you suspect me!" Gay cried when Gabrielle turned away from the telephone with a triumphant air.

Gabrielle looked straight toward Dick with a queerly level glance. "Here's your chance to square yourself," she said quietly. "You go into the bedroom, and I'll see that this girl doesn't touch anything before the police come. Do you understand?" She stressed the last words.

Dick hesitated. He gazed steadily at Gabrielle. "All right," he said slowly.

Gay caught her breath in horror at a new thought which had come to make her miserable. She had been gazing fixedly at the radio. Now she seemed to hear the voice of that police reporter reading the announcement of the escape of "Marrying Mike," thief and lunatic. Could Geoff have been Marrying Mike? Could he have stolen this red-headed woman's jewels? Now that she thought the whole thing over calmly, it had been incredible from start to finish. No sane man would have forced a woman into marriage in the dead of night.

She gave a little moan. If dreams were futile, what was left in life? All this long week she had thought and dreamed about the man she loved. In the back of her mind had been the firm conviction that some day she would meet him again. And hadn't he said that her kisses stirred him? Hadn't he told her that she had threatened his peace of mind? She had been living on that vague dream. But if Geoff were a marrying maniac! She quivered as if some one had struck her a blow.

Gabrielle chuckled mirthlessly. "Beginning to fuss, are you?" she said. "Well, you'd better do a little worrying!"

She had hardly finished her sentence, when there was the sound of heavy-treading feet at the door. Gabrielle let in two policemen. Again she told the story, this time with a winsome charm that even Gay found captivating. "So I wanted you to be here when I searched this girl's possessions for my jewels," she concluded.

"You shouldn't have left your jewels here," said one of the officers, shaking his head. "Risky business." He looked at Gay as if she were a potential murderess.

"I had word that my mother was very ill," said Gabrielle, prettily sad. "I just dashed off without a thought of anything."

"Except putting your apartment in the hands of a real-estate agent, and turning off the electricity and the gas and the telephone," said Gay, coming to life.

The younger policeman snickered a trifle. Gabrielle's eyes flashed, but she kept her temper well under control. "If you'll come into the bedroom now?" she suggested.

Before the eyes of the officers, she looked through all the bureau.

drawers in turn, then in the closet. Finally she turned to one of Gay's suitcases. "Is this yours?" she asked Gay.

"Yes, of course. There's nothing in it, though. I unpacked completely."

The older policeman lifted the suitcase, then he looked suspiciously at Gay. "Guess we'd better have a look at this," he said.

"It isn't locked," said Gay. "Look all you like."

But it was locked, to her complete mystification, and they had to break the lock. Inside was a welter of Gay's clothes. From an oiled-silk bag that Gay used for soap and toothbrush, the policeman drew out a glittering handful of jewels—a pearl necklace, a jade bracelet, and a flashing diamond-and-emerald pin.

Gay stared at the jewels as if she had taken leave of her senses. "But," she gasped, "I never saw those things before in all my life!"

"You'd better come down to headquarters and tell the judge that story." The policeman gave her an accusing glance.

"You can't do this!" cried Gay wildly. "Why, I——"

She thought of the folks back home. She thought of the horrible disgrace. She began to cry. "I didn't take them," she sobbed. "Oh, please believe me. I didn't take them!"

It was only when she reached the jail that the one comforting feature of the whole terrible business came to her. Geoff couldn't have been the criminal, because the jewels were found. The only thing he had stolen was Gay's heart.

"If you haven't any money to fight this case, the State will assign you an attorney," the kindly police matron advised her. Gay had cried

so much that her face was streaked and swollen. Her throat ached, and her eyes felt as if they were balls of fire. She sat on a rickety chair in a little anteroom, and twisted her damp handkerchief in her nervous fingers.

"Oh, I hope he comes soon!" gasped Gay.

"I think he's coming now," said the matron, looking up. "And you're sure in luck! It's Mr. Farowell! He's a wonderful lawyer. He could get anybody off, even if they'd committed ten murders, he's that good a talker! But he won't take cases unless he feels sympathetic toward the prisoner. That's why he does so much charity work—like with you, for instance. He says that gangsters have plenty of money to hire their own lawyers, but that honest folk who land in jail need help. He's got such a big private fortune that he doesn't need the money." She broke off with a smile. "Good evening, Mr. Farowell. And here's a young lady who's been weeping her eyes out, all because they say she stole some jewelry."

"I hope she's innocent," said a deep voice.

Where had she heard that voice before?

The dingy room seemed to spin. Gay put out a groping hand to steady herself, and instinctively Mr. Farowell caught it in one of his own. Instantly Gay knew. Flame seemed to leap from his hand to hers just as it had done before. "Geoff!" she whispered. "Geoff!"

Then she grew faint.

A moment later, when the world grew steady again, she realized that she was held close in Geoff's arms, but his arms hadn't any love in them, as they had during their midnight marriage. He was looking down at her with a puzzled expres-

sion in his blue eyes. "You are some one I know?" he asked courteously.

Gay closed her eyes for an instant and fought back the engulfing waves of faintness. He didn't know her! The miracle that had happened to her hadn't happened to him. She meant nothing to him. A dull ache came to still the joyous beat of her heart. She fumbled until her fingers found the ribbon around her neck. She drew out the ring and handed it to him.

"Did you ever see this before?" she asked quietly.

He took the ring, looked at it, looked more closely.

"Good heavens!" he cried. "It can't be. Where did you get this?"

Gay freed herself from his arms, stood waveringly on her own feet. She summoned her pride.

"Some one put it on my finger in the dead of night just a week ago," she said with dignity. If he hadn't fallen in love with her as she had thought and dreamed and prayed he had, she wasn't going to hold him to a marriage which had been a mistake. "I sublet an apartment, and the man who—who was married to me"—her steady tones faltered for an instant before she went doggedly on—"didn't wait for my explanation that I was not Gabrielle."

Geoff ran a shaking hand across his forehead. "Do you mean to tell me that you are the girl I married?" he demanded.

"Yes." Gay sprang to her feet. "I'm that girl. And if you can't see the difference between that—that tiger cat who railroaded me in here and—and myself, you must be blind!" As she spoke, she was conscious of her tear-drenched eyes and crumpled house dress. What a sight she must look!

"Did Gabrielle Thomas have you put in here?" questioned Geoff in an ominous manner. Gay nodded. "I'll see about this immediately! Don't worry. You'll be out of here inside of an hour, or I'll know the reason why!" He stamped out.

The police matron was bursting with questions, but she didn't let any of them escape. She helped Gay wash her face, and found powder and rouge for her. She even took Gay's dress and pressed it for her. "Any friend of Mr. Farowell's is a friend of mine," she said, when Gay tried to thank her.

Gay's heart was thumping so hard that it seemed to shake her. Geoff, a famous lawyer, a friend of poor people, a truly altruistic person! A prince among men! But he hadn't loved her as she had loved him. Love hadn't come to him like a blinding flash, swift as summer lightning. He had been carried away by her kisses, but that wasn't real love. She would give him his freedom; an annulment would be easy. And then he would go away, and she would never see him again!

At the desolate feeling in her heart, Gay felt like weeping anew, but she crushed back the sobs. She gave no further thought to her predicament concerning the jewels. Geoff had said he would get her out. She believed implicitly in him.

In less than the hour specified, he was back. "It's all right," he said briefly. "Dick Davis planted those jewels in your suitcase at Gabrielle's instigation. It was his one way of proving his love for Gabrielle. Well, he's won her back. They were married a week ago."

"Oh," gasped Gay. "Then after all——"

"After all, I didn't keep that fearful woman from happiness, despite the heroic measures I tried to take."



He took the ring, looked at it, looked more closely. "Good heavens!" he cried. "It can't be. Where did you get this?"

He laughed grimly. "Well, she'll create her own punishment for herself and any one else who happens to be around her. I confess, I'm almost sorry for Davis."

Geoff was helping Gay on with her hat and coat. As they walked out of the jail, he explained to her that all record of her being brought into the place had been struck off the books. "The whole miserable business is as done with as if it had never happened," he concluded.

"Except that I know the name of my—husband." Gay's treacherous voice faltered a bit on that magic word. "So now we can have this idiotic marriage annulled." Gay bit her trembling lip.

Geoff helped her into a taxi, got in

beside her, and gave an order to the driver in too low a tone for Gay to hear. They rattled along

as fast as the traffic lights would allow. Gay's spirits went down to zero ebb.

"Never since that night have you been out of my mind," said Geoff suddenly. "I've thought and dreamed——"

Gay's heart came gloriously alive. "You've dreamed?" she whispered.

Somehow he had tight hold of both her hands. "I tried to forget you, but somehow I couldn't. Those tumultuous kisses of yours! You don't kiss every one like that, do you?" His tone was wistful and pleading.

"No." The word was a mere breath of sound.

"I thought not." He sounded triumphant. "Somehow I knew that those kisses were just for me, incredible as that seemed."

Gay gained courage to look up at him. He gazed down just then, and their glances met and locked. Gay found it impossible to look away. Her brown eyes seemed to drown in the fathomless blue depths of his. "Mrs. Geoffrey Farowell!" he cried, catching her to him. "Doesn't that sound marvelous?"

Gay was quivering with the intensity of her feelings. She tried to reply, but she couldn't. And she didn't have to. Geoff's face bent closer, and she held up her lips meekly. Then when their lips met, she wasn't meek at all.

"Say, boss, the meter's ticking, and we're at the pier you told me to drive to. How about stirring?"

Geoff and Gay came dazedly back to earth. Geoff gave the driver a bill, and they got out of the cab.

"Why, where are we?" cried Gay in surprise, looking about.

"At the docks. Where did you suppose?" Geoff was smiling at her as he pulled a couple of steamer tickets out of his pocket. "It took

me only about half an hour to settle that Gabrielle affair. The rest of the time I was attending to this."

Gay gasped. "But where are we going? And I haven't any clothes with me! And I—I haven't said I'll marry you!"

Geoff began helping her up the gangway which led to adventure and romance. "I'll answer all those things backward," he laughed. "Last—you don't have to say you'll marry me, because we're legally, positively, absolutely married already! Second, I telephoned to one of the large department stores and ordered them to rush out a complete trousseau for a bride. I had to guess at your size, but I've no doubt you can make the dresses fit. You'll find the things in the cabin. And as to your first question——"

They had reached the deck of the steamer by then. "We're on our way to Bermuda, of course! That's where all honeymooners go! People know just what to expect, so they aren't surprised when they see folks kiss—like this!" He stooped over Gay and laid his lips on hers in a kiss that seemed never to end and that touched Gay's very soul.

"But you haven't told me you love me!" cried Gay, trembling with happiness and excitement.

"I'll save that for the ninety-nine happy years of our married life!" answered Geoff, as they went below to their cabin.

Gay thought that was a perfectly beautiful answer!





Dream Kisses

By I. Baird Richards

CHARITY'S eyes, neither brown nor green, depended entirely upon the shade she wore to define their color. Charity's hair, fine and copper-tinted, became a burnished glory under the gold of the sun. Her nose was tilted above a short upper lip, and bore a patch of persistent but adorable freckles. When she smiled, people caught their breath and realized that her beauty was the rare kind that has to be discovered. For her smile seemed to shine from within with the faint glow of light in an alabaster vase.

Right now she was far from smiling as she gazed at Hal Dykeman across the low place in the hedge.

LS-3C

Her eyes were a mutinous red-brown now, taking their color from the knitted henna suit she wore. They were violet-shaded beneath, too, with grief for her uncle's death.

"I know what you think!" stormed Charity. "You think Ford cares only for the money Uncle Ben left me! You've no right to have such mean thoughts about him. I—I won't have it!"

Hal glared right back at her, his blue eyes dark with anger. He was ruggedly handsome, with his black hair waving close to his head. His chin was just as stubborn and determined as Charity's.

They had fought and been friends ever since the Dykemans had moved

to the house on the obscure street that joined the back of the Bennett property. Hal had been the only one who ever dared contradict Charity Bennett. As a result, weeks sometimes passed during which Charity firmly told herself that never again would she speak to that awful Dykeman boy; weeks in which she agreed with her friends that, after all, people who mattered did not live on Shanty Street.

Yet Charity had never been entirely able to resist the strange fascination of Hal's utter honesty. Something within her met it with deep respect. Then, as Hal had grown older and had begun to be mentioned as a possible contender for the title of heavyweight champion, they had seen little of each other. Hal was home now because he had promised his frail old mother that he would give up fighting and help run his uncle's thriving hardware and furnace business.

"Well, for Pete's sake!" exploded Hal. "You come out here just after the reading of your uncle's will, all upset because you're secretly afraid that Ford Parsons is in love with your money, and when I suggest that you make him think you're not the heiress in order to settle your own doubts, you fly at me as if I had insulted you! Go ahead and marry him if that's the way you feel! You know that he never noticed you before his father lost all his money in the market crash! You know he's always been crazy about Lola Dunn!"

Hal glared belligerently at Charity.

Then his expression swiftly changed as he noticed her strangely white face. "I'm sorry, Charity," he murmured. "I lost my temper. I'm a fool! Of course Ford cares for you. He couldn't help it."

But Charity's small gold head was proudly upflung. "I have perfect faith in Ford," she asserted, "but just to prove that you're wrong, I'll put Ford to the test. Then, when I've shown you what a small-minded person you are, I want you never to speak to me again!"

For a moment longer they glared at each other; then, with a quick little sob, Charity turned on her heel and ran back to the big house in the middle of the block. Hal gazed after her slim, retreating figure as long as a splotch of color was visible, then he, too, turned away. His shoulders suddenly sagged, however, as he went back toward his own house and the lunch that he had left in answer to Charity's call.

Upstairs in her bedroom, so lovely in tones of henna and jade, Charity went directly to the telephone. She'd call Ford at once, she decided, and put him to the test, just to show Hal. But her hand shook as she held the receiver, and her heart beat a frightened tattoo. She had to wait while they hunted him at the bonding company where he worked. Even though she had always been a little crazy about handsome, debonaire Ford Parsons, Charity sometimes got a sick feeling when she remembered that, as Hal said, Ford had paid scant attention to her before his father's loss.

When Ford's voice presently came back to her over the wire, indifferent and faintly bored, she found it suddenly difficult to speak.

"Ford," she stammered, "can you get away and come out at once? Mr. Breen has just finished reading the will. I want to tell you about it."

There was a tiny silence in which she heard him draw a deep breath. When he spoke again there was a suppressed eagerness in his voice.

"If you must have an audience, Charity, darling, I'll come out and let you pour the good news in my ear."

Charity steeled herself against the impulse to tell him the truth. Would she be able to put him to the test, after all? Just the sound of his voice routed her defenses so disastrously. After all, she told herself, it wasn't that she doubted him. It was that she wanted to still forever any doubts in any one's mind that Ford loved her uncle's money and not herself.

When he came she was waiting for him on the side veranda. He sat down beside her in the porch swing, began eyeing her with casual concern.

"Why so pale and shaken, little one?" Ford smiled and reached out a narrow hand to ruffle her shoulder-length bob.

Charity thrilled to his touch. It took a tremendous effort for her to say: "Uncle Ben has left me his money only on condition that I never marry."

Ford withdrew his hand, and the eagerness was blotted out from his dark, expressive eyes. "No! Charity, you're kidding me!"

He got to his feet and lifted her to face him while he searched her tear-filled eyes.

"It can't be!" he exploded. "He couldn't have been so mean! I know he didn't like me, but I didn't think he'd go that far to keep us from marrying. Charity, we'll have to find a way to get around it; we'll have to break the will!"

Charity shrank away from him, her eyes wide with shocked incredulity. Break the will! Wasn't the miracle going to take place? Wasn't Ford going to gather her in his arms and say: "We'll be married at once! We'll show the world that it's you,

and not your uncle's money I care about!"

"No!" she said in a low, frightened voice. "No!"

"You mean"—Ford's tone was ominously quiet—"that you'll give me up without a struggle?"

Give him up! "Oh, no, Ford, that isn't what I mean!" With her sorrowful eyes fixed upon him, she waited for him to go on from there.

Ford laughed with annoyance. "You don't mean that you'd give up that fortune to marry, Charity! Don't tell me you're that old-fashioned!" Ford lighted a cigarette with unsteady fingers.

"You mean you wouldn't want me to?" Charity heard her own voice come as if from a great distance.

"Thanks awfully for the compliment, darling, but I couldn't let you do that. You'd never get over blaming me for depriving you of a fortune."

"Ford!" Charity's words seemed dragged from a deep pit of anguish. "I wouldn't feel that way. I'd rather have love and happiness than all of the money in the world!"

"My dear, of course we feel that way now," Ford drawled, "but I'd certainly be a cad if I let you do anything so rash." His dark eyes were unable to meet her stricken gaze.

There was an instant of silence, broken only by the sounds of some activity within the house. Ford didn't care! Hal had been right! It was the money, after all. She had let him see that she cared, and he had turned her down.

Charity looked at him suddenly with clearer eyes. His regular features seemed almost weak. He was selfish! The adoration of a lot of girls had made him so. For an instant Charity toyed with the maddening temptation to tell him the

truth. She had only to tell him the truth to feel his arms once more about her, to feel his kisses warm on her lips.

But by a supreme effort she summoned pride to the rescue. She laughed with a fair imitation of indifference.

"I'm sure you're right, Ford. After I've had time to think it over, I'll be awfully glad, I know, that you were so sensible."

Charity's pride lasted that long, but no longer.

Numbed by pain, she turned before he could see her tears, and ran through the sun parlor into the hall. Tears blinded her to an unfamiliar object on the floor. She tripped, and would have fallen if a pair of strong young arms had not caught her as she swayed.

A pair of intense blue eyes glared into hers.

"Well, for the love of Pete, Charity, can't you look where you're going?"

Hal Dykeman! What was he doing here in working clothes, with his dark hair clinging in damp rings to his proud young head? But for an instant amazement was drowned in the strange sense of comfort she experienced in his arms. For an instant longer they glared at each other; then Hal, flushing a painful red, released her. He released her physically, yet Charity had the sensation of his arms still about her, still sustaining her spirit.

Ford had come in from the veranda, and his supercilious gaze swept Hal.

Charity drew back, and all of her humiliation and heartbreak suddenly directed itself toward Hal. Had he been spying? Had he come to hear Ford turn her down? That thought was unbearable. For the first time of her life, Charity struck

out at some one else. She tried deliberately to make Hal conscious of the difference in their social stations.

"Just what are you doing here," she demanded haughtily, "and who let you in?"

Hal's eyes narrowed. His face went white.

"I'm the furnace man," he said with bitter, mock humility, "and, of course, the housekeeper let me in the back door. The firm for which I work is accustomed to going over the furnaces of their customers each year before it's time to start the fires up in the fall. I'm adjusting the valves."

Hot tears scalded Charity's eyes at the contempt in his voice, the disillusionment in his blue eyes. She had told him never to speak to her again. She hadn't meant it; but when he had spoken she had treated him like a servant. She could never make him understand.

Hal had stooped to his task again.

Ford sneered. "No one could tell you weren't the old-clothes man to look at you," he said. "I'm surprised, though, Dykeman, to see that you know your place at last. I thought you'd probably gotten a lot of big ideas from the cheap publicity you've had."

Ford turned away and spoke again to Charity. "Come on, Charity; let's go out in the garden. I know you're not unreasonable." Ford's voice held the little note of coaxing that was always so hard for her to resist. But she scarcely heard it now, so intent was she upon watching Hal's stooping figure. The rippling, flowing muscles in his arms and shoulders had stiffened under Ford's insult, but he gave no other sign. Charity knew, though, and reveled in the knowledge that if Hal had not been working on something that was obviously a part of his un-



Charity shrank away from him, her eyes wide with shocked incredulity. Wasn't Ford going to gather her in his arms and say: "We'll be married at once!"

cle's business, he would have knocked Ford down.

"Come on, Charity," Ford said again.

A hot wave dyed Charity's fair face. She smiled at Ford with eyes

grown suddenly hard and bright. "I'm sorry, Ford, but I've a lot of things I must do. Make it some other day, if you don't mind. Just call me up and we'll arrange it."

With a great show of dignity,

Charity swept up the stairs. Inside her bedroom again, she stood with frightened eyes before her dressing-table mirror, staring blindly at the unhappy girl reflected there. Suddenly she hated Hal for having suggested this miserable trick to play on Ford. Suddenly, too, a great fear invaded her. Wouldn't it always be that way? With her uncle's money, would she ever quite know whether any one really cared for her alone?

In that instant she made a startling decision. She would call her lawyer, tell him what she had told Ford, and instruct him to back her statement if he were approached. She would make the whole world think that if she married she would lose her fortune. Then she would set out to find love for its own sake, show Ford that she could be loved for herself alone! And most of all, she would prove it to Hal Dykeman! It would be her mission in life.

As the weeks dragged by, however, Charity was too unhappy to do anything about her plan. News of the supposed contents of the will had made her an endlessly interesting subject of conversation. Every one asked the same question: Would Ford marry her? Would Charity contrive in some way to get both her fiancé and her inheritance? Charity knew, too, as the news of her broken engagement leaked out, that they secretly laughed at her because she had not been deeply enough desired by her fiancé to be acceptable as a penniless bride.

In her natural sorrow for her uncle's death, coupled with her humiliation, Charity shut herself away from all of her friends. She had declined even to see Ford again, though she followed his name in the

social columns of the paper. Apparently he was going about just the same.

She had tried, however, to see Hal. She had gone more than once at dusk to the low place in the hedge and whistled the low call that had always brought him outside. But now he refused to answer the signal. He was evidently not going to forgive her. That hurt Charity more than she could understand.

Then one day, as she was coming out of the movies, she all but collided with Sara Doyle, who had always been one of her special friends. The hurt in Sara's big blue eyes made Charity feel a wave of contrition.

"Sara, don't look at me like that! I've been mean and small, but I'm over it now. You know how much I like you."

"Well"—Sara smiled stiffly—"you've a funny way of showing it!"

"How can I show you how sorry I am?"

"I might forgive you if you crawled out of your shell long enough to come to my party tonight," Sara relented.

"All right," said Charity with a catch in her voice.

And so she went to the party. She was looking her best in a yellow evening dress that shaded to orange at the hem. There was an orange sash, too, and she had brushed her hair back in deep waves. It was a large party, and there were many people present whom she did not know.

Against her will, her bright, hard gaze kept seeking out Ford. When she finally saw him, he was dancing with Lola Dunn, a tall, languorous blonde who moved like a flower in the wind. A pang smote Charity. As Hal had stated, Ford had always cared for Lola. What a fool she had

been, Charity rebuked herself, to think his former preference for herself could ever have been anything but self-interest!

When he finally saw her, he seemed surprised. Before he took a step toward her, however, she knew she couldn't bear to dance with him, couldn't bear to pretend she didn't care. Suddenly she tore herself from her surprised partner's arms and ran through the hall into the conservatory.

A loop of her orange sash caught in the door handle and jerked her from her feet. A pair of strong young arms caught her as she fell. A pair of blue eyes glared bitterly into hers. Hal Dykeman! What was he doing here, dressed in faultless evening clothes? He had never been a part of her sophisticated crowd. Of course, they had all known each other in school years before, but people from Shanty Street did not mix socially with those from Berkeley Drive.

But her heart lifted at the sight of him, for underneath his anger she knew he was her friend. She would make amends, beg his forgiveness.

Suddenly his presence a second time in the guise of savior struck her sense of humor. Her wide, sweet mouth spread into a smile.

"You're so handy, Hal! Are you making it your life work to save awkward young girls from breaking their necks? How do you time my disasters so perfectly?" To her amazement, Charity was conscious of the same sense of comfort she had experienced before when Hal had held her in his arms. She nestled against him involuntarily, and smiled up into his unrelenting young countenance.

"Because you're rich and beautiful, Charity," he said, "I suppose you think you can get away with

anything. You can't—with me, anyway."

Charity was not surprised when he kissed her. She was surprised, though, that she responded to his lips. She wanted to stay in his arms, wanted him to keep on kissing her.

He held her close, as though he never intended letting her go. She could hear the mad pounding of his heart above the thumping of her own. Hal's kiss—the first one he had ever given her in all their years of friendship—was the most exciting thing that had ever happened to Charity.

Then she felt a hand pulling roughly at her shoulder, and turned to find Ford glaring at them both.

"I must say, Charity, this is a bit too much!" Ford's eyes were furious. "The first time I see you in a month, I find you staging a petting party!"

Charity remained in the circle of Hal's arm for the simple reason that she couldn't get away without revealing to Ford that the accident of her sash had caused that kiss. Let Ford believe that some one as handsome as Hal was in his evening clothes was finding her desirable! That thought helped Charity's pride. She smiled mysteriously at Ford, who took a step closer to peer into her companion's face.

"Well, if it isn't our friend from Shanty Street!" Ford laughed. It was, Charity thought, a very unpleasant laugh.

She was furious. Ford was a snob! All of their crowd were snobs! Even she herself had seemed to be one that day when Hal had come to fix the furnace. She blamed herself bitterly. His arm, which still encircled her waist, now felt like steel.

"Yes, Ford," she answered coolly. "Isn't it nice to know some one who

earns his money by working for it? You see, he wouldn't even be afraid to marry a girl who was poor. He'd expect to support her himself. He's independent. Even if he married a girl who had money, he'd scorn the thought of using hers, and of their living on it.

Ford's eyes narrowed angrily. "You seem to know a lot about him!" he sneered.

"Well, naturally, since I'm going to marry him!" At the sound of her own words, Charity gasped. What had made her say such a silly thing? Her heart beat crazily; the room seemed to billow and wave about her. But underneath she knew she had spoken the truth about Hal's character. He would scorn the things that many of her world took for granted.

Ford threw his head back and laughed derisively. But it was a very short laugh. Hal released himself as suddenly and effectively as a coiled spring. Charity, leaning back against the door, automatically loosened her sash, while her horrified eyes saw Hal's fist shoot out to Ford's chin.

"You cheap little cad!" Hal growled.

Ford swayed groggily for an instant, then fell to the floor.

Almost at once there was a mass of curious faces about them.

"What on earth happened, Charity?" gasped Sara Doyle as some one helped Ford unsteadily to his feet.

"I think Hal's fist is what happened," Charity giggled hysterically.

Ford heard her remark.

"I must say, Sara," he sneered, "that if you're stooping to prize fighters and furnace men for guests at your parties, you can count me out after this. I don't care to mix with that sort when I go to parties!"

There was a long, beating silence in which Charity stole a horrified glance at Hal. His firm mouth was etched by harsh, white lines, and Charity knew that it took all his self-control to keep from hitting Ford again. In the silence, Sara's voice fell coldly.

"I'm sorry, Ford. I invited Mr. —er—Dykeman because father asked me to. He knows his uncle through business. I supposed, of course, that he would behave like a gentleman!"

Charity gasped. How could Sara be so cruel, so snobbish?

Hal's blue eyes were blazing with anger. "I'm sorry, Miss Doyle." He bowed stiffly. "I lost my temper. I apologize."

He turned on his heel and walked out of the front door. All eyes followed the easy, graceful swing of his broad shoulders as he disappeared into the night.

Lola Dunn laughed. "You're an idiot to send a handsome young god like that away, Sara. Perhaps Ford needed a slapping."

Charity paused only an instant; then she sped after Hal. "Wait, Hal!" she called. "Wait—silly!" She found that she was crying as she ran toward the dressing room for her little black velvet evening wrap. She got outside just in time to see his small, dark roadster gather its first speed. Charity made a flying leap and landed on the running board.

With an impatient exclamation, Hal brought the car to a sliding stop. "Are you trying to commit suicide?" he demanded angrily.

"No," she choked, "but if you think you're going to leave me with a bunch of snobs like that, you're mistaken! I hate them all! I'm never going near them again! They're all a lot of cats."

Hal eyed her with mocking unbelief as she climbed into the car.

"They're always rude to people who haven't inherited money!" Charity said bitterly. "They'd treat me that way, too, if they dared! Their fathers all made money, and now their children think it's the money that counts!"

Hal started the car again.

Charity spoke again in a low tone. "Hal, I suppose you know I'm sorry I acted the way I did that day you were fixing the furnace. I suppose you know it was because Ford really turned me down when I told him that I'd lose the money if I married."

"The cad!" flamed Hal. Then, in a softer tone: "I wish you'd been brought up on Shanty Street."

Charity's heart quickened its beat; then, strangely, desolation seized her. Some day, naturally, Hal would marry some one who had been brought up on Shanty Street, and she would lose him as a friend. In the driveway in front of her home, as he helped her out, he said:

"I hate parties. I went only to please my uncle. I'm sorry I was such a roughneck, kissing you, and all that." Charity knew that the apology came hard.

"That's all right," she said lightly. "I liked it!" Her breath seemed caught in her throat. "Would a girl have to be brought up on Shanty Street for you to fall in love with her?" she demanded gayly. "You men are so temperamental! Ford couldn't love me because he thought I had no money—you have to have a girl who's brought up in a certain district!" Charity felt that she had to make him know it was all a big joke to her. Pride wouldn't allow her to reveal to any one the depth of her humiliation at Ford's hands. She turned to enter the house, but

Hal seized her by the shoulders and suddenly whirled her to face him.

"Why did you tell Ford what you did about us?"

Charity's eyes were downcast, though a strange madness swept along her veins. Hal's vitality was a tremendously thrilling experience. She sensed that when Hal really did love a girl, that girl would be unable to resist him.

"Why, to—to annoy him, of course!" she stammered.

He held her for a moment longer; then, with a half-ashamed laugh, let her go.

"I'm a fool!" he muttered. "I can't seem to learn from experience!"

He climbed into the car, called a sharp "Good night!" as it roared away.

In her room once more, Charity flung herself on her bed and sobbed bitterly. After to-night she would be an even greater object of ridicule than before. Probably Ford would tell the crowd why Hal had struck him. They would learn later that her claim that she was to marry Hal Dykeman had been just an idle boast.

An hour later, after she had gotten into bed, she was surprised out of a troubled sleep by the ringing of the telephone beside her. The voice coming over the wire made her wide awake in an instant.

"Charity, darling!" It was Ford who spoke. "Listen, sweetest, I'm not going to give you up to some one else! If you're determined to marry some one and lose your inheritance, then you've got to marry me! Will you elope with me now, to-night? You've got to, Charity! Meet me outside as soon as you can. I'll be waiting."

Charity's laugh choked in her throat. All her wounded pride fell

away like a cloak. Ford loved her, after all, more than her money. She'd be able to hold up her head again. Pity and knowing laughter would be a thing of the past.

"All right, darling," she said happily. "If you're so sure you want me, I'll meet you in twenty minutes at the end of the drive."

Charity flew into her clothes. In ten minutes she had slipped down

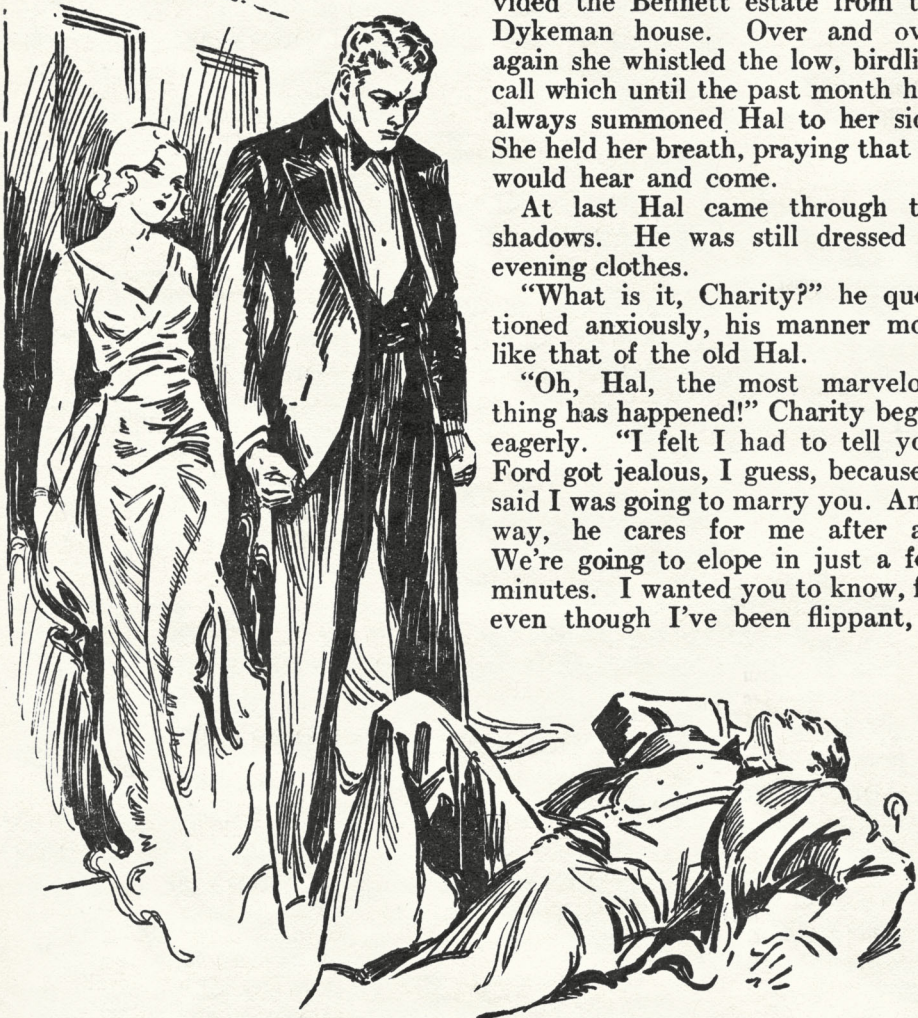
into the deep shadows of the veranda. But she made herself wait the full twenty minutes. As she waited she thought of Hal and the girl he would some day ask to be his wife. A fierce hatred for that unknown girl welled up in her. The envy she felt was as sharp as a knife.

"Well, I am a dog in the manger!" she marveled. Obeying an impulse as sudden as it was compelling, she crept down the veranda steps and dashed back to the hedge which divided the Bennett estate from the Dykeman house. Over and over again she whistled the low, birdlike call which until the past month had always summoned Hal to her side. She held her breath, praying that he would hear and come.

At last Hal came through the shadows. He was still dressed in evening clothes.

"What is it, Charity?" he questioned anxiously, his manner more like that of the old Hal.

"Oh, Hal, the most marvelous thing has happened!" Charity began eagerly. "I felt I had to tell you. Ford got jealous, I guess, because I said I was going to marry you. Anyway, he cares for me after all. We're going to elope in just a few minutes. I wanted you to know, for even though I've been flippant, it



Hal's fist shot out to Ford's chin. "You cheap little cad!" he growled. Ford swayed groggily for an instant, then fell to the floor.

did hurt terribly having him turn me down, having people laugh at me."

She paused, and in the moonlight she saw the eagerness die from his face like a lamp blown out. Finally he spoke.

"I—hope you'll be happy. I hope you won't regret it."

There was a silence in which Charity heard her own heart beating slow and deep like a jungle drum. From the distance she caught the sound of a motor. Ford had come.

"Well, good-by." She turned slowly away. The miracle of Ford's love had occurred, and it no longer seemed to matter. What had happened? She paused an uncertain instant to gaze back at Hal, her small face wistfully lovely in the mystic glow of the moon-drenched garden.

Then, with one lithe leap, Hal was across the hedge, standing beside her.

"Charity," he said, "we won't be meeting any more across the hedge. Would you—would you kiss me good-by?" His blue eyes were glowing sorrowfully down into hers.

And Charity suddenly understood that that was what had been wrong. She hadn't wanted to go from Hal without his farewell kiss. She raised her soft, sweet lips, and the tears rushed to her eyes.

Hal's lips closed over hers, and his arms closed about her slim figure. He strained her to him in a delirious embrace. Sweetness like a consuming fire flamed along her veins. Madly, bewilderedly, Charity responded to his caresses.

Then Hal must have felt her tears, for with a groan he suddenly drew back and gazed down into her lovely face.

"Charity, dear," he said, "the only explanation I can make is that I

love you. I'd sworn never to tell you, but I love you! I'm mad with love for you, I think. Try to understand and forgive me if you can, my dear."

Blinding, glorious light had dawned for Charity. The beauty of it was all but intolerable.

"Hal, dearest!" she sobbed. "Don't let me go! I love you! I didn't know—I didn't know!"

With an incredulous cry, Hal drew her to him again.

As he did so, a figure came out of the shadows. Ford Parsons stood glowering at them. In his hand he carried Charity's overnight bag, which she had left on the steps of the veranda. He had found it and come to seek her out.

"Charity!"

They turned at the sound of his voice.

Like some one regaining consciousness, Charity came down from the heights of her ecstasy.

"Ford!" she began desperately. "I'm sorry—I made a mistake. I don't love you, after all. It's Hal. You see, it's always been Hal—and I didn't know." Hal's arm held her, sustained her courage.

The silence was broken by Ford's laugh.

"I suppose," he taunted, "that you think Dykeman isn't marrying you for your money, since he found out your bluff about not inheriting the fortune if you married!"

"What do you mean?" began Charity bewilderedly.

"I mean just that. He knows. Ask him. He beat me to it; that's all."

"Charity," Hal said close to her ear, "forgive me, but I telephoned Ford this evening and told him the truth about it. I thought that my meddling had caused you enough unhappiness. I loved you so much

that I wanted you to have him, even though I knew he wasn't worthy."

Charity laughed joyously. It didn't even hurt any more to know and understand Ford's complete selfishness. Her former feeling for him had vanished so utterly that it seemed as if it had never existed.

"I'm glad you did, darling," she said to Hal. "If you hadn't, this might not have happened for ages yet"—she nestled close to him—"though, of course, it would have come to light sooner or later."

"Beat it, Parsons!" Hal's voice was quietly authoritative.

Ford angrily dropped Charity's bag and obeyed.

When he had gone, Hal looked down into Charity's lovely radiant face.

"You know, sweet, what you said this evening in jest is true. You'll have to live on what I earn. It won't be easy at first, but I could never use your money."

"Hal, I'd rather have what your hands bring me than coronets and pearls from any one else. To wear a certain hat or a dress or shoes and say to myself: 'This is half an hour of labor that my love has done for me'—oh, don't you see what that will mean to me, dear—the thrill, the joy of belonging to you?"

"You darling! You darling! I think I must be dreaming!" Hal murmured incoherently as he caught her close.

"Then kiss me in your dreams," whispered Charity with a happy sigh, and lifted her lips to his.



WARY LOVERS

FROM you to me there is a current going
That somehow reckless winds have failed to turn,
And when our glances meet new urges burn
Within our thoughts that otherwise were slowing.
Never the reason shall we two be knowing
That suddenly a greater truth we learn
Than any that our struggles came to earn—
Here is a better reaping without sowing.

For oftentimes your heart grows overbrave,
As curiously I ponder long on you
And see your aims rise up how utterly!
Then even I leave laughter and turn grave
With courage that I may at last pursue
The plentitude of love you hold for me.

JOY GERBAULET.



Bitter Harvest

CHAPTER I.

By Anita Smith

cheeks were feverishly pink.

WAIT, Hilary;
it's Anne!
Aren't you go-
ing to speak to me?"

A Novelette

But there was a de-
termined set to her
pretty dimpled chin.
She had waited weeks

Of course he hadn't meant to. She knew that. He had seen her. She had quite shamelessly put herself in his way. But he had looked through her as though she were so much air, and hurried by without even a flicker of recognition. Her heart beat thickly and her clear

for Mahomet to come to the mountain. Now she had deliberately laid her pride aside. If Hilary was resolved to shut himself up inside his shell and ignore even her very existence, then she had to do something drastic. No matter what other people said or did, to her he

was the main reason for a sun in the sky, and he should know it.

Before the bottom had dropped out of his world, they'd drifted together like wildfire. Her clear brown eyes were a little desperate as she thought of it. And then he'd vanished. Now he was back after two unexplained years, and he hadn't been near her. Did he think that she, like all the others, was a rat to desert a sinking ship?

"I've been dying to see you." Her voice trembled a little.

He was better-looking than ever, and wherever he'd been, he'd gotten brown and thin and hard. But he was older too. There was a defiant twist to his handsome mouth and something mocking about his black eyes.

"Oh, hello, Anne. How are you?" he drawled.

Now that she had forced herself upon him, he was very casual about it, lounging there in the street, the sun on his thick black hair, his lazy careless smile holding her obstinately at arm's length. Her lips quivered. He was acting exactly as if there had never been anything between them. And actually there hadn't. But adoring him, she had been sure he cared until he abruptly walked out of her life without even a word.

"I thought surely when I heard you were back that you'd come to see me, or at least let me know where you're staying," she reproached him.

He grinned mirthlessly.

"I guess you know why I haven't been advertising my presence in the old home town," he said bitterly. "You see, Anne, I'm one black sheep for whom the fatted calf won't be killed."

"I never believed one word against you! Never!"

He gave a short, cynical laugh.

"The evidence was too plain for me to deny, Anne."

Again she flinched. That had been the whole trouble.

"Of course he's guilty," Anne's father and her friends had been telling her for months. "That's why he packed up and left overnight. He couldn't face you or any one else."

"I don't care what the evidence was," she told Hilary now, just as she had been eager to tell him from the first. "You couldn't be guilty of a thing like that!" She was a little white. "Cheating at cards! Fleecing your friends with a marked deck! You were framed, Hilary. I've always known you were!"

"By whom, Anne?"

There she was again at the brick wall against which she had already battered herself a thousand times. Granted that Hilary was innocent, in the face of all the proof to the contrary, who could have gone to such elaborate pains to frame him?

Apparently he had no enemies to profit by his disgrace. It was true that his grandfather, old Colonel Stanley, had cut him off without a penny. But nobody except a group of miscellaneous charities stood to benefit by the change in the colonel's will.

"I can't think of any one who had anything to gain by that marked deal except myself," said Hilary curtly, "and neither can you, Anne. It's sweet of you to go on trying to believe in me all this time." He gave her a sardonic smile. "I confess that knowing your quixotic love of fair play, I had made up my mind that a card cheat was the one thing you'd find yourself unable to excuse. I never dreamed,"—there was an edge to his voice—"you'd wasted two years of your fair young life trying to believe that black is white."

Don't bother about me any longer, Anne."

She was trembling.

"I can't help bothering about you, Hilary. You see"—her chin quivered, but she went bravely on—"I liked you so much, Hilary. I still do."

It cost her everything to make that admission. After all, he had never told her he loved her. The only fact she had to go on was that until everything went so dreadfully wrong they had seemed on the verge of something beautiful and sweet. She had been so young—barely seventeen. She had thought Hilary had been waiting only for her to make her formal *début*.

She made herself remember now how that summer his eyes had lighted every time they met hers, how his hands had trembled when he touched her, how as they danced his arms had tightened about her till their hearts had pounded madly. She staked everything on the fact that he had cared two years before. Clutching frantically at her faith, she made a burnt offering of her pride.

"You're everything to me, Hilary."

She saw his hands clench at his side.

"I thought you'd forgotten me." His voice grated. "You were only a kid, a sweet young thing. I never meant you to take me seriously."

She whitened. "Then you don't care, Hilary? You never did?"

"I'm terribly sorry."

Her lovely mouth quivered.

"At least tell me where you're living."

He shot her a keen glance.

"You've everything to live for, Anne." He was thinking, of course, of the something about Anne, entirely apart from her beauty, money,

and social position, that made her popular and sought after. "It's such a waste of splendid material for you to go on even thinking about anybody who's managed to make as thorough a mess of everything as I have."

"I don't care!" she cried stubbornly.

He sighed.

"Not that it can do any good for you to know, but I've rented the old Becker place on River Street." His lips curled. "I had a fancy to hide out with the rest of the derelicts along the water front."

How bitter he was! She remembered the Becker house, a tall ramshackle two-story frame building that had been a prominent residence in the days before the town had turned its back on the river and left the street that faced its bank to fall to pieces. Anne had a picture of the squalid, tumble-down old houses that lined the water's edge. The thought of Hilary living in that sordid and unsavory neighborhood sickened her.

"Why do you stay there? It's too horrible!"

He grinned wryly.

"Water seeks its own level."

"Even a man who has made a mistake can come back, if he likes."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm not worth bothering about, Anne."

"But you are! You are!"

He stirred restlessly. She realized he was going to slip through her fingers. And she hadn't said half she had been storing up all these months to say.

"Let me help you make a new start, Hilary. I'll do anything!"

He gave her a strange glance.

"Don't stay down with the kind of people who hang out on River Street," she pleaded.

His lip curled.

"My dear Anne, at least the bums on the water front don't snub me."

"Neither will I!"

"But your family and your friends will," he smiled bitterly. "It's probably all over town by now that you've been standing on a corner for almost twenty minutes talking with that notorious Hilary Stanley whose name was blacklisted by every club he ever belonged to!"

"Let them talk."

"About me, yes! But not about you, Anne. I'm not quite low enough yet to want to drag you into the gutter beside me."

"I'll start at the gutter with you and fight back," she said harshly.

He was suddenly white.

"It's lucky for us both," he said evenly, "that I like you too much, Anne, to take you for sheer spite at your father and the rest of your snobbish friends, too little to want you so badly I could forget my conscience."

"Oh!" She caught her breath painfully.

He swept her a mocking bow. "Exactly," he said and walked away.

So that was that, thought Anne, and made her way miserably back to her shining coupé, which she had abandoned to run after Hilary. Everybody had been right all along. She was a silly romantic fool to have gone on all those years eating out her heart for a man who had slunk out of sight without even a sign to the girl who had been so eager to champion his cause. He had never been the least in love with her. Blindly she started the car.

She did not mean to look at Hilary as she passed. But she couldn't keep her eyes from seeking him. He had joined a cheaply dressed girl with a coarse pretty face who was smiling up at him as they

crossed the street. She was a very young girl, but with eyes too old for her babyish profile. Anne gritted her teeth. "Water will seek its own level," she told herself.

"So you finally ran Hilary Stanley down," observed Anne's sister Editha at lunch.

Editha was older than Anne, and she had the high clear polish of an expensively cut diamond. She would never make a fool of herself over somebody who was down-and-out by his own efforts. Editha's only weakness was her little sister.

"I saw him, yes."

Of course Editha had heard. She had been uneasy ever since she had learned that Hilary was back. She hated him because he had made Anne miserable.

"And you got hurt for your pains?" she now surmised after one glance at Anne's pointed, wretched face. "Oh, honey, if you could only have made up your mind to accept the facts long ago, you'd have saved yourself so many heartaches."

"I know," said Anne.

"He never had a leg to stand on. The club steward sold him two packs of cards. But the ones he sold him were not the ones Hilary brought back to the game. And in his room they found the green ink and the other decks he used to practice on and the glue he sealed the packs with so they'd look as though they'd never been opened."

"Don't, please, Editha. We've been over all that so often before. There's nothing new to say."

"It's just that we can't bear to see you go on and on, wasting your time, even thinking of that——"

Anne got abruptly to her feet.

"I don't blame you and father for nagging me about Hilary," she said unsteadily. "I know it's only because you love me. But—oh,

Editha, I can't stand anything else to-day!"

She ran downstairs and got into her car again. But there didn't seem to be anywhere to go. She thought of Jane. They had always been intimate friends. Jane was the one person who hadn't argued with Anne about Hilary. Jane had also been desperately in love with somebody two years before, a young chauffeur to whom her family had been violently opposed.

Of course, Jane had completely gotten over Thomas now, and was safely married to Dwight Potter, but she knew what it meant to be foolishly fond of a man and to be called a romantic young fool for her pains. From Jane, at least, Anne would get no nagging. Jane was sweet, and sympathetic, and newly married, and radiantly happy.

Or so Anne had believed until she ran up the stairs of Jane's pretty English house in answer to a muffled call and saw the tear-stained face that lifted mournfully from a damp pillow in Jane's bedroom.

"Darling, what is it?"

Jane only buried her face again and began to weep in a mute, helpless way that frightened Anne.

"What's the matter, dear? Maybe I can help. Surely you and Dwight haven't quarreled!"

Anne was genuinely perplexed. Jane and her husband seemed so thoroughly in love. Jane stirred and drew aside the elaborate bedspread, which fell to the floor. Anne stared. For a minute she did not understand.

"What on earth?"

Jane pointed tragically under the bed. Anne stooped and brought out a small slatted wooden box. Even then for a minute she could only stare stupidly at the small, dark-colored pigeon squatting in the

cramped inclosure. Jane began to weep again, and something clicked in Anne's brain.

"Good heavens, you don't mean it's from that—that——" She couldn't go on.

Jane nodded and held out a small grimy piece of paper that had been folded many times. Anne's fingers shook as she reached for it. She had heard ugly, furtive gossip whispered about. But that those incredible tales could be true, much less concern some one near and dear to her, had never entered her wildest dreams.

She read the note:

Slip a hundred-dollar bill into the tube in which you found this paper and release the pigeon. If you don't, your husband will hear all about the night you ran away with your father's chauffeur.

The words were cut out of newspapers and pasted on the sheet, and the communication was signed "The Even Upper."

"But it can't be true!" cried Anne. "It's too absurd to believe some mysterious somebody has been blackmailing this town for months!"

"That's what I thought," said Jane wretchedly, "till I came upstairs this morning after Dwight left and found that—that box on my window ledge."

"It's only a hoax; somebody's idea of a joke."

"It won't be a joke to Dwight," said Jane mournfully.

Anne caught her breath. She had forgotten that Dwight was terrifically jealous, and that Jane had never, in spite of Anne's pleadings, screwed up her courage sufficiently to tell him about how near she had come to making a fool of herself before they met.

"But nothing wrong happened," protested Anne. "You did run away



"I can't help bothering about you, Hilary. You see"—her chin quivered—"I like you so much, Hilary." It cost her everything to make that admission. After all, he had never told her he loved her.

with Thomas, but you came to your senses in time and ran back faster than you left."

"Try to make Dwight believe that," gulped Jane. "You know that his parents got a divorce when he was sixteen, and that he was terribly upset by the scandal of it. It destroyed his illusions and made him suspicious of everything."

Anne knew. Dwight wasn't really to blame.

"He's just beginning to get over those old hurts," said Jane piteously,

"and if anything happened now to shake his faith in me, I'd die." Her mouth sharpened. "I'd do anything, Anne, to keep him from knowing I'd ever looked at another man. You know and I know that I was merely infatuated with Thomas. I was just sixteen and too silly to live. I've never really loved anybody but Dwight."

Anne nodded her head slowly.

"Of course."

"And nothing's going to spoil things for us!"

"You mean——"

"I'm going to pay, of course. I've got to."

"Don't!" cried Anne fiercely.

"It's only a hundred dollars. I'd give ten times that to keep from hurting Dwight."

Anne was remembering something she'd heard about this mysterious "Even Upper," who had been preying on society for months. People were strangely reluctant to discuss the matter. Every one seemed afraid to come right out with facts. But she had heard that whoever the blackmailer was, his demands were never exorbitant enough to drive his victims to anything rash like defiance or a call on the police.

"It's the principle of the thing," she told Jane. "It's wrong to pay even a dime. Oh, darling, don't let yourself in for anything like this. Tell Dwight the truth. Refuse to be victimized. Turn this pigeon over to the police. Maybe they can find a clew to whoever is back of this outrageous thing! I never thought there was a word of truth in all these yarns about a blackmailer or a ring of blackmailers operating here! I can't quite believe it yet. But if there is such a scoundrel, it's your duty, Jane, to do everything you can to expose him instead of foolishly submitting to him."

Jane was staring at her strangely.

"Do you realize," she asked in a curious voice, "that not a soul in this world ever knew about that night I ran away with Thomas except you and Hilary Stanley?"

Anne went deathly cold.

"Are you insinuating that—Jane, you can't mean you think Hilary is back of—of——" She couldn't go on.

"If you weren't so touchy about Hilary that no one dared breathe

it to you, you'd have known long ago that people have been whispering that he is the Even Upper."

"Jane!"

"He's bitter enough against everybody who's snubbed him to want vengeance. Then, too, with the colonel refusing to give him a penny, he needs the money."

"How dare you!"

"They say he's determined to even old scores."

"But you never snubbed him."

"Dwight did."

Anne felt as if she were going mad.

"But the Even Upper has been operating for at least two years, and Hilary's been back in town only a few weeks."

"So he says. But you know anybody can hide out down there on the water front and never be seen. And Bill Forbes swears he saw Hilary six weeks after his grandfather kicked him out, living in a shanty boat down by the old hunting club below town."

Anne shivered. Hilary had looked awfully brown and fit. Was it possible he'd never been away? Had he been hiding on the river all that time?

"It isn't true! It can't be true!"

"He was popular, you know. He had a great many friends, and people always trusted him and told him things." Jane's chin set. "If he was cheat enough to run in a marked deck of cards in a gentleman's game, he's not too good to cash in on his friends' confidences if he can."

"Oh!" Anne buried her face in her hands.

"And only you two did know about me," went on Jane relentlessly.

Anne started to her feet, her face deathly white.

"Don't!" she begged huskily.

Jane, her mouth suddenly bitter, was rolling a greenback into a thin roll.

"Do you still want me to call the police?" she asked sharply.

Anne's head dropped. She couldn't speak.

"Here goes!"

Jane had put the money into the celluloid tube fastened to the pigeon's leg. She lifted the bird out of its box, went to the window, and raised the screen. Both girls watched somberly as the small dark carrier fluttered, balanced itself uncertainly, then wheeled and flew confidently until it vanished against the fog which hung over the river.

The river! Anne's heart quivered, then seemed to stop beating.

"You shouldn't have come here."

Hilary's face was stern when he opened his sagging front door the next day and found Anne on the narrow stoop. She was sure he did not mean to ask her in. But she brushed by him. Evidently he had not bothered to furnish the house except for the square parlor on the first floor, the small kitchen that opened from it, and possibly a bedroom upstairs.

It was very bare and shabby. Upon a rickety table by the small grate fire stood a battered typewriter. Hilary had apparently been sitting there, but he did not offer her a chair. She slipped into a small rocker. He remained standing, arms folded, face cold and set.

"I had to see you about something," she faltered.

He frowned.

"You must not come here," he repeated stubbornly. "It's no neighborhood for you."

She smiled tremulously. "But I often come down to old Holy Luke's mission on the next block to bring

food and old clothes and"—she was trying to ease the scowl from his brows—"to find a servant occasionally. Heaven knows what the town would do for help in emergencies if it weren't for old Luke."

Hilary's mouth tightened.

"It's the style, of course, to make fun of him, but there's no estimating the good that poor old codger has done."

"I know, Hilary, I wasn't really making fun. I admire and respect old Luke. He's doing a marvelous work. I can name a dozen perfectly decent and self-respecting people whom old Luke took out of the depths and converted and saved."

"He's been a good friend to me when I needed one," said Hilary in a calm voice.

"He's a good friend to any one in trouble."

"Why did you come here?" he demanded.

She stirred nervously.

"Hilary, you can't stay down here. It—it gives people all the more room to talk."

Outside a small, dark pigeon lighted on the window sill. Anne went deathly white. "This place is enough to give any one the creeps."

He stared vacantly at her, went absently to the window, and opened it. The pigeon fluttered away and then came back at once to peck at the crumbs he scattered on the ledge. It wasn't the same pigeon, of course, or, if it was, the tube had been removed from its leg. The old houses along the river were infested with pigeons. It meant nothing, Anne told herself fiercely.

"People always liked you when you gave them the chance." Her voice trembled. "They've forgotten how nice you are. If you'd only come back to your own kind, Hilary,

they couldn't think dreadful things of you. If it's money that's keeping you in this horrible place——" She shivered again. "I've been talking to Jim Reynolds. He'll give you a position, Hilary, selling bonds for him, if you'll take it."

He eyed her narrowly.

"Reynolds was always in love with you. He'd do anything for you."

"Old Luke isn't the only person eager to help you back up the ladder," she retorted.

He laughed bitterly.

"My dear child, outside of you and your devoted Jim, the old crowd would ask nothing better than for me to give them a chance to cold-shoulder me."

He was terribly bitter, and from appearances he needed money. And outside there on the window sill the pigeon was pecking away at crumbs. A cold mist rose in her brain. Was Hilary really the Even Upper? Had he actually stooped so low? Her small hands locked in distress. He glanced at her quickly.

"It's awfully sweet of you to go on worrying about me, Anne. Only you must stop it. Even before—before—you know grandfather had plenty of fault to find with me. I was a square peg that couldn't be fitted into a round hole. I wouldn't learn to be a first-class banker as he wanted me to. I flunked every course he made me take in finance. He was about ready to wash his hands of me before I turned up cheating at cards. If I'm down and out to-day, I've really no one to blame but myself. Your family is quite right to think I'd make a mess of your life, too. But I won't, simply because"—he was suddenly white—"you deserve a lot better than anybody who's turned out as badly as I have."

"Then you won't take the job with Jim?"

He shook his head.

She rose wearily. "And you won't come back where you belong?"

"I can't."

"Eleanor is giving a dance to-morrow night," she persisted. "She'd be glad if I told her you were coming. She was always fond of you."

"Poor Eleanor," he murmured.

They were both thinking, of course, of the tragic ending to which Eleanor Farly had so nearly come. She was older than Anne, just Hilary's age, an impulsive, high-spirited, lovable girl who four years before had been newly married to John Farly, a struggling young lawyer. There was a reckless streak in Eleanor, inherited from her father, who had gone broke playing the market. John had been making very little money at the time of their marriage. He had just gone into politics. He was working desperately hard.

It didn't seem like stealing to her when she took some of the funds John had collected for a charity drive to bet on a horse that was a sure thing to win the Fairmount Derby. She meant to return the money out of her winnings the next day. She really did it for John because he needed a stake to put over his campaign for city attorney. But the horse fell and broke its leg. And Eleanor woke up suddenly to the fact that she was a thief and that John's career would be ruined forever by her folly.

It was pure accident that Hilary had happened to stop in the next morning to borrow a book. He found Eleanor with a pistol at her temple, grimly determined not to live to see John dragged down to disgrace with her. Fortunately Hilary had had plenty of money at



She was dancing with Hilary. His arm tightened about her till she felt winged with flame. She knew then that he had been as hungry for her as she had been for him all those years, knew that he loved her.

the time. His grandfather hadn't started shutting down on him then, as he did later because Hilary wouldn't or couldn't be a shining light in the colonel's bank.

He had given Eleanor the money she needed to make restitution and

advised her to tell not even John who had, Hilary knew, very fixed ideas of right and wrong. Of course Eleanor had always been grateful. It was she who later told Anne the whole story.

"Just so you'll know why even if

this whole town's against him, I'd go through fire for your Hilary, Anne," she had said.

Eleanor was one ally on whom Anne could positively rely.

"Won't you come to the dance to-morrow night?" she begged.

His lips curled. "And impose on the fact that as I once did Eleanor a service she can't very well snub me now? Of course not!"

Anne eyed him steadily. She'd always believed him just that quixotically honorable and yet he was the man who had cheated his friends at cards and was suspected of blackmailing them. She left him then without a word.

Outside the house, she felt confused and miserable. Nothing made sense. Either she had never known the real Hilary or he had drastically changed.

"Oh, Miss Marsh, can you stop a minute?"

She hadn't really meant to visit the shabby old river mission that afternoon, although she often did. But she halted her car at "Holy Luke's" eager cry. He was a short, pudgy, benignant-faced, gray-haired old man, as shabby as the ramshackle building where he worked so earnestly. No one knew or cared to what denomination Luke Forster belonged. It wasn't even certain that he'd ever been actually ordained a minister to preach the gospel. But there was no doubt of his good works.

He fed the hungry, took in the sick and nursed them, found work if possible for the unemployed, combed the town for the needy, eagerly accepted anything from the more fortunate for his nondescript flock. He had earned the veneration of the entire community. He shut the doors of his mission to nobody. And it was remarkable how

much really worth-while material he'd salvaged from apparently ruined stuff.

"I hate to impose on you after all you've done for me already," he said humbly, "but I've a girl here. She's a good girl, but she's had a bad break and needs work desperately. Do you by any chance know of anybody who could give her employment if only for a few days?"

Anne thought fast as she followed Holy Luke into the big, bare hall that took up most of the mission. She had helped place a number of his protégés, and they had never proved unworthy of the old fellow's trust. He seemed to have a gift for bringing out the best in those he labored with. Many of them, Anne suspected, had been pretty shady characters originally, potential if not actual criminals when Holy Luke took them on. None of them, however, had ever let him down once he found honest jobs for them.

"My friend, Mrs. Farly, is entertaining to-morrow night. She told me one of her maids is awfully slow, and she really needs——" She paused abruptly.

Holy Luke had motioned to a girl on the sidewalk. Anne's heart skipped a beat as she saw her.

"Rosa would be just the girl for the place, I'm sure," said old Luke.

The girl was the one Anne had seen walking with Hilary. She was ashamed of her sudden fierce jealousy. After all, it wasn't Rosa's fault if Hilary preferred a waif from the river mission.

"I'll give you a note to Mrs. Farly," she said quickly to discipline herself.

Old Luke beamed. "Nobody could be more generous and kind than Miss Anne," he said.

Rosa shot Anne a curious glance.

"Thank you," she murmured.

On the way home Anne cudgelled her brain. What was it about Rosa's babyish face and oddly sophisticated eyes that seemed familiar? If she had ever seen the girl before she passed her with Hilary, the incident escaped her. Yet Rosa, too, had looked at her warily, almost as if she had expected Anne to recognize her.

Eleanor's dance was really to celebrate the fact that after a long, uphill climb John had finally arrived. It was common gossip that he was to receive an important political appointment from the governor. For so young a man it was a brilliant achievement. There was no question, of course, of John's acceptance. It was no wonder Eleanor's lovely face was radiant that night.

Her charm would be a tremendous asset to her husband in Washington, and Eleanor loved John wildly. She'd always yearned to help him on to his daring ambitions. Anne was glad for them both, even if their happiness did make her own position lonelier. She'd miss Eleanor terribly.

"You couldn't get him to come?" Eleanor asked Anne the first minute she was free that night.

Anne shook her head.

"He was always so terribly proud and sensitive." Eleanor frowned. "So am I. Maybe that's why I understand Hilary. He'd rather die than hurt anybody he loved and I'm like that too."

Anne shook her head.

"He never loved me."

"Rubbish! He did and he does! He's only determined to steer clear of you because he knows your family would have a fit if you married him now."

"If I thought he really cared, I'd make him marry me."

"Don't be too sure. The more he cares, the less likely he is to let you in for what he's going through."

"But I shouldn't mind if the whole world cut us."

"He would."

Later, a waitress in trim black-and-white passed with a tray of empty cocktail glasses and from under lowered eyelids glanced furtively at Anne. At the sight of her neat costume, Anne remembered. Rosa had been a maid at Colonel Stanley's. Anne distinctly remembered going there once for tea with Hilary just before his disgrace, and this same girl had moved unobtrusively and served in the stately living room. As Anne stared, she saw Jane Potter, who was standing beside her, glance at Rosa as if she recognized her. An instant later, Rosa turned sharply away.

"Do you know that maid?" Anne asked Jane at the first opportunity. "I mean the one who went out with the glasses a while ago."

Jane knit her pretty brows.

"She looks familiar. It seems to me, though I'm not sure, that mother had her in for a few days once when Norah was ill."

"Before you married?"

"I think so," Jane flushed. "In fact I know so now because I remember that I thought she was flirting with—with Thomas."

Anne had a feeling that in her hands she held a tangled skein of snarled threads, but she had no exact idea how to untangle them. Yet a strange instinct warned her that Rosa's continual bobbing up in her life was no coincidence. Then Anne glanced up at some one's smothered exclamation and forgot everything else.

Hilary was hesitating in the doorway. Eleanor was nowhere to be seen, and all about people were star-

ing with curled lips. Of course they meant to snub him, and he knew it. His tanned face was chalky; his mouth had a bitter twist.

"I've been saving this dance for you," Anne cried, and went straight to him.

Across the room Editha gasped and reddened. Near by some one muttered something about the fellow's nerve, daring to show his face after the way he had put himself beyond the pale. But Anne didn't mind. She was dancing with Hilary. His arm tightened about her till she felt winged with flame. She knew then that he had been as hungry for her as she had been for him all those years, knew beyond all doubt that he loved her.

"I shouldn't have come," he said through white lips. "I knew it would be like this."

And a moment later: "After you talked to me, I thought maybe you were right, and I was wrong. I've always been too touchy. I had a forlorn hope I'd let my imagination work overtime and people weren't so down on me as I believed. Men have been forgiven for worse crimes than trying to cheat at cards."

Her heart ached. So he didn't know he was suspected of being the mysterious blackmailer who was using society's secrets to make society pay! Anne had been making cautious inquiries. No one would talk plainly. But she no longer doubted that whoever the Even Upper might be, he had reaped a far richer and more extensive harvest during the past two years than she had dreamed possible.

"I was right all along," Hilary went on wearily. "My name's mud here and always will be. Good-by, Anne."

"Wait, Hilary! I must talk to you!"

But the music had ended and he turned fiercely away. He was gone before she could overtake him, although regardless of the staring and contemptuous eyes about her, she ran out into the hall after him.

"Hilary!" she called wildly.

She saw his car, a powerful, imported model, brand new, dart away from the curb. Where had Hilary gotten the money to buy such a car? She recalled with a sickening heart that he had worn new and expensive evening clothes.

"Anne!"

John Farly, white as death, stood at the head of the stairs. She stared up at him stupidly.

"Come here! Eleanor——" He choked and covered his face with his hands.

Anne knew even before she ran up the steps and after him into Eleanor's bedroom.

John Farly was kneeling by the couch. At first Anne did not doubt that Eleanor was dead. One arm, hanging at her side, still clutched the tiny bottle with its ominous skull and crossbones. Her eyes were closed. But when Anne laid her head down on Eleanor's chest, she heard the heart beating faintly.

"She isn't dead! There's a chance. Call an ambulance, John, and get Doctor Ashe from downstairs. We may be able to save her!" Anne said, trying to keep her voice steady.

CHAPTER II.

The next hour was pure nightmare. Somehow the house was finally emptied of guests. Doctor Ashe came to Eleanor at once. But he could only shake his head and say that the one chance was to get her to the hospital immediately.

After agonizing minutes, the ambulance came. John went along, of

course. Anne stayed behind, trying to bring some order out of chaos. In half an hour John telephoned.

"There's a bare chance. She's unconscious. They're working with her. They won't let me in." Anne's heart ached for him. And then came the cry she had been dreading: "Why did she do it, Anne? Why? Why?"

With death in her heart, Anne stared down at the crumpled piece of paper she had found thrust down among the cushions of the couch.

Put a hundred-dollar bill in the tube where you found this letter and release the pigeon. If you don't, the newspapers will carry the story of how you and your husband gambled with money that didn't belong to him. When that comes out, he can say good-by to any political hopes he's got. You'd better pay. THE EVEN UPPER.

"It was an accident, of course!" Anne told John fiercely. "How could you think anything else?" she added fiercely.

But she knew better. Poor Eleanor had chosen to die rather than ruin her husband with the old folly she had thought buried forever behind her in the past. But it hadn't been buried. It had flopped out of its grave on the night of Eleanor's triumph. "Oh, Hilary, Hilary," thought Anne wildly, "can you be low enough to blackmail your friends?"

Every fiber of Anne's being denied it. And yet Hilary knew, and Hilary had money from Heaven knew where! But could Hilary have done this hideous thing to Eleanor, his friend? It wasn't true! It couldn't be!

"I'm afraid this lets me out of a job again," said the maid Rosa, as Anne hung up and turned away from the telephone.

Anne hadn't heard her approach. They stared at each other. Rosa's

bold black eyes did not match her subservient voice.

"I draw the world's worst breaks," she said mournfully. "Every time I get work, something happens and I'm out of a job again. No wonder I can't ever get ahead."

Anne's eyes narrowed.

"You used to be with Mrs. Potter's mother, didn't you?"

"Yes, Miss Marsh, but when Miss Jane married, they didn't need so much help."

"And at Colonel Stanley's?"

"Yes, but after—after Mr. Hilary left, the colonel stopped entertaining, and as I hadn't been there as long as the other servants, I had to go. That's the way, I reckon, it'll be here, too."

Anne stared at her steadily.

"You're quite right," she said evenly. "I doubt that with Mrs. Farly ill and at the hospital, an extra maid will be needed."

"That means I may as well check out in the morning."

Yes, Anne decided, the girl was certainly in a hurry to leave the house.

"Where will you go?"

"Back to the mission, I guess. I don't know what I'd have done the past two years if old Holy Luke hadn't always taken me in and found me work again."

"How would you like to work for my sister?" asked Anne.

Rosa looked startled. "In your house, Miss Marsh?"

Anne nodded.

"My sister was saying yesterday that our maid wanted to take a month's rest. Of course the job wouldn't be permanent, but it might help you out till something turned up."

"Oh, I'd be very grateful, Miss Marsh," gushed Rosa, and her black eyes glittered.



She ran to him and began to sob as he drew her into his arms. Chief Walters considerably ignored them to concentrate on his captive.

"Then come over to-morrow about noon."

"I don't like that maid you hired, Anne," said Editha a few days later. "I caught her snooping around my desk a while ago and I'm certain she was listening on the downstairs phone, when you were talking on the extension in your room yesterday. Anyway, she looked terribly flustered when I walked in on her. She pretended, of course, to be dusting, but I'd swear she had the receiver

off the hook. I didn't say anything, but I felt like discharging her then and there.

"Please don't, Editha," said Anne. "She's one of the waifs from the river mission, and I want to help her if I can."

Editha sniffed.

"Some day you're going to let old Holy Luke wheedle you into giving one of his protégés a job you'll be sorry for! In my opinion half of them are crooks and thieves!"

"But not one of them has ever

been discharged for dishonesty. I know. I've made inquiries."

Editha, who had always thought of Anne as an adorable child, would have been astonished had she known just how thorough Anne's inquiries had been.

"Well, I've warned you," Editha snapped, and let the matter drop. "Have you heard from Eleanor today?"

"Yes." Anne's face brightened. "She's much better. Of course she's still critically ill, but the doctors are extremely hopeful now."

"Is there any truth in the rumor that she did it on purpose?"

"Of course not!" cried Anne. "Why should Eleanor have tried to kill herself?"

She turned away abruptly. No one but herself, and one other, would ever know for certain that Eleanor had deliberately drunk poison. She knew, and, of course, the Even Upper, who for once had gone too far. From every one else his demands had been modest enough not to provoke his victims to any act of desperation. Only Eleanor had been of a different temperament. And Hilary knew that.

He was too familiar with her impulsive nature not to have foreseen such a result. If he really was the mysterious blackmailer, he had known when he sent Eleanor that letter what would happen. But apparently the Even Upper hadn't known. He had expected Eleanor to pay. Anne sensed that the sinister figure behind all these outrages levied small but numerous payments. The business depended on the number of its contributions.

It was blackmail on a huge scale, she was convinced, but one content with dribbles of cash, so small that the victims could afford to pay and let the matter drop. Apparently the

police had not been called in on a single case. Editha would also have been astonished had she known that Anne had been closeted all that morning with a grizzled but likable chief of detectives at police headquarters.

"But, my dear young lady, surely you're letting your imagination run away with you over these rumors!" he had protested. "A blackmail ring couldn't be operating on such an extensive scale without our getting at least a whisper of it. Now if you can give me something definite to work on, the name, for instance, of some one who actually has been victimized——"

Anne thought of Jane and Eleanor. Their secrets were not hers to betray.

"I can't," she said grimly. "But I hope soon to have some definite proof for you."

"In that case," said Chief Walters genially, "you may count on our fullest coöperation."

It was quite plain that he thought she had believed a lurid story that had been told her for a hoax. Anne thought of Eleanor fighting for her life on a hospital bed, and shivered. Whoever the Even Upper might be, he was no joke.

And then she went upstairs from her conversation with Editha and found a small slatted wooden cage on her window ledge.

If you don't want your father to know about your disgraceful affair with Jim Reynolds, put a hundred-dollar bill in the tube where you found this letter.

THE EVEN UPPER.

Anne gasped. So Rosa was mixed up in it all, just as she had sensed! For there had been no disgraceful affair with Jim, of course. That conversation over the telephone the day before had been

purely and solely a trap into which Rosa had tumbled headlong. Good old Jim, not understanding the impassioned words Anne had said to him over the phone, had, nevertheless, played his part well.

Anne went to the head of the stairs.

"Rosa, will you please run down to the drug store and get me ten two-cent stamps? And then stop in at the dry-goods store and get the things on this list for me. It won't take you more than fifteen or twenty minutes."

She waited till she saw the girl on the street; then she went to the telephone.

"You're quite sure you understand my instructions?" she demanded sharply when she had spoken quickly for three minutes into the transmitter.

"I'm to have a squad of men down on Water Street to watch for a small dark pigeon to which you will have tied a long red ribbon?"

"Yes."

"Give us fifteen minutes, and we'll be on the job."

Anne's hands were very cold as she walked back into the room. Feverishly she put them to her hot cheeks. Suppose all her deductions were wong. After all, Hilary had known Rosa for years. It was possible that Rosa was working for him. In putting the police on the trail, Anne might be leading them straight to the man she loved. She saw again Hilary feeding the pigeon on his window ledge, Hilary in smart new clothes driving away from Eleanor's house in a new, expensive car, Hilary and Rose walking down the street together.

Fifteen minutes later, white as death, Anne opened her windows and released the bird. It hovered uncertainly, balanced itself, then

straightened out, and winged its way straight toward the river, a glaring scarlet ribbon dangling fantastically from its left leg.

As Anne raced down the stairs and jumped into her coupé outside, Rosa, coming leisurely up the walk, stared at her, then smiled to herself. Of course, she thought, Anne was tearing off to the bank in quest of a hundred-dollar bill.

But Anne's smart blue car swiftly threaded through the downtown traffic and pushed through the narrow, cobbled slum streets beyond, out to the river front with its squalid, tumble-down houses. She made a sharp turn left, jolted over the rough asphalt for two blocks. Then Anne's heart seemed to stop beating.

Outside the rickety Becker house which Hilary had rented stood Chief Walter's bright-red car.

Anne's shaking hands jerked her coupé to a sudden stop at the curb. For a moment tears blinded her eyes. So it was Hilary, after all! In spite of her faith which had refused to die, he was guilty! Anne pushed by the stocky policeman, who tried to stop her at the door, into Hilary's bare, cheerless parlor.

"And so you've been systematically blackmailing everybody in this town rich enough to afford a servant?" Chief Walters was thundering. "The whole thing's been a racket, has it? And a clever one, if I do say so, too clever for an amateur! You're old at this business. When we get you down at headquarters, we'll take your finger prints and see where you got to be such an expert on fancy crime!"

"No, no!" whimpered a broken voice.

Anne caught her breath, her hand going to her throat.

Cringing before the chief's eagle

eye, handcuffs on his pudgy wrists, stood Holy Luke!

"You'd better spill the works," rasped Walters. "We've got you, you old hypocrite! We saw you take that pigeon in, and then when we swarmed in the mission after you, you ran out the back way here to Mr. Stanley. But we had eyes on every house in this street and we found you"—he turned to Anne—"thanks to this young lady."

"Anne!" cried Hilary.

She ran to him and began to sob as he drew her into his arms. Chief Walters considerably ignored them to concentrate on his captive, who after considerable prodding, at last faltered out the whole miserable story.

Luke Forster was a confidence man, a clever forger, and a thorough-going crook, who had served time in a dozen different prisons, from the last of which he had escaped. Not daring to show himself in his old haunts, he had accidentally dropped off a freight train in that town some years before and had found refuge on the water front. The man had played the part of an old preacher in some jail theatricals once with astounding success, considering his true nature.

From that beginning had sprung the crooked, clever scheme that had paid him until that day such handsome returns. At first his idea had been only to get together a group of clever crooks like himself, and under cover of pretending they were honest converts, worm them into the homes of the rich to steal and rob. But by the time he had worked the mission up to the point where that was possible, he realized that he had a far more valuable weapon at hand with considerable less risk to face.

Because he had thoroughly earned the respect of the community, Holy

Luke's protégés had been at one time or another employed by almost every prominent family in town. It was easy enough for them, skillful as they were in everything underhanded, to ransack drawers and eavesdrop till they had possession of secrets that were grist for the gang's mill. Rosa, who was the old scoundrel's daughter, had been by far the most successful operator. For Rosa, where she failed to find material for blackmail, was quite capable of manufacturing it.

"Sure," she confessed at headquarters, "I framed Hilary Stanley! I went to the colonel's to work to get the dope on that young man. The colonel was threatening every day to disinherit him if he let his foot slip. But he didn't slip, so I fixed it up with Beacher, the club steward, who was an old cellmate of dad's. Hilary Stanley never marked that deck. I did it! And I left the decks I practiced on and the green ink in his room. Beacher gave him the cards I'd fixed.

"But the young fool didn't play into our hands as we expected. We thought he'd pay us well not to let his grandfather know he'd been caught cheating. Instead he went straight to the colonel and told him that he'd been accused of using marked cards. The old man didn't even ask if he was guilty. He stormed up to Hilary's room, found the proof I'd planted, and ordered him out of the house. Hilary went. And so after all our trouble we never got a penny out of it."

Old Colonel Stanley had been called down to headquarters too. His proud face worked. "My boy, how can you ever forgive me? I should have known!"

Hilary, his arm about Anne, smiled painfully.

"That's what hurt, sir—to think

that you or any one else who knew me could have believed I'd do a thing like that! I hadn't done the things you wanted me to. I couldn't be a banker, because I hated it. But, after all, there's nothing dishonorable in preferring to earn my living my own way. And I"—his voice trembled—"I've made good, grandfather, even if you did say I'd starve to death at it."

"What?" cried the colonel in a startled voice.

"When you turned me out, I determined to do what I'd always wanted to do—write. You said I couldn't make enough with my typewriter to buy a postage stamp. You were right for a while. I nearly starved for twenty-two months on a shanty boat down the river. I guess I would have if I hadn't caught fish and had a watch and some pearl studs and my roadster to sell. But I stuck at it, determined to do or die. And I don't mind telling now that I was just about ready to give up three months ago when I finally had a book accepted."

"Hilary!" cried Anne.

Even she hadn't known that. But then events had happened so fast and furiously in the last few hours that they hadn't really had a minute alone together. He smiled at her.

"The advance wasn't much," he said, "but it did permit me to leave the river and take the Becker house. That's when I took to dropping in at the river mission. Old Luke was full of yarns about his flock that gave me story ideas. I was working hard on my next book, but I'd made up my mind the other'd been a flop. And it was tough going."

He squeezed Anne's hands.

"I began to think I was a fool to think I could write. And I didn't seem to have any aptitude for anything else. That afternoon you came

down to Water Street to see me, Anne, I was about ready to own up that I was a complete failure and walk into the river, my typewriter under my arm, till my hat floated. Then the morning of Eleanor's dance, I got a letter, inclosing a check that made my eyes swim. My book had suddenly caught on. New editions had had to be rushed into print. The movies were offering fifty thousand dollars for the talkie rights."

"Fifty thousand dollars!" gasped the colonel.

Hilary grinned. "I'll bank the check with you in the morning, grandfather."

"My boy!"

"The publishers have been burning up the wires ever since for my next book, and I've had three offers from Hollywood."

"Of course you'll accept!"

But Hilary shook his head.

"I'm knocking off work for a month," he announced blithely. "You see, Anne and I are going honeymooning." His eyes were suddenly misty. "We've a lot of lost time to make up, haven't we, darling?"

Holy Luke, his daughter Rosa, and their accomplices also took a long trip—to the State penitentiary. And many people who hadn't breathed easily for years felt as though a sword had been removed from above their heads. Eleanor put off going to Washington to be matron of honor at Anne's wedding which every one attended. So many people felt guilty about the way they had treated Hilary Stanley.

After the ceremony, Anne smiled into Hilary's eyes. Gone was the bitterness, the hard cynical lines about his mouth, the look of disillusion and defeat! How handsome he was, how wonderful!

"I love you, love you, love you!" he whispered.

They were running upstairs, hand in hand, to get into their traveling clothes. She had the train of her long ivory wedding gown over her arm. The famous Stanley pearls, the colonel's gift, gleamed against her white throat. Orange blossoms and her mother's lace bridal veil framed her lovely pointed face, so flushed and radiant with happiness.

"Darling!" cried Hilary huskily, and crushed her in his arms.

Her lips lifted to his.

"But for you——" he groaned.

She silenced him with a kiss. Their bitter harvest was left behind them. Ahead lay only happiness. Her arms crept up about his neck. They clung together.

"Nothing matters now," she whispered, "except that I'm yours and you're mine, Hilary, forever!"



Listed below are the stations over which the
Love Story hour comes to you every Thursday
night over the Columbia Broadcasting System's
Basic Network

CITY	STATION	TIME
Akron	WADC	8:30 ES
Baltimore	WCAO	8:30 ES
Boston	WNAC	9:30 ED
Buffalo	WKBW	9:30 ED
Chicago	WGN	8:30 CD
Cincinnati	WKRC	8:30 ES
Cleveland	WHK	8:30 ES
Detroit	WXYZ	8:30 ES
Hartford	WDRC	9:30 ED
Kansas City	KMBC	7:30 CS
New York City	WABC	9:30 ED
Philadelphia	WCAU	9:30 ED
Pittsburgh	WJAS	9:30 ED
Providence	WEAN	9:30 ED
St. Louis	KMOX	7:30 CS
Syracuse	WFBL	8:30 ES
Toledo	WSPD	8:30 ES
Washington	WMAL	8:30 ES

ES—Eastern Standard Time
ED—Eastern Daylight Time

CS—Central Standard Time
CD—Central Daylight Time

The Love That Lies

By Betsy Ross

PHIL, we won't go until you promise to run up to Mountain Laurel Lodge every single week-end and stay for at least ten days in August," Judith Carington said commandingly.

She sat on the edge of Phillip Harburton's desk in his sumptuous private office, and smiled down at him lazily. A costly silver-fox fur trailed on the floor, and there were handsome pieces of jewelry nestling in the ruffles at her neck, flashing from her wrist and fingers. Every detail of her costume was perfect.

At a small desk in the corner of the office sat Deirdre Fallon, pretending to be bus-



ily at work. Her clipped bronze head bent over her typewriter, and her deep, uniquely blue eyes were veiled in thick lashes. Her dress was of long-wearing navy jersey.

"No wonder she looks like a million dollars!" Deirdre was musing to herself. "I could look like twice that amount if I could afford her clothes. And pretty soon she'll get Mr. Harburton into her net, and then she can buy twice as many." She typed a few more words on her noiseless machine, and turned over the page of the report she was copying.

"I never promise a woman anything—even you," Phil was answering Judith with a teasing smile. "I'll see. I'll come when I can. Now run along and let me work."

The girl on the desk pouted and shrugged.

"You're the least obliging creature I know, Phil Harburton. I can't see why I waste any time on you. But there's no use my running along now. It's nearly lunch time, and you may have the pleasure of buying my lamb chop and orange juice."

"I'm overcome with pleasure at this generous gesture, my dear," laughed Phil. "Now get out and let me work. I'll meet you at the Belmont-Plaza grillroom entrance at one."

The girl slid off the desk, picked up her fur, and threw it carelessly over her shoulder.

"Oh, I'm sick of the Belmont-Plaza! I'll meet you at André's, where there's not such a mob—one o'clock. See that you're not late. I don't like to be kept waiting."

Even when she tried to propitiate Phil, there was an arrogant, imperious note in Judith Carrington's voice. All her life she had had everything she wanted. Her charming looks and her money had at-

tracted scores of men to her. And Judith was always accepting one of them—for a few months until her caprice changed.

She wandered slowly across the thick carpet, obviously reluctant to leave. Her gaze wandered idly over the beautiful furniture, lovely pictures and vases of flowers.

"My word, Phil, you certainly do yourself well," she drawled, lingering to jerk a rosebud from a tall vase. The rest of the flowers came with the one she selected, and water splashed over the bookcase and rug.

As she thrust the rose into the tie of her dress, Judith glanced idly at the spreading pool on the floor.

"Miss Fallon, have you a cloth?" she asked sweetly. "I'm afraid I've made a mess here. It ought to be mopped up or it will ruin the finish of the bookcase and make a stain on the rug. Awfully sorry. Well, goodbye, Phil darling. I'll be seeing you." She let herself out of the office with a quick malicious little flash of smile at Deirdre. The secretary's face was pink with suppressed indignation, and Judith enjoyed it hugely.

It irked her that Phil insisted on having his secretary in the same room with him. It was all the more annoying when the secretary was a girl as attractive as Deirdre.

"Thank Heaven she hasn't the money to dress up," sighed Judith, glancing at herself in a mirror as she passed down the hall. "And when I get Phil Harburton out on the lake under the summer moon it's going to be all over with him. I might as well have a new picture taken for the society section before I go—Miss Carrington, fiancée of Phillip Harburton! It would really be very bad taste to repeat the portrait I sent for my last engagement. Poor old Gregory! He'll be furious!"

Meanwhile Deirdre was savagely

mopping up the spilled water, replacing the flowers and filling the vase again.

Phillip Harburton burst into a roar of laughter.

"If you could only see your face, Miss Fallon! You positively frighten me. As the man with the vicious dog said: 'Remember, I didn't bite you!'"

"I'm sorry," snapped Deirdre.

"You look it," chuckled Harburton. "Er—I was going to give you some more letters, but I don't feel like working. It certainly is hot. Guess I'll go out to lunch. Don't take it so hard."

He took his hat out of the closet and walked to the door. Deirdre was still arranging the flowers. He stared at her, still smiling.

"Cut off one of those buds for me, will you, Miss Fallon? I feel rather festive."

Deirdre snapped off a small pale-pink bud with a bit of leaf, and held it out. Harburton was putting on his gloves. He twisted around and absent-mindedly hunched his shoulder to indicate that he wished her to pin on the flower.

The girl flushed, but instantly took a pin out of a box on her desk and with trembling hands inserted the pale-green stem into the rough tweed lapel. She could feel his nearness, could smell the faint fragrance of shaving lotion, and for an instant his breath was warm on her cheek.

But the little incident meant nothing to light-hearted Phillip. She might have been the office boy brushing his coat, or the elevator operator handing him a dropped glove. He glanced down at the flower with a careless smile, thanked her, and strolled out of the office, humming to himself.

Deirdre bit her lip as the door closed. She was a perfect simpleton

to stay here when every day was a new torture, she told herself. If he had only ignored her utterly it might have been better; she would have some hope of awakening him to her presence. But he was well aware of her—strictly as a nice-looking, efficient employee. He teased her, and admired her clothes, and gave her extra work to do without a thought. But as for ever considering her as a girl, as his possible wife, nothing was farther from his thoughts.

When he married he would certainly choose from the gay, rich crowd of *débutantes* who were constantly calling him up and writing him amusing letters. But he would be in no hurry. Deirdre was sure he had never really been in love. He had had flirtations, of course, but they were mere games in which there were definite rules and no one was serious.

But Deirdre had never been so worried as she was now, for Judith Carrington was the most determined young woman she had ever seen, and it was evident that she had set her heart on capturing Phillip. There was no reason why he should resist, either.

Judith was pretty, of immense fortune, of his own class, and well-educated. She spoke French admirably, and had been abroad as often as Deirdre had been to the movies. There wasn't a chance for any one else, Deirdre moaned to herself, and then laughed at her own absurdity.

"Stop weeping for the moon," she scolded herself, and jammed a blue hat the color of her eyes over her lovely bronze hair. The mirror flashed back such a charming picture that for a moment she was comforted. "If I only had a million!" she sighed.

As she turned to leave the office, the door opened and the office boy came in with a yellow envelope in his hand. He was a small chubby youngster with unruly sandy hair.

"Put it on the desk. I'm going out to lunch, Bobby."

"You think you're smart, don't you?" snapped Bobby, wrinkling his freckled nose. "How do you know it's not for you?"

"How do you know your grandmother wasn't a monkey?" retorted Deirdre saucily, and smiled at the boy.

"Say, Deirdre, you look wonderful. Don't forget we're going to elope when I get seventy-five bucks saved and I'm fourteen," he reminded her.

"Oh, I won't. Anyway, your proposal is first on the list, Bobby, so don't worry. Well, I have to run along. Just put it on his desk. I'm not supposed to open telegrams."

"Oh, aren't you? Well, this one's got your name on it. Honestly. Look—Miss Deirdre Fallon. See?"

Deirdre suspected another of his jokes, but took the envelope from his hand to glance at the address. Sure enough, it was for her. With trembling fingers she tore it open.

It was from a firm of attorneys in the Marx Building. If she would call there at one thirty she would learn something to her credit.

When Deirdre walked out of the attorney's office she wasn't quite sure she was still alive or had gone to heaven. She had entered with thirteen dollars in her smart bag and sixty-eight in her savings account. She walked out worth six thousand and some odd figures which she didn't even bother to remember.

Six thousand dollars! It didn't seem possible. If she worked all her

life for what she was getting now, she could hardly manage to save half that amount. She had completely forgotten about old Cousin Abby, who taught school out in Harmersville. Who would ever think that old schoolmarm had put away such a sum? And it seemed strange that she should leave it to Deirdre, until one remembered that she really had no other relative in the world!

But why worry about that?—Deirdre asked herself. She had the money! Visions of luxury rolled before her dazed eyes as she walked along the street. She had a chocolate malted milk at a soda counter for lunch.

"I could be eating at André's, too, if I wanted to," she thought ecstatically. "Six thousand! I hope I don't wake up."

She said nothing at all to any one when she returned to the office. Some strange reticence took possession of her, and except for a faint wild-rose flush in her cheeks and two bright stars in her eyes, she gave no indication of her good fortune.

She discovered that a very curious plan was beginning to form in her mind. Although the good old New England strain in her blood suggested that she put the money away and not touch a cent of it, since some day she would be glad to fall back on such a comfortable nest egg, she refused to consider it.

A girl was young only once, and Deirdre found that she was becoming daily more desperately in love with Harburton. She hardly cared what happened to her if she could not win his love. It would be far better to risk her little fortune in a daring gesture than to play safe and lose all the glamour in life.

Deirdre, of course, had plenty of attention from men she did not care about. There were always hand-

some, jolly, impecunious youths ready to take her places and ask her to share their meager salaries in a cozy apartment for two. But Deirdre held them all at arm's length. There was only one man in the world for her.

However, she wasn't above letting them be of service to her now and then. At eight o'clock that evening she called Stan Kelsey at the Jasper Auto Sales Co.

"Hello, Stan. I've a prospect for you," she announced.

"Break it to me gently. I might die of shock. Where is he, her, or it?"

"It's I."

"Oh, April fool, eh?" Stan laughed. He didn't care what excuse Deirdre used, just so long as she stopped to talk.

"No, honestly. I want to buy a car. I want a terribly smart cream roadster secondhand, that looks as if it cost a million."

It took a long time to wear down Stan's incredulous amazement, but at last he promised to be right around for her.

An hour or two later, Deirdre was learning to drive a dull green-and-yellow car that almost answered her description.

"You know, Deirdre, this isn't the way people buy cars. You ought to hem and haw for a couple of months, and make all the salesmen take you out, and then just pay a nickel down," explained Stan, as she steered the car slowly around a parked truck.

"Why bother when I know what I want?" murmured Deirdre.

"Say, do you always go after what you want like this?"

She nodded. "My word, this is lots of fun, Stan. I'm going to like driving. I didn't know it was so easy."

"I suppose you won't speak to your old friends now that you're in the millionaire class," he complained.

"Don't be absurd," said Deirdre. "Oh, heavens, what do I do now? It's stopped. And don't try to hold my hand while I steer the old thing. It's no use."

The next day Deirdre spent her noon hour in the French room of a big department store, and subsequent days were spent in jewelry shops and furriers and smart shoe stores.

On July first Judith Carrington reluctantly left town for the luxurious Adirondack estate the Carringtons called "camp." Harburton had a place near them where his older sister acted as his hostess, and he promised to be up over the Fourth.

The sixth of July fell on Monday, and when Harburton entered his private office he slammed the door and gulped. In Deirdre's swivel chair sat a strange, exotic creature wearing a bronze silk dress that exactly matched her hair. Around her white throat was a necklace of carved lapis lazuli exactly the shade of her glorious eyes. Smart little bronze slippers and stockings as sheer as a mist completed a perfect costume.

"Great leaping bullfinches!" exclaimed Harburton, throwing down his hat and advancing toward the vision. "You aren't—you are—you aren't—it is Deirdre Fallon, isn't it?"

"Is there anything wrong?" asked Deirdre demurely, her restrained smile decorated by two deep dimples.

"Wrong! Everything is very much all right. But what in the world is all the—er—excitement about."

"Oh, I'm tired of my old clothes," laughed Deirdre lightly.

But Harburton walked across the room, looking at her as though he had seen her for the first time. Her eyes, as darkly, mysteriously blue as the summer night, were full of dancing stars, her cheeks were flushed with color, and her lovely warm red lips trembled with nervous pleasure.

Harburton was urbane and sophisticated. He was not the sort of man who could be fooled about women's clothes. One glance at the perfect line that molded Deirdre's exquisite figure and the rich hand embroidery on the panels of her skirt indicated the French origin of her gown. Her shoes, too, tattled unobtrusively of an aristocratic little shoppe on Fifth Avenue.

"Well," he remarked lightly, but with a keen glance of admiration, "you'll have to pardon my rudeness, but really I thought for a moment you'd come into a fortune."

"I have!" exclaimed Deirdre triumphantly.

"No! You don't mean it! But you're not going to leave, are you? Not now?" There was no mistaking the alarm in his tone.

"We-ell," drawled Deirdre, glancing up at him through her very effective lashes, "of course I shouldn't like to handicap your business just when we're getting such nice orders again."

"Oh, I didn't mean that——" began Harburton in a rush, and flushed for the first time in months.

Deirdre could have shouted with joy, but only the demurest little smile curved her charming lips.

Harburton frowned and walked nervously up and down. He kept tossing worried glances toward the lovely girl whom he had just discovered five minutes before, and didn't intend to lose if he could help it.

"Then—er—it's quite a fortune, I understand? You intend to live on your income?"

"You can see my new car if you'll look out of the back window," laughed Deirdre softly. "It's the green-and-yellow roadster parked in the lot. I really don't know how to run it very well yet. I almost ran into a lamp-post this morning." She cleverly avoided a direct answer.

"Good heavens, you must be careful!" snapped Harburton. "I'd be glad to give you a lesson or two. After all, I owe you something for promising to stay on. You—you will stay, won't you?"

"Oh, I suppose so, for a while, anyway," she sighed, and glanced down at her left hand, on which flashed a handsome diamond. Harburton's eyes dropped to the ring, and she saw him turn a little pale.

"Are you engaged?" he demanded harshly.

"Well, I'm not announcing anything," she countered.

Harburton turned on his heel and walked briskly to his desk. Deirdre heard him slamming drawers, rattling papers, snapping angrily into the telephone. Her heart sang, but only a quiet smile was visible on her face. She'd have to go slowly and watch the corners, as Stan said when he was teaching her to drive.

That evening she was ready to leave before Harburton was, a strange reversal of ordinary conditions. She could see that he was not really busy. He kept glancing at her, and she knew he wanted to say something. At last he spoke.

"Miss Fallon, you must be careful about driving your car downtown. I'd advise you to wait until you've had more practice. I suppose some one is teaching you?"

"I had a few lessons," remarked



When Harburton entered his private office he slammed the door and gulped. In Deirdre's swivel chair sat a strange, exotic creature.

Deirdre, smoothing on her gloves and adjusting a smart little gold hat.

"Your fiancé will no doubt be glad to help you."

"Please remember I didn't say I was engaged," she reminded him, with a provoking flash of her lovely blue eyes.

"Why quibble? I got the idea."

Harburton's eyes openly approved every detail of her costume.

"At any rate, he isn't in town," said Deirdre.

"Then really, I almost feel it's my duty. You should have at least a few more lessons," exclaimed Harburton, springing up to get his hat.

He was so changed from the usual drawling, indifferent self he presented to the world that Deirdre hid a smile as they left the office. Her heart was beating tumultuously. When Harburton insisted upon driving through the downtown streets, and began to hint at a dinner invitation, her cup of happiness seemed running over.

That was the beginning of a magic, fairylike time for them both. It had been so easy that Deirdre often found it hard to believe in her happiness. They went places together night after night in his car or hers. Her mysterious fiancé was seldom mentioned, and Judith Carington's telegrams and letters lay on Harburton's desk, neglected for days.

Deirdre was utterly thrilled. She had never been to first nights of important plays, nor had she sat in front-row seats. Out of deference to the slim pocketbooks of her escorts, she had been used to pretending that the balcony was really the preferred spot and insisting that she wasn't hungry after the performance when she really longed to dance at a smart night club.

With Harburton there was no need to temporize. He would spend thirty dollars on their evening's pleasure without a thought, and it quickened Deirdre's pulse to see the respectful attention her very distinguished, handsome escort received everywhere they went.

Now and then Harburton spoke of her money and suggested that

when she was ready to make investments he would be happy to advise her. In her inexperience she might easily be misled. Then it was that Deirdre felt a peculiar little shudder in her heart. Money was everything, it seemed.

At first she tried to appear sophisticated and used to every pleasure they shared, but her natural enthusiasm soon betrayed her. She still drove awkwardly. She often turned over the car to him in traffic jams. At dazzling midnight shows she would turn to him with an excited little laugh, her lips parted, her eyes sparkling.

Harburton himself was like a new man.

"It's simply wonderful to find a girl who's not fed up on everything, Deirdre," he confided to her, as he slipped off her evening wrap in the Paradise Club. "You're the queerest and most fascinating mixture. Half the time you're like a little girl, and the next moment you're sophistication itself."

"Well, there's no use pretending to you that everything isn't new to me." Deirdre gave her delicious little ripple of a laugh. "I can't even smoke without choking, and I suppose I look as dazed as a country cousin at the sights. Just give me time, Phil."

"No, I don't want you any different. You're perfect. I'd—I'd like to go on showing you things forever," he whispered daringly. But Deirdre avoided his eyes.

"Let's dance," she said in confusion.

As they danced, he held her close in his arms, looking down from time to time at the soft flushed cheek so close to his lips, the luscious crimson lips with their cleverly applied color. And Deirdre, feeling his breath on her cheek, his eyes burning into hers,

felt faint with delicious terror. No one could doubt what those passionate glances meant.

Now and then he was obliged to spend a week-end at his mountain home, and on his return he never failed to ask her anxiously, yet with a show of carelessness, if her fiancé had returned to the city. Deirdre evaded answering, yet it only added to a growing unhappiness in her heart.

If she had been in love with him before, now she was utterly obsessed by her feeling for him. The very curve of his face, the tender shine in his eyes at a shared amusement, the light on his close-clipped hair, were dear to her.

Yet she was increasingly unhappy. She had won his interest under false pretenses. She had lied to him. She had let him understand that by good fortune she had been elevated into the leisure moneyed class to which he belonged. If he found out that she had deceived him he would surely hate her. Besides, how did she know his feeling for her would survive the shock that she was actually penniless? Money seemed to be his standard. After all, did she want love based on such a false promise as that?

She said: "No!" aloud, but inwardly she knew she wanted his love on any basis. Life without him seemed so ghastly that she shuddered to think of it.

But how could he help finding out? Her money was melting away like water. She had already spent nearly three thousand dollars, exactly half! When her money was gone, her cardboard castle would collapse and with it all her hopes. Nothing would be left.

"Why are you so grave, Deirdre?" he would often ask when he had particularly tried to please her.

"Just thinking," she would answer with a pensive smile.

On one such occasion he leaned over and took her slim left hand in his. Deirdre felt a warm tide of blood sweep up from the touch of his fingers.

"I've been thinking, too," he murmured, twisting the diamond around restlessly. "Thinking I'd like to toss this little barrier of cold ice into the North River and buy you another."

She looked into his intense eyes, and for a moment her lips trembled piteously. Then she withdrew her hand and glanced away. But all the rest of the evening she was white and quiet.

She knew deep in her heart that she couldn't go on, that she must tell him the truth, yet it was such an agony even to think of the breaking point that she put it off.

Harburton's vacation was slated for the second week in August. He was obliged to be absent for ten days, although no man ever left with more reluctance.

The night before his departure, they drove for miles in his big gray car along the coast road, hardly speaking yet bound by the silent bond of perfect companionship.

They stopped at a roadside inn, frequented by a smart crowd, and danced on a wide porch lighted with shadowy lanterns. Deirdre felt she would remember this night all her life. She was so happy above the anguish in the depths of her heart. Her dress of pale-green chiffon was exquisite with her bronze hair, and with every earnest, adoring glance Harburton's eyes told her how beautiful she was.

He left her on the steps of her apartment house.

"I'll never forget this night, Deirdre," he whispered, lifting her

hand to his worshiping lips. "It's been paradise."

"Nor shall I," she replied.

"Deirdre, isn't it possible that you might have made a mistake? This man to whom you are engaged——"

She interrupted with a little cry.

"Oh, Phil, don't speak of it—please!"

He shrugged, his lips twisted for a moment. She stood looking down at him, almost frantic in her longing to throw her arms about his neck, to tell him she returned his love, to pour out her story. The next day he would be gone. Beautiful, impulsive Judith Carrington would have ten long days and ten golden warm nights of August magic in which to beguile his heart away. Oh, why couldn't she bind him to her now? Deirdre wondered miserably.

But something she could not define restrained her.

"Anyway, you can't stop my thinking about you, darling," said Harburton almost harshly, and ran down the steps to his car.

Deirdre watched him drive away, the tears glittering on her long curved lashes, her hands clenched into white fists of torture.

The next day at noon, Bobby, the adoring office boy, brought her another telegram from the attorneys who had wrought her first magic. Perhaps they had discovered more money! Perhaps another forgotten relative had remembered her.

Trembling with keen anticipation, Deirdre slipped on her little black hat, wrapped her beige coat around her new bouclé sports ensemble, and left the office, little suspecting what malicious jest fate had in store for her.

An hour later she left that office in which the little fat attorney had seemed an evil, grinning gnome and

the tall one a pitiless onlooker at the massacre of her hopes.

There had been a mistake. They were full of regrets.

"You see, every one thought your aunt died intestate, that is, without making a will. She had always been outspoken in her aversion to such an act, so naturally it was not looked for with any thoroughness. It wasn't in her safe-deposit box, the logical place, so naturally——"

"But please tell me," Deirdre had burst out, tortured beyond endurance. "I don't care about the details. The money—shall I have to give that up?"

"Some of it, in fact a great portion of it. This lady"—he nodded toward a thin, suspicious-eyed woman of middle age—"Mrs. de Lorme, is the chief beneficiary."

Deirdre had turned wide eyes beseechingly toward the grim figure at his side. The woman bridled.

"Well, I should hope I was," she snapped. "Didn't I take care of Abby Fallon when she had the flu? Didn't she live in my house for years and years? Didn't I treat her more like a sister? What did this girl ever do for her—I'd like to know. I bet she didn't even remember she was alive."

"I'm sorry," mumbled Deirdre. "I'm glad she had some one to be good to her. I—I didn't know. Oh, if you'd only made sure first!"

"It is very regrettable," murmured the tall attorney indifferently, regarding his shining nails.

"Well, my lands, I told them to wait," spoke out the woman, but more kindly. "I just knew Abby wouldn't play me a trick like that after she'd always said I'd get most of what she had. So I never gave up hope. I never stopped looking, and at last I found it. Yes, sir, found it in that book she was always

reading. Sure was lucky—for me, that is.”

“But please,” begged Deirdre, turning to the men, “won’t some one tell me the terms of the will? How much am I supposed to—to return?”

“Ah, of course. Naturally you’re anxious to know. Well, you are to receive two thousand, and the rest is left to Mrs. de Lorme.” The attorney glanced again at the paper on his desk.

Deirdre tried to stop the trembling of her lips. She opened her bag with hands that shook convulsively, and took out her bank book.

“I have three thousand two hundred and fourteen dollars still on deposit,” she faltered. “I’ll give you that at once. And I—I bought a car. If you’ll give me time I’ll sell that, or give it to you, or I’ll sell this ring.” She could not go on.

Mrs. de Lorme looked at her. Deirdre was surprised to see that her black eyes were really very kind, and that her thin face could relax into less grim lines.

“You poor child!” she said. “I was fond of your cousin, and I know you never meant to do wrong. I know she wouldn’t like to see you feeling like this. It’s all a big mistake, but I’m not the woman to try to right one wrong with another. See here; you go along to the bank with me, and hand over the three thousand, and you just keep what you’ve spent. After all, she was your own kith and kin, and blood is thicker than water.” Here Mrs. de Lorme began to gulp, and Deirdre in her relief laughed hysterically. Presently they were all laughing.

“You’re a mighty good woman, Mrs. de Lorme,” said Deirdre as they left the office. “There isn’t one in a thousand who’d take this the way you’ve taken it.”

“Well, bless your heart, I took a liking to you when I saw you really did care about your cousin. Now let’s have some lunch at one of these fine places so I can brag about it when I get back home, and then we’ll trot over to the bank.”

Deirdre spent some very bad hours that night. It was only due to a woman’s kindness that she was not in real trouble. Out of her mistaken good luck she had left only some smart clothes, a ring, and a car which she could not possibly afford to run.

Her first duty should be to sell the car, and she might as well sell the ring, too. It just stood for a lie, Deirdre reasoned, and after all, she would be far better off with the money in the bank.

She put the car in Stan’s hands the next morning, and at noon began to hunt for a place where she could dispose of her ring.

As the lonely days went by, she brooded more and more on the trouble she had brought on herself by her deception. She vowed that the first thing she would do when Phil returned would be to tell him instantly, bravely all about it. Then she would try to find another job.

She was no child. She knew now that she did not want him on false pretenses. Although she longed for him with all her soul, she would not sacrifice self-respect and honor to a false love. If it was real, it would endure. If not—well, perhaps she could bear that, too.

Daily she received letters from him, charming, delightful notes. Often he described parties and outings in which she knew Judith had shared. Usually there was a daring, half-veiled paragraph that made her heart beat faster. Would he really mean that when he discovered what she had done?

He was due to return on Thursday morning about ten o'clock. She decided that morning to wear once more the old navy-blue office dress that belonged to the old Deirdre. That would instantly let him know that something was wrong. He would see her as she had been weeks before, when he was blind to her. It would show him what she really was now.

As the hour for his appearance approached that morning, she felt herself almost suffocated with apprehension and terror. Her blue eyes were almost black. Her lashes stood out in wide circles of fear at every footstep approaching the door.

At last she heard him coming. She turned about. His hand was on the knob. Instantly the door was flung open. He strode in, closing it behind him and took a step toward her.

"Deirdre!" he exclaimed, and stopped. She stood up, her face white as a sheet of paper. He was staring at her, his lips parted, a grimace of astonishment on his face.

"What in the world has happened?" he asked after a moment, walking toward her.

"Sit down," faltered the girl between dry lips. "I—I have something to tell you. In the first place, I want you to know that I have no money—not a cent," began Deirdre as Harburton, disregarding her suggestion, stood staring down at her.

"What happened?"

"It was a mistake. They thought there wasn't a will. Then one was found."

"But this sounds very peculiar to me," said Harburton. "You mustn't give up without a struggle. We must see a lawyer. I'll take you to mine and——"

"No, no. It isn't worth bothering about," protested Deirdre, her face

crimson with humiliation. It was even worse than she had imagined. "You see, I deceived you about that, too."

"How could you? What do you mean?"

"It wasn't a great deal of money at all. It was just a few thousands. And instead of being sensible about it, I just went crazy. I wanted to see what it was like to have lovely clothes and jewelry and a car. Oh, I'm dreadfully ashamed. It was a despicable thing to do—to deceive you."

Harburton looked puzzled and bewildered, as if he still could hardly believe his ears. His glance swept over the girl, and then came to rest on her left hand.

"Your fiancé—he's gone, too? Do you mean to say that when he heard you——"

"Wait!" Deirdre interrupted desperately. "That was another lie, too. I haven't any fiancé. I just let you think I had. I didn't correct you when you talked about him."

Harburton was silent, looking at the girl with a curious brooding expression that she could not define. She was sure he must hate her. The thought made her sick with despair, yet at the same time she felt a vast relief that it was all over. At last he knew.

"So," he murmured, after a long pause in which Deirdre stared at her twisted white hands, "it was all a joke, a mere summer's pastime." His voice was bitter; he gave a curt little laugh. "Well, I admit the joke's on me. I bit good and hard. I thought I had found the one girl in the world for me. I thought at last I had discovered the one charming, clever, delightful person with whom I'd never be bored, whose enthusiasm bubbled up from an ever-

young spirit that could never age. me, that I might change her mind
And I was a fool enough to think about that other chap. Oh, what's
that she was beginning to care for the use——" His voice broke and



Judith was smiling rapturously. With a little flourish, she held out her left hand on which shone a staggering diamond ring. "Miss Fallon, I'm engaged!" she exclaimed. Deirdre felt her world shattering about her.

he stalked away from her, his hands clenched at his sides.

"Oh, don't!" implored Deirdre, her dark-blue eyes tortured with his words. "It's not true!"

"You just told me it was," retorted Harburton over his shoulder.

"But it's not so!" Deirdre half rose in her chair and held out her hands beseechingly for an instant. "I tell you it wasn't a joke. I prayed and begged and longed for a way to make you realize I was alive, to make you recognize me as a girl instead of a machine."

"What's that?" snapped Harburton, whirling around.

"When I got this money I decided on a desperate course. I felt you'd never look at me unless I made you, unless I could dress to command your interest. That's why I did it. It wasn't a joke. And I simply invented that fiancé because I knew you were so blasé. I wanted you to feel you couldn't have me." Her cheeks were flaming now, but every defense had gone down before the flood of truth.

"Good heavens, it can't be possible!" stammered Harburton.

Deirdre felt that if she had to stay in that room another moment she would explode with pent-up emotion. She snatched her bag and soft hat from the top drawer and walked swiftly to the door.

With her head thrown back, her blue eyes flaming, and all the intensity of the moment expressed in her tense face, she spoke.

"I'll tell you why. I've lost all reticence. Nothing matters now." She leaned forward, gazing into his eyes, her voice trembling, yet distinct and low. "It was because I love you, love you, love you!"

She jerked open the door, but before she could dart out, a figure crashed into her.

"Oh, watch out!" It was Judith Carrington in a big white floppy hat and an embroidered linen suit, looking utterly enchanting and beautiful. Beside her Deirdre's navy-blue dress was like the drab cocoon of a moth.

Judith was smiling rapturously. She let her smile also rest on Deirdre for an instant. With a little flourish, she held out her left hand on which shone a staggering diamond ring.

"Miss Fallon, I'm engaged. Congratulate me!" she exclaimed, and then without waiting for Deirdre to regain speech, Judith ran across the room to Harburton.

"We couldn't wait, darling. We followed you down in the car. Oh, isn't it thrilling? Kiss me!"

Deirdre felt her world shattering about her. She did not wait to see them embrace, but fled from the room, pulling the door closed, her cheeks ablaze with humiliation too deep for utterance.

She didn't quite know how she reached the park in the middle of the city, but she sank down on a bench there five minutes later, trying to think.

Oh, it was ghastly to think that she had betrayed herself at the eleventh hour! If she had only let him speak a word, he might have enlightened her. Now it was too late. Maybe in the rapture of loving Judith he would recall the poor little moth who had played too long with the flame and singed her wings. But that would be all.

She could not go back there. She would even shrink from passing him on the street. Perhaps she could go to another city and start all over again.

All afternoon she stayed in the park, alternately strolling about and sinking down on a bench to rest. Voices spoke around her, but she did

not even hear them. She was like a figure in a dream, unaware of what went on about her.

At five thirty she began to walk toward her apartment house, her eyes fixed on the ground, her thoughts still drugged with despair.

She did not notice the gray car parked between other cars at the curb. She did not lift her eyes as she walked up the steps. When some one grasped her arm she merely tried to pull away with a mumbled remark.

"Deirdre!" exclaimed Harburton's low, intense voice.

Immediately she started, glanced up, and gave a little cry.

"Oh, let me go! I don't want to talk to you or see you."

"But I have something to say to you. Get into my car," he ordered.

"No, no! Please go away."

"If you don't come now, I'll follow you to the ends of the earth to make you listen to me. You might as well get it over now," he said almost savagely.

Shrinking from his touch, she allowed herself to be seated in the roadster and be driven swiftly through the city streets, out on the boulevard and at last down the smooth shore drive. He turned off at last in a little sandy road that led down to the lake's private bathing beach.

"It's no use—what you have to say," began Deirdre. "I don't want your sympathy nor your charity. You've found the girl you love. I—I hope you'll be happy."

"Do you, Deirdre?" he asked earnestly, forcing her to look at him. "Then listen to me. No one on this earth can make me happy but you."

She stared at him in wonder.

"It's true. I have found the girl who can make me happy. It's you, Deirdre, you!"

"Oh, no!" she breathed. "It's Judith. She said you and she——"

"She said she was engaged. That's true. Prince Dmitri Vassinoff is the unfortunate victim this time. She was merely using me to make him jealous," laughed Harburton with light contempt. "They came in to buy the ring this morning."

"It was you she loved. I could see it," insisted Deirdre.

"Ah, you're prejudiced, my dear—at least I hope you are, darling." His voice was very tender.

Deirdre searched his face with her anguished blue eyes, while her fingers pressed against her trembling chin.

"You're looking for pity, for charity, for dismay?" Phil questioned gently. "You won't find

it, my darling. There is nothing in my heart but love."

"Oh, how can you when I lied, deceived you, tricked you?" She stopped because his warm fingers pressed her lips into sudden silence.

"I was an utter fool, I'll admit," he began, "not to see the precious thing I was looking for until it was polished up for me, but I've only gratitude for the trouble you took, gratitude that you made me see. You were honest and honorable to confess to me, dearest. I respect you for it, but it couldn't make one love you more. Don't you realize how happy it makes me feel that you have nothing, that I can pour out the beauty and riches of the world before your dear eyes and feel repaid when I see that charming



smile of yours thanking me? Deirdre, don't keep me waiting any longer. Do you really love me, darling, as you said this morning?"

"Oh, yes," she whispered, "with all my heart."

"And you'll marry me, dearest, just as soon as we can manage it?"

For answer she lifted her face. There were tears in her glorious sea-blue eyes; the rayed lashes were a dark fringe against her white skin. Her lovely lips, trembling and smiling, awaited his kiss.

Swiftly he leaned forward, swept her hungrily into his arms, kissed her again and again with the insatiable hunger of a man who has found at last what he has sought all his life. It was a wonderful, rapturous moment for both of them.

Deirdre's arms slipped slowly about his neck; all her unhappiness breathed itself out in a little sigh that was warm on his cheek and she nestled closer. After all, life really was going to begin over again for her!



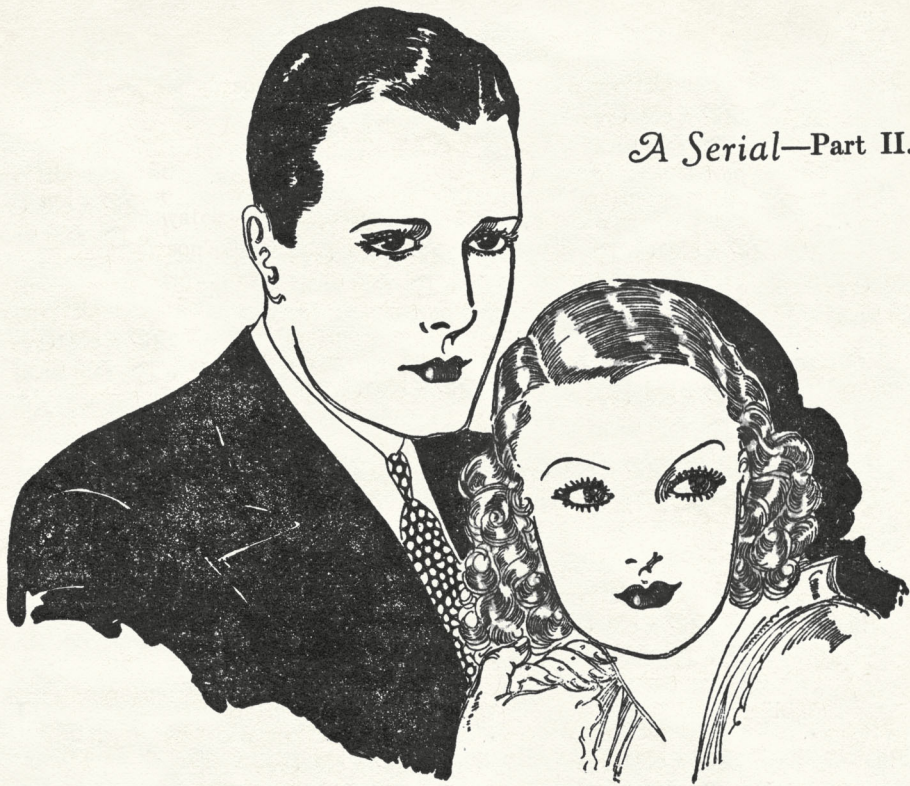
SURRENDER

YOU hold me close against your heart,
I hear its throbbing beat—
And in this moment know your love
Has made my life complete.

The message of your throbbing heart
Is like a clear, sweet call
Of love that cannot be denied—
And I surrender all.

Gladly I give my heart to you,
Surrender to love's bliss
And wait with trembling ecstasy
The rapture of your kiss.

RUBYE WOODARD.



A Serial—Part II.

The Richest Girl

CHAPTER III.

By Vivian Grey

GLORIA wondered, as she chattered gayly to first one man and then the other, and then to friends standing near selecting things from the buffet, how she was to endure it. How she was to keep sane and poised and not go into the arms of the man whose eyes never seemed to leave her delicate loveliness.

She felt their soft dark depths on

THE STORY SO FAR:

Gloria Garrison, a wealthy society girl, engaged to marry Clifton van Norden, member of an old, aristocratic family, realizes that her engagement is one of convenience rather than love. With him it was her money; with her, his name. At a dance, Gloria meets a stranger from the stag line and falls in love with him.

her as she turned to chatter with a passer-by and then looked back at him to find him still watching her.

"But you're not eating!" she said. "Surely you're not one of those rare men who hasn't an appetite?" Hating herself the while for the commonplace

words. Somehow they weren't at all the sort of things she wanted to say to him, but with Cliff there—

And then she was heaping a plate

and handing it to him and was somehow, not quite understandably, hurt by something eager, almost grasping about the hands with which he took it.

It wasn't that his movement was ill-bred, it was something more fundamental even than breeding. He had that, she could see. But there was something—she turned away thoughtfully and a vision of him rose before her, shutting out the room with its gay, laughing crowd, a vision of him in slightly shabby clothes over which his very gentility triumphed.

She was held for a while by that vision. Something caught oddly at her heart and aroused a strange and utterly new feeling within her, a thing that she scarcely recognized as having a maternal element.

And then she turned back to his empty plate and with her own swift hands refilled it, laughing while she did it as if it were a game.

She felt her fiancé's eyes on her disapprovingly and then turned to him, laughter on her vivid lips.

"A sandwich, Cliffie?"

"Thank you, no," he replied stiffly.

Clifton van Norden was cold to her the rest of the evening but the richest girl scarcely realized it. She only knew, when it came time to leave, that she had seen very little of Clifton and a great deal of a tall dark youth whose very touch vitalized her.

"You'll come with us?" she asked, looking up at him, while Clif stood waiting for her, her wrap on his arm.

The youth hesitated.

"I—why——"

"Of course you will—come along."

"I—I'll call a taxi—I——"

Gloria smiled, and her smile in that moment was like the full glory of the sun on a perfect June day.

"I have my car. I meant, of

course, that I'd drop you wherever you go."

"Oh, thanks."

Clif waited in amused tolerance and, in the car assumed an air of bored indifference.

He roused, however, when the car turned into his street.

"I'll see you home, Glory," he said, "and then Tompkins may drop me."

Gloria looked up at him in exaggerated amazement and then turned sweetly to the dark youth sitting so silently beside her.

"Where can we take you?" she asked.

There was a scarcely perceptible hesitancy. Then:

"No. 61 Park Avenue."

The richest girl looked through the dim light of the car interior and wondered if she saw the slightest trace of a flush on the strong features of the youth beside her and then leaned back against the soft cushions with a little sigh.

"It's been such a lovely evening," she said to no one in particular, her golden head relaxed against the cushions.

"Wonderful!" It seemed to come involuntarily from the dark youth, involuntarily and in a voice so weighted with tender sincerity that it turned Clif's eyes sharply to him, and Gloria, even in the dim light, was conscious of the steel in them.

When the car stopped in front of 61 Park Avenue and the tall dark youth was standing on the sidewalk, Gloria leaned out of the perfumed luxury of her car and held out a slim, white ungloved hand around which fur as soft and pliable as the sheerest silk swirled with gracious voluptuousness.

"This is only good night," came in her low, throaty, poignantly lovely voice.

The youth took the hand she held out, stared at her a moment as if entranced with her fragile young beauty, and then slowly and gently lifted it to his lips.

"Only good night," the richest girl was echoing the words as her blue eyes looked long and earnestly into the darkly tender ones of the youth on the pavement. "There's Dolly Winkler's tea dansant Monday." And then with the most delicate tact: "If you haven't been invited, won't you come anyhow? Dolly loves crashers—especially if they're good-looking."

"I——" The youth started to say with the faintest intonation of regretful refusal.

"But you can't turn a lady down, you know." There was gentle laughter in her eyes. "It simply isn't done."

He smiled and looked at her as if hers were the only eyes in the world.

"Then you'll be there—Dolly Winkler's tea dansant Monday."

"Dolly Winkler's tea dansant, Monday," he repeated with a solemn reverence that almost made a prayer of the simple words that sealed their next appointment.

The richest girl looked back as the car moved from the curb and saw him standing, still bareheaded, his shabby gentility etched against the glamorous background of one of exclusive Park Avenue's most exclusive apartment houses.

"Thrillingly romantic!" It was the ironic voice of Clifton van Norden that brought Gloria back to a realization of things as they were.

It seemed to remind her of something she had wished to do. She bent over and spoke distinctly to the chauffeur.

Van Norden started.

"I told you I'd see you home!" he said, his voice sharp with impatience.

Gloria turned to him with a funny, almost sad little smile:

"But I wouldn't think of letting you inconvenience yourself, darling. What price gallantry? Enormous, if you're asking me to answer from my small experience."

Clifton stared at her, a stern look in his eyes.

"Gloria, what's got into you? I've never known you to act this way?"

"I'm learning things," she replied, very softly.

"I suppose you're referring to the stunts of that sap! He acts as if he's hypnotized!"

"You would call him a sap, darling," Gloria said, almost too sweetly and evenly. "And if he's hypnotized, then thank a gracious Providence for sending a hypnotic victim a girl's way once in a while!"

"You're talking like a fool!"

"Oh, I am, Clif! I'd no idea how much of one—perhaps you had?" And she turned to him with a sweetness that had something hard and sharp about it.

"Gloria, you're not yourself -to night! Perhaps we'd better not talk about this any more!"

"Perhaps that is safer—just now."

And she leaned back in the fragrant luxury of her soft furs and gracious silks.

At the door of the stately old Van Norden house in its appropriately quiet street, the big car stopped and Clifton got out.

"Good night, Clif." The words came easily from the vivid lips of the lovely girl still seated in the softly lighted interior. "See you soon!"

"Good night!" he replied, as if a little surprised that all that was offered him was that cool little hand



The richest girl wondered if she looked in the mirror just then if her face would be illumined by love.

and its accompaniment of cool words.

And the richest girl leaned back against the cushions and closed her

lovely eyes and didn't bother to look back and see that the young man whom she had just said good night to, was, like that other young

man a few moments before, still standing at the curb staring after the disappearing car.

She was smiling dreamily and thinking how little removed she was from Jackie, the manicure girl, whose face had been illumined by love.

And the richest girl wondered if she looked in the mirror just then if her face would be like that of the little manicurist. She hoped so. There was such a glory about it.

"The eyes!" Marie said as she helped her into her nightgown after she had reached the luxurious security of her own lovely room. "They shine—oh, more than that di'mon'!" Pointing to the huge square diamond that glistened on her young mistress's slim finger.

Gloria looked at the diamond a moment.

"And well they may, Marie!" she said. "They've got a right to—if you're asking me. But I advise you not to! I'm not quite ready to give interviews!"

"No. Secrets—they are sweet, when they shine from the eyes!"

Gloria laughed—a bubbling, glorious little ripple of sound.

"And such secrets! When they shine from the eyes! So secret!"

But it didn't matter. She wasn't trying to keep anything really secret. The richest girl didn't have to. She could do as she wished. Her word was law in her little world which comprised her father and a host of adoring, well-trained servants.

She looked at the white hand that lay in such relaxed beauty on the linen pillowcase and wondered if it could be the same hand that she had known all through the twenty gorgeous years of her gorgeous life.

It seemed, somehow, different—glorified.

It was a kiss that had done that, she knew.

And she awakened the next morning with the feeling of having slept with a smile on her face and in her heart.

The city—roofs and chimneys, brave window boxes, hopeful dogs tail-wagging along at the end of leashes, faces peering out of windows, bits of sky looking down in patches jagged by roof lines—seemed like a nicer place to be in as she stood for a moment gazing through the polished glass behind the silken curtains before turning to her breakfast tray.

And on the tray, quite overshadowing the toast, the coffee in its silver urn and the priceless china cup and saucer, was a bunch of roses—great, soft, velvety things that laid a wealth of fragrance on the air as Gloria's slim hand touched them.

She picked them up with a little start of joy. Roses—and for her breakfast!

She looked at the card. And then turned away.

Clifton van Norden!

There never before had been flowers for her breakfast from Clifton. He had only had flowers sent on the obvious occasions—when they were going to dances that required them, on her birthday, Christmas, and such days.

And then roses!

She might have known when she saw they were roses—the obvious thing—that it was Clifton. Casual men thought of roses first for any girl, every girl.

Roses were, of course, right for some girls. But scarcely for her.

With a careless, almost tired little gesture she indicated them to her maid.

"Are there flowers for the dining room table to-day, Marie?"

"But, surely"—Marie looked aghast—"these are for you!"

"I know, Marie, but there are some things I'd rather share."

Marie looked at her oddly but said nothing. There were times when Marie had a positive genius for understanding.

Gloria dressed with a peculiar care that day when it was time to appear at dinner. She didn't know exactly why. Nothing was to happen except, perhaps, Clifton's casual call.

He generally "dropped around," as he said, toward evening—sometimes in time for dinner, but generally for the late supper that was served to her father and herself in front of the fireplace.

Nothing else could happen.

The tall, handsome, dark youth whose kiss had so glorified her hand didn't know where she lived; didn't even know her name. Unless, of course, there was the possibility of his having recognized her from her pictures that appeared so often in the papers.

And yet, there had been no flash of recognition in his eyes as they rested on her. There had been only that adoration, that humble, reverential sort of worship in his gaze that had set her heart singing, verily, to the high heavens.

And so the richest girl decided, and with a little flush of happy pride, that the handsome youth must have missed all of the rotogravures in which her picture had appeared.

Or, better yet, perhaps he hadn't acquired the habit of looking at the pictures of debutantes!

Gloria's father looked up, a smile lighting his face, as she entered the stately dining room of the old mansion.

Always punctilious, he came to his feet with something in his man-

ner that brought her eyes to his face, a question in them.

"The queen arrives?" she said, with a funny little smile and an appreciative gesture.

She walked over to him and lifted her face for his kiss.

His hands lingered on her shoulders for a moment after their greeting and his eyes as they looked down at her were moist.

"Glory, you grow more like your mother every day—more beautiful. She came into this room dozens of times just as you did now. It startled me for a moment. I thought I was dreaming too vividly." His voice was weighted with tender, reminiscent emotion.

"She was very much in love with you, wasn't she?" Gloria asked very gently.

"I tried to give her reason to be."

"And she was—she was a woman very much in love. I know that now, from the little photograph that I have of her. I can see it in her face. That's the answer."

Garrison looked thoughtful for a moment.

"I dread the time when I must lose you, Glory. This old house won't seem right without you. Of course I know I can't keep you always—Clif will be getting impatient. I wonder if we could persuade him to live here with us? I'm too selfish to give you up."

Gloria smiled. It was a smile that seemed to reserve something.

"I expect we could—if it comes to that," she said.

"You see you're all in the world that I've got."

Gloria's hand went out across the fine white damask to him.

"I'll never forget that," she said, gently.

"I know—you couldn't. You're too like your mother. A woman

with a kinder, more generous heart never lived. And her life was so pitifully short."

Gloria was trying to smile through

the mist that glistened in her eyes and made them look like great deep-toned forget-me-nots with the dew still on them.



Her hand moved out toward him, the great square diamond lying on her pink palm. Van Norden stared. Then, in a strained voice, he said: "Don't do anything foolish—anything you'll be sorry for."

"But you made her happy. How much better to live happily even if it must be shortly than to drag through the years with half a loaf. I'm sure if she could have had her choice she would have taken it as it was."

And Gloria scarcely heard her father's answer. She was thinking of her own life. How much more wonderful to live one deliriously happy year—one wildly, ecstatically happy year than to drag through twenty, with no knowledge of the heights of human experience!

After dinner they sat in the huge living room in front of the fireplace, read their paper and talked. Those late Sunday afternoons when the demands of his daughter's social life gave them time for talk—quiet talk—were things that Tom Garrison looked forward to all through the week.

Sunday had always been the one day of respite for him, the one day on which he had time for the finer things. His early life had been a busy one and of necessity had been shorn of all things that make living an easier, more desirable thing.

During the week he had fought and struggled, battled competition with seeming unending energy and come home with no resources for enjoyment left.

But Sunday!

Always, from the very first days of their marriage until the end, he and his wife had made Sunday morning breakfast a rite that they lingered over lovingly. And then the whole day had gone on in that same tempo.

Even though his wealth had begun to pile up and poured in increasingly they let no social ties touch their Sunday.

That was their day, with the rest of the world shut out.

And though Gloria, with her Saturday night parties had never quite been able to be at the breakfast table for breakfast, as she grew older and able to understand just how her father missed the beautiful, smiling-eyed woman whose voice she could not remember ever having heard, she tried to fit into the Sunday that he seemed to still be trying to keep.

At twenty she had learned to love that quiet hour and was a bit sorry when she heard the bell ring and knew that in a moment the manservant would be announcing Clifton.

"How are you, Clif, my boy?" Her father's hand was out to the young man as he came into the room.

It was the usual greeting and Clif answered in the usual way but Gloria felt his eyes on her with a question that had not been there before. They lacked something of their usual assurance and that was evident in his manner as he approached her.

"Sweet of you to have sent the flowers," she said, looking up at him while he held her hand in greeting. "We loved them on the table at dinner. Precious of you, Clif."

"I—hoped you'd like them." It came with a peculiar stiffness.

And all the while as the three of them sat talking of trivialities and watching the flames on the hearth as they leaped and died and filled the room with warm, vibrant lights and shadows, Gloria was conscious of a slight tenseness about Clif.

He was waiting—merely waiting until they could really talk. She felt that. His mind was not at all on the things they talked of.

He stared at the roses as they sat at supper. They had been brought into the living room. It was almost

as if he sensed that they had failed a little in their mission of beauty. They had not been given quite the place that he had expected his flowers would be given.

Flowers on the table while they ate—all right to be sure. But those particular ones had been sent to the girl he was engaged to.

It was still early when Tom Garrison rose.

"I imagine you children have a lot of things to talk about," he said. It was his usual good night.

Gloria looked up and smiled.

"Good night, daddy," she said and Clifton rose dutifully and took the hand Garrison held out.

They sat silently for a moment after Garrison had left. Then Gloria turned to the young man.

"All right," she said. "Say it. Perhaps I'll know the answer."

"Well, there are things I want to clear up, Glory."

"I'm a marvelous torchbearer!"

"It isn't quite a joking matter."

"I know. I don't feel that way about it either, really." She was suddenly serious.

"I think you probably know what I mean."

Gloria looked down at her slim, well-kept hands, the hands that Jackie had done to such perfection.

"I used to win prizes at guessing games when I was very young," she replied, still quite seriously.

"You still persist in joking about it!"

"Oh, no, I'm not!" She bent toward him a bit. "I'm afraid that I've never been more serious in my life."

"Gloria, I mean this—this person you've picked up and have a fancy for playing around with!"

"That's just what I mean, Clif!" A poignant little note in her lovely voice.

"Well, the stag line is all right—a sort of necessary evil, I suppose—under our present social system, and naturally all of the girls do dance with them; but, after all, you know that——" he stopped.

"Yes, I know, Clif," she said, very gently and in a very small but earnest voice. "You, and men like you, have made the stag line—we girls have had nothing to do with that. You've made it with your selfishness, your negligence, your desire to hang around the punch bowls and buffets rather than be out on the dance floor. And now you're trying to belittle the thing that you created!"

"Don't be silly! No man could dance as much as a girl wants him to! The stag line just is. That's all there is to it, but no nice girl ever takes it seriously—any more than they would the decorations. That's really all it amounts to!"

"Says you!"

"Don't be cheap!"

"Don't be cheap!" There was gentle scoffing in her voice. "I've been cheap ever since I've been taking you to dances and then depending upon a lot of strange young men to keep me from being a wallflower! Nothing could cheapen me after that—not any more than I already am!"

"Why, when I want to go out with you I have to go and get you! I have to take you home! I have to supply men who will dance with me while you lounge in the smoking room or drape yourself around the punch bowl! After that could anything cheapen me?"

"That's only what all of the girls do! It's simply the thing to do, that's all! It's the age we're living in!"

"Oh, no, it isn't! It's the kind of people we are! The kind of man you are and the weak, silly kind of girl

I am! Why, even the maid in the kitchen doesn't have to go out to meet her man. He comes in from the country twice a week on his motor cycle, drives up to our side entrance and then marches up to the door to ask for her, as proud as a peacock! That's what the maid in the kitchen gets from her man while I have to run all over town for you!"

"Well"—with some of the defense taken out of his voice—"I'm busier than you are."

"You're not so busy. You're not nearly so busy as men were a generation ago. They worked harder then. They wanted to support the women they married and do things for them—that was the ideal of every decent man, but they managed to do their courting decently!"

"You must have been reading romantic history."

"Perhaps I've needed to."

"This isn't getting us anywhere. Are you or are you not going to that tea dansant to-morrow?"

"Why, of course I'm going."

Clifton stared at her.

"And that stag liner is going to be there?"

"I hope so."

"Gloria, this has gone far enough. It's all right for you to dance with those boys but I won't have you make me a laughingstock. Either you stay away from the tea dansant or our engagement is broken."

Gloria was silent for a moment. Then, with ominous calm, she spoke:

"I suppose that it's never occurred to you that you've made a laughingstock of me?"

"I've only done what every man in our set does!" he exclaimed sharply. "I wish you'd stop harping on it!"

And then suddenly Gloria smiled, a bright, sharp, clearly defined smile, devoid of all tenderness.

"All right, that amounts to asking for your ring back." And her slim white hand moved out toward him, the great square diamond lying like a huge tear on her pink palm.

Van Norden stared. Then, in a strange, strained voice that was stiff with pride, he said:

"Don't do anything foolish—anything you'll be sorry for."

Once more the laugh echoed on Gloria's lips.

"Always putting the right valuation on your aristocratic old name, Clif, eh? Of course any girl should be sorry to relinquish the right to bear it. But perhaps I'm one of those strange and uncomfortable creatures who doesn't run true to form! I'm—I think I'm glad! I think I've never been happier over anything in all of my life!"

"Are you going mad—quite completely mad?"

"No, I'm just coming to my senses! Here I have all the money I need to buy anything in the world and I've been laying it all on something I didn't want at all. I've been trying to buy myself a headache! And now I've discovered what gorgeous things a girl can have even without any money and I'm going to have them! I'm talking about love, Clif. Oh"—as he would have spoken—"let's not pretend! Ours wasn't a love match."

She paused for a moment and looked at him.

"It seems rather horrible," she went on finally in a strained voice, "to put the thing into words, but you didn't love me. You know that and I think I've known it all along and I'm sure now that I never loved you. With you it was my money and with me—well, it was your aristocratic old name, and then daddy thought it would be a swell match and I have a habit of want-

ing to please the people I'm fond of—even about the big things.

"Oh, I know this is going to be rather embarrassing for a while for you—breaking off with the richest girl in your set. People are going to wonder, because, of course, we all know that you need the money to keep your old name up in the style it really deserves. But you can say that I just wouldn't do—that you ditched me. Tell them anything you want. I don't care because I'm going to be so foolishly happy that I won't know what the rest of the world is doing!"

"Gloria, you're talking as if you'd lost your senses! Things like this simply don't happen!"

"Oh, yes, they do! They're happening right now!"

"Are you trying to tell me that we're through? You can't mean that. You can't!"

"Yes, darling, I'm afraid that's exactly what I mean. I'm afraid, that, after all, you're not my big moment; you're not quite the masculine menace I thought you were. I find that I really can bear the thought of living without you. I'm afraid, darling, that our love is—just a faded photograph, as it were!"

"You're being silly now!"

"Terribly serious!"

"I suppose you're trying to tell me that as a sweetheart I've failed."

Gloria looked at him critically and then smiled dazzlingly.

"Well, darling, you don't quite look like a man whose love letters would be published in the paper!"

He stared at her. There was a sort of aristocratic thinness about him that Gloria felt must reach to the very soul of him. She was conscious of wondering if he ever had kissed any girl with the passionate loving that she had felt in the lips that met hers in that quiet balcony

hung so high above the teeming city and so close to the stars.

She couldn't believe that he had.

She closed her eyes a moment and seemed to thrill again to the tenderness of that caress. If life held such soul-stirring things, then she must know them. She must!

"You're not telling me you're in love with that stag liner?"

"And if I am?"

"Why, you've taken leave of your senses, Gloria! Such things just aren't done among our kind! Why you don't know anything about him! You—why, this just can't be!" He seemed to be completely flabbergasted, quite lost and at sea.

Gloria sat merely looking at him with her calm, blue eyes.

"I can't believe this! It's just a passing fancy! Why, what would your father say? You'd never dare tell him!"

"I know. He's the one thing about it all that hurts. He was rather proud of the fact that his daughter was going to bear an old and distinguished name." There was something very young and sad in her voice.

The huge diamond still lay in her pink palm that was extended toward him. She looked at it a bit regretfully but did not withdraw it.

"Keep the ring," Clif said a little roughly, at length. "This isn't going to last. Perhaps I was a bit hasty, but I do wish you'd cut the tea dansant."

"I can't. I'd rather go there than to anything else in the world."

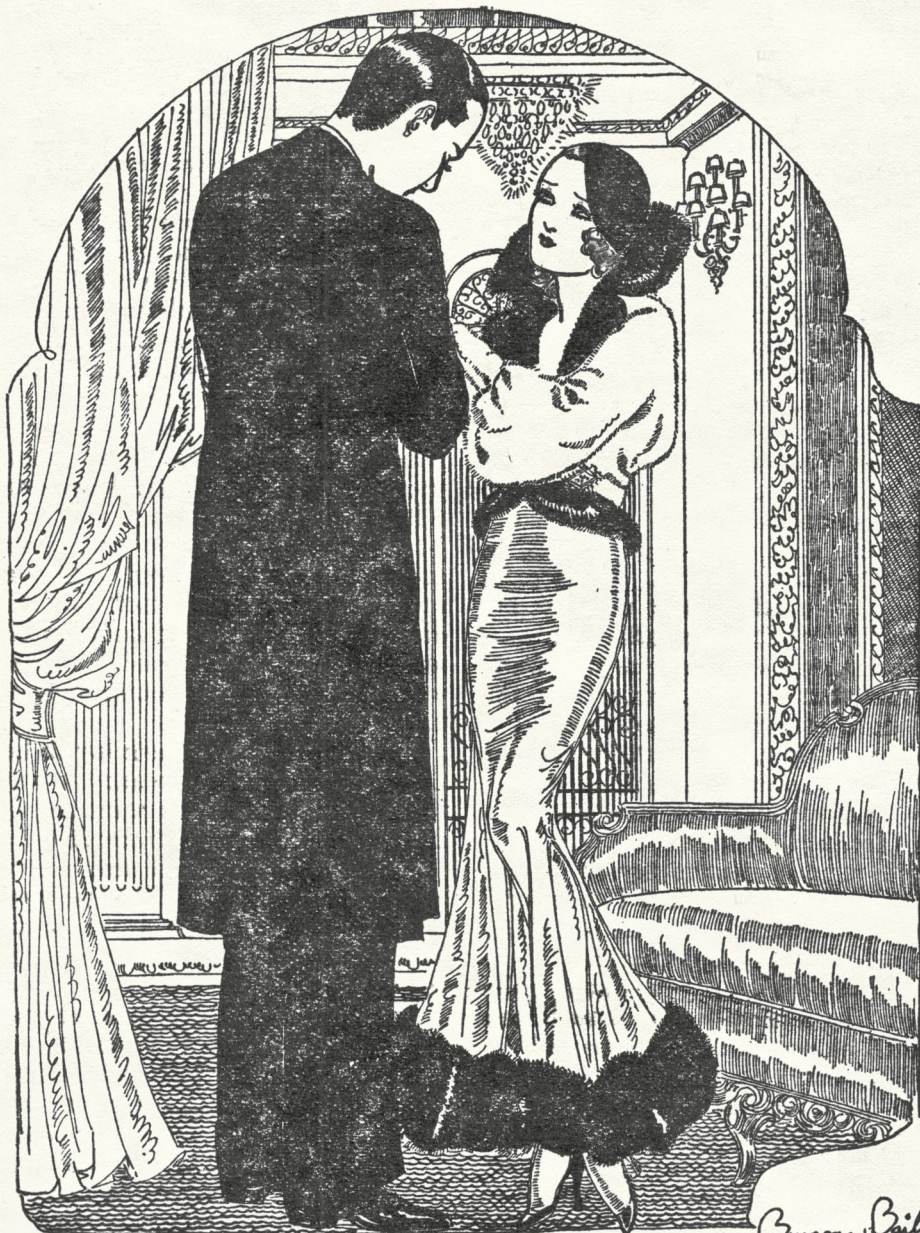
And suddenly there was something hurt in Clifton's eyes that Gloria was sorry for. She knew quite well that it was only his pride that was hurt—that fierce pride of those old, old families—and that he would get over it without any permanent damage.

But it was like her to be sorry just the same.

"Keep the ring, you'll get over this and there's no use of our making a scene that we'll be sorry for in the future."

"I'll never get over it, Clifton," she said, very earnestly. "And you'd better take your ring."

"My guess is as good as yours," he replied smiling slightly, "where the human emotions are concerned,



And then as if something different about her hand had attracted his attention, he said: "You're not wearing your ring."

perhaps a little better since I'm older. You'll get over this. You've been swept off your feet by some silly romantic idea. Such things never last. I was hasty. I forget that you aren't quite grown up—only twenty. You'll laugh at this some day."

And he went away leaving Gloria with the great square diamond still in her hand. Somehow, she had the feeling that she couldn't put it back on her finger, that she never would be able to do that.

It had been rather a bitter quarrel. There had been so much cold conceit in Van Norden's attitude and not even at the last when he said "Good night," had he been the worshipful sweetheart that Gloria wanted her man to be. But it wasn't that. Not any of that. It was something that dated back to the moment when she had stood on that tiny balcony, so near the clouds that she could almost have touched a star, and felt arms around her that trembled with emotion and lips crushing hers that were strong with adoration and tender with devotion.

Something that had happened then had touched her heart with a vitality and desire that she knew, instinctively, were eternal.

She would never be able to deny them again.

CHAPTER IV.

Gloria dressed the next day for the tea dansant with particular care.

She wore a dress of dark-green velvet with touches of sable and a tiny green velvet hat that let a riot of golden curls escape at the sides.

Ordinarily she would have asked Clifton to get off early and go with her or would have asked him which one of their friends he thought she should ask. There was sure to be

a shortage of men; that was one of the things that could always be counted upon.

But she tripped down to her car, a little brown fur jacket, pinched in at the waist, over her green dress, got in and let the footman close the door without any instructions to call at any other address to pick up escorts.

And her young heart sang the while. It was lovely to be so free of social responsibilities, to know that the girls could look at her askance all they pleased for not supplying her own—at least—three men and to know that she would have one who mattered more than all the rest.

She asked the chauffeur to drive twice through the park.

It wouldn't do to get there too early. She'd only get nervous waiting until her handsome youth with whom she had her appointment appeared.

After the second drive through the park the car turned east and stopped in front of a smart restaurant.

Gloria knew, as she stood at the mirror in the powder room trying to add new beauty to a face that was already far too beautiful for the peace of masculine hearts, that at least most, if not all of the guests had arrived.

There was so much chattering out there and then they were dancing, too.

She turned from the mirror just as a group of girls came into the room, their jeweled vanity cases opening with little clicks.

"Gloria darling! And what a dream of a dress. You'll be the party's panic and the rest of us will sit around like wall decorations—you know those well-known and not-so-popular blossoms!"

Tall, suave Rita Wayne smiled

her lazy, insolent, sophisticated smile.

"It's positively indecent to display so much beauty all at once, Glory."

Glory smiled and looked around. Of course she was beautiful; she had intended to be especially beautiful on that afternoon.

She glanced at her wrist watch. She had timed her arrival nicely. She was a full three-quarters of an hour late. She must try to keep rather unattached and stroll around. It would be like him to have hidden in some corner.

It was harder to be a crasher at these small parties. It was more obvious.

But though she made the rounds of the room Gloria did not find the youth she looked for.

A tall sleek young man whirled her away in a dance.

"Lo, Glory, beautiful! Just beginning to wonder if there wasn't going to be a thrill in this party. And now you're here!"

"What-ho, Tony!" But while her voice answered his gay greeting she swept the room with her eyes; surely somewhere *he* was there.

"And how you're here! All gosh darn gorgeous, if you're asking me!"

"Do I rate a second glance, Tony?" she asked, in mock seriousness, looking up at him as if her whole attention, even her whole heart, was in his keeping while really she was wondering while she danced where the handsome youth whose kiss still burned her lips was, why he hadn't arrived, if he hadn't meant it when he said he would be there.

Perhaps he had never intended coming. And yet there had been so much earnestness in his voice and still greater earnestness in his eyes.

Tea in a dainty cup was offered her as Tony stopped near the table.

"Let's feed—what say, beautiful?" he asked.

At least there near the table she could watch the whole room and so she murmured, "Yes, let's."

She lingered over the tea, answering Tony's light chatter with chatter equally light while her heart seemed momentarily to get heavier and heavier.

Perhaps he had just been fooling; perhaps he had never intended to trouble to see her again, perhaps that was part of the technique of cut-ins. Perhaps—but she didn't dare think any farther. Her heart was aching too drearily.

She glanced at her jeweled watch. An hour late! She turned to the man she was dancing with.

"I think I'll go," she said and felt as if the smile on her face must have a peculiar fixed metallic quality.

The youth Gloria had been dancing with stopped suddenly with a look of surprise on his very young face.

"Oh, and I thought I'd just captured the best little thing out of Ziegfield's kennel."

"Thanks for them kind words, sir!" Gloria tried to be gay as she slipped away toward the powder room where she had dropped her coat.

Her little green hat still sat audaciously above her soft golden hair. She wouldn't wait for the car to come for her. She'd take a taxi and rush home and hide.

She rushed blindly into her jacket and without good-bys to the girls or her hostess was hurrying along the corridor toward the elevator when a rushing figure intercepted her.

She looked up sharply.

"You!"

"Yes I'm sorry to have been late! I——"

But Gloria's voice, young and

suddenly lilting through its mist of surprised and amazed pain, interrupted him:

"Oh, I'm so glad! I thought you weren't coming! I thought—why, I——"

Gloria looked down and found that a quaint little corsage of the deepest of deep-blue, wide-eyed, forget-me-nots had been thrust into her hands.

She stood staring at the little bouquet with its stiff border of green leaves backed by the palest of pale-pink lace paper and then found that gradually it became indistinct.

There was a mist glowing like morning dew in her eyes as she looked up at the youth.

"Sweet!" she said and the simple word carried a world of meaning.

"Not a millionth part as sweet as you are, beautiful! I had to get them for you because they matched your eyes—your beautiful eyes."

But those eyes were bent over the flowers while her vivid lips brushed them in a thrilled little caress. It seemed to Gloria that her heart was suddenly verily aching with its burden of happiness.

It was such a simple little thing—a bouquet of forget-me-nots.

But something about it, the eagerness with which he thrust them into her hands and then stood there in his young, humble, shabby gentility made it the most soul-stirring thing that had touched her life.

She held them close against her heart as if they were infinitely precious.

And then simply, unaffectedly, as if it was the most natural thing in the world, she lifted her vividly lovely lips. His dark head bent and touched them with an air of awe and reverence.

"That is thank you," she said very softly.

And she knew quite well, when he didn't answer, just stood looking at her with intensely adoring dark eyes, that it was because he dared not trust his voice.

They stood wordless for a while, verily held by a romantic aura that enveloped them.

Then:

"And I thought"—her young voice poignantly sweet—"you had deserted me. I thought you weren't coming!"

His hands had gripped hers and he was looking down into her eyes alight under the mist of hurt pride and thrilling new happiness that filmed them.

"Didn't you know that I'd come? Didn't you know that nothing in heaven or on earth could really keep me from getting here when there was the chance of seeing you? Didn't you know that?"

And he was looking into her eyes with that tender intentness.

"Oh, I—I hoped so!" She sounded like a little girl who had been very much frightened and finally had found safe haven.

And then the youth, there in the restaurant corridor, bent over her slim white hands and kissed them with a wealth of tenderness.

There was something almost tragic in his eyes when he raised them to Gloria's again.

"Perhaps it would have been better though," he said finally in a voice muted by feeling. And then as if something different about her hand had attracted his attention: "You're not wearing your ring."

Gloria looked at her left hand, guiltless of the huge square diamond that Van Norden had put there.

"I know," she said in a very small voice.

The youth looked at her intently, as if he would have said something

which required more courage than he had. And then Gloria broke the spell that had held her.

"I have an hour before I must be home to dress. Let's—oh, let's do something lovely with it!"

"Yes, let's! I——" And then he stopped as if remembering something.

"We'll drive through the park and watch night come stealing over the city. I love this time of day! Come on!"

"But——" He hesitated and once more Gloria was acutely conscious of his shabby gentility. She remembered with a strange little pang at her heart how he had looked at the food that night at the dance and how she had purposely filled his plate and turned away so that he could eat as much as he wished.

He had seemed hungry then and he was shabby. Gloria paused a moment on that thought. In her delicate little bag was a wad of bills that would have kept him living well for a month. She would never have missed it—yet she wouldn't dare offer to loan it.

There was so much pride about him. Besides she might only have imagined he seemed hungry that night.

"I'll call the car!" she said quickly. "I had intended to, anyhow!"

"That's—nice of you." It came from him lamely, as if it wasn't quite the thing he had wanted to say.

They waited, standing at the door and peering through the glass like two eager children until Gloria's huge luxurious motor swung around the corner and came to a stop in front of the place.

And then they ran out and climbed in still like two eager children.

"Gloria!" Her name was like music on his lips and for a moment

the girl started at the sound of it. He did know her name! Then: "That must be your name. I heard the chauffeur call you 'Miss Gloria'! That name was made for you, beautiful! For the glory that is your hair and that lights your lovely eyes."

The richest girl was leaning back against the cushions, her eyes closed and a smile curving her lovely lips, the quaint little corsage held in tender hands.

"Go on," she said softly as if afraid of breaking some magic spell that the twilight had woven around her. "I could listen to that forever!"

"And I feel as if all eternity wouldn't be long enough to tell you how lovely you are, how beautiful you are. You seem like some one I scarcely dare touch for fear you'll vanish; too beautiful to be real."

"But I am real, so real! And I want all of the things that real girls want! I want"—courage of a new sort filling her heart—"oh, I want your arms and your lips!"

There was a poignant, aching little note in her voice, a note which the softly falling shadows of the city, as they rolled smoothly along its streets seemed to echo. Street lights were picking out hurrying figures and making denser the shadows of tall buildings.

A pale moon looked wanly down through an early twilight touching the branches of the trees of the park with silver and then, shining through them, laying filagree patterns on the grass.

The youth had been silent a moment after the richest girl stopped speaking. He had seemed to be struggling for restraint. She turned a lovely face, made still more lovely by the pale light of the moon, toward him.

"Gloria! Gloria—beautiful! I'd never dared dream of anything like this—a girl like you, near me, near enough to touch, near enough to take in my arms and hold so close against my heart! Oh, Gloria, gorgeous, I'm afraid of when this has to end! I'm afraid of the loneliness of it! I've been trying to fight it, trying to tell myself that it's all just a dream, that I mustn't see you any more, that it just can't be, but I haven't the courage! I haven't the strength! You'll have to do it!"

"And I can't! I never will! It can't end! It can't!" Her own voice broke and softened as she looked up at him from the circle of his tenderly-infolding arms. "If anything happened to stop this, I'd just want to die!"

"Gloria!"

"Oh, do you think that I didn't mean it when I let you kiss me that way? Do you think I can easily forget the pressure of your arms? Do you think——"

"I haven't dared think anything except that I've laid my heart at your little feet. It's there for you to do with as you will, Gloria, beautiful!" he broke in.

She turned starry eyes up to him.

"I'll treasure it all of my life."

And they rode on, through the park with its fairyland of lights and shadows, its silver filigrees laid by a pale moon peering down through branches bare of their foliage. They rode on, clinging to each other, with no need for words.

His lips found hers and caressed them, closed her eyes with gentle kisses, brushed her cheek and then nestled for a moment in the soft fur at her neck.

Chimes from a distant church tower etched against the night air their clear musical notes.

Gloria listened.

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"Seven o'clock!" She turned a startled face to the youth. "I must get home but I can't bear the thought of the evening without you. I'm going to a dance to-night—can't I pick you up?" And when he hesitated she gave him the place and the hour. "I could call for you," she added, "I'd like to if you'd let me. It's being done, you know!"

"I—perhaps you'd better not."

"But you will come?" There was that note of pleading in her voice that was something new to it. "If I thought you weren't going to be there——"

He caught her hand and lifted it with passionate speed to his lips.

"Yes! Of course, I'll be there. You know that I'd have to go, that I couldn't stay away if you were to be there!"

"I'll drop you at your place."

"Don't go out of your way. I have an errand not far from here. You might let me out anywhere along here!"

Gloria smiled at him. The car was just swinging into Fifth Avenue.

"You won't let me do anything for you, will you?" she asked in a gentle voice. "You're so strange that way."

"It would be so much nicer to do for you!"

The car had stopped.

The richest girl lifted the quaint little corsage of forget-me-nots to her lips and kissed it and then held it out toward the youth, standing bareheaded at the side of the car. He bent and brushed the deep-blue of the flowers with his own lips, then Gloria's hand waved in farewell and she turned to see him watching the car as it moved away.

She bent and again brushed the flowers with her lips. Forget-me-nots, he had said, to match her eyes; forget-me-nots to mirror the depths



They had reached the hotel and were sweeping in with the other occupants of that you take off those flowers, Gloria. I will not

of her eyes. Forget-me-nots that held his kiss.

There had been something so sweet about the way he had pressed

them into her hand—just a single bunch with a frill of green leaves and lace paper around it, but it had set her very soul singing.



fine motors that had drawn up at the door when Van Norden said: "I demand dance with you if you continue to wear them."

It was more to her than all the gorgeous bouquets that had come to her in boxes imprinted with the name of smart florists.

A smile curved her lips, a soft, sweet dreamy thing, as she rode on toward the great mansion that had been her home since babyhood, and

that smile was echoed in her heart, and filled her whole being.

"Marie," Gloria said to the waiting maid after dinner, "I'm wearing forget-me-nots to-night, so pick out something that will look right with them."

Marie's eyebrows lifted in surprise.

"Ah, but mamselle forgets! The cloth of gold came from the dress-maker to-day and it is heavenly!" Her eyes rolled expressively.

"The cloth of gold—cloth of gold," came thoughtfully from Gloria. "No, Marie, forget-me-nots on cloth of gold would look too like a candy box."

"Oh, no! Not forget-me-nots on cloth of gold—but some other flowers, Mees Gloria! The dress—you must wear it! It will be divine on you! See!" And she held out the garment, a shimmering mass of cloth of gold with a sea-green velvet girdle.

"It is lovely," Gloria murmured.

"Lovely! And how I had to rush them to get it done for this evening!"

But Gloria looked on, wordless.

"And look!" There was pleased satisfaction in the maid's voice. "See what come! The Meester van Norden he call up and say, when you not here, what color dress you wear to-night. I say cloth of gold. And then he send these! Exquisite! Just the thing for to-night!"

Gloria looked listlessly at the box of orchids, bedded in fragrant lily of the valley that Marie held out to her.

"Put them in water," she said, "I'm wearing forget-me-nots to-night."

"And after all these rush and these beautiful flower they come from Meester van Norden!"

But Gloria turned away, shaking her head.

"I'm sorry, Marie, to make all your managing for nothing, but it's just got to be something that will go with forget-me-nots to-night. They're more important than any dress." And she bent over the little corsage that she herself had put in a vase on her dressing table.

No other hands should touch it. It was too dear and sweet a thing.

Marie stood before her holding up another gown, eggshell lace that clung close to the lines of her figure below the deep décolletage, to flare at the knees and finish in a thousand little ripples about her black moire pumps.

Gloria looked at it critically and then at the flowers.

"Yes, Marie," she said finally. "Just the thing."

But Marie was shaking her head dolefully as she put away the gorgeous gold gown. She couldn't understand the importance of that simple little bunch of flowers. They couldn't compare, she thought, with the roses that Gloria had slighted the day before.

"I'll do it!" The quick words stayed Marie's hand as she would have picked up the forget-me-nots to arrange them against the soft lace.

The girl stared at her young mistress and then smiled faintly and turned to other duties while Gloria's own hands picked up the flowers caressingly, held them against her gown and then secured them.

With her black velvet wrap drawn closely about her she went down to the living room where her father waited to say good night to her.

There was a playful element in his smile.

"I'm almost afraid to let you go, you're so lovely. You get lovelier

with every day that passes over your golden head. If it keeps on——” He broke off with a sigh.

“Flatterer!” Gloria stood on tip-toe to kiss him, then was gone, hurrying on tiny high-heeled pumps to the great entrance and down to the car.

Seated in the car, she looked up to see her father standing in the lighted doorway looking after her. She wondered if she caught something wistful in his eyes. Her hand fluttered from her lips as she blew him a light kiss.

Van Norden was waiting for her when she arrived.

“I thought you’d never get here. What kept you?”

Gloria looked up in surprise.

“I’m as nearly on time as usual,” she said easily.

And then wondered if Van Norden flushed with impatience at having given himself away, or if she only imagined that a dull color rose to his face.

Her wrap fell away as she sat in the warm interior of the luxurious car.

Van Norden seemed to catch the fragrance of flowers. He sniffed and then looked down at the corsage nestling in its circle of green leaves.

“Forget-me-nots!” he said. “I thought I ordered orchids for to-night.”

“You did and they were delivered and thank you for them so much. It was sweet of you, Clif. But I had to wear these.”

Van Norden said nothing for a moment. He stared out of the car and Gloria felt that the side of his face that she could see was strangely taut.

“I presume you don’t mind telling me why you had to wear those?”

he finally asked in a cold voice, still looking away from her.

It was Gloria’s turn to sit silently then. She didn’t know exactly why she didn’t want to tell him. Surely it wasn’t because she hesitated at hurting his feelings; he had been so careless of her. Perhaps it was because she didn’t want to even discuss a gift from the other man with him. Perhaps it was too sweet and sacred a thing.

But she felt Van Norden turn toward her, cold questions in his piercing gaze.

“They were given to me,” she finally said in a very small voice.

“And it wouldn’t be very difficult to guess by whom!”

“I’m afraid not!”

“And you’re so brazen about it, Gloria!”

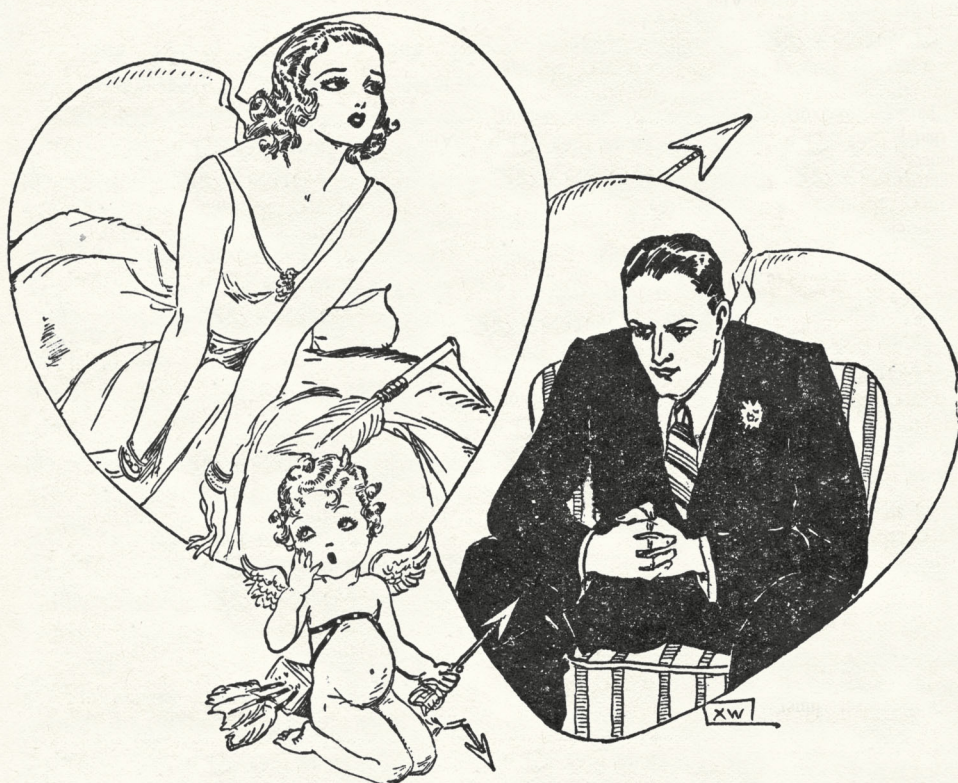
“I’m not brazen! I’m simply honest!” she replied, quietly.

They had reached the hotel and were sweeping in with the other occupants of fine motors that had drawn up at the door.

Little cries of greeting echoed on the night air and the lobby was alive with them, girls in their bright, long dresses hurrying hither and yon, men in their formal black and white following and greeting friends as they moved along.

“I never dreamed that you’d carry things quite this far!” Van Norden stormed. And, then as they reached the powder room and Gloria was about to disappear within, he added: “I demand that you take them off, Gloria. I’ll go downstairs and get you something with which to replace them but I will not dance with you if you continue to wear those flowers!”

He stood stiffly, waiting for her answer.



A Pair Of Broken Hearts

By Katherine Greer

JOYCE glanced absently at the society section of the Sunday paper, as she sipped her morning coffee in the deserted dining room. Why read about parties and other people's gayety, when one felt as she did?—she thought disconsolately. Wasn't it all rather futile, anyway?

A small item in the last column caught her eyes, and she read and reread every word:

The wedding of Miss Evelyn Bell and Mr. Richard Harrington, which was to have occurred on April tenth, has been postponed indefinitely.

So the gossips were right—it actually was broken off! Poor Dick! Joyce sighed sympathetically, and forgot her own troubles. How terrible he must feel! Dick was almost like a brother to her. She wished there were something she could do to help him, to cheer him.

But there wasn't, she knew. He would get plenty of consolation from all his friends—too much, if he hated pity as much as she did. Even before the announcement, people had been feeling sorry for him because of the way Evelyn was treating him. Not even her closest friends could

understand what she saw in Count Vannoni. But naturally, he was the cause of the broken engagement.

Joyce wondered as she tossed the paper down without reading any further, how soon the announcement of another engagement would follow. If these fascinating strangers from the rest of the world would stop coming to the Islands, things might go along more smoothly for the permanent residents. If Vera Eaton hadn't come with her millionaire father to spend the winter at the beach hotel, Joyce mused ruefully, she might be engaged to Larry Painter at that moment, instead of waiting anxiously and eternally, it seemed, for a belated telephone call.

A little Oriental maid peeked into the dining room.

"I've finished, Sem," Joyce told her, then asked: "Where is everybody? Church and golf club, I suppose?"

Sem grinned and nodded. Joyce picked up the disorderly array of papers and wandered out to the broad, shaded veranda.

She gazed out at the expanse of velvety green lawn, with its profusion of varicolored flowers, with its feathery-leaved trees swaying gracefully with the trade winds, with its bordering hibiscus hedge. And above it all, was a brilliant blue sky. It was a heavenly place, certainly, a place made for happiness. Why couldn't every one be happy?

Beyond the hibiscus hedge, the sloping roof of the Harrington house was visible. The Maynards and Harringtons had been neighbors since before Joyce was born. Dick and Joyce had built a dam in the creek in the ravine behind their places when they were ten and seven respectively. They had teased and fought, and been friends and foes alternately, through the early teens.

Since then, they had accepted each other with friendly casualness.

As Joyce stood there, deep in her own thoughts, a section of the hedge was pushed back, and a tall figure slipped through the opening and swung lithely across the soft grass.

"Why, hello, Dick," Joyce welcomed the unexpected visitor. "I was just—just——" She couldn't tell him she was just reading about him. "I was just admiring our view," she hurried on in sudden unnatural embarrassment. "It's a gorgeous day, isn't it?"

"Oh, swell!" Dick's cynical tone obviously did not refer to the quality of the weather.

Joyce realized her tactlessness, and blushed.

"You've been reading the morning paper, I see," Dick challenged abruptly. "There's no use pretending. I know. And you're feeling terribly sorry for me because my fiancée has thrown me over just a week before the wedding."

"Yes, I am, Dick. It's a shame! Vannoni is an awful sap. I've met him, and I think——"

"Yes, yes, I know, Joyce. I think so, too—whatever you were going to say. But Evelyn doesn't. That's the unfortunate part. She thinks he's perfect, quite superior to me, in fact," he continued ruefully.

"If she marries him, she'll be miserable," Joyce prophesied wisely. "He's domineering and cruel and he——"

"And he may even beat her," finished Dick calmly. "But that thought doesn't exactly heal my broken heart. You see, I still love her."

"Yes, I know," said Joyce. "And I know something about a broken heart, too," she added frankly.

"That's exactly why I came through the hedge just now," Dick

confessed. "I had an idea we were both in the same boat, and it might help if we consoled each other."

"Larry and I have never been engaged," Joyce denied.

"Perhaps not. But you were very close to it," he insisted, "when that Eaton girl arrived a few months ago. And you're still in love with him, even though he takes you to a dance, immediately disappears with her, and asks another man to take you home."

"You knew about that!" Joyce flushed with mortification. "Oh, I suppose the whole town knows," she added despairingly. "I might as well admit I've been jilted. It's quite as obvious as though there were a notice in the paper. You're right, Dick; we are in the same boat. Let's tip it over and end it all!" she laughed mockingly.

"And this is the good little sport who played baseball with the boys! I'm ashamed of you!" Dick admonished teasingly. "Why, your case isn't half as hopeless as mine! If you change your tactics and pretend you don't care whether Larry goes or stays, you have every chance of getting him back. When his conscience doesn't hurt him every time he slips off with Vera Eaton, she may not have the appeal of forbidden fruit. He may come rushing back to you with an engagement ring."

"You're too optimistic, Dick." Joyce laughed in spite of herself at his preposterous ideas. "Besides, what good would it do to pretend I don't care about him, if he doesn't see me doing it? The fact is, Dick, that I've been going with Larry so exclusively for the last year or so that all the other men have stopped asking me. And now when he doesn't ask me, I just sit at home."

"I can remedy that," said Dick.

"I'll ask you and you'll go. We'll be seen together everywhere. They'll think you've caught me on the rebound—or whatever it is they call it—and I'll make Larry so jealous that——"

"And maybe I can make Evelyn jealous, too!" Joyce was beginning to like the idea. At least it would be better than sitting at home, waiting interminably for telephone calls which failed to materialize.

"No chance of that," said Dick positively. "Still, it would boost my morale tremendously if you did go around with me for a while. I was dreading facing the old crowd alone, and I'd made up my mind not to be a quitter and dig into my shell."

"All right, I'll do it for our mutual benefit," Joyce agreed. "They say two minds are better than one. Why not two broken hearts?"

"That's a bargain, then"—Dick held out his hand—"to be dissolved at a moment's notice when either of us desires."

Sem stood in the doorway. "Miss Joyce is wanted on the telephone."

"If that's Larry, you're sailing with me this afternoon, and dining at the yacht club afterward," commanded Dick.

When Joyce returned to the veranda he looked at her questioningly.

"It was Larry," she reported. "He said he'd drop in for a few moments about four. I told him I wouldn't be here—and why."

"Good girl," Dick approved.

The yacht club was a popular rendezvous for the younger set on Sunday nights. The dining room was crowded with people they knew when Dick and Joyce entered. As they waved with careless gayety to various friends, they could feel the surprise and tension which their en-

trance had produced. They even caught an unsuppressed exclamation or two.

"They're all talking about us," Joyce giggled. This combining of broken hearts and sharing the pain wasn't half as bad as bearing them alone.

"Evelyn and Vannoni are over there in the corner," muttered Dick.

Spontaneously, Joyce reached across the table and gave his hand a sympathetic pressure.

"Oh, Dick, I'm sorry."

He squeezed her fingers hard, and smiled back at her reassuringly. "Remember, no sympathy!" he warned her. "But keep on looking at me with admiration in your eyes, my dear. Pretend I'm Larry."

"I don't have to pretend. I admire you tremendously," said Joyce earnestly. "I always have. When I was ten, you were the King of the Hawaiian Islands to me!"

"But that was about fourteen years ago," Dick laughed ruefully. "Since then your ideas must have changed considerably."

"You are taller and broader and handsomer than you were then," Joyce appraised him, "and I believe your eyes are even bluer."

"Yours are certainly larger and deeper, and your lashes are twice as long and curling," he replied.

"We're getting along splendidly," she laughed. "Even at the height of his form, Larry never coöperated so expertly!"

After that Dick and Joyce were together every night, and usually managed to meet at the beach in the late afternoon for a swim besides. On those occasions they took particular care to go to the same part of the beach which the tourist crowd frequented. There they were almost certain to meet Larry and Vera Eaton, and Evelyn and her count.

One day, as Joyce and Dick lay in the sun on the raft before swimming back to shore, Larry climbed up beside them.

"I called you this afternoon, but you had gone," Larry murmured reproachfully to Joyce.

"So sorry," she said casually. "Dick had the afternoon off, so we played nine holes of golf before our swim. And by the way, how's your game these days, Larry?"

"Completely off," he grumbled. "My nerves seem to be on edge."

"Hm-m-m!" remarked Dick non-committally. "Just the opposite with me. I've never been in better form than I was to-day."

"You were marvelous!" said Joyce with genuine enthusiasm. "Larry, you should have seen his drive on the fourth tee!"

Larry muttered something unintelligible, which gave the impression that he hoped he'd never see one of Dick's drives.

And Dick tactfully changed the subject. "Where is Miss Eaton to-day?" he inquired.

"Oh, she's on the beach," Larry answered. "She doesn't swim out, you know."

"I didn't know," said Dick. "You should teach her."

Later, after Larry had left them, Dick continued: "Afraid we rather rubbed it in just now. We certainly got Larry's goat. You see how well our plan is succeeding! I'm ruining his golf game and he is comparing Vera's attractions with yours. She can't swim, while you're a regular mermaid. She's a dub at golf."

"Oh, he didn't say that!"

"But she is; I've seen her. Playing with her has been another thing which has knocked his game. Unless I miss my guess, he'll be camping on your doorstep by the end of the week. The oftener he sees you

with me, the more he begins to appreciate your charms and realizes what he's missing," he assured her.

"You are playing up wonderfully, Dick," said Joyce. "A great actor has been wasted——"

"I'm not acting," he cut in emphatically. "I think you're swell—I always have. Only——"

"Only you fell in love with Evelyn," she finished gently. "I understand. I don't blame you. She is beautiful and fascinating." Unaccountably, she had been tempted to add: "And spoiled and bad tempered," but she controlled her impulse. Could it be possible that she was jealous of Evelyn Bell? Of course not! Vera Eaton was the girl who was making her jealous.

As they walked along the sand toward the clubhouse, they met Evelyn just coming out of the water.

"Why, hello, Dick." And as an afterthought: "Hello, Joyce. Oh, Dick," she continued with assumed casualness, "I've been

intending to call you. I found your gold cigarette case in my desk drawer the other day, and I still have your field glasses. Drop around soon and get them, won't you?"

"I'll send a messenger at once," Dick replied curtly, "if they're in your way."

"Oh, darling, I didn't mean that,"



drawled Evelyn sweetly. "I'd like to have a talk with you, too, if you aren't too busy," she added with a meaning glance at Joyce.

Dick ignored her look, and answered: "Joyce and I'll stop on our way home. Thanks for reminding me."

"Very well, suit yourself. But if you come this afternoon, I probably won't be there," said Evelyn crossly.

She was snippy and horrid, Joyce decided. What could Dick see in her? Aloud Joyce said: "Just as I prophesied, she misses you—she's regretting her action."

At the Saturday night dance at the country club, Larry cut in on

Joyce every few minutes. He had brought Vera Eaton to the dance, but he was neglecting her as he had neglected Joyce a few weeks before.

"You're getting yourself very much talked about by going around so constantly with Dick Harrington," Larry growled as they danced.

"I don't know why," murmured Joyce innocently. "Surely Dick's one of the nicest men in Honolulu. I've known him all my life."

"And you know that he's still madly in love with Evelyn Bell, don't you?" he insisted. "You know that he doesn't care a thing about you!"

"And what if he doesn't?" she inquired coolly. "Perhaps it's a satisfaction to know exactly where I stand, anyway." Instead of being pleased by Larry's possessive tone, by the unmistakable note of jealousy in his voice, she was suddenly angered by it. She was seeing a new side of him. He seemed very different from the courteous ardent admirer she had once thought him.

Larry was leading her through a French window out upon the veranda, and down to a bench by the first tee.

"And even if we leave Harrington out of it, you've been treating me abominably these last few weeks," Larry continued petulantly. "I've telephoned any number of times, and found you out." He caught her shoulders and turned her toward him. "I



thought you cared about me, Joyce, as I do about you." The old adoring eagerness was in his voice. "I'm crazy about you, darling. You know that!"

"You have a peculiar way of showing it sometimes," murmured Joyce.

"Oh, I suppose I've been behaving rather badly about Vera Eaton," he acknowledged sheepishly. "I admit I was rather attracted to her for a little while, but it was only a very superficial attraction. She isn't the type that lasts long. I'm all over it now."

"And you're ready to come back to me for a while? Is that what you're trying to say?" Joyce asked calmly.

"Permanently, Joyce darling," he assured her positively. "I want you to marry me." He attempted to take her in his arms, but she resisted.

"Thanks very much, Larry, but I don't believe I want to marry you now," she said.

"Then you don't forgive me?" he demanded. "You——"

"Yes, I forgive you," she answered. "In fact, I'm beginning to think that I should be grateful to you. I just don't love you any more."

"But you did love me," Larry insisted confidently. "I know you did! You've become infatuated with Dick Harrington! You've fallen in love with him!"

"I haven't!" Joy denied hotly. But even as she said it, she realized suddenly that his accusation was true. She had fallen in love with Dick! That was why she had been happier those last few weeks than she had ever been in her life before. They had developed a companionship which was strangely restful, yet exhilarating. She had enjoyed be-

ing with him more than with any other man she had ever known. They seemed to think alike, to understand each other perfectly. That was why Larry's jealous, irritated criticism had annoyed her so. That was why she had suddenly seen him in a new light. Unconsciously, she had been comparing him with Dick, and the result was decidedly unfavorable to Larry.

"Then why have you changed toward me?" Larry argued. "Why do you refuse to marry me?"

Joyce almost laughed out loud at her own inconsistency. Now that Larry was actually uttering the words she had so long been yearning to hear, perversely she wished he would stop saying them. "Please, Larry," she begged, "let's not talk about it any more. I'm sorry my answer's such a shock to you, but it's final. I can't marry you, much as I appreciate your asking me. Now hadn't you better go back to Miss Eaton?" she suggested pointedly. "You brought her here to-night, I believe."

Joyce could hardly wait to report to Dick the latest development in their game, the successful culmination of her part of the scheme. So far, they had told each other frankly about every encounter they had had with their former sweethearts, and discussed the progress they were making. Dick would be delighted that Larry had proposed.

Then suddenly Joyce caught her breath. What would he say when she told him she had refused Larry? How could she explain that? Would he suspect what she had only just discovered—that she had fallen in love with him? She would be careful what she revealed, but she would have to tell him part.

When she returned to the ballroom, Dick was dancing with Eve-

lyn. Evelyn was smiling up at him, and his magnetic blue eyes seemed to be enveloping her adoringly. That was the first time they had danced together since the breaking of their engagement.

As she stood in the doorway, and followed them around the floor with veiled eyes, they suddenly disappeared out on the veranda through an opening at the far end of the room. Joyce felt strangely desolate and alone. Dick, her good friend, upon whom she had been depending more than she had realized, was deserting her when she needed him most.

She escaped into the dressing room. She was no longer in the mood for dancing. She feigned a headache, and lay down on the chintz-covered couch in the corner.

After a while, Dot Sperry and Jane Ray entered, but they were so busy repairing their make-up, that they failed to notice her.

"I walked down to the beach with Tom just now," Jane reported avidly, "and I'm perfectly positive I saw Evelyn Bell with her arms around Dick Harrington's neck!"

"My dear, do you suppose she wants him back?" gasped Dot.

"It looks like it," said Jane. "And if she does, she'll get him. Girls like Evelyn get what they want."

"I hope Joyce hasn't fallen for him. She's been going around with him a lot lately."

Joyce scarcely dared breathe until they were out of the room.

Then she rose, and after a dissatisfied glance in the mirror, went reluctantly back to the ballroom. "The dance must be nearly over by this time," she assured herself.

"Been looking everywhere for you," Dick apologized as he spied her, and encircled her with his arm for the final bars of the music. "I

saw you go outside with Larry hours ago. Everything O. K.?" His eyes twinkled meaningly.

"Oh, yes, fine," she answered dully.

Later, as they rode leisurely along the smooth road overlooking the ocean, he reopened the subject. "I have an idea that my days of devotion to a certain very charming young lady by the name of Joyce Maynard are numbered," he said solemnly. "Judging by his actions to-night, Larry's doing just as I expected. He's trying to get you back again." He paused a moment, as though waiting for her to say something, and when she was silent, added gently: "Isn't he?"

"Yes," admitted Joyce reluctantly. This was going to be very difficult. She knew now, more than ever, that she must not let Dick suspect that she had fallen in love with him. If he knew, he might feel impelled through pity or chivalry to ask her to marry him, and she didn't want him that way. Besides, there was Evelyn. Even now they might be engaged again. "Larry proposed to me to-night," she began hesitantly, "and I——"

"And you accepted him, of course!" Dick finished for her. "Good work!" he continued with impetuous enthusiasm. "I can't tell you how happy I am for you, Joyce dear. Larry's a good fellow, and now that he's come to his senses, he'll appreciate your true worth. I wish you all the joy in the world."

He talked on with unusual animation. Joyce stopped listening to his words. She was disappointed and hurt by his tone. He was showing plainly that he was overjoyed to have her off his hands, to be released from his bargain without being compelled to make the break himself.

"Thanks, Dick," she began again

bravely, "but you don't understand."

"Of course I do!" Once more he misinterpreted her. "I understand how you feel about him, even if he isn't worthy of you. No man could be, for that matter. His voice became suddenly husky, as he patted her hand with brotherly affection. "You're a great little pal, Joyce." Then his tone changed again, and he laughed shortly. "Did you see me dancing with Evelyn?" he demanded. "You aren't the only one who staged a reunion to-night. Evelyn told me she's decided that after all, the count is a cheap fortune hunter, and she doesn't want to marry him. She——"

"Dick! I'm so glad!" With a valiant effort Joyce made her enthusiasm sound genuine. Dick had been very discerning when she had been unhappy because Larry had jilted her. He must not see that now her heart was really breaking, that he was breaking it into bits.

"But we aren't engaged again," said Dick. "Not so fast, Joyce."

By that time they had reached the Maynard door, and Joyce jumped out of the car without waiting for him to help her. She held out her hand, and said lightly: "Thanks a lot, Dick, for everything. It's been a great game. As a companion in misery, I can recommend you. I'll be seeing you!"

In the days that followed, Joyce missed Dick terribly. As a companion in misery, he had been wonderful. But suddenly it occurred to her that she hadn't been miserable with him very long. She realized that almost immediately after they had begun to see a lot of each other, she had forgotten her hurt, had begun to enjoy life. She knew now that he was responsible. And now

she was miserable again—and this time there would be no Dick to make it easier for her.

To the consternation of her family, she practically stayed in seclusion for several days. No one asked her to go any place at night, and she dreaded going anywhere during the day, lest she meet Dick with Evelyn or hear more gossip about their reconciliation.

At the end of the week, her father was called to San Francisco on sudden business.

"Come along with me, Joyce," he suggested. "You seem a little run down. The change and the sea air will do you good."

Joyce wasn't optimistic about the healing powers of sea air, but she snatched eagerly at the chance to escape.

Just two hours later, they were on the big white ocean liner, about to be released from its moorings in the harbor.

"That was a close shave," chuckled her father, as the sailors waited to lift the gangplank the moment they stepped off of it. "Another half minute and we'd have had to follow in a tender."

Joyce went directly to her stateroom. She was too close to tears now to run the risk of losing control of her feelings when the band played "Aloha."

It wasn't until just after sunset that she came up on deck again. She always liked the hour preceding dinner, when most of the passengers had gone down to change, and the deck was deserted. She walked to the stern of the ship, and leaned against the rail. She pulled off her close little hat, and held her head back, so that the salty spray blew in her face, and the wind caught her short hair and tossed it in disorderly array.

She stretched her arms exultantly above her head, and sighed involuntarily. This air was good. There was something strangely soothing about it.

There was another occupant on the deck, after all, she discovered. A man leaning on the rail some distance away from her seemed to be finding it satisfying, too.

As Joyce glanced at him idly and was about to turn away, he drew himself erect and strode toward her. There was something familiar about him. It simply couldn't be Dick!

It was.

"Joyce!" he cried huskily. "Am I seeing things or are you really on this ship?"

"Dick! What are you doing here?" Her exclamation coincided with his.

"Oh, just a business trip," he answered her question first, "I decided at the last moment."

"So did I," she said. "Dad had urgent business and suggested that I come along."

After that there was a tense silence. They had been taken by surprise. Both seemed at a loss for words.

"How—how have you been?" asked Dick at length. "I haven't seen you lately."

"I've had a cold," Joyce lied desperately. "That's why I haven't gone to any parties."

"I haven't gone to any either—since that dance at the club," Dick admitted sheepishly.

Joyce was puzzled by his tone. She tried unsuccessfully to read his eyes in the waning light. "Oh!" she said. "I supposed you were taking Evelyn again."

"I haven't seen her since that night."

"Why, I thought—I thought——" Joyce began in bewilderment.

"Oh, I know what you thought!" exclaimed Dick. "You thought that because Evelyn told me that she wasn't going to marry Vannoni, I was going to win her back. I deliberately let you think that, because I didn't want you to feel sorry for me when you left me for Larry. I didn't want to mar your happiness."

"But Evelyn wants you back. They said she had her arms around your neck that night, down on the beach," puzzled Joyce.

"Yes," Dick said, "I believe she did." Then, abruptly, he caught her arm, and muttered gruffly: "Oh, Joyce, I might as well tell you that I wasn't doing a part when I was with you—not after the first few days, anyway. My devotion was real, deeper and more sincere than it had

ever been toward Evelyn, because there was more genuine admiration and companionship along with the other attractions. You cured what I thought was a broken heart, but which was really only injured pride—and now you've given me a real one. I love you, dear," he ended gently. "Now that you know, just forget it."

His hand fell heavily to his side, and he was about to turn away when she caught his coat lapels and forced him to face her.

"Dick!" she cried breathlessly. "For two people who thought they were very clever and discerning, we've turned out to be terribly blind and stupid! Did I say that I'd accepted Larry when he proposed to me?" she asked, then answered the



question for him. "I did not! I tried to tell you that I'd refused him, but you wouldn't let me. You were in such a hurry to congratulate me!"

"Joyce, you can't mean that!" He bent close to her, his hands gripping her shoulders, and he must have caught a revealing light in her dark eyes. "Will you marry me, Joyce darling?" he whispered huskily.

"Yes," said Joyce emphatically, as she raised her lips for his kiss.

They clung together, oblivious of the salt spray in their faces, oblivious of the sharp breeze which lashed their coats, conscious only of each other for a long, blissful, breath-taking moment.

An unromantic bell boy, swinging along close beside them, with his loud gong and singsong: "Dinner is now being served," brought them back to reality.

"Sweetheart, I can't believe yet that I'm really the one you love, in-

stead of Larry," marveled Dick, as he held her close.

"And I can't believe that you love me!" Joyce doubted in her turn. Her eyes shone up into his.

"Fortunately, we'll have the rest of the voyage to convince each other," he laughed. "If we're thoroughly persuaded by the time we land, I suggest a wedding in San Francisco. I've heard that there are some glorious honeymoon spots along the coast."

"But your business?" Joyce reminded him practically.

"My business was just bluff. I was really running away from a broken heart—and you."

"Then isn't it lucky I brought dad along—to give me away?" Joyce murmured rapturously. "A pair of broken hearts—darling, my heart's all yours now!" And their lips met again in a long, satisfying kiss.



A BOND OF LOVE

YOU think of me as free,
 Free as the winds that blow,
 Free as a vagabond might be—
 You do not know
 That ever so long as you willingly
 Urge me to go,
 Love makes a happy slave of me,
 And I linger so.

PETER A. LEA.

LS-7C



A Chance At Hollywood

By Bruce Robbins

MAXINE walked down the street, her head held at a more rebellious angle than usual. She was mad clean through, and mentally reviewed her anger at Joe Givvens, her partner in marriage and also vaudeville work. He had been acting like a fool over that little blond shrimp on the same bill with them.

Maxine had not only had to put up with it for a whole week in Harrisburg, but now in Camden, two weeks later, the blonde had appeared on the same bill. There hadn't been anything yet that Maxine could put her hand on—Joe was too clever for that—but the thing that made Maxine boil was the airs

that Daisy assumed around her. If Maxine hadn't considered herself too much of a lady, she'd have scratched Daisy's eyes out long before.

Maxine vibrated with anger as she stalked along the sidewalk on the way back to the hotel. Grim little lines appeared around her mouth, and a furrow crossed her brow. It was a pretty mouth and a pretty brow; the lines that now furrowed them seemed to add to her piquant beauty. Short brown hair escaped from beneath her small hat to lie over her ears. As she muttered angrily to herself, her brown eyes snapped and sparkled in a charming manner; the heels of her

smart little shoes rapped against the sidewalk and made many a passing man turn for a second glance.

She and Joe had met on the small time two years before. Two months later, they had formed a comedy-skit team and had finally married. Joe, with all his bragging, could be very attractive when he tried; he had won Maxine's heart without half trying. Joe considered himself a great little salesman.

Maxine was not only mad; she was hurt by Joe's interest in Daisy. For two years she had worshiped him, had followed him around, doing his bidding without even a thought of her own. Joe was happy that way, and Joe's happiness was all that really mattered to Maxine. Joe made all their plans and expected Maxine to fall in with them. Maxine idolized him to the point of mental apathy, so far as her own interests were concerned.

She had wakened up, of course, when Joe had taken an interest in Daisy. Maxine dully realized her mistake; she had encouraged his ego until he took her for granted.

"He's probably tired already, just knowing I'll hang around without any effort on his part," she muttered to herself. "I've let him think too long that I'm only what he's made me. He taught me what I know about acting, but I can go back to hoofing any old time," she continued grimly.

That assertion, however, was mere bravado; she knew she couldn't leave him; Joe had become a part of her. She loved him too much; with all his faults, she had to have him.

"If I could only think of something to make me more important in the act! He thinks he's the whole show, and I've let him think so too long," she mused.

Under Joe's tutelage, Maxine had advanced to a slightly higher type of work; she had been only a hoofer when they had met. Joe had taught her the rudiments of acting, how to speak lines effectively for vaudeville. Maxine had been thrilled by the new work, and also by Joe; he had been unfailingly attentive, even in the small things that are so dear to a woman's heart. They had been really happy until the advent of Daisy, "the little blond shrimp."

Maxine reached the hotel, but found that Joe had already gone to the theater. That didn't add to her good humor; he had probably gone there ahead of time to see Daisy's act again. Every night Joe could hardly wait to finish dressing so he could go out in the wings and watch Daisy finish her routine. He imagined he had been very clever in presenting a different excuse every night as to why he could not wait for Maxine to finish changing.

It was almost time for the act, so Maxine hurried to the theater. She glanced at her wrist watch as she entered the stage door; she had time to change with a few minutes to spare. Her walk had relieved her feelings somewhat, but she hadn't thought of a way of dealing with Daisy.

"At least this is the last night in Camden. How I hate this town!" thought Maxine. She hoped she would never have to play Camden again. Their twelve weeks were over, too; Joe said they would have to run up to New York to see if Arthur had another booking for them.

As she reached the stage, she spied Joe standing in the wings, already dressed for the act, watching Daisy out on the stage. Joe glanced up as she approached him, and sheepishly tried to kill the smile

with which he had been watching Daisy work. The smile congealed in a ridiculous, amusing fashion.

"Hello, baby," whispered Joe. "Where have you been all afternoon?"

"You might wonder after a time," said Maxine, not smiling.

"Hurry and change; we're on in a few minutes," said Joe, choosing to ignore the inference in her tone. "Big house out front; take a peep," he suggested, as if he had been watching the audience instead of Daisy.

"The house can go hang!" said Maxine, feeling her anger at him welling up into an insurmountable wave.

"Sh!" commanded Joe. "What's the matter, baby? Don't you feel well?" He led her toward their dressing room.

"I feel well enough," said Maxine, "to beat you up!" She regarded him grimly as she pulled open the door. But even then Maxine realized that she was only very mad; she could never have carried out her implied threat of violence. To any one else, Joe Givvens was just a mediocre vaudeville actor, but to Maxine, with all his conceit, he was the beginning and end of life.

"Aw, baby, what have I done?"

Maxine favored him with a meaning glance that consisted principally of elevated eyebrows. She stalked over to the dressing table, flinging off her coat, and reached for her costume that hung on a hook. Rapidly and deftly she began putting on her make-up.

"What's eating you, baby?" asked Joe, trying to help her with her costume.

"I'm going to be eating a little blonde one of these days, if a certain young man doesn't leave her alone," replied Maxine through

clenched teeth. "And stop calling me baby!"

"Aw, don't be like that," grinned Joe. "I just watch her work to see how good she is—professional interest. She's pretty good, ba—Maxie. I got a great idea for a new act. We've been playing this one long enough," he continued.

"And now, I suppose, you're going to tell me Daisy's going to be in the new act."

"Sure; why not? She's a cute kid. The new skit's for three people, two women and a man."

"So," said Maxine, "it's gone as far as that—you're planning to bring Daisy into our act!" She turned on Joe with a gleam of fury in her eyes. Rage made her face flush hotly.

"She's a real little actress," countered Joe. "She knows the business. She can help me coach you along, teach you gestures and things that'll put you across in a big way. I've done all I could, but it takes a woman to develop a woman's full talent."

Maxine gasped at that astonishing revelation. To think that Joe thought he could cover up his little scheme to get Daisy into their act by any such flimsy subterfuge! Added to that, it was an insult to her ability as an actress, after she'd tried so hard to please him. Maxine could hardly contain her rage.

"That little blonde couldn't teach me anything except a few things a lady wouldn't want to know!" cried Maxine. "I wouldn't want to be seen in the same act with her; I'm particular about some things."

"I'm surprised at you," said Joe. "Daisy's a nice girl."

"Yeah! Nice for what? You watch yourself, or you won't be nice for long."

"I don't like that at all," said Joe,

assuming a pose of insulted dignity that failed comically to express injury.

"And since when did you think you could write a skit?" asked Maxine, turning to survey him with angry scorn. "I don't suppose we'll have to buy any more one-acters now that you've turned writer. Wait till I tell Arthur that one!" she laughed.

Now Joe was offended. "You don't know what I can do," he replied in a huff. "I've done pretty well with you—don't forget you were only a hoofer," he continued haughtily, trying to retaliate for the sting of Maxine's scorn for his ability as playwright.

"'Was' and 'am' are two different things. But don't forget, I can go back to hoofing any old time you want to write a skit for Daisy," answered Maxine with some heat.

"Aw, Maxie," countered Joe, "don't get all hot about it. Daisy doesn't mean anything to me. I want to build up our act. We've got to change to something new—why not my skit? I'll tell you about it."

"I don't want to hear it."

"All right," said Joe, spreading both hands wide in the defeated gesture of a man who has tried his best to be reasonable with a woman. He opened the door and started for the stage. "Maybe you would be better at hoofing," he said maliciously. "But those who stick with Uncle Joe get on the big time." He was pleased with himself after that last sally; it repaid him somewhat for the previous sting to his pride.

Maxine hurried to finish her dressing. The thought of Joe's plan to bring Daisy into their act irked her beyond endurance. His conceit had never irritated her before, but it infuriated her now. She was out-

raged at the realization that he had thought she would consent to his philandering right under her nose, and in the same troupe. When the call bell rang, she left the dressing room with fire in her eyes.

Just as Maxine reached the stage, Daisy passed on her way to her dressing room.

"Hello, dear," smiled Daisy, intently examining Maxine's costume, which was getting a little worn. Daisy's dress was new, though cheaply cut and fashioned. Maxine was put at an immediate disadvantage; all she could do was glare at Daisy, as her anger mounted in billowing waves. Daisy's smiling condescension was almost more than Maxine could stand; it was with an effort that she kept herself from laying harsh hands on her.

Maxine walked out on the stage. The curtain went up. By that time Maxine was so mad that she began the skit automatically, realizing with a shock a third of the way through, that she was on the stage, acting.

Joe had bought their skit soon after they were married, and they had played it in ever since. It was an abbreviation of a farce that had toured the country several years before on the legitimate stage. Cut for vaudeville, it was nothing more than the high points of the longer play. Joe liked it, for he considered his part good and Maxine's was not too heavy for a beginner. She was the young girl who attracts a gay *Lothario* through her sophisticated speeches that she really does not understand. The double meaning of her words really escape her until the man makes his intentions evident, whereupon she becomes incensed and slaps his face. Feeling that she has hurt him more than was probably necessary, her heart

becomes softened, and so does the lover's when he perceives her real innocence. All ends happily, with a great part of the farce and comedy hanging from the lines of the skit, rather than from the plot. It wasn't a great act, but it was enough to furnish a livelihood for two mediocre players.

When Maxine's anger cooled sufficiently for her to realize where she was, the skit had reached the point where the heroine first begins to understand that she has let herself in for more than she has intended. Maxine's appearance of slight bewilderment fitted in excellently with the amazement supposed to be portrayed by the heroine in the farce; her facial expression upon recognizing the audience in front of her was dramatically funny. The audience was delighted. It was really the first time a majority of the spectators had caught on completely with the idea of the farce.

But Maxine had not cooled down completely; she continued to think of Joe and Daisy. The point in the skit arrived where she was supposed to slap the man's face. The audience was again delighted, that time by an open-handed haymaker delivered with all Maxine's pent-up emotion to Joe's cheek. Joe fell back against the sofa in surprise.

Just as soon as Maxine had slapped him, her anger was dissipated. Her eyes filled with tears and she threw herself into Joe's arms, unhappy at what she had done. Love quickly followed her previous anger, and for a moment she forgot all about the skit. Joe whispered to her hurriedly, and they returned to the characters of the farce before the audience realized that Maxine had not really been acting her part. It was an embarrassing moment for Joe. They fin-

ished the act, and to Joe's relief received several rounds of applause.

Maxine followed Joe contritely to the dressing room. There her flood of tears almost drowned the coherence of her self-reproach. Joe soothed her, kissed her, held her in his arms, marveling anew at her evident affection for him. It had been months since they had been as close; Joe forgot to think of Daisy. His only serious criticism, after she had been quieted, was of her breakdown on the stage after she had slapped him.

"You shouldn't ever do that, Maxie. No matter what happens, keep on with your lines. You've got to be a good trouper under any circumstance."

"Yes, Joe," answered Maxine, all contrition. "But you can't imagine how that little blond shrimp makes me boil!"

"Aw, forget it," said Joe, patting her shoulder. "Daisy's a good kid, but you and I get along pretty well by ourselves. Did you hear that applause we got?"

"Yes; that was more than anybody on the bill had all week long."

"You bet it was! That little skit's not so bad, but I guess we ought to have a new one. We'll go in to see Arthur, Monday. Or how would you like to take a few days off to rest up?"

"That would be swell," said Maxine, smiling. "Only, let's go over to Philly or some place else before we go to New York; I can't stand this town another day."

Joe agreed, and they spent a few days at a little town on the coast of New Jersey. They did nothing but sleep late, read the papers, and go for long walks. It was like a honeymoon to Maxine; they hadn't taken one when they were married.

On the third day Joe began to get

restless, and Maxine suggested that they might as well go on to New York. Joe's cockiness was beginning to return; he wanted to see some fellow who could develop an idea he had for a skit. Maxine viewed his returning boastfulness with fear and trembling; she felt she would never be equal to attacking it again. She uttered a little prayer that it would never again work against their happiness. If she could only think of some way to take a

little wind out of his sails, without hurting him seriously—she thought longingly; if she could only act a little better, so that he would notice her and value her a little more highly and become alarmed at the thought of losing her.

It was Thursday of the week following their engagement in Camden when they finally reached Arthur Bromwell's booking agency. Joe was an old friend of Arthur's, and they were immediately ushered



The audience was delighted by an open-handed haymaker delivered with all Maxine's pent-up emotion to Joe's cheek. Joe fell back against the sofa in surprise.

into his office, before the crowd waiting in the anteroom.

"Hello, Maxine," said Arthur with a smile, giving his other hand to Joe.

"Arthur, old boy, old boy!" cried Joe, pumping his hand. "What's the news? Got something for us?"

"Pull up a chair, Joe," said Arthur, seating Maxine. "Times are hard; hope you've saved your money."

"Don't kid me. What's the chance for another twelve or sixteen weeks? In the meantime, I've got an idea I want you to start one of the writing boys on—new idea for a one-acter," said Joe, with an important air. "We can make out with the old one till they get it ready for us."

"How's the old one been going?" asked Arthur, smiling.

"Best ever—big houses all around the loop. You've been getting reports on us, I know. Got the biggest hand in Camden the other night. Got the curtain four times."

Arthur sat smiling for a moment, and then looked at Maxine.

"Really, Arthur, how about shooting us out on another circuit until you get this new idea of mine worked out?" continued Joe.

"Joe, I'm afraid you'll have to rest for a while; too many theaters are closing early this year. Give me a short, written idea of your one-acter, and I'll see what they can do with it."

"Well, that's tough about our regular theaters, but how about a new circuit, something a little bigger this time?" said Joe, in his most coaxing manner.

"Don't know of a thing right now. But, Maxine, I've got something for you; I don't know whether you'll like it or not, away from Joe. It's a movie contract for you to go to

Hollywood and play in the comedies. A fellow saw you play in Camden Saturday night and sent me a contract for you to sign. He was quite enthusiastic, said you had possibilities, said you were a real actress. He was impressed with the way you played your part in the farce, said you put the whole idea of the skit across. Take it along and look it over," he continued, handing her the paper.

Maxine sat dazed; the gods had heard her prayer. But the way it had come about was funny. She stole a glance at Joe, and could hardly keep from laughing at the expression on his face. Joe's mouth hung open with a loose lower jaw. For once he didn't have anything to say. Maxine thanked Arthur, and aroused Joe sufficiently to get him out of the office. He forgot to leave his great idea for Arthur to turn over to the skit writer; for once his sails were empty of wind.

Joe sat around their hotel room, watching Maxine as she unpacked their trunk. Every so often Maxine walked to the table and glanced studiously at the movie contract; then she would walk around, impressively gazing off into space. Joe wanted to say something, but he didn't know how to begin, and Maxine refrained from asking his opinion of what she should do. Several times as his eyes followed her with a new light in them, Joe tried to speak, but couldn't. Maxine knew his ambition had always been the movies.

Finally, Joe could stand it no longer; he got up and reached for his hat, starting toward the door.

"Where are you going, Joe?" asked Maxine, smiling.

"Oh, just down the street."

"Will you leave this contract with Arthur for me?"

Joe glanced at the paper. "Aren't you going to sign it?" He looked at Maxine in wonderment.

"Not until I catch you looking at the next little blond shrimp we play on the same bill with," smiled Maxine.

Joe's arms stretched toward her, and Maxine ran to him. Joe's head bent and he kissed her, not once, but many times—the kind of kisses Maxine had been dreaming of all those lonely weeks when they had been estranged. Maxine's eyes closed and she clung to him, while Joe held her tightly, murmuring the sort of endearments Maxine had been longing to hear for such a miserably long time.

"Maxie darling, I love you. I get off on the wrong track every once in a while and sort of take you for granted, but you're all I really want—you and a place on the small time, and a hope for something better. Maxie dear!"

He kissed her for a long moment. He held her close, and his lips caressed her hair. Then he asked the question both of them were waiting to hear—Joe with a dread of losing her, Maxine with the happiness she had always known would

come with the moment when she knew Joe really appreciated her: "Baby, you're sure you don't want to throw me over and go to Hollywood? You're sure you won't be sorry you're giving up such a chance? It might make you a big actress. It might put you on the big time. If you stick to me, you know, you may never get anywhere."

Such humility from Joe! Maxine looked up at him, her arms held tightly around his neck. Slowly she drew his head down until their lips were close. "Who says I want to get anywhere?" she asked in a soft, not quite steady voice. "Who says I want to be a big actress? Who says I'm not satisfied to stick to you?"

She left a little bit unsaid, so that Joe would still feel that he must carefully guard her love. She didn't add the hundred ardent, adoring things that were trembling on her lips. But then, even if she had wanted to, she couldn't have said them, for a moment later Joe was kissing her lips again and again. Maxine sighed, but not for the Hollywood contract. After all, love on the small time was good enough for her.



MY JANE

SHE took the pathway through the wheat—

My Jane, with honey-colored hair;

So lovely, she—each head of grain

Was lifted curiously, to stare.

And when she walked the path again,

And I, her lover, met her there,

Behold! the field had turned to gold,

Paid tribute to her beauty rare!

LONA PEARSON MACDORMAN.



Hidden Beauty

By Georgia Brooks

CATHERINE HART glanced slowly around at the disorder of her sister's bedroom.

It was like Jennie to dress in a whirl like that, leaving everything for some one else to pick up. They had both come in rather late from work, and Jennie, as usual, had a date for the evening.

She was pretty and full of fun and had several boy friends, whereas no man had ever looked twice at Catherine.

But why should they?

She looked at herself in the mirror, and saw a slender girl with brown eyes—her sister's were a dark, lovely blue. Jennie's hair was golden and waving, while her own was straight and brown. Jennie's cheeks were warmly flushed with lovely color, and not pale as milk — But what was the use of going on?

She knew that she was plain and uninteresting, and it didn't matter really. But she could not help thinking wistfully that it must be

nice to have men to admire one and find one attractive, though it brought anxieties with it as well.

Not that Jennie herself ever worried. But lately Catherine had begun to feel rather anxious about her sister and Gerald Cunningham.

Jennie had gone out with him to-night, and Catherine suspected that her sister was more interested in him than she would admit.

The two girls were orphans, and though Catherine was only three years older than her sister, her affection for the younger girl was almost motherly. She could not bear to think of Jennie being unhappy or of doing anything foolish.

Jennie was pretty and sweet enough to win the love of any man. But Gerald Cunningham was so different from the men she was accustomed to meet.

Catherine wondered if she should try and stop Jennie from seeing him so often.

She turned from the mirror as the front doorbell rang and, hastily smoothing her hair, went to answer it.

A man stood there. He was about thirty, and handsome in a rather grim way. His eyes were gray and very keen beneath heavy brows, his chin firm, his mouth well molded and stern in its outlines.

"Are you Miss Hart?" he inquired abruptly.

"Yes," Catherine answered.

"Then I want to talk with you," he said.

He passed her without waiting for an invitation and strode into the living room. Catherine followed him, feeling faintly amused and a little annoyed.

She was not accustomed to having strangers walk into the apartment in such a manner, and he was so cool about it, too!

She thought fleetingly that he would always do pretty much as he liked, wherever he was. There was something self-assured, almost arrogant, in his bearing, and the look he fixed on her, deepened her annoyance.

"What have you to say to me?" she asked, her head held high.

"A good deal," he told her curtly. "That is, if you are really Jennie Hart?"

There was a faint surprise in his tone, but she did not hear it. Her heart missed a beat, then raced on again.

So it was Jennie he had come to see!

What could he want with her sister? Nothing good, she was sure, by his manner.

But whatever it was, it was better that she should hear it than Jennie.

"I am Jennie Hart," she told him deliberately. "But I don't know who you are."

A cynical smile crossed his lips.

"I am John Cunningham, Gerald Cunningham's brother," he said. "Perhaps now you can guess what I have come to say?"

A sudden rush of color burned in Catherine's cheeks, her eyes met his in defiant challenge.

"I haven't any idea," she said.

He was still gazing at her with that searching intentness that embarrassed and annoyed her, and he was conscious of a sharp sense of surprise.

At first it was the girl herself who had surprised him. She was so different from what he had expected. He found himself wondering what his brother could see in her.

She was neither pretty nor smart, and somehow she did not strike him as the type of girl who would try to trap a rich man into marrying her.

But now he was not so sure. Obviously she was not as innocent as she had at first looked, or as uninteresting.

That angry color in her cheeks lighted her whole face, making it vividly alive. He noticed that her mouth was a warm, natural red, and sensitively curved. The brown eyes that met his defiantly had something in their velvety depths that stirred him oddly.

It enraged him that it should be so. He told himself that he was right to try to save his brother from the girl. She was unusual, dangerous.

His mouth hardened into a straight, grim line.

"I have come to put an end to your association with my brother," he said deliberately. "You will give me your word not to see him again."

"Indeed!" Her voice, like his, was throbbing with fury and outrage. She had no thought of undeceiving him as to her identity, she had an angry impulse to fight for her sister as if it were herself. "Suppose I refuse?" she asked. "What reason can there be why Gerald and I should not be friends?"

"Friends!" He repeated the word roughly. "Don't try to bluff me. You intend him to be much more than a friend if you can manage it! But you won't succeed in your scheme. I have made up my mind to put an end to them."

"How dare you!" she cried. Catherine was blazing with outraged pride and fury—so furious that she could have struck him. She felt that she had never hated any one as she hated this man. "What right have you to come here and say such things—to despise me? You know nothing about me. You can't despise me as much as I despise you. You are beyond contempt. A rich

idler who dares to look down on me because I am poor and have to work for my living!"

She paused for breath, and for an instant John Cunningham felt a twinge of something like shame.

But he banished it swiftly. It was only what he had expected, he told himself scornfully. The girl was shameless and determined, a calculating little gold-digger. But she had met her match in him.

"Your indignation is well acted," he told her. "But you can't deceive me. If you think that you are going to marry my brother, you are much mistaken."

"How do you propose to prevent it?" she asked.

They were glaring at each other, angry gray eyes delving into angry brown. Catherine thought that she had never seen any one look so grim. His face was dark with fury, his eyes like granite, his lips set in hard lines of angry determination. But she, too, could be determined.

He came nearer to her, standing over her menacingly.

"I shall find a way," he said. "I will not stand by and see my brother make a fool of himself and disgrace his family. You will have to reckon with me now, and I shall win in the end. Don't say I haven't warned you."

He turned sharply on his heel, and without another word strode to the door.

Catherine's fingers trembled as she drew on her coat and hat.

The last week had been a strange one—the strangest she had ever known. It had been spent in a whirl of gayety.

For the first time in her life she had dined at expensive restaurants, and sat in the best seats at theaters with a man!

On learning of John Cunningham's visit that night, her sister had implored her to keep up the pretense. Jennie had confessed that she and Gerald loved each other and meant to get married if only John did not manage to prevent it.

He would probably have Gerald and the girl he loved watched, Jennie prophesied, and if only Catherine would go on taking her place, they would watch the wrong girl!

Catherine had at first shrunk nervously from the idea, but in the end she had given in.

What had made her do that? She told herself that it was love for her sister that persuaded her, but she knew in her heart that it was something more than that.

She could not forget the bitter insults that John Cunningham had hurled at her, and the desire to avenge them had become an obsession. She knew that the best way to punish him was to help along the marriage that he was trying to prevent.

Jennie had been right in her idea that John would watch his brother. Twice he had appeared at the hotel grill where Catherine and Gerald were dining, and once Catherine had danced with him.

She did not want to remember that dance—the odd ecstasy that his touch, his nearness, had stirred in her.

That night she had renewed her vow to make him pay for his scorn of her, and she was making her vow good. To-night the last act was to be played in the revenge that she had planned.

By to-morrow John Cunningham would learn how she had outwitted him.

The plan had been Catherine's own. She was to slip out, with seeming caution and secrecy, to de-

ceive possible watchers, and go to Morristown, where she was to spend the night at a hotel and return the next day.

In the meantime Jennie would have joined Gerald and they would be on their way to Greenwich, where they had arranged to be married.

It was odd to think of Jennie married.

Catherine's eyes grew wistful as she sat in the train that was taking her to Morristown. She did not begrudge her sister the happiness that she was helping her to win, but life would be very lonely without her, more dreary than ever after the excitement of the week before.

Catherine had enjoyed that brief glimpse of gayety, even though she had only shared it with another girl's sweetheart.

What would it be like to have a man of her own?—she wondered. Suppose she were really on her way to join the man she loved?

"Morristown!" Trainmen shouting roused her from her reverie.

Clutching her small suitcase, she walked along the platform and out of the station. Her destination was a quiet hotel, where Gerald had the day before engaged a room for "Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham."

Catherine was wondering which taxi to take, when a big car drew up beside her. Thinking it was for hire she got in, giving the name of the hotel. The fare could not be much, she reflected, for the hotel was situated in the middle of the town. But after a time she realized that the car had left the town and was driving along a country road.

She was about to call to the chauffeur when they turned into a winding drive leading to a house.

Could this be the hotel, miles from even the nearest farmhouse?



"I am going to keep you here for the night! I don't think that even my brother's infatuation for you will stand the knowledge that you have spent the night with another man."

"Perhaps you will explain the meaning of this outrage!" she demanded indignantly.

"I shall be glad to explain everything if you will come inside," he said quietly.

Catherine hesitated. Somehow she felt an odd reluctance to enter that house with him—a reluctance

She was sure that it could not, and for the first time she felt a twinge of uneasiness as she got out and turned to the driver.

Then her uneasiness changed to startled amazement. For the man facing her was John Cunningham!

that was born of the queer fear that gripped her. But she would not let him see that she was afraid.

She let him lead her through the front door, which, she noticed, he opened with a key, and in a pleasant sitting room on the ground floor.

The room had a curious air of being unused. The blinds were drawn and the vases empty of flowers. It occurred to her that the hall through which they passed had had that same air of emptiness, and that there was not a sound of voices or movement anywhere.

"Whose house is this?" she asked sharply.

"It belongs to a friend of mine. He has lent it to me."

"Then your friend is not here?" she interrupted, conscious that her heart was beginning to beat very fast. "The house is empty?"

"Quite empty, except for ourselves!"

The reply came calmly, but there was something in his tone that deepened her fear to panic.

She turned and ran to the door, but he was too quick for her.

Before she could reach it, he had seized her wrists and was holding them in a firm grip.

"How dare you!" she said furiously. "Let me go."

He released her wrists, but stood with his back against the door, gazing down at her with a mingling of impatience and mockery in his expression.

"Do you really think I shall let you go, after the trouble I have taken to get you here?" Cunningham asked.

"If you don't, I shall scream for help!"

"Oh, scream away," he replied. "There is no one to hear you. I have taken good care of that!"

The color drained from her cheeks; she was shaking now with terror.

"Why have you brought me here?" Catherine asked tensely.

"Can't you guess?" Cunningham laughed harshly, oddly. "I warned you twice, but you would not heed

my warning. Now I have taken matters into my own hands. I have made it impossible for you to marry my brother!"

"How?" Her lips would hardly frame the words.

"By an obvious and very simple method. I know that Gerald has reserved rooms at the hotel and is waiting for you. But he will wait in vain, for you will not be there. By the time he sees you again, he will no longer want to marry you."

"You mean——"

"That I am going to keep you here for the night! I don't think that even my brother's infatuation for you will stand the knowledge that you have spent the night with another man."

"You cad!" Fury banished her fear, she faced him with blazing eyes, her hands clenched. "I could kill you for this! I hate you! I've never hated any one so much!"

"I wonder if you really do?"

The words startled himself almost as much as they did Catherine. He was amazed at the impulse that had brought them to his lips, the surge of feeling that was sweeping over him.

He had the sudden longing to seize her in his arms and crush the mouth that scorned and defied him with his own, to hold her slenderness against him for a moment of triumphant possession.

There would be a passionate satisfaction in that, and something more. For his leaping pulses and wildly beating heart told him that it would be rapturously, dangerously sweet.

"Why do you ask that?"

Her voice was all at once soft, breathless.

Was it his imagination, or did some of the longing that stirred him throb in it?

Her eyes were still very bright,

but it was no longer anger that shone in them. Her lips trembled a little as she made an unconscious half movement toward him, like a red rose quivering in a gentle breeze. A rose for his gathering.

Almost the temptation mastered him—almost, but not quite. All at once he realized the madness that had held him in its thrall and fought against it. He drew back sharply, his hands clenched at his side. His eyes grew hard with scorn for his own weakness, his mouth set in the grim lines she knew so well.

"I have not the faintest idea," he said. "It is nothing to me whether you hate me or not. Don't mistake my meaning. I am keeping you here for my brother's sake, but you are quite safe with me. There is no one who would be more safe, because I don't even like you."

A fragrant smell of coffee and frying bacon greeted Catherine when she went downstairs the next morning.

She was still feeling tired, because she had slept badly. Far into the night her thoughts had kept her awake—thoughts that annoyed her with their persistency and disturbing quality.

She was very pale as she entered the kitchen.

John Cunningham, looking up from the dish of bacon and eggs he was placing on the table, noticed it instantly. He saw the shadows under her eyes, and the grave, sorrowful droop of her mouth, and felt a brute.

He had been feeling like that during most of the night, during which he, too, had tried vainly to sleep, and wondering whether he had not made a mistake after all.

Certain things that this girl had said to him rankled unpleasantly in

his mind. She had accused him of being a snob—of wanting to prevent her marriage to Gerald just because they were not of the same social standing.

Was there any truth in that accusation?

What had he really against the girl except that she was poor and had to work for her living? Was his dislike of the marriage born of something quite different? A jealous fury at the thought of her marrying any man—any man but himself?

The idea was so startling that he nearly dropped the bacon dish. His voice was rough as he said abruptly:

"Good morning! I hope you slept well?"

"Quite well, thank you," she lied.

"You don't look like it!"

A tinge of color warmed her pallor.

"Nor do you," she retorted. "I suppose you lay awake congratulating yourself on your wonderful plan?"

"On the contrary, I lay awake cursing it."

"I don't think I understand." She poured herself a cup of coffee with a hand that shook.

He pushed back his chair from the table and rose. His face was dark and almost haggard, and there was an odd expression in his eyes as he turned to her.

"I want to tell you that I am sorry," he said unexpectedly. "I've behaved like a brute—and an idiot. But I regret it bitterly."

"It is rather late for regrets, isn't it?" She tried hard to speak calmly.

"It is not too late. I'll do everything I can to put things right for you. I'll go to Gerald at once and tell him the truth."

"I'm afraid you can't do that." She was beginning to laugh unstead-

ily. "I mean, I don't want you to go to Gerald because—because——"

He caught her up quickly.

"Why don't you want it? Is it because you find you've made a mistake? That you don't love him after all? If only it were true."

The cry rang through the room with sudden passion, and what she would have answered she never knew, for at that moment there was a shrill ringing at the front door-bell.

John Cunningham returned from answering it with an envelope in his hand.

"It is a telegram," he said. "Forwarded from my home. A business message, I expect."

He paused, and Catherine saw an expression of bewilderment on his face as he read the telegram. She guessed what it contained even before he handed it to her.

MARRIED THIS MORNING STOP PERFECTLY
HAPPY STOP LOVE FROM US BOTH
JENNIE AND GERALD

There was a brief silence, which the man broke.

"What does it mean?" he said. "How can Gerald be married when you are here?"

"It is very simple," she returned. "I'm not Jennie!"

"Then who are you?"

"I'm Jennie's sister, Catherine. It was I who planned it all—you can't blame them. You vowed to stop the marriage, and I vowed you shouldn't. So because you had taken me for Jennie that day, I went on being Jennie."

It was out at last, the whole story.

"I don't expect you will ever forgive me," she finished. "But I so wanted Jennie to be happy. There wasn't any reason why she shouldn't marry your brother——"

"There was a very big reason," he interrupted hoarsely. "The biggest reason of all. I realized that last night."

"But you couldn't," she expostulated breathlessly. "You've never even seen her. You thought I was Jennie."

"That's the reason!" All at once he was quite near to her, bending over her, looking into her eyes with an expression in his own that made her heart race. "Don't you see that I couldn't bear the thought of you marrying Gerald or anybody? I wanted you so badly myself."

It was some minutes later that she stirred in his arms and lifted her face from his shoulder, against which it was resting.

"I've just remembered that I ought to be at the shop," she said. "And there's the telegram to answer. Shouldn't we send them our congratulations?"

"You are never going back to the shop," he said. "You will be much too busy. You are going to marry me by to-morrow at the latest."

She looked up at him shyly, her cheeks scarlet as poppies.

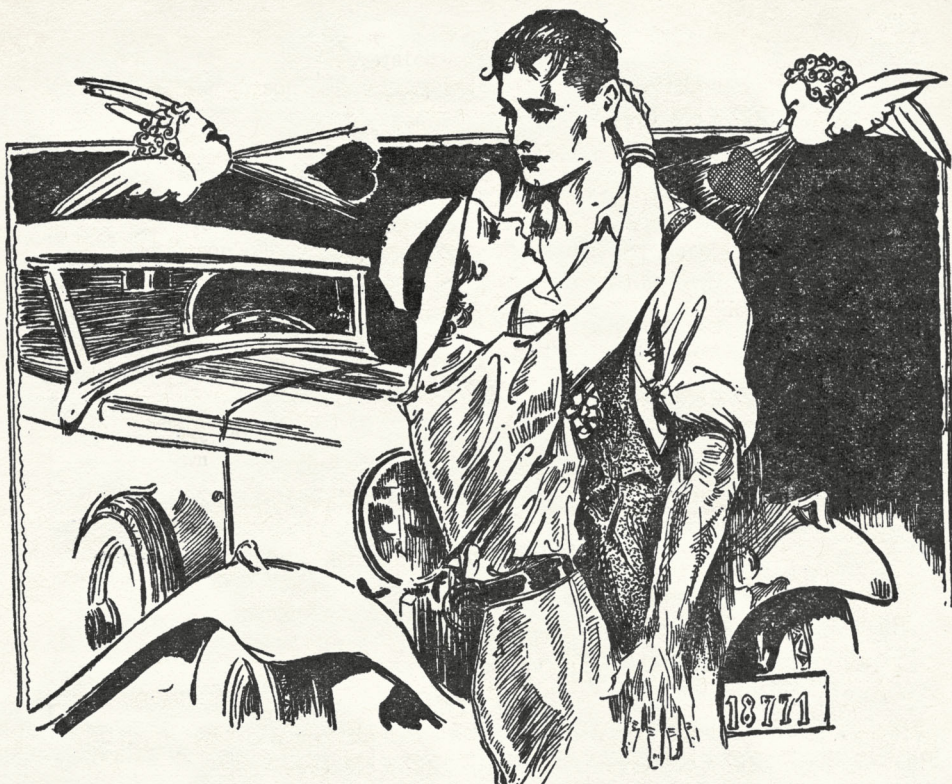
"But we can't——" she began.

He stopped her with another kiss.

"We can," he contradicted. "As for the telegram, we'll answer it to-morrow. It will be so easy then, we can just put the same as they did: 'Married this morning. Perfectly happy.'"

And they did.





Million-dollar Baby

By Lola Mallory

THERE was a lull at the notions counter. Roen McDermott patted her sleek blond hair into place and rearranged the rows of buttons and elastic and darning cotton as she hummed "I Found a Million-dollar Baby in the Five-and-ten-cent Store."

"For Heaven's sake!" Doris Gibson, the girl at the toilet-goods counter across the aisle, called. "Are you at it again? That's all I ever hear you sing. Besides, that song was a hit last summer."

Roen smiled good-naturedly. "I like it," she said.

LS-9C

She resolved to hum it to herself thereafter, however. All the girls were beginning to tease her about it. If she wanted to cherish a dream and cherish a song, she had a perfect right to do so, as long as she did it privately.

At lunch time Doris stopped at her counter. "What are you doing to-night?" she asked.

"I've—I've promised my mother I'd stay home." Roen blushed as she told the little white lie.

"Oh, yeah?" Doris Gibson scoffed. "That's a new one. Why won't you go on a double date with me, Ro?"

Roan rearranged rows of shiny round buttons. "I don't like your boy friend, and I know I wouldn't like the boy friend he'd bring for me," she admitted frankly at last.

"Huh!" Doris countered. "You're too particular; that's all! Well, it's the last time I'm going to ask you to go on a date."

"I'm sorry, Doris," Roan said quietly, but Doris flounced off to the lunch counter in the rear.

"Hello," the waitress in the blue smock and cap said to Doris. "You look angry. What's the matter?"

"I had another run-in with Roan McDermott."

"About dating again?"

"Yeah. Say, that girl burns me up!"

"Sh!" the waitress warned. "That fellow who comes in here every day and watches her is sitting right across from you. He's heard every word you said."

The young man who came in every day to watch Roan pricked up his ears instantly. Doris lowered her voice, but he could still hear her words.

"It won't do him any good," she said bitterly. "If he was anybody he wouldn't hang around a five-and-ten-cent store—and eat lunch here, too. And Roan wouldn't have anything to do with any one who wasn't a millionaire and spoke like a movie hero."

"It's too bad she's so romantic, isn't it?" the waitress sympathized. "She's so pretty that she could have loads of boy friends if she wanted them, instead of waiting for a sort of fairy prince to come along."

"I'll say!" Doris agreed slangily. "But what can you do with some one like that? Well, I've got to be getting back."

The young man had finished his lunch, too. He went out by another

exit so that he wouldn't have to pass the notions counter. He had decided that he didn't want Roan to see him—now.

Doris's prattle had given Dan Garrigan an idea which, he was sure, would serve to introduce him to this soft-eyed, golden-haired girl with whom he had become so utterly infatuated. Ever since he had chanced into the store several weeks before and had seen Roan pensively rearranging her stock, he had come back every day, for the express purpose of seeing her.

The garage in which he was head mechanic was only two blocks away from the five-and-ten-cent store in which Roan worked. All afternoon as Dan ground valves, rebored cylinders, and replaced piston rings he thought over his idea and grew more and more enthusiastic as he worked out the details. It wasn't fair, he admitted a little sheepishly, and then reminded himself that all was fair in love and war. An Irishman, he ruminated, never stopped at anything. If the girl he had fallen in love with wanted romance, it was up to a Garrigan to see that she got it.

At five o'clock he washed up, took off his grimy brown coveralls. It was an immaculately clad Dan Garrigan who drove out of the garage a few minutes later in a maroon limousine that belonged to one of his best customers. If the customer caught him—he grinned at the thought—he'd just say that he was testing the motor.

He approached Roan as she was rearranging her counter for the last time before closing. She looked up at him, noticing him for the first time.

"May I help you?" she asked, noticing how youthful his grin was and how his blue eyes twinkled.

"Yes," he said in the carefully

modulated tone he had been practicing every time he was alone during the afternoon. "Are you by any chance Miss Roen McDermott?"

Her eyes widened in surprise. "Yes, I am," she admitted. "How did you know?"

The young man's eyes twinkled more than ever. "You may not remember me," he said, "but we lived on the same street for a while when we were youngsters."

"Really!" she asked guilelessly, puckering her brows. "Do you mean when we lived on Argyle or on Rokeby?"

"On Argyle," he said promptly. "We lived about a block away, but we didn't stay there long. It was just about that time that my grandfather left us all that money, if you remember. My name is Dan Garri-gan."

Roan puckered her brows again. "I'm afraid I don't remember," she said, "but I'm flattered if you remember me. And how is everything?" she asked, at a loss for something else to say.

"Quite all right," Dan said easily. "I just got back from Florida. Before that I lived in New York for several years, and I feel very strange and a little lost back here in my home town."

"Well"—Roan commented, a little flustered because she knew the other girls were watching her curiously. "Well——"

Dan leaned forward. "Miss McDermott," he said shyly, "I wonder if I might have the pleasure of driving you home. My car's outside."

"I don't know," she reflected.

"Please let me!" he begged. "I've been very lonely, and it's only by chance that I happened in and saw you. Let me take advantage of the opportunity that has so conveniently presented itself."

Roan looked into his twinkling blue eyes. It was impossible for any one with so open and so Irish a face to be dishonest, she decided. Besides, they really did know each other if they had lived on the same street. It was strange that she couldn't remember.

"All right," she agreed. "We're closing now. I'll be out in ten minutes. Where is your car parked?"

"Right around the corner. It's a maroon one, and you can't miss it."

Roan hurried around the corner ten minutes later, a little apprehensive but excited by the romance of this strange adventure that had suddenly projected itself into her uneventful life. When she saw that the maroon car was nothing less than an impressive-looking limousine she gasped a little.

"I wonder," he said as they were speeding northward, "if you'd do me the honor of having dinner with me."

"Well," Roan reflected again, "I'd love to, really, but I'm not dressed for it." It wasn't a good excuse, she knew, because she really didn't have a nicer or newer dress than the deep-blue one with its touches of red that she was wearing; but, of course, this suave young man in the long, jaunty car didn't know that.

"Don't let that stand in your way," he said. "You look very charming. Where would you like to eat?"

"I really don't care."

"Suppose we go to the Edgewater. Do you like the Marine Dining Room?"

"I don't know," she said simply. "I've never been there."

It happened that Dan had never been there, either, but instead of admitting it he said nonchalantly: "We'll go to the Edgewater, then. I'm sure you'll like it."

They ate a sumptuous dinner and

danced to the rhythmic strains of the orchestra. They talked. Roen could think of nothing they had in common except the old neighborhood where both had lived, but Dan didn't seem anxious to dwell on the subject. Instead he fabricated on his travels, using all the anecdotes and experiences the wealthy patrons of the garage passed on to him while they were waiting for their cars to be serviced. Roen drank it all in, her blue eyes wide and fascinated.

"How have you found the time to travel so much?" she asked at last. "Don't you find it hard to get away from your work?"

Dan was stumped for a moment. He sipped his coffee before he answered. "Well, you see, I don't work."

"You don't!"

"No. I don't have to."

"Even so," she objected, puckering her brows in the serious way she had, "every one ought to work, whether he has to or not."

Again Dan was stumped. He would have taken another sip of coffee, but all of it was gone. So he made a stab at an answer and said: "You see, this is the way I figure it. If I were to get a job I'd be putting some one out of work who needed it far more than I. So I thought it would be best for me to travel and see the world while I could."

His fabrication had evidently worked, for she told him: "I think that's really very splendid of you!"

"Good!" Dan grinned. "Now let's dance again."

Just as he was priding himself on his luck in always saying the right thing, Roen said when they got back to their table after the music stopped:

"But you'll do something soon, won't you? Surely you don't intend to play around all your life!"

"Of course not," Dan assured her, thinking how adorable she was when she was so serious.

"What will you do?"

"I beg your pardon?" he asked, sparring for time.

"I said: 'What will you do?'"

"Oh, I don't know. There's a lot of time to decide that, of course."

Roen puckered her brows, but decided that she had better change the subject. She noticed that young Mr. Garrigan was becoming embarrassed. Because she couldn't think of anything else, she began to talk about herself. Dan was flatteringly interested.

"I don't mind my work, of course," she said, "because it's the only thing I could get now and I feel that if you're holding down the best job you can get you should do the best work you can do."

"That's right," he agreed admiringly, remarking to himself that there was a brain beneath her smooth blond hair.

"So I'm doing the best I can until things break a little. Then I'm going back to my real work—stenography. I'm keeping up my shorthand so I won't lose speed. My ambition has always been to be a private secretary in some big corporation."

"You'll probably achieve it," Dan assured her, wondering if she wanted that secretarial position more than anything else—a home and a husband, for instance.

"I wouldn't mind my work at all," she confided, "if it weren't for the fun people sometimes make about the girls who work in the five-and-ten-cent stores—in stores and in the movies, for instance."

"Yes," Dan agreed. "Then there's that song."

She smiled shyly. "Oh, the song isn't so bad. In fact, I like it."

Roen was ecstatically happy, but she noticed that Dan had changed a little after the night he told her he loved her, and that he was moodier and more restless every time she saw him.



of her life as suddenly as he had come into it. But evidently Dan Garrigan had no such intentions. The next night he appeared again at closing time. That time his car was a mauve-colored sports roadster.

"What a beautiful car!" Roen exclaimed.

"Is it yours?"

"Oh, yes," Dan said airily. "One of them."

"My goodness!" Roen laughed. "How many have you got?"

"Not too many," Dan grinned. "I like variety."

He took her to dinner at the Balloon Room of the Congress. He had never been there before, either, but

All in all, it was the happiest evening she had ever spent in her nineteen years. She couldn't stop thinking about it the next day as she waited on customers and rearranged her stock while she waited for more customers to come in. She wondered if Dan Garrigan would go out

he carried it off as if he dined there every other night. Roen was thrilled. They talked a lot again, and she was more fascinated than she had been the first night.

"How long are you going to stay in town?" she asked when he brought her home.

Dan calculated rapidly. It would take him about two months to spend the money he had been saving toward buying a little car of his own.

"About two months," he told her, trying to make his voice casual.

"Is that all?" Her voice revealed her disappointment.

"Yes," Dan answered, not grinning that time. He drew closer.

"Roen," he said, looking into her deep-blue eyes, "will it matter to you—when I go?"

She lowered her eyes and he knew that she was answering "Yes." He took her into his arms and kissed her.

"I love you," he said. "I've loved you ever since that first day I"—he stopped himself before he blurted out that he had come into her store daily—"saw you. Roen—tell me, darling; do you think you could love me a little?"

"More than a little," she answered, her eyes sparkling with love, and he kissed her again.

"I'm not going to ask you to marry me now when you hardly know me," he said before he left. "But at the end of the two months there's a very important question I'll be asking you."

The next two months passed swiftly. Dan called for her almost every evening—whenever he could get one of the expensive automobiles kept in the garage. They went everywhere; one night it was the Lido Club; the next an aristocratic North Side hotel grillroom. Roen looked as smart and attractive in

her inexpensive evening clothes as any débutante. She was ecstatically happy, but she noticed that Dan had changed a little after the night he told her he loved her, and that he was moodier and more restless every time she saw him. She questioned him about it, but he assured her half-heartedly that nothing was wrong.

How could he tell her, he asked himself, that he was suffering the torments of a conscience made bitter by the fact that he had won a trusting girl's love by living a lie? He had gambled everything because he had fallen in love with a pretty and romantic five-and-ten-cent-store salesgirl. Now he found that he was more in love with her than ever, that he loved her more each time he saw her, and that because of his deception he could never win her.

For how could he ask Roen to marry him when she thought he was a millionaire playboy instead of a poor forty-dollar-a-week garage mechanic? And how could he confess to her? What good would it do now if he did? It would disillusion her and turn her against him. There was nothing he could do but fade out of a picture that was getting blacker and blacker.

Roen, unaware of what was passing through Dan's mind, began to have her misgivings, too. At first she had been so thrilled by the romance of it all that she hadn't considered the matter from any other angle. She had realized only that at last the man she had dreamed of all the weary weeks she had stood behind the notions counter had come into her life, and that he was as handsome, as charming, and even as wealthy as she had always pictured him to be in her dreams.

Suddenly the thought came to her: "What will being the wife of

a rich man be like?" Of course it meant that she could have all the clothes and luxuries she wanted, but it meant more than that, too. It meant that she would have to travel in an entirely different sphere from the one in which she had traveled so far. It meant that she would have to begin life over again, mold herself to a new pattern. She would have to be afraid continually of doing the wrong thing and saying the wrong thing.

And always—it was this thought that rankled most in Roen's mind—there would be the knowledge that she wasn't really a part of this new life, that she had been found in a five-and-ten-cent store, that that was where she really belonged, perhaps. Worse yet, Dan would always remember where he had found her; Dan would always know that she really wasn't a part of his world, and perhaps some day Dan might even decide that the five-and-ten-cent store was where she belonged! And every time she heard the song she now liked so much, she would cringe, thinking that Dan's friends might know, realizing that Dan did know!

The thoughts troubled Roen so much that she, too, became pensive as the two months drew to a close. She began thinking how wonderful it would have been if Dan had only been an ordinary sort of person who held an ordinary sort of job and had an ordinary amount of money. That would have meant that she could marry him when he asked her to, and work with him and for him, and be really happy instead of laboring constantly under the fear that she was a stranger in her own husband's home.

Roen had worked ever since her school days, and she couldn't imagine any one who didn't have some

sort of job being happy. Dan didn't believe in working, and she sensed that that, too, would be one of the many causes for contention.

The more she thought about it all the more she realized how utterly impossible the whole thing would be. If she said "No" to Dan Garrigan she knew that she would be throwing away the greatest opportunity of her life. But common sense told her that by making herself unhappy for a while now she would be avoiding a lifetime of unhappiness later. At the end of the two months she had decided that she would have to say "No" to Dan, no matter how difficult it was going to be.

He wasn't waiting for her that night, and she wondered at it and thought that perhaps he was ill. She called the fashionable hotel where he had told her he was stopping. The switchboard operator told her that no Dan Garrigan was registered there.

Puzzled, Roen went home and tried to read. She couldn't. She went to bed and tried to sleep. She couldn't. With a heavy heart she wondered if he had hurried out of town without saying good-by because he had changed his mind about wanting to marry her. It would be for the best if he had, she told herself, but that didn't help her sleep or lighten her heart. At dawn she drifted off into a troubled sleep, to be awakened by her alarm clock two hours later. Lackadaisically see dressed, and even more lackadaisically she went down to the five-and-ten-cent store that would remind her of Dan every minute she spent in it thereafter.

There was a letter waiting for her on her cash register. She had never seen Dan's handwriting, but she knew instinctively that it was his. With trembling fingers she tore the

letter open, expecting to find a short farewell. It read:

DARLING ROEN: You don't know how hard it is for me to write this, knowing that it means the end of the most beautiful thing that ever came into my life. I, too, have always wanted romance, in my hard-boiled way. About two weeks before I introduced myself to you as a boy who used to live on the same street—the first of a long series of lies—I chanced into your store and saw you. I fell in love with you at sight. I came in every day after that just to see you. One day I overheard two girls discussing you and me. I learned your name from their conversation. They had noticed that I came in daily, and one of them said it wouldn't do me any good—that you wouldn't have anything to do with any one who wasn't a millionaire. I was so madly in love with you that I decided to pretend I was a millionaire.

I borrowed those cars, Roen. I'm head mechanic in a garage two blocks away from your store, and I used our customers' cars. I used up all my savings entertaining you. It was crazy of me to deceive you like that, but I thought that nothing mattered except getting to know you. I noticed then that the longer I knew you the more I loved you, and the more unhappy I became, knowing that I had built up your love for me on a foundation of lies and that I could never hope to win you once you knew the truth.

So now you know. You don't know, of course, how I've suffered and how I hate myself. Please don't be unhappy about it, darling. I hope that some day some one worthy of your love will come along. As for me, I'm going to get another job the first chance I get, so that I won't run into you by chance—because I could never bear to see you again. Please forgive me and forget me.

DAN.

Roan smiled as she read the letter. She reread it many times during the day, whenever things were

slack at the notions counter, and her smile grew as she planned her answer. Shortly after closing time she walked to the garage two blocks away. No one was there except a man in the office and some one far back in the garage who was replacing a piston ring. She didn't know it was a piston ring, but she did know it was Dan, even though he was almost unrecognizable in his dirty brown coveralls. She walked up to him quietly.

"Dan," she said softly.

He wheeled around. His face was streaked with grease, but he managed to be dignified.

"What are you doing here?" he said sternly. "Didn't you get my letter?"

"Yes," Roen smiled. "I came to answer it—in person."

He grinned. He started to take her into his arms, then remembered his grimy coveralls and hands. But Roen didn't care. She came close to him and put her arms around his neck. "I'm glad you're poor and a nobody like me," she assured him.

"But, Roen darling," he argued, "I make only forty dollars a week."

"I make much less than that."

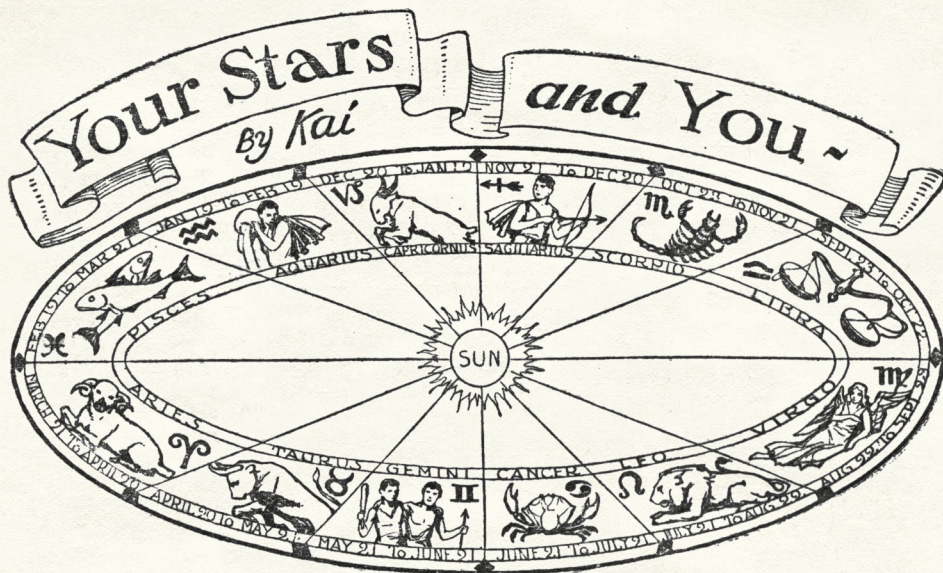
"And I'm only a mechanic here."

"Head mechanic," she corrected.

"I'm only a five-and-ten-cent-store salesgirl."

"You are not!" he said, and the beloved grin returned to his face. "You're my million-dollar baby!" And he forgot his grimy hands and face and coveralls long enough to press a kiss on her willing lips.





YOUR WEEK

This is a disconcerting and unsettled week. Mental disturbance and excessive physical reactions will produce unhappy developments. For those people who are under the direct influence of the planetary positions at this time, the aspects during the immediate seven days will have far-reaching effects. These current aspects are intensely emotional. Perhaps some of you can recall the events and personal developments during the latter two weeks in April of this year. This interval we are experiencing now is similar to that period in its significance for change, readjustment, establishment of personal equilibrium, and the inclination to make drastic decisions. Those of you who are perplexed and disturbed over your emotional affairs at this time should not attempt to settle these matters during the immediate seven days. You can save yourself much personal misery if you avoid taking definite action now. Prior to Thursday of this week, important matters should be treated with utmost care, and your schedule should include only those affairs which are in the line of routine and duty. You will note in the "Day By Day" section of this current department there is a New Moon and an Eclipse of the Sun on Wednesday afternoon. The planetary aspects this week are correlated with the Grand Conjunction of Neptune and Jupiter on September 18th. In subsequent issues of this magazine, next week and the week following, we shall talk more

about this Grand Conjunction. The joining of Jupiter and Neptune in the heavens is not a common occurrence planetarily, and its effect should be understood as clearly as possible. The influence of the Eclipse this week will be felt by those with birthdays during the last eight days of any month. If your birthday occurs at that period of the month, look ahead and be sure you are right before making a definite move.

DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time

Saturday,
August
27th

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There are few planetary influences to-day which are adaptable to an undisturbed frame of mind or to a harmonious relationship with people. The day is disturbed, restless, and turbulent. To speak specifically, until four thirty-five p. m. to-day every one will have to be upon his guard emotionally and verbally. The morning hours are not as unsettled as the afternoon hours, but it would be wise to keep complete control of oneself and use premeditation in handling all affairs with others. The evening hours are emotional and disintegrating. Pleasure will be the keynote of the evening.

Sunday,
August
28th



Yesterday I warned you about the turbulence of the afternoon. There is an overhanging influence from yesterday which is in force until midnight of this evening's hours. This entire day is most unsatisfactory and unproductive. To-day is one that will require poise and deliberate action. Avoid morbid reactions and quarreling with those closely connected with your life. Domestic and emotional matters are taboo. Your personal influences will be the prevailing keynote to the trend of the hours throughout the day and the evening. The aspects from the planets overnight are improved, after one a. m.

Monday,
August
29th



This is a much better day than the two previously described. The hours until two o'clock in the afternoon will carry a note of dissatisfaction and a tendency to brood upon the happenings of the past few days. Ignore inward feelings and use the hours for routine and business matters. The better time for commercial affairs is in the afternoon until five thirty p. m. The trend of the evening hours is decidedly pleasurable. One may make the evening constructive by discussion, tangible effort that is predicated upon an objective, and by creative effort, especially ideas and work which deal with advertising, literary effort, and any endeavor which is consequential to one's purpose of living.

Tuesday,
August
30th



Until the noon hour to-day, the hours are pleasant, harmonious, active, aggressive, and suitable for the matters which are important to your routine and program. Until nine thirty this evening there is very little of an adverse quality in the planetary aspects which is disturbing, except an undercurrent of nervousness and excitability. The evening hours are O. K. if one

remains calm and unimaginative personally. Otherwise, you may proceed confidently in your particular channel of activity and allow your ideas to take tangible and practical form in your mind for your future procedure. In an emotional way, it is better to use control in handling the happenings and developments this evening.

Wednesday,
August
31st



This is a day that should be handled in sections. The outlook is not favorable from the standpoint of personal reactions and individual impressions. This is one of the most forceful and important days we have experienced this year. There is no way the astrologer can advise you concerning the developments at this time. You know your personal conditions better than I do. All I can suggest is that you think twice before acting to-day and realize you have a planetary force which is powerful to handle and endure. We have a New Moon and an Eclipse of the Sun at two fifty-eight p. m. Prior to that hour, hold important matters in abeyance. During the afternoon and evening hours, affairs relating to routine and duty should comprise the only aggressive effort engaging your attention. The main thing to remember to-day is self-control and consideration for the other fellow. Do not change plans previously made; be kind to those who are your domestic associates; ignore superficial annoyances. The particular significance of to-day is covered in the section of the department "Your Week."

Thursday,
September
1st



The main trend to-day is more settled and less hectic, but we have to pass an influence of Jupiter and Saturn at eight thirty o'clock to-morrow morning before we are finished with strain and upheaval. General effort will

bring you a fairly satisfactory day, and there is an underlying note of constructive results. Until one p. m. the hours are favorable for general business activity, writing, and creative work. Between noon and four thirty o'clock in the afternoon there is a pleasant and sociable influence. The evening hours are quiet, stable, and constructive. This is a good day to sum up your qualifications and eliminate the factors in your life which have impeded your personal and material progress.

Friday,
September
2nd

♀

After nine o'clock this morning the hours are fairly good, but it will require vigor and concentration to keep on the job. There is an undertone of nervousness and irritability until three thirty p. m. The remainder of the afternoon and evening are pleasant. The entire day is generally adaptable to routine business. New expansion and ideas may be considered and inaugurated to-day which may be effected next week.

IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN—

March 21st and April 20th
(Aries ♈)

—emotional disturbance, sensitivity, undesirable physical reactions, and difficulty with employment is the indication at this time if born between March 23rd and 29th. There will be a recurrence of business difficulties and an adjustment of routine, mixed with serious and practical reactions, if you were born on or near April 19th. Trouble in the emotional department of your life and unsatisfactory relationships domestically and with the opposite sex are indicated for April 5th to 15th folks. Changes, readjustments, mental upheaval, and a new outlook upon life is the message of the stars for Aries people born on or near April 12th and 13th.

April 20th and May 21st
(Taurus ♉)

—this is a fairly good period and an opportune time for the Taureans born between April 22nd and 28th. This group should take advantage of new contacts and chan-

nels of activity in order to make 1933 a banner year. Stable influences from the planets are operating for you if born on or near May 20th. The folks born near this latter date had the same influence last winter, and you should make a final readjustment in order to obtain benefit from the oncoming planetary aspects. This is an unusually stimulating mental period for the Taureans born between May 6th and 16th, and your relationship with others, especially in affairs of the heart, will be pleasant and satisfactory.

May 21st and June 21st
(Gemini ♊)

—home and domestic conditions are upset and carry expense for Gemini people born between May 23rd and 29th. You would also find emotional affairs disturbing at this time; you should be most cautious in all financial matters. Practical consideration of important factors and a serious outlook is indicated for you Geminians born on or near June 21st. If born between June 6th and 16th, this is a pleasant period, an emotional time, but a period of changed outlook and changed conditions. The people in this latter group who are engaged in literary work or commercial activity should concentrate now on creative and productive effort—a generally good period for you folks.

June 21st and July 21st
(Cancer ♋)

—Cancerians born between June 24th and 29th should be in a fairly pleasant frame of mind these days. You are operating under inspirational and stimulating influences. These days should not be passed over in a lethargic manner; use your favorable influences constructively. Changes and undesirable circumstances are indicated if born between July 7th and 17th. Be cautious in all matters relating to credit and business. The current period is critical and particularly annoying if born on or near July 22nd. Excessive personal feelings, especially relating to partnership and domestic matters, may lead you to make mistakes at this time. Be as cautious and deliberate as possible in making any kind of a decision.

July 21st and August 22nd
(Leo ♌)

—most of you Leo people are operating under fairly good influences at this time, except those born around August 22nd. Those whose birthdays fall on or near that

date will have employment and health complications, but your judgment and outlook are being influenced by the stable planet Saturn, and you should use the influence in a constructive and settling manner. Changes, travel, good judgment, mental stimulation, and pleasant contacts are indicated if born between August 7th and 18th. There will be excessive emotional reactions at this time if born between July 25th and 31st. My advice to this last-mentioned group is to ignore new emotional interests and use your favorable influences for planning ways and means to increase your income and material security.

August 22nd and September 23rd (Virgo ♍)

—all Virgo people are receiving the full influence of planetary aspects at the moment. These fall months are yours specifically, and the returns from all your efforts made will be felt in a negative or positive manner in 1933. It is really up to you individually. For some of you there will be increased emotions, love interests, domestic felicity, and the opportunity to make money. Most of the Virgo folks are very practical people, but they need enlarged vision. Those of you who have influences for expansion and inspiration at this time were born between August 23rd and 31st. The current week is stimulating and good for friendly contact if born between September 8th and 17th. The stable and serious planet Saturn is operating in the lives of those of you with a birthday immediately prior to or on September 22nd. This latter group should clean their material and mental houses and prepare the foundation for big things within the next twelve months.

September 23rd and October 22nd (Libra ♎)

—you Librans born between October 9th and 18th will find the present week and the current period very disturbing. Your influences are not the best that could be desired, and most of the upheaval will be emotional, and will be felt in the domestic and partnership departments of your life. My advice to the above group is to make no drastic decisions, keep your emotions under control, and change your present outlook upon life so that you may reach balance and an intelligent perspective. If born on or prior to October 23rd, this is a dull and unhappy period. Do not attempt to adjust your domestic affairs now or transact business dealings with

property. Better influences are ahead for you, and it would be better to wait, if possible. This is an inspired and opportune time for you if born between September 25th and October 1st. Avoid secret emotional affairs.

October 22nd and November 21st (Scorpio ♏)

—further stabilization, a balanced outlook, and similar reactions to those of last spring is the indication for the Scorpio people born prior to or on November 21st and 22nd. This is a favorable time for love interests and casual enjoyment if born between November 8th and 17th, but you have contradictory and mixed influences for health and business affairs; there will be mental disturbance and worry for this latter group, likewise. The current period is favorable and adaptable for adjusting old misunderstandings for the Scorpions born between October 25th and November 1st. Maintain a sound and practical viewpoint about business affairs and plan a schedule now which will materialize during the early months next year.

November 21st and December 20th (Sagittarius ♐)

—Sagittarians will find their minds active and alert this week, and most of you folks born between December 8th and 17th are under influences for change, travel, and increased business. For this latter group employment matters will not proceed so smoothly, and there will be health complications. Stable thinking, good judgment, and that eliminating process for a smoother existence is indicated for you if born on or prior to December 21st. Emotional upheaval, disconcerting inner feelings, the liability to health irritation, and the tendency to be very impractical is the message of the stars for you if born between November 24th and 30th.

December 20th and January 19th (Capricorn ♑)

—the Capricornians born on or just prior to January 20th are operating under similar influences to those of late last winter. This is a final fling of Saturn in your direction, and if you act shrewdly and logically now, you stand a good chance to benefit from the favorable influences coming your way in 1933. Excellent influences for new projects, ventures, expansion, and a renewed grip upon yourself and your schedule of existence is the indication if born between December 24th and 30th. The

influences are not so favorable for you who were born between January 6th and 15th. Most of your troubles will be with marriage and business partners, and in connection with heart interests. Try to maintain a sound balance and an intelligent viewpoint. These aspects of the present time are not everlasting, you know.

January 19th and February 19th
(Aquarius ♒)

—you Aquarians born prior to or on February 19th are operating again under a stabilizing and sound influence of Saturn. You should reorganize your existence and your outlook at this time, so that you may progress during the coming winter months. The current influences are disturbing and upsetting physically if born between February 23rd and 29th; this latter group should not allow themselves to become imaginative and visionary about business affairs, either. If you are an Aquarian born between February 5th and 14th, the current period is changeable; but changes always bring disruptive mental and physical reactions. You will make the changes, so you might as well work with your influences instead of against them.

February 19th and March 21st
(Pisces ♓)

—Pisceans born between March 5th and 15th are under aspects from the planets which indicate change, love affairs, and concentration upon business. There is a stable and settled influence in your lives if born on or prior to March 20th. Now is the time for you to exert yourself and make a constructive effort to rearrange your method of living and sum up your qualifications so that you can make progress in the immediate future instead of standing still. The influences are most disturbing and productive of restlessness and nervousness for the Pisceans born between February 22nd and 28th. A child born between these days will be difficult to handle, and adults with a birthday at that time will find partnerships and emotional matters upsetting and deceptive.

CHATTING WITH KAI

The skipper of this department is rushing in where the most angelic astrologers fear to tread. I am forced to become technical in a popular astrological column! Do most of you customers realize this department is written to each of you individually, yet must appeal to, and be definite in its explanation for three or four million read-

ers? Well, this is a frank talk from Kai to you, you, and you.

I wish to explain to the regular readers and to any of you who are interested casually in the accuracy and workings of this "Star" department, that it is written purely from mathematical facts correlated with astrological knowledge—just what it is all about, and how you may use these paragraphs to advantage.

Many of my correspondents and readers are familiar with the details of astrological laws. There are many students who know what I am trying to say. I know this because they write and tell me so.

Let us take the department in the order it is given. The section "Your Week" is a general outline of the major positions of the planets for the seven days included between the dates of each issue. Those of you who have checked my paragraphs for the past two years know this blanket description is as complete an explanation as it is possible to give in a general way.

The "Day By Day" is a description of the general and local planetary influences that prevail each day, and which may be relied upon as describing as nearly as possible the effect of the positions of the planets in their relation to you, materially, emotionally, spiritually, and superficially.

The section labeled "If You Were Born Between—" is more technical than any description embodied in these columns. None of the statements I give you is guesswork. Each week's charts are drawn and interpreted as accurately as possible. Now, often you will note that I say "born between, on, or near such and such a date." This means exactly what it says. Allow three or four days on either side of the date given. Many of you do not know that the astrologer deals with degrees, minutes, and seconds. It is necessary in this department that I maintain flexible dates. When a certain date is given, you are supposed to apply the information intelligently in your own particular case. Do not read or interpret too literally. Use plain, ordinary common sense in reading these lines and in applying them to yourself.

The "Star Question Box" speaks for itself. I read your letters and consider them carefully. When you receive an answer through these pages, you may be assured the information contained herein is obtained from your personal chart—when a time of birth is sent to me.

Space does not permit me to answer all of you, but serious questions are treated

with all the sincerity, technical care, and seriousness that I would devote to you if you were in my studio and discussing your personal affairs with me across my desk. Do not forget that every letter is received and handled confidentially.

There are matters which may not be printed in these columns. Where it is possible to answer you in an indirect way, if the matter is too personal, I shall do so. Follow the rules and the data requirements stated at the end of this department. The editor of Love Story Magazine, Street & Smith, and myself are maintaining this department for you. We hope you like it and, if you do, that you will say so. This is your department. Do not forget that. I send you greetings and remain always Faithfully yours, KAI.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ THE STAR QUESTION BOX ★
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Mr. W. J. S., born April 27, 1901, New York, time unknown: Cannot tell you specifically about going into the new business, without your time of birth. The general positions in your chart indicate new and conservative business interests, if you are cautious and have tenacity of purpose to pursue the course you choose.

Mrs. C. E. H., born July 4, 1898, Massachusetts, eight-thirty a. m.: I may be too late to be of much help to you. Advise you to go to court and try to get a settlement concerning the accident. You have a good chance to win the suit.

L. B. L., born May 21, 1897, Illinois, seven a. m.: Yes, many Gemini and Pisces people make the mistake of entering that state designated as the "holy bonds of matrimony." It just does not work. Piscean temperaments are too phlegmatic for the Geminians, especially when the woman is born under the June sign. Your letter was most interesting. Sorry not to have answered you sooner, but—oh, well, you know how it is with those busy astrologers. Our magazine space just will not accommodate the thousands of letters that are received weekly. Take a tip from me and leave all serious thought about men in the background until after January, 1933. You are O. K. in the writing profession. I would not cease trying, if I were you. Better influences are coming your way in 1933, especially during the

fall months. You were not born under the sign Taurus. Your Sun and Mercury are in Gemini; Moon in Aquarius; Venus in Taurus. You have a good chart and should not allow temporary conditions to upset your particular apple cart. Let me hear from you again soon.

Put those feet on the ground, A. E. R., born May 24, 1908, Illinois, eight a. m. You are allowing your emotional equipment to rule you entirely. Do not think about yourself so much. You have talent and ability and much philosophy, but you must concentrate upon something else besides yourself! Try to remain balanced and reach a happy medium. Yes, there are many changes coming to you within the next year. Your most stable influences are in the early months of 1933. Your most productive and beneficial months are in the fall of 1933.

M. F., June 29, 1908, about three p. m., Maine: You certainly landed upon me with both feet! Well, I am sorry and thank you for your patience. Delayed answers through this department are absolutely unavoidable. There are changes for you now and throughout the fall and winter. Your financial conditions should improve immediately if you will avail yourself of all new channels of expression and take advantage of opportunities that are coming your way. The fall and winter of 1933 are excellent for you, and it is a period when you may cash in on effort expended in the interim.

H. L. K., born August 6, 1878, Illinois, between six and eight in the morning: Yes, you are under favorable planetary directions, and I do not see any reason why the remainder of the year should not be very profitable and satisfactory. Do not close your mind against changes if they come your way. Any readjustment will be O. K. eventually.

Miss L. E., born July 25, 1901, five a. m., place not stated: No, I do not like some of the indications as shown in your chart and that of the November man. I fear you are laboring under illusions about many things at this time. I suggest you face the facts squarely and be prepared for an adjustment of temperaments if you marry this man.

Mr. M. B., born March 6, 1915, Illinois, three a. m.: Stay away from hypnotism! You are under influences at this time which

are very harmful to yourself if you dabble around with the forces of space. I suggest you go into radio or photography.

Mr. B. L. C., born August 2, 1914, Iowa, seven thirty a. m.: Yes, young man, your plans for a literary career, or rather journalism, are O. K. I believe you will make a good newspaperman. Get yourself a job on any kind of newspaper and work up from the bottom.

P. L. W., born March 11, 1905, Ohio, six a. m.: You will have to be very careful and practical in all business dealings during the next six months. You are subject to deceptive influences from outside sources. Keep your emotional equipment under strict control, and under no circumstances allow personal interests or feelings to interfere with your professional interest.

I. N. R., born October 13, 1877, Michigan, six a. m.: Thank you for your letter. Perhaps you have made a mistake in working solely with an ulterior motive. It appears to me as if your brother-in-law will remarry this fall or early next year. You should not force the financial issue at this time. Your chart indicates loss through a man close to you. Do not give up entirely; just wait. The year 1935 brings material gain to you. The fall months of 1935 bring opportunity and financial benefit to your nephew. You will have to use all your cleverness, tact, and ingenuity to avoid a complete break in this peculiar relationship. You had better write me again and let me know how the situation stands at the time you read this.

B. C. S., born February 3, 1911, seven thirty a. m., Illinois: No, I suggest you get out of the army. You will find conditions difficult during this year and it is not the best time to make a change, but

you are going to become more dissatisfied as the months progress. You should go into business or take up aviation. You would enjoy the aerial division of Uncle Sam's defensive forces much more than the army. Your best influences ahead are in the fall months of 1933.

M. T. J., born March 22, 1907, Scotland, six thirty a. m.: I suggest you put the March man out of your life. This is not a good match for you, and this is not the proper time for you to be tied up emotionally.

Miss L. K., born July 4, 1888, Massachusetts, ten forty-five a. m.: You do not state clearly just the thing you wish to do. You should have elaborated upon the environment and just what plans you have made. The general positions in your chart are indicative of a change that is beneficial.

WHY QUESTIONS ARE NOT ANSWERED

Miss O. P., June 30, 1903, Canada: You did not ask a question.

Mrs. S. O. S., September 12, 1902: I must know the nature of your trouble before I can answer your question.

Mrs. M. K., New Jersey, November 2, 1890; husband, May 26, 1887: I must know the nature of the business you and your husband are in.

Mrs. J. N., January 26, 1907: What profession are you in?

Mrs. B. L., May 26, 1907: What kind of business do you intend starting?

M. W. G., July 28, 1893: Your letter was not clear. Just what is the matter?

Editor's Note: Questions for this department are answered only through Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine. Each reader is allowed to ask one question. Be sure to give the following data in your letter: date, month, year, and place of birth, the hour of the day or night, if possible, and sex. Address your letters to KAI, care of this magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.





The Friendliest Corner

By MARY MORRIS



Miss Morris will help you to
make friends



Miss Mary Morris, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Morris will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. All reasonable care will be exercised in the introduction of correspondents. If any unsatisfactory letters are received by our readers, the publishers would appreciate their being sent to them. Please sign your name and address when writing. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Friendliest Corner, so that mail can be forwarded.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

ACTORS make good friends. Here's a young man of the stage and screen who promises sincere friendship and is ready to back up that promise with the sort of letters that will make life eventful. He knows the thrills of Hollywood; he's worked with your favorite stars; he's traveled extensively in his twenty-six years of crowded, accomplished living. Boys, let him tell you what your handwriting reveals. Let him describe life back stage and on moving-picture location. Let him broaden your knowledge of music and writing. Talk over the real, vital interests of to-day with some one who's interested in you. Are you modern, broad-minded, interested in life? Then H. von H. is your Pal!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man of twenty-six, blond, and six feet tall. I've been in the theater for a number of years

—in vaudeville and an organist. For some time I've been with a famous moving-picture company in Hollywood. I've spent some time abroad, and have lived in almost every State in this country. My chief interests are music, which I write constantly, and short-story writing. My hobby is graphology. I'd like to make some sincere and interesting friends. I'm rather serious-minded, love beauty, am modern and broad-minded. I hope I may prove interesting to you Pals.

H. VON H.

A lover of indoor baseball.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am very lonesome for some Pen Pals. I am a girl, eighteen years old, love all sports, especially swimming, horseback riding, and indoor baseball.

I will feel happy if you could find me some friends from all over.

SUNNYSIDE EM.

She's interested in radios and housework, but not boys.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of nineteen, and would like to know some of

LS-9C

the girls of my age, what they like to talk about, where they go, and what their hobbies are. My hobbies are radio and housework, but no fellows. D. E. S.

An understanding boy who's interested in German and psychology.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man of twenty-one, five feet eight inches tall, and weigh one hundred and thirty-five pounds. I would like to correspond with boys from nineteen to thirty years of age.

I'm a high-school graduate, and have also attended college. I live in sunny California and would especially welcome letters from here, but will answer all letters and exchange snapshots. German and psychology are my favorite subjects; dancing and swimming are my diversions. All you boys who want an understanding Pal, please write to

CALIFORNIA COLLEGIAN.

Ritty's pet hobby is photography.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I join your Corner? I am a young married woman of twenty-five. My pet hobby is photography, but I am interested in travel, sports, and music. I am anxious to have friends in every State in the Union.

I have traveled much and can furnish pictures of interesting places to all who write. Let's see who'll be the first!

RITTY.

Be a sport and write to Irish Rose, girls!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young girl of eighteen, with brown hair and big brown eyes. I would like to hear from Pen Pals from all over the world. Like swimming, dancing, and hiking. I assure you, I will answer all letters. Come on, girls; be good sports and send me some letters.

IRISH ROSE.

A modern miss who will soon be a "Mrs."

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a modern miss, not quite eighteen, a little over five feet, and weigh ninety-eight pounds. Have been going steady for a year, and intend to get married soon. Won't all you girls please write to me? I promise speedy replies. Love swimming, dancing, tennis, and most sports. Am peppy and full of fun.

SKEEZIX OF CHICAGO.

You can be assured of your letters being answered here, girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young girl, seventeen years of age, and would like to hear from Pen Pals from all over the world. I like all sports, especially hiking, dancing, swimming, and parties. I can assure you that all letters will be answered promptly.

WASHINGTON ROSEBUD.

Pen Pals are only one of his four hundred and sixty-seven ambitions.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: One of my four hundred and sixty-seven ambitions is to have lots of Pen Pals. Can you help me? Come on, boys; grab your portables and a stack of paper, and let me know of your interests. My chief hobbies are the radio, music, sports, movies, and dancing. I am twenty-three and—well, I'll tell you the rest of my secrets if you will write to me.

SIMPLE SIMON.

Get started with those letters to Mozelle, girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I want some Pen Pals! I am fourteen years old, and sometimes very lonely. I like all sports, especially dancing and swimming. I wish some Girl Scouts would write and tell me all about themselves. Let's get started, girls.

MOZELLE.

Her special hobby is stamp collecting.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm twenty-five, married, and have a daughter two years old. My chief hobby is stamp collecting, and I'd love to hear from Pen Pals from all over the world.

STAMPS.

Sunburst lives on a large oilfield.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a farm girl of sixteen summers, interested in poetry, drawing, and having a good time.

So come on, Pals; write to a girl living in the world's largest oilfield.

SUNBURST.

A dancing girl who wants to become famous.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young girl, have blue eyes, and weigh one hundred and thirteen pounds. I love music, and enjoy all sports. I am a dancer and en-

tertainers, and my great ambition is to become a widely known stage dancer. Come on, Pals; write to a

DANCING DAUGHTER.

Anything you want to know about, from acting to teaching school.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would you please find me some Pen Pals? I'm a young man of twenty-five, a school-teacher, with curly hair and fairly good-looking. I've done some acting and dancing on the stage. I'll answer any and all letters. Please write to me, boys from all over. R. M. B.

She can write just as many letters with her left hand, girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who would like to write to a left-handed little girl from California? I am seventeen years old, a brunette, with blue eyes. I like skating and hiking, but don't get a chance to do much of either. Hurry up, girls, and send me some letters

LEFTY DOYE.

A good listener for you people with troubles.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of twenty-eight, married, and happy. I'd like to hear from girls, married or single. I am interested in horseback riding, tennis, skating, dancing, and, most of all, cooking.

Come on, all you girls between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty-five; write to me and tell me all your troubles, and I'll show you what a good listener I can be.

HELEN TOOTS.

Add this traveling girl to your list of Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a fifteen-year-old girl who has traveled all through the West Indies and to many places in the United States; in fact, I am very fond of travel and adventure. Come on, girls, and add one more Pen Pal to your list. Write to me, and I will tell you of my many adventures. Will exchange photos with all who write. PORTO RICAN GIRL.

Hear about that marble town in the hills of Vermont.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I join your Corner? I am a junior in high school, have brown curly hair, blue eyes, and am six-

teen years old. I love all sports, with swimming, tennis, dancing, reading, and basket ball as my favorites.

I live in the largest marble town in the world, situated here among the green hills of Vermont. Please, won't all you girls write to me? I promise to answer every letter received.

REENIE.

Have you a little friendship left for Chuck, boys?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young man, twenty-five years old, weigh one hundred and forty-two pounds, and have brown wavy hair and blue eyes.

I'm terribly lonesome and long to hear from some one who would be a friend to me.

CHUCK.

Excitement is her middle name.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't somebody please write to me? I'm just another French girl in a strange city, and have plenty of time to write letters. I enjoy swimming, dancing, and hiking, or anything that's exciting. I'm seventeen, have light-brown hair and blue eyes. I'll appreciate hearing from any one, and will exchange snaps with those who care to.

FRENCH EDNA.

Football, wrestling, and swimming seem to be the leading sports.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a fellow, twenty-three years old, have blond hair and blue eyes. I am interested in football, wrestling, and swimming. I will be only too glad to answer all the letters that come my way, and will be sure to make them interesting.

WASHINGTON VERN.

A lover of song and dance.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to correspond with some of your Pen Pals. I am a married woman of twenty-five, have brown eyes and hair and a sun-tan complexion. I love all outdoor sports, especially fishing and hiking, and love to dance, sing, and listen to the radio. So come on, Pen Pals, and write to

WINKIE.

Some letters will keep her busy.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of twenty, living just outside the capital of Canada. I keep house for my father and a family of five, as my mother is dead. I love all kinds of sports, and have lots of

time to write to Pen Pals, so please keep me busy by sending lots of letters.

DELORIS OF CANADA.

Bring some news of the outside world to this invalid.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am an invalid and very lonesome. I am a fellow, twenty-two years of age, and have been sick since I was eight. I have never been outside of the State of Pennsylvania, and have no friends. So please, boys, won't you write to me? I would like to hear from pen friends from all over the world.

INVALID AL.

She certainly likes a lot of things.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would somebody like to correspond with a green-eyed blonde from golden California? I like horses, dogs, and birds, play polo, swim, and hike. I enjoy good concerts, music of all kinds, literature, and love to dance. In fact, I like everything that's nice in this jolly old world. Please, girls, write to me.

M. A. OF CALIFORNIA.

Exchange school topics with Pansy of Vermont.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of thirteen, with blond hair and blue eyes. I love all sports, especially swimming, skating, and golf.

I would like to hear from any one who would care to write to me, and promise to answer all letters received.

PANSY OF VERMONT.

Keep this lonesome wife busy by sending lots of mail.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would you please help a lonesome wife get some Pals? I am twenty years old, and my hobbies are dancing and swimming and reading.

Will exchange photos with all who write, so come, on, all you Pals, and keep my mailman busy.

HAMPTON WIFE.

Doing Asiatic duty on the high seas.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a sailor on the U. S. S. *Beaver*, and am now doing Asiatic duty. I will leave here shortly for Honolulu, and sure will be glad to get home, for I've been away from the States for six years.

I certainly would love to have Pen Pals from all over. How about it, boys?

ASIATIC SAILOR.

A widow who is left all alone is fond of the outdoors.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a widow, left all alone, forty-two years old, and weigh one hundred and thirty pounds. I am fond of the outdoors, like music, shows, and, above all, like to write letters. Would like Pals from everywhere, and will answer all letters. Do not keep me waiting.

GOOD PAL.

Boys, give the mailman a reason to stop at his door.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to join your Pen Pal corner. I am a young fellow, interested in swimming, dancing, and other outdoor sports. I am not working, and have plenty of time to answer letters, and promise to write interesting ones, too! Here's hoping the mailman stops at my house with loads of mail.

BILL OF MILWAUKEE.

A golden-brown-haired girl whose hobby is swimming.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I join your Friendliest Corner? I am a young girl of twenty-one, have golden-brown hair and brown eyes. I would love to hear from Pen Pals from all over the world.

My chief hobby is swimming, but I also like to dance and skate. I promise to answer all letters, and will exchange snapshots. So come on, girls, and write to me.

OHIO DORIS.

Sports suit him fine.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a boy, twenty years of age, with light-brown hair and blue eyes. My hobby is collecting pictures of radio artists, and my favorite pastime is playing the piano. As for sports, hockey and baseball, with a little box lacrosse thrown in for good measure, suit me fine.

MICKEY HIMSELF.

A young mother of twenty-one longing for Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young mother, twenty-one years old, longing for Pen Pals. I would like to hear from any one, for I've plenty of spare time to write.

I will answer every letter received, so please, girls, write to me.

NEW HAMPSHIRE DOT.

Tempest has high ambitions.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's another girl wanting to join your Friendliest Corner. I am a sixteen-year-old high-school senior, can play the piano, love to read, dance, swim, and have high ambitions. No matter what your age, or where you live, girls, be sure to write.

TEMPEST.

Massachusetts Mae will exchange anything you may wish—pictures, stamps, et cetera.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young married woman of nineteen, and have blond curly hair. I like swimming, touring, hiking, and stamp collecting.

I will correspond with any one, either married or single, and will also exchange snapshots, stamps, movie stars' pictures, or anything my Pals may wish.

MASSACHUSETTS MAE.

This golf fiend is fond of music, tennis, and dancing.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Is there just a wee bit of space left in your Corner for a lonesome blue-eyed, sandy-haired girl of eighteen? I am a senior at an academy, fond of literature, music, tennis, dancing, and just now the golf bug is under my bonnet. Out with your pen, ink, and paper, girls, and drop a few lines to

THE GOLF BUG.

Working girls between eighteen and thirty-five wanted here.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am very lonesome, as I haven't anything to do. I am twenty-five years of age, married, and have light hair and brown eyes.

I want my Pen Pals to be working girls between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five years. Come on, Pals, and write to me. I'll answer every letter received.

GERT OF NORTH CAROLINA.

A city boy with countrified ideas.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am in my early twenties, single, and a city-bred chap with countrified ideas. Through my business activities I have come in contact with many people in different parts of the country,

and, having traveled a little, I can discuss my pleasures with some of you Pen Pals. I am interested in the outdoor life, as well as music. My pen is ready for work, so please do not fail me, boys.

DERF.

A real, true Pal for the price of a few letters, girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May another lonesome girl join the ranks of Pen Pals? I'm an only child, so you can see why I have much time to myself. I am not a modern girl, neither am I old-fashioned, but like all sports, music, drawing, painting, and reading.

I am twenty-seven years old, have brown wavy hair and blue eyes. So, if some one will write to me, I will be a real, true Pal to them.

A LONE CHICK.

A far traveler, a daring adventurer, seeks friendship.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please let a long-absent American boy enter your Corner. I have traveled all over this wide world, and sure would love to have some Pals. To the first ten who write to me I will send a curio.

I have visited places where no white people had ever been before, and, believe me, boys, I can write about some real thrilling adventures.

AMERICA'S OWN.

She can tell you about two States.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Writing letters is one of my pet hobbies; therefore, I should be delighted to have some Pen Pal write to me. I am a girl, sixteen years old, in my third year in high school and interested in swimming, hiking, tennis, and dancing.

It will afford me a great deal of pleasure to write to you and tell you about the fascinating city of New York, and also about my State, New Jersey.

NEW JERSEY JOAN.

This young married couple are hoping for lots of letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a married girl of twenty-one, and would love to have lots of Pen Pals, especially a few foreign ones. I am interested in everything and save postmarks. My husband would like to hear from men who have traveled. We

both will answer all letters received, and do hope we get lots of them from all over.

JIM AND GEN.

A Texas girl who plays the accordion.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't just every one, from everywhere, write to a nineteen-year-old Texas girl whose hobby is writing letters and playing the accordion? Will answer all letters, so come on, Pals interested in this wonderful State of mine, and write to

BIT OF TEXAS.

Get in on this fast and enduring correspondence train, boys.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a fellow of nineteen, and find life quite interesting. My interests are many and varied, and I'm sure that I could interest any and every one.

No one, anywhere, is barred from writing, and, in fact, all are invited to get in touch with me for a fast and enduring correspondence.

NERTS.

A little girl who has traveled.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May a seventeen-year-old girl who loves to have friends join your Friendliest Corner? I love dancing, tennis, the movies, and have traveled in nearly all the States, and sure can tell a lot of interesting tales. I would like to hear from girls from all over.

JUNE BUG.

An organist who also plays the guitar.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Just a few lines from an eighteen-year-old St. Louis boy who would like to find some Pen Pals. I am interested in aviation, dancing, and moving pictures. I play a guitar and organ, and am interested in swimming and horseback riding.

FUZZY.

Girls, get the rhythm of those coed blues.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of seventeen, have brown hair, gray eyes, and weigh one hundred and fourteen pounds. I take part in all sports, especially tennis and bowling.

I have recently organized a coed orchestra, and I do a bit of tap dancing, and play the piano and saxophone. I have

many friends, but would love to have some Pen Pals.

COED'S ORCHESTRA.

Dublin Nora promises speedy replies.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please try and get me some Pen Pals? I am just a young married girl of eighteen, and have loads of time on my hands. Please, every one, married or single, young or old, write to me, and I'll promise a speedy answer.

DUBLIN NORA.

This boy from Manhattan also wants friends.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young man, twenty-two years old, am six feet tall, and weigh one hundred and fifty-five pounds. I'd like to write to some boys who would really be true friends.

MANHATTAN BOBBY.

Artists, here's a new field of design.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young man in my middle twenties, and my work consists of designing and making art glass. I've traveled quite a bit in this country and Central America. I like swimming, mountain hiking, horseback riding, boating, motoring, tennis, golf, and music.

JUST FRANK.

This sport lover is full of pep.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl, eighteen years of age, and would like Pen Pals from all over the world. I have brown hair, blue eyes, and all sports are my hobbies. I am full of pep and love to dance. Won't every one please write to me?

KEARNEY ANN.

Talk about stage training with a veteran trouser.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of sixteen, a blonde with blue eyes. I take toe, acrobatic, tap, and classic dancing, also sing, take elocution lessons, and play the accordion, piano, violin, and banjo.

I have a studio here where I teach twenty-three pupils dancing and elocution, and have traveled all over the United States and Cuba. I have danced on the stage since I was four years old, and will tell you all about it. Please, every one, write to me.

A TALENTED GIRL.

He'll tell you about the excitement of winning a basket-ball game.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder if you will let me join your Friendliest Corner? I am a seventeen-year-old boy and a junior in high school. I like the movies, books, sports, and played on the basket-ball team last year. I should like to hear from fellows of any age from anywhere.

INDIANA BILL.

Write to this high-school boy living on a four-hundred-acre farm.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a call for Pen Pals from a boy in Nebraska. I am sixteen years of age, and am a soph in high school. I live on a four-hundred-acre farm and enjoy all outdoor sports, also tennis, dancing, baseball, and fishing. Won't all you boys, from all over, please write to me?

NEBRASKA JERRY.

Topsy Turvy wants Pals from out West or down South.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Just another girl who wants Pen Pals. Come on, girls; won't you write to me? I am twenty years old, have brown, naturally curly hair, and blue eyes. I'm fond of sports, dancing, and would like to hear from Pals out West or down South. I'll answer letters from any one who writes to me, no matter where she lives.

TOPSY TURVY.

A college graduate with a master's degree.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: All my life I've lived in a large city where friends were plentiful, but business suddenly took me to a little village in northern New York. I'm a boy of twenty-seven, and a college graduate with a master's degree; play the violin and piano, like all activities, especially swimming, and hate to be alone with no one to enjoy the week-end drives I always take through the neighboring mountains and lakes. I have always listened sympathetically to the troubles of others, and will certainly guarantee an answer to your letters.

BILLY BEAVER.

A woman from the city of Japanese orange blossoms.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married girl of twenty-one, and although I have many Pals, one can never have too

many. Would like to hear from girls of my age, married or single, who like to make novelties of all kinds, scrapbooks, or who like children. Come on, good friends, and I'll promise to write an interesting letter.

ELLA OF D. C.

Just another seventeen-year-old blue-eyed girl.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl, seventeen years old, with dark hair and blue eyes. I enjoy many hobbies, especially writing and dancing. I would like to hear from Pals all over the world. So drop me a line, girls, and I promise true friendship.

FLO OF WORCESTER.

Hollywood's an old story to him.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I was injured in a plane smash-up. My companion was killed, but I escaped with my life, even though I did have just about every bone in my body broken.

I am a fellow, six feet two, have blond hair and green eyes, and am twenty-four years old. I lived for years in Hollywood, and can tell something about the movies. Right now I am living on the edge of the desert, and if it weren't for the radio and the movies, I would die of loneliness.

CALIFORNIA BUDDY.

Potomac Goldie finds comfort in letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm so very lonesome and haven't many friends. Don't you think you could help me find some? I find comfort in letters. I am fourteen years old, and would like to hear from girls who are interested in nursing.

POTOMAC GOLDIE.

He's only out of the hospital a short time, so be sure to write, boys.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I enter my plea for Pen Pals? I am twenty-four, five feet five, and interested in sports, the theater, literature, art, people, and travel. I have been terribly lonesome here in the city, as my younger brother passed away last year. I have recently come out of the hospital, and have been having quite a bit of trouble with my eyes. I can't see very clearly as yet, and have to get along with the touch system on my typewriter. I would especially like to hear from boys who are interested in writing.

ARNIN.

A married woman begging for Pen Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here I come, begging for Pen Pals, and I want some that will be true-blue. I am married, and keep house, also work, and have been book-keeper for the same firm over seven years. Will appreciate letters from all ages, and am interested in everything and everybody.

UNION JACKIE.

E. W. will tell you all about Atlantic City.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young fellow, eighteen years old, with blue eyes and light-brown curly hair. I like skating, swimming, and football, and promise to answer all letters as quickly as possible. I live near that famous summer resort, Atlantic City, and can tell you anything you would like to know about it. Come on, boys.

E. W.

Every one, from everywhere, write to Vira.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young girl, sixteen years of age, with dark-brown hair and light-blue eyes. I'm very fond of the movies and all kinds of parties. Won't every one, from everywhere, write to me? I promise to be a true Pen Pal, so come on and write.

VIRA.

Nothing would please her more than some letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a curly-headed, blue-eyed blond girl of twenty. I love to dance, swim, and am a great baseball fan. I'm a stenographer, but have not been working for some time. I get awfully lonesome during the day, and nothing would please me better than to have a few Pen Pals. Come on, girls; let's get acquainted.

CURLY GERT.

Help Desperate forget her troubles, girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am very lonesome and have quite a few troubles, so won't somebody try and keep my mind occupied? I would rather write letters than do anything else. I am eighteen years of age, and would like some girls of that

age or older to write. Please help me forget, girls.

DESPERATE.

A very shy girl who needs some cheering up.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a sixteen-year-old girl, with blue eyes, auburn hair, and am five feet five inches tall. I am very shy and get lonely at times. Come on, all you gals who are, and those who are not, in the same predicament. Who will be the first to cheer up poor, shy me?

SHY JERRY.

Kewpie's sports include walking.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am sixteen years of age, and would like to get acquainted with girls from all over the world. My favorite sports are golf, dancing, swimming, and walking. I will answer all letters within twenty-four hours after they are received.

KEWPIE.

La Verne intends to enter a Marathon dance contest.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of seventeen, a senior in high school, and always on the go. I'm interested in football, as I have many boy friends on the city high-school team. I know quite a few Marathon dancers, and intend to enter a Marathon dance some time myself. Everybody, please write to me.

LA VERNE.

Peek-a-boo craves good times.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a seventeen-year-old girl who just craves good times. I have several good friends, but very few Pen Pals, so won't all you girls between the ages of fifteen and twenty please write to me? I promise faithfully to answer all letters, and will gladly exchange snapshots. O. K., girls; I'm waiting!

PEEK-A-BOO.

A boy from that far-off country of India.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to have some Pen Pals. I am a boy of twenty, stationed in India, and will be here another four years. I am a signalman in the imperial force. Boys, be sure and write to me, for I could tell lots of interesting tales about this far-off country.

SIGNALMAN FROM INDIA.



THE FRIEND IN NEED

Department Conducted by

Laura Alston Brown

Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve in these pages problems on which you desire advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.

Although Mrs. Brown receives more letters than she can possibly print in the department, she answers all the others by mail. So, lay your problem before her with the knowledge that it will have her full attention.

Address Mrs. Laura Alston Brown, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

ELLEN DEAN is discouraged. Marriage is not at all as she pictured and wanted it to be. Isn't that a familiar cry? We often expect so much more of life than seems to be coming our way. We have high hopes and our own definite ideas as to what we should be getting out of romance and marriage, and when we begin to hear the call of reality and drop down from clouds of honeymoon bliss into everyday life, we are tempted to say: "Life isn't what I've wanted it to be."

Life is very seldom what we want it to be. We can't go out and pick out certain chunks; it's handed out to us in a take-it-or-leave-it way. I want to talk to young wives this week, especially those who are finding their first, second, and even third year of marriage a bewildering affair. I can understand the constantly puzzling molehills of existence which in marriage so often

loom as large as proverbial mountains. But, before airing my workable suggestions, let us read Ellen Dean's letter:

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Perhaps you will think I am an awful coward, but after one year of marriage I'm just about ready to call quits. Do all married couples, even though they may still love each other, find marriage such a jumble of confusing incidents?

The first six months of our marriage was, I suppose, similar to that of any couple before the honeymoon bliss has worn off. We had such good times together, never quarreled, and found each other interesting. But, before the year was out, Bob began to find fault with me, and didn't mind telling me I ought to do this and that and thus and so. We quarreled about expenses, and marriage was beginning to grow stale.

I am a lover of home, and have always tried to do all I could to make our three-room apartment as attractive and comfortable as I could. Bob has a fairly good job, but he began to complain whenever I bought even the smaller household necessities without which a woman could not be expected to manage. He'd complain if

he found a new kitchen utensil or if I bought four pairs of stockings at once because it was cheaper than buying one pair at a time. The things that warped our dispositions were just little things, and they always seemed bigger than they actually were. So, to avoid further quarrels about little expenses and because I had reached the point where I just hated to ask him for a penny, I found a job and worried myself sick on the side.

No matter how hard I tried, at the end of the year things seemed to be going from bad to worse, and Bob found fault with everything I did. We just didn't seem to understand each other, and sometimes he remarked that marriage certainly tied a man down. Don't men stop to think that a woman is tied down, too; that she gives up all her personal liberty and is obliged to depend on the man for everything? There seldom were any parties and good times, and I had to economize on clothes, because Bob believed we couldn't afford this or that. Of course, as Bob went to business, he had to have good clothes and look well-dressed—so he said. But it was quite all right for little Ellen to shop in bargain basements and pick out as good a dress as she could, simply because she was supposed to think of the future and save.

Don't misunderstand me, Mrs. Brown. I'm not really bitter about all these things. I loved Bob, and I believe I still do love him as much as ever, but it seems so unfair that he should take all the glory and ease, and I should be the one to economize. Why must marriage be such a tangle? Why can't men be fairer? I'm beginning to believe that all men are selfish. Their idea of life seems to be that a wife and the responsibilities of marriage are just an imposition, if one may judge from their actions and behavior.

I suppose my story is no different from that of other young wives who find the first year so hard to pull through. I have several friends who, before the fatal first year was over, found it such tough going that they gave up and sought freedom. Now they are working again, being their own bosses, and claim they'll never marry again.

I don't want to break up my marriage, Mrs. Brown. I love our little home. I want to go on and build it up into something solid, and realize at least some of the things I've dreamed about. I want to raise a family some time, and feel that my life isn't just a succession of petty

worries, disappointments, silly little misunderstandings, and nervousness as to what Bob will say if I do this and that without consulting him. I want him to be my pal, and not feel as though he were my keeper.

I'm so terribly discouraged now and feel almost too tired to go on trying. I cannot help wondering sometimes if I wouldn't be better off on my own, though it would mean being alone again. Is there any hope for young wives who are in the same fix as I?

ELLEN DEAN.

Is there any hope? I should say there is! Of course, a woman needs plenty of grit and backbone to struggle successfully through the period of readjustment which starts with her marriage. If she doesn't struggle, she goes under, and her marriage isn't the kind of marriage she dreamed about as a young girl.

In the first place, I sincerely advise every young wife to cultivate courage. Wives, try to adjust yourselves to the changed circumstances into which marriage thrusts you. It isn't easy to have to down your own desires for the sake of keeping peace in the family. I don't mean you should be so unwise as to sacrifice all your individuality, because that gives some husbands the mistaken idea that their wives are less interesting than other women. But use your common sense and don't resort to tears when you can't have your own way or your husband seems to have turned from a sweetheart into a grouch.

Many young wives say: "John just won't listen to reason!" All right; if he won't, stop trying to make him—at the moment. Don't let your disposition get all shot to pieces; go on your way as serenely as you can. It isn't easy to break John of the bad habit of believing that he's always right and every one else is slightly wrong, but it has been done. Just how it may be done depends on the individual, but I honestly believe that the wife who

doesn't permit her husband to see how upset and annoyed she is has the best chance of reaching that phase in marriage which means a life without constant emotional upheavals.

If you must economize—and economizing is a popular necessity when the nest egg is not especially large—do the best you can. If John remarks you are extravagant, hold your breath and say you're sorry and will do better next time—even though you know you haven't a thing in the world to feel contrite about. Men do not always understand the trick of household economy, and it seems that it takes them much longer than it does women to realize that their personal freedom has been curtailed to a great degree. They often do not take their ball and chain gracefully. In matters of economy, putting up with things, and doing the best that can be done, women have a lot more gumption than men. Don't you think so, readers?

So take heart, young wives, and don't give up too easily. Be patient and try to reach some sort of understanding without hysterics. If John appears not to be too upset when you cry, don't take it for granted that he no longer loves you. Make him feel he's the best chap in the world, when he wants to be. You remember the old saying about catching more flies with sugar, don't you? Well, "subtle diplomacy" is another expression for it.

I know it's a good deal easier to hand out than to follow advice; but, just the same, the things you really want in life won't be dropped into your lap. You have to work for them in one way or another. A wife has a job as much as a stenographer has, and a wife ought to use her ingenuity to make life pleasant

for herself. The first year is a time when two people first begin actually to know each other. Many wives give up too easily, and too readily stop to consider momentary personal feelings instead of keeping an eye on the future. That goes for the husbands, too, as they often seem to forget their wives are human beings who have a right to retain their individuality. Wives, find out what causes friction, try to eliminate the cause, and the problems of marriage will be greatly diminished.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: My problem is on my mind so much that I just can't keep it to myself any longer. I must tell some one how I feel.

I am twenty-two years old, and have been married for nearly two months. What I want to tell you may sound rather peculiar to you. I am in love with another boy, instead of with my husband. He is one year my junior, while my husband is two years my senior. Anyway, we're all grown-ups.

I have known the man I married for six years, and I have gone with him almost that long. I thought I loved him more than life itself until I went to college and met this other boy, whom I loved from the start more than I can explain. It was so different from my first love. For a long time I thought I loved both of them, but finally I could see my love was fading for my old sweetheart. He had done so much for me, had seen me through trouble, seen my tears, seen me happy, and still stuck; but I let this new love step right in. I saw him at school every day, went to shows, dinners, dances, and to his home, until seeing him became a great part of my life. It seemed that nothing else mattered.

This dream of happiness lasted for six months, then my old sweetheart saw he was losing out and worked fast and fought hard to hold me. I had still played around with him. I know now that I shouldn't have, but he knew that I had changed. Our marriage came much sooner than we had planned. He had done more for me than every one but my family knew about. He financed me through college and gave me money when I needed it. I felt that I shouldn't have taken his money; but I

could see no harm, as we were engaged and I was just trying to get somewhere first. I meant to be true, but I wasn't. I can't explain it; I only know that I am married to him and that I would give anything in this world to be free again. I could stand it if I could not see very plainly that I have hurt the boy I really love. He was once happy and cheerful; now he is quiet, appears to be worried, and constantly begs me to break with my husband and give him the happiness he has prayed for. I know I love him, and I have seen him several times since my marriage, though I felt it was wrong. The only real quarrels my husband and I have ever had have been over this other boy.

How can I right a wrong now, when I have done an injustice to three persons? My husband says that he gave me everything he had—his love, confidence, money, life—only to be disappointed, because we have both been perfectly miserable ever since our marriage. Before, we were happy. It would be wonderful if I could go on and be what I promised to be to him long ago, and I know that my friends who know about our marriage will be disappointed in me.

I have told my dearest friends about it, and they advise me to get a divorce and marry the boy I love. But I must get a job first; that's why I have not lived with my husband. I have just finished school and am still with my brother, trying to get a job. I would have to go home, until this other boy gets a job, because he is poor, too, and we could not be married just now if I were free. My husband is unwilling to give me a divorce, because he thinks that I will come to my senses and love him as before, but I am afraid that I will always feel this way. He knew before we married that I loved this other boy, and I think that he just worked on my sympathy to have me under obligation to him. He thinks I am too fine to cheat on him; but, since he has acted selfishly in wanting me when I love some one else, I have seen this other boy. I have been mean to my husband, and he still worships me and says that I mean everything to him. But what's the use? It is only making things harder. Breaking my husband's heart seems the only action left.

What shall I do? I haven't any grounds for a divorce, but the boy I love is rushing me, says he is lonely and is waiting. He says the past will be forgotten and we'll be the same sweethearts as before. He has wonderful prospects for the future.

I know that I am hurting him and myself, while, if it were the other way, I would be hurting only my husband. I am afraid of a tragedy, because my husband says that he can't live without me and that he tried to forget me when he found out that I cared for some one else, but could not. I am terribly sorry for him, and am willing to do what is right and just. Everything is in a terrible mess, and I haven't any peace of mind. I hope you will understand. I'll do what you advise me.

KATE.

You say you are willing to do what is right, and in the same breath you say that breaking your husband's heart is the only action left. Would that be right? If you continue to see this other boy, you're not giving your marriage the chance it should have. These triangle problems always seem to be so easy to solve. "If I could get my freedom, everything would be all right," many say. I wish you could read some of the heartbreaking letters I receive, Kate; letters from young women who divorced their husbands to marry the other man, only to find out that the man who had been urging them to secure freedom did not turn out to be the ideal they had thought.

It is a human failing to be selfish, but how can you hope to find true happiness by breaking a man's heart and his faith in you? Why not give your husband a chance? Stop seeing this other boy; perhaps it is only infatuation on your part, and when it wears off, you will be glad you haven't done anything foolish. Give yourself a year or two in which to find out if you are wrong or right; then make a final decision. As long as you continue to make things harder for yourself, you will be no nearer a solution than you now are.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm very much in love with a girl I have been going with for a year. I used to see her very often, and we had very good times together; but

she now is going with other boys. I asked her not to, but she still does, and, of course, I go out with other girls when she won't give me a date.

I love her very much and would do anything to have her feel the same way about me. Please tell me what to do. I've tried everything I know. People tell me that she loves me, but she doesn't act as if she did. Shall I continue to date her as often as she will go out with me, or drop her altogether?

BILL.

If you drop this girl, Bill, you'll hardly have a chance to win her affections. By all means continue to ask her for dates, and don't be gloomy when she tells you she wants to go out with other boys. It is hardly fair to monopolize a young girl's time. Continue to be attentive, and may the best boy win.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I've been reading your advice in the *Friend in Need*, and I am wondering if it is possible for you to help me.

When I was eighteen years old I married a man past thirty. I certainly was in love with him, and am yet. He was not modern in his ideas, so I gave up the few dances and parties I used to attend, just to be happy with him. He hated dances and any form of modern fun. Occasionally we'd visit relatives. I have come in contact only a few times with the youthful friends I knew before my marriage. I had never smoked, drank, or ever been kissed. I was considered an attractive girl, although not exactly pretty.

Ever since we married, I have given up my "girlhood foolishness" and settled down. My husband wished it, even though he never actually said so. He wants me to be dignified and poised. I can't very well be that way, because I am high-strung and very much alive. I want laughter, harmless fun, and the companionship of others, and my husband is not that way. All he wants now is the comforts of a nice home.

I've been upbraided for my fickleness, my feather-brained gayety, and I put all thoughts of fun out of my head until just recently. I have been married nearly six years, and have three children.

I can't bring myself to be seen alone at any public gathering, and it is not wise to go with any one else. We seldom have money to spare for anything but the barest

necessities. My husband has not had a steady job till lately, and it takes all we can rake up to buy the things we really need.

My husband seems to think it is very wrong for a woman to go out with a brother-in-law alone, even once in three years. Recently my sister came from another State to visit us for a week. Her husband took me to a show one night because it's been so long since I went, and my sister can't go because she gets bad headaches. My husband made me very unhappy over it, harmless as it was. He said little, but I knew how he felt after I got back. Nothing was said before we started.

I don't see why he doesn't trust me. Every one who knows me knows my character is above suspicion, and I am bitter because he does not give me credit for being the good wife and mother I am.

He hinted that perhaps I had even kissed my brother-in-law as a reward for taking me to the show. I tell you it hurts. I love my husband, and I'd like to find a way out of this confusion. I've been trying to find the solution ever since his first and second outbursts of jealousy, but I can do nothing. He is strong-willed and inclined to be suspicious of all women. Proof means nothing to him. He says he trusts me, but his actions show plainly that he doesn't. If I didn't love him I might find some way out. It seems I have to lose all the joy of youth in suppressed longings and seclusion. I'm afraid our marriage won't last, and the thought of not getting along at all makes me heart-sick. I want his love, trust, and respect.

VERY SERIOUS.

Suspicion is like a dark cloud, always shutting out the sunny rays of tranquillity. It is unfortunate, of course, that your husband isn't more considerate of your feelings. However, since you do not like to go out alone, couldn't you make friends with other young married women, and perhaps arrange to have one social evening a week? Every one should have friends, and it doesn't take a fat pocketbook to promote friendliness.

If you could manage to spare the time, join a lodge; it will help you make friends and give you an added interest in life. Of course, with

three children to care for, you are probably quite busy all the time; but, nevertheless, you should have some outside interest. Be patient with your husband. Don't give him half a chance to be the least bit suspicious of you, and if he is, try not to let him upset your disposition. Joke about it, and show him how foolish he is to suspect you as he does. Perhaps, if you laugh about it, instead of showing how hurt you are, he will come to his senses.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have read many of your letters, and am very sincere when I say I need your advice.

I am eighteen and married to a man of twenty-two. We are so very happy and are very much in love. He has been very true to me in the eight months of our marriage, and I know he will always be, as he has not looked at another girl since I met him, four years ago.

Here is my problem: My husband makes only nineteen dollars a week. He loves children. I do not feel it would be right to have a family in our present financial condition. This caused our first real quarrel. He says I have no mother love, but this is not true at all. I adore babies, and some day want some of my own. I can't help but think it would be an injustice to bring a baby into the world and be unable to give it the care it should have. I want to wait a year or two, but my husband says I am just putting it off. Don't you think we'd be wise to wait?

WORRIED.

Starting a family on a nineteen-dollar-a-week salary has been done, but it was probably pretty hard going. If you are only eighteen, you two could easily afford to wait a year or two, as you say, until your finances show a chance of increase.

What do you think, family? Can Worried and her husband give their children a break on nineteen a week, or would they do better to wait? Let's hear!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I know you will think me a little fool, and that's just what

I've been, but now I don't know what to do.

Eight months ago I secretly married a boy a year older than I. I'm nineteen. He has just finished school and hasn't been able to find a job, and is, of course, unable to support me. So we decided to be married and keep it quiet until he could support me. During the last two months, my mother wondered why I cut out all other boy friends and nagged at me so constantly to go out with others that I just couldn't hold out any longer. Finally I told her all about it.

I don't know what caused it, but when mother started action to get the marriage annulled, I discovered that I no longer loved my husband. Probably I never did and the whole affair was just infatuation. My husband made a scene, but agreed to the annulment when I promised to consider remarrying him in two years' time. Finally I told him that I did not really love him, and didn't see why we should continue seeing each other at all.

When he heard that, he began to drink and ran after me all the time, saying I had no heart and was driving him crazy. In reality he was driving me crazy, so finally I gave in, and for the past month we've been keeping company again. But it's worse than ever now, since I am sure I don't care for him at all. What can you do with a man like that? H. B.

Give him the gate, my dear, once and for all. You've brought all this on yourself, you know, and the longer this goes on, the more martyred you will feel. I don't believe in secret romances. At this moment that lovesick boy friend of yours knows you have not made up your mind definitely, and he no doubt hopes to use all the high-pressure grief he can to make you marry him against your will. Why do it? Can't you do your own thinking? After all, neither one of you would be happy.

Impress upon him, once and for all, that you are being absolutely fair in not wishing to marry him, and that you are severing this friendship right here and now. Then, if he continues to drink and follow you around, you can be sure

he is putting it on and enjoys playing the cast-off sweetheart. He'll get over it. It would certainly be wrong to marry him some day, feeling as you do about him.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have been reading the advice you give to so many girls, and I wish you would help me.

I'm a girl, nineteen years old, and have been married for two years. My marriage was a very unsuccessful one. You know how girls are in this generation; they think they know everything, and they don't know anything. I'm the same way, or, I should say, I was. My mother warned me and told me not to get married, because I'd be sorry; but I didn't listen. So here I am, writing to you for advice.

Since we married, my husband has gotten into the habit of going out nights and coming in drunk. He goes out mostly with a boy he knows, but he never fails to come home drunk. I have threatened to tell this friend of my husband the trouble he causes, but that doesn't do any good, so I have started to go out, too, these last few months. If I'm not home when he gets there, he locks me out. He has warned me, if I ever stay out all night, I can pack my clothes the next day and find another home.

During the two years we have been married he hasn't been working much, and my mother has done without things to give us money. Whenever I asked him why he didn't ask his mother to help us out, he said he didn't want his mother to skimp; but he takes all he can get from my mother.

My husband never wants to give me any money. He goes shopping for all the groceries, won't buy me the clothes I need, and buys only the things he likes. I'm so sick of the whole business, I would just like to curl up and die. What would you do in my place?

JERRY.

Well, I wouldn't curl up and die; there's too much to live for. In the first place, my dear, try to reach some sort of understanding and find out exactly how you two stand. Does he intend ever being a real husband? It certainly doesn't seem as if he did, judging from your description of his present behavior. Perhaps, if your mother tightened

her purse strings, he would develop a different state of mind. I think that, even if she loves you and doesn't like to see you doing without things, it would be wiser for her to stop helping him out. Then he will understand that, if he wants money, he will just have to hustle for it himself.

Tell him frankly that you will give him a little while to shoulder his responsibilities like a man. If he shows no desire to buck up and be sensible, there'll still be time enough to think of some other way to straighten out this tangle. Meanwhile, do you think it is wise for you to step out just because your husband does? Of course, it's all right to have women friends; but, if you are permitting men to help you spend lonely hours sociably, I would advise you to stop and think. It's hardly to your credit if you do. It is always wise for a woman to be prudent. Don't you agree with me, Jerry?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am twenty-four and am deeply in love with a girl of twenty-one. Until I met her last year, she had been going steady with another boy for some time. He also loves her, and for the past two months has refused to keep away from her. Even though she has told him she no longer cared for his company, he doesn't want to give her up.

Now and then she does go out with him, and one day, after we had a misunderstanding, she called him up to spite me. She's been out with him several times since, for the same reason.

You may advise me to give her up, but just the thought of it makes my heart jump. I date her now and then, and when we are out she is as sweet as she can be; but sometimes she just doesn't seem to care anything about me, and it makes me frantic. I think she really likes the other fellow as much as she likes me, and treats him in just about the same manner. She tells me she likes us both and can't make up her mind which one she really likes the better.

Do you think she is just stringing us both along, just because we take her out?

Please advise me what to do. Shall I give her up or try to win her? I'd hate to have a girl let me come to see her just because I take her out and show her a good time.
UNHAPPY.

So would any man, and I sympathize with you; but I don't see what you can do, except to keep up the friendship, if you are in love with her, and wait until she can decide in whose presence her heart skips a beat. Perhaps, if she were to date other boys, too, it might help her make up her mind.

Another thing—sometimes, when a boy begins to date other girls, the young lady in question realizes whether or not she cares enough to give the boy more of her time. Suppose you try that. Don't sit around and mope; stop wearing your heart on your sleeve; date other girls, and don't keep it a secret. If she likes you, she won't be pleased to have you straying from her side, and will no doubt be a bit peeved. If she is, then you may consider yourself favored, but just to what extent will remain for you to find out.

Billy from Ohio: The above advice goes for you, too. So snap out of your blues, my boy, and don't become too easily discouraged.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have been a reader of Love Story Magazine for many years, and you certainly give the right advice. So may I come to you with my problem? I'm still young, only twenty-one, fairly good-looking, and I must have some one's advice.

When I was sixteen years old I married a boy of the same age. We kept company for six months before we married. I really did love him then, and he told me that he loved me, too; but how could he have loved me when, two months after our marriage, he left me and went home to his mother?

I had a good job, and after he left I continued to work. I went to his home and asked him to come back to me, as I loved him. He said he loved his mother and not me. Don't think I didn't like his

mother, because I did, and I tried to make her like me. His family said they liked me, but behind my back they talked about me. They didn't have anything to talk about, as I have always been a good girl.

My husband stayed with his people for a week, and then came back to me. He said he was sorry and still loved me. I forgave him, and we made up again. He had a good job before we married, but as soon as we were married he quit, and has not had any work since.

Things went on quite smoothly after we made up the first time, but did he stay with me? He did not! His mother came to see us one day, and when she left he went with her. I wouldn't have cared so much if he had given me a reason, but he didn't say a word. That time he stayed with his mother for a month, and then, like the little lovesick fool I was, I again tried to make him come back. His family said I was not good enough for him and that they would never let him come back to me.

Well, I went home and cried until I couldn't cry any more. But he came back a month later, and once more we made up.

We lived together for two years, and then he left again. At that time I was a very sick girl. He then came to me and told me he could not live with me any longer, because he didn't love me. I said if he left, I'd never take him back. He left; that was three years ago. I sued for divorce, but luck was against me, and I had to stay sick in bed for six months. I was in a strange city, nine hundred miles from home. I had to stay in the city hospital, and while there a painter who was working there took a liking to me and later fell in love with me and asked me to marry him; but, as I was not quite free, I couldn't. I told him my story, but he said it made no difference. He is not working steady now, and he says when he does get steady work he will see to it that I get my freedom, so that we can be married.

Tell me what you think about the whole thing, Mrs. Brown, and what I ought to do. Several times lately my husband has asked me to give him another chance. Should I? I still care for him, and I'll probably never forget him.

I'm only twenty-one, but I certainly have seen more trouble than many an older woman.
DORIS.

My dear, if you still love your husband, why not give him another

chance? He is older now; perhaps he understands better what life and marriage mean, and I hardly think he would beg you to come back to him if he cared nothing about you or did not really want you.

Since we have been discussing this age question, some of you have written in to say that youthful marriages are all right, and that I ought not advise youngsters not to marry until they have reached maturity. But outnumbering your letters many times are letters like Doris's, disclosing a life of unhappiness and a muddled state of affairs, plus a question mark about the word "love." Some youthful marriages do turn out well; it depends mostly on the girl and boy—their financial backing and maturity of mind. Such cases, however, are very rare. As a general rule, the youngsters find marriage a difficult responsibility which they are not quite ready to undertake, and naturally, the marriage ends up the wrong way.

I do not wish to be pessimistic when I advise very young persons to wait until they really have enough common sense to swing matrimonial obligations. We all want romance to gild the drab days of our existence, and love is a wonderful emotion. But don't you think it's wiser to wait for the real thing, instead of accepting its shadow—infatuation?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have been reading your advice to others; please help me out with my problem. A year ago I met a girl and fell in love with her. Then she told me she was married. I asked her if she loved her husband, and she said, "No." I asked her why she married him, and she replied because she did not want to go to school. I should not have seen her again,

I suppose, but I was very much in love with her.

Shortly after that she went away, but wrote to me that, even though her husband was very jealous of her, he went out anywhere he wanted to. After seven months she came back to take care of her sick mother. Her mother knew only that we were friends. The minute she arrived she wrote her husband that she wanted a divorce and that she was not happy.

We really love each other. He wrote that he was coming to see her and talk things over. She agreed, but when he came she was frightened and told him about me.

She still says she loves me, but they are back together again. She is afraid of him. He says he will shoot me, and I do not see her now; but I have not given up all hope. I love her too much to forget her. Recently she wrote me that her husband said he will never give her up. She is afraid to leave him, as they have a three-year-old child, and he would take the little girl away from her. That would be the last thing I'd want him to do.

I suppose it is all wrong to love a woman who is not free, but it seems almost impossible for me to forget her. What would you advise me to do? HENRY.

Why not really try to forget her, Henry? It may be difficult at first, but in the long run you will find it the best thing you could have done. After all, she has a child and a husband, and even though she found you interesting while she was away from her husband, all this doesn't lead to real happiness. There are too many handicaps, and the main one is that she is another man's wife.

Find a nice girl and try not to keep your mind on the other one. Time takes care of most miseries, and I'm sure, if you give yourself a chance, some other girl will prove interesting and desirable. Crying for the unattainable is a total loss of time and energy and as useless as a fan to an Eskimo.

