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STREET & SMITH'S

LOVE STORY

EVERY WEEK

MAGAZINE

JAN. 13, 1934

ILLUSTRATED



BEGINNING

ROMANCE for SALE

By Maysie Greig

MODEST STEIN

AND NOW 2 for 5



World's Finest Values!



Just imagine the double enjoyment you can get out of a nickel now! *Take your choice*—Two individually wrapped bars of Baby Ruth or Butterfinger or one of each for 5c. Look for these great values on dealers' counters everywhere.

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The World's Finest Values—TREAT YOURSELF TODAY!



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BARS



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I'll train you at home for many Good Spare Time and Full Time Radio Jobs



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Spare-time set servicing pays many N. R. I. men \$5, \$10, \$15 a week extra. Full-time men make as much as \$40, \$60, \$75 a week.



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Employ managers, engineers, operators, installation and maintenance men for jobs paying up to \$5,000 a year.



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Employ testers, inspectors, foremen, engineers, servicemen, for jobs paying up to \$7,500 a year.

Aircraft Radio

Radio is making flying safer. Radio operators employed through Civil Service Commission, earn \$1,620 to \$2,800 a year.



Loud Speaker Apparatus

Installation and service work is another growing money-making field for trained Radio men.



Television

The coming field of many great opportunities is covered by my Course.



If you are dissatisfied with your present job; if you are struggling along in a rut with little or no prospect of anything better than a skinny pay envelope—clip the coupon NOW. Get my big FREE book on the opportunities in Radio. Read how quickly you can learn at home in your spare time to be a Radio Expert—what good jobs my graduates have been getting—real jobs with real futures.

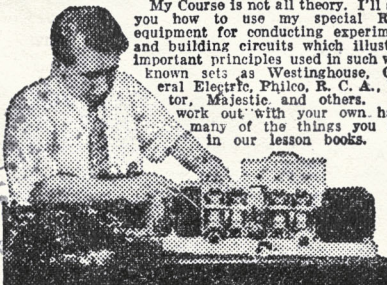
Real Opportunities Ahead for Trained Men

It's hard to find a field with more opportunity awaiting the trained man. Why in 1932—the worst year of the depression—the Radio Industry sold \$200,000,000 worth of sets and parts! Manufacturers alone employed nearly 100,000 people! About 300,000 people worked in the industry. In 1932, broadcasting had its most profitable year. It's a gigantic business, even in the worst business years! And look what's ahead! Millions of sets becoming obsolete annually. 17,000,000 sets in operation that need servicing from time to time! Over 600 great broadcasting stations furnishing entertainment and news to 100,000,000 people. These figures are so big that they are hard to grasp! Yet, they are all true! Here is a new industry that has grown quickly into a commercial giant.

Get Into This Field With a Future

There's opportunity for you in Radio. Its future is certain. Television, short wave, police Radio, automobile Radio, midjet sets, loud speaker systems, aircraft Radio—in every branch, developments and improvements are taking place. Here is a real future for thousands and thousands of men who really know Radio. Get the training that opens the road to good pay and success! Send the coupon now and get full particulars

SPECIAL Radio Equipment for Broad Practical Experience Given Without Extra Charge



My Course is not all theory. I'll show you how to use my special Radio equipment for conducting experiments and building circuits which illustrate important principles used in such well-known sets as Westinghouse, General Electric, Philco, R. C. A., Victor, Majestic and others. You work out with your own hands many of the things you read in our lesson books.

on how easy and interesting I make learning at home. Read the letters from graduates who are today earning good money in this fascinating industry.

Many Make \$5, \$10, \$15 a week Extra in Spare Time Almost at Once

My book also tells how many of my students made \$5, \$10, and \$15 a week extra servicing sets in spare time, soon after they enrolled. I give you plans and ideas that have made good spare-time money—\$200 to \$1,000 a year—for hundreds of fellows. My Course is famous as "the one that pays for itself."

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I am so sure that N. R. I. can train you at home satisfactorily that I will agree in writing to refund every penny of your tuition if you are not satisfied with my Lessons and Instruction Service upon completion. You'll get a copy of this Agreement with my book.

64-page Book of Information Free

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J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute
Dept. 4AD
Washington, D. C.



THIS COUPON IS GOOD for
One FREE COPY OF MY BOOK

mail it
Now

J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute, Dept. 4AD
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Smith: Without obligating me, send your free book about spare-time and full-time Radio opportunities and how I can train for them at home in my spare time. (Please print plainly)

Name..... Age.....

Address.....

City..... State.....



Yearly Subscription, \$6.00 Six Months, \$3.00 Single Copies, 15 Cents

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Are you lonely? Do you want new friends? Then turn to
The Friendliest Corner on page 141.

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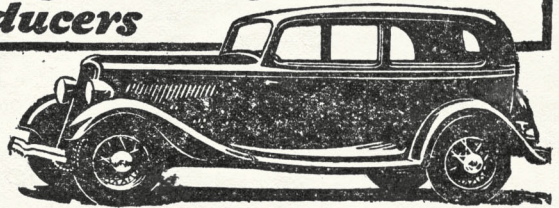
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You have probably never worked for a boss who didn't want to limit your pay at the end of the week. I never discharge my helpers for making big wages. Think what it would mean to say to yourself on Monday morning: "I want \$40.00, \$50.00, or even \$60.00 this week," or whatever amount it takes to pay your bills and have enough left to make you happy and contented, and then get it at the end of the week. That's just the kind of an unlimited offer I am making you now. If you are honest, conscientious and willing to follow a few simple instructions, I won't put any limit on your earnings. Just how all this works for you is fully explained in my big free booklet that I want to send you just as soon as I get your name.



Make More than a Living Wage

I am not satisfied to see my helpers make just a living wage. They must be prosperous. They must have plenty of money to enjoy the good things of life. I don't want to limit the pay you get at the end of the week. If you will send me your name I'll show you how Wm. E. Berkheimer, Pa., made

\$90.00 in a Single Week

I'll tell you the frank story of O. P. Hertzog, Pa., who made \$85.50 in a week; or Jacob Brown, Ill., who netted \$30.00 in one day; or Mrs. Emma M. Jutras, N. H., who made \$75.00 in one week working six hours a day. I'll tell you how A. L. Blunman, Ariz., without experience, made \$9.00 the first three hours. I have hundreds of letters of exceptional earnings like these in my office from my helpers. Now I am offering you a proposition even better than I gave to these people. Will you listen to reason? Will you give me a chance to explain my sensational new Route Plan? Costs nothing to investigate.

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I Need Men and Women at Once

This is not just a "one man" job that I am offering you. I have enough vacancies so I can put a number of men and women to work. Better send name today.

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- 1. Mail Coupon.**
Do this today—right now—don't wait.
- 2. Read Facts.**
I'll send you a simple, straightforward statement of just what I have to offer you.
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There is no waiting and no delay. The sooner you start, the sooner you will have cash in your pocket.

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ALBERT MILLS, Employment Mgr.
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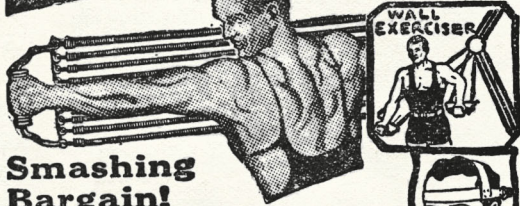
Please send me confidential information about your employment offer. Tell me how I can get started on one of your Routes in my locality and make up to \$42.50 a week at once. I am to be under no obligation.

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Brasil Laboratories, 147 E. 47th St., N. Y. City. Dept. 13



At parties everyone seemed to be able to add to the fun, while I was just a wallflower.



I received fewer and fewer invitations. Only long, dreary evenings seemed to be in store for me.



Then one day I read about a new way to learn music that had made popular musicians of thousands.



The Free Demonstration Lesson proved that this way of learning music was as easy as A-B-C. Real fun, too!



Then came Janet's party. All were flabbergasted when I offered to play . . . and actually did!



No more lonesome evenings now. My musical ability has brought me romance—Bill and I have announced our engagement.

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—shortest road to friends, popularity, good times

THE interesting story told above is not just one unusual case. It is typical of the experiences of more than 600,000 other folks who have learned music—who have become socially popular—this quick, modern, easy as A-B-C way.

You, too, can learn to play—to entertain others—to pep up any party—just as these thousands of others are doing. And best of all you can accomplish this without the expense of a private teacher. You'll practically teach yourself—right in the quiet of your own home—in a much shorter time—and at only a fraction of the cost of the old fashioned way.

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Don't get the idea that you have to be a musical genius—that you have to be talented—or that you need previous musical training to learn by this method. And, unlike the old fashioned way, you don't have to

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playing a game. Practicing becomes real fun instead of a bore as it used to be with the old way.

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In order to show how easy and pleasant this course is, the U. S. School of Music has prepared for you a free Demonstration Lesson and Explanatory Booklet. No matter what instrument you select to play, the Free Demonstration Lesson and Booklet will show you at once the amazingly simple principles around which this method is built.

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The success of this U. S. School method of musical instruction is due to two things. One is the fact that it makes everything so simple—so crystal clear—so easy to understand. First it tells you how to do a thing. Then it shows you in pictures how to do it. Then you do it yourself and hear it. What could be simpler?

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29x4	50-20	2.35 .85	30x3 1/2	2.35 .75	
30x4	50-21	2.40 .85	31x4	2.95 .85	
28x4	75-19	2.45 .95	32x4	2.95 .85	
29x4	75-20	2.50 .95	32x4	2.95 .85	
29x5	00-19	2.85 1.05	34x4	3.25 .85	
30x5	00-20	2.65 1.05	32x4 1/2	3.35 1.15	
28x5	25-18	2.90 1.15	33x4 1/2	3.45 1.15	
29x5	25-19	2.95 1.15	34x4 1/2	3.45 1.15	
30x5	25-20	2.95 1.15	30x5	3.65 1.35	
31x5	25-21	3.25 1.15	33x5	3.75 1.45	
29x5	50-18	3.35 1.15	35x5	3.95 1.65	
29x5	50-19	3.35 1.15			
30x6	00-18	3.40 1.15			
31x6	00-19	3.40 1.15			
22x6	00-20	3.45 1.25			
32x6	00-21	3.65 1.25			
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SEND ONLY \$1 DEPOSIT on each tire ordered. We ship balance C. O. D. 5 per cent discount for full cash with order. Any tire failing to give 12 months' service replaced at half price.

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 Complete with batteries and bulb, ready to use. Household and automobile necessity. Gives 600 foot light beam. Adjustable handle.

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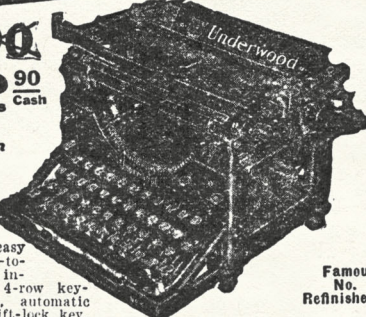
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Name Age.....
 Address
 Town State.....

ASTHMA

was Strangling her



Illustration

Attacks Stopped At Once

If asthma has kept you gasping and miserable, read this letter from Mrs. Will Case, Route No. 2, Hubbard, Nebraska.

April 19, 1931—"I was sick over 15 years with asthma. I couldn't get my breath and what little sleep I got was had while propped up in bed or in a chair. I tried Nacor. By the time I had taken half of my second bottle my asthma was gone and has not returned."—Mrs. Will Case, Route No. 2, Hubbard, Nebraska.

FREE—No need to suffer asthma torture when blessed relief can be yours. For years Nacor has helped thousands. Write for letters and booklet of helpful information about relief of asthma and bronchial coughs.

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BALD NO LONGER

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Prostate Sufferers



An enlarged, inflamed or faulty Prostate Gland very often causes Lameback, Frequent Night Rising, Leg Pains, Pelvic Pains, Lost Vigor, Insomnia, etc. Many physicians endorse massage as a safe effective treatment. (See Reference Book of the Medical Sciences, Vol. VII, 3rd edition). Use **"PRONAGER"**, a new invention which enables any man to massage his Prostate Gland in the privacy of his home. It often brings relief with the first treatment and must help or it costs you nothing. No Drugs or Electricity.

FREE BOOKLET

DR. W. D. SMITH INVENTOR
EXPLAINS TRIAL OFFER. ADDRESS
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Supports Self by Writing

"When I reached this town I was a real child of the depression. I had no job, and no chance of getting one. I saw your ad, borrowed the money to pay for the course, and finally finished it. But before finishing, I had become self-supporting as a correspondent for the state papers."

"I will say that I believe that if anyone wants to be a writer and will apply themselves to your course, they will soon know whether their living is coming out of the writing market."

EDWARD G. FOSTER,
Talihina, Okla.

How do you know you can't WRITE?

Have you ever tried?

Have you ever attempted even the least bit of training, under competent guidance?

Or have you been sitting back, as it is so easy to do, waiting for the day to come some time when you will awaken, all of a sudden, to the discovery, "I am a writer"?

If the latter course is the one of your choosing, you probably *never will write*. Lawyers must be law clerks. Doctors must be internes. Engineers must be draftsmen. We all know that, in our times, the egg does come before the chicken.

It is seldom that any one becomes a writer until he (or she) has been writing for some time. That is why so many authors and writers spring up out of the newspaper business. The day-to-day necessity of writing—of gathering material about which to write—develops their talent, their background and their confidence as nothing else could.

That is why the Newspaper Institute of America bases its writing instruction on journalism—continuous writing—the training that has produced so many successful authors.

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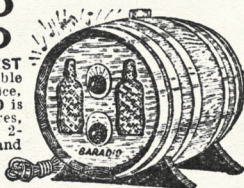
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A SERIAL—Part I.



Romance For Sale

By Maysie Greig

CHAPTER I.

WHEN Paul Hershaw said that he would like to meet Miss Odette Cosway, Luke Grimsby, her director, shrugged his shoulders and replied, "We'd have to fight our way through to her. The whole world wants to meet Odette to-night. I'll introduce you later."

They stood, a little isolated from the rest of the crowd, at the All Star Studios' yearly reception. Anybody

who *was* anybody in the movie or artistic world was here to-night—famous stars; famous directors; famous scenario writers, famous novelists—all rubbing shoulders in the big, lavishly decorated studio. An orchestra at one end of the room provided soft music that was a background to the incessant chatter; from the adjoining supper room came the sound of popping corks and subdued merriment.

"What a mob," Paul commented as he lit a cigarette. "I feel like

quoting old Gilbert when he said, 'When everybody's somebody, then no one's anybody.'"

Luke frowned. "I don't agree with you."

Paul smiled faintly and looked down at the glowing tip of his cigarette. "You never do, Luke. You're a grown man with the romantic ideas of a child. But if you weren't"—again that faint smile—"I don't suppose you could direct Odette Cosway and Lance Furner's pictures so successfully. After all, it's a big responsibility to have the success of the two most perfect screen lovers on your mind."

Luke blew out his pudgy fat cheeks aggressively. A habit he had when he felt any one was making fun of him. Not that they often did. Luke Grimsby was too important. He was the most successful director the All Star Studios had.

"Seems to me a bit more romance in your system wouldn't be bad," he commented dryly. "It might help your work, too. I'm not crabbing about your pictures, Paul. They're all good enough in their way, but too realistic. Too darn realistic. That's why they don't go across as big as they might. Now what the public wants is——"

"Spare me from what the public wants to-night!" Paul interrupted with a slight ironic grin. "I have to listen to that every time we have a directors' meeting. Are Odette Cosway and Lance Furner as devoted in real life as rumor has it?"

"I'll say they are," Luke replied with enthusiasm. "The world's most perfect screen lovers, the——"

"Please don't quote publicity pars at me," Paul begged. "They're engaged, aren't they?"

Luke raised his heavy eyebrows. "Of course they're engaged. And as devoted a couple as——"

"Yes, yes," Paul sighed. "I've read all that. You can't pick up any paper without reading it. But is it true?"

Luke threw his cigarette on the floor, crushed it out with his heel and looked at the tall, thin man beside him with contempt.

"If it's not true then nothing in the whole darn world's true," he muttered. "Why, she worships the very ground he walks on. And look at the marvelous way their romance started. She was on a vacation and discovered him in a cheap road company. The studios were on the lookout for a new leading man for her and he just fitted the bill. Ever since, they've been inseparable. Why, their next picture will be the eighth in which they've co-starred. And each one has been more popular than the last."

"What's Furner like? It's queer, but I've never met either of them," Paul said.

"You're usually off training a genuine penguin chorus as a background for some educational picture of the North that no one wants to see, aren't you?" Luke laughed. "No offense meant," he added hastily.

Again that faint, slightly whimsical smile crossed Paul's lean, sensitive features. "I suppose you're right," he said, and added vehemently, "But isn't it better to give the world life as it really is——"

"So long as the Gelway Studios is willing to foot your bills, I guess it's all right," Luke finished. "But seems to me they're paying a high price for artistic successes!" He added, as the silence grew: "You asked about Furner? He's quite a decent fellow—very attractive to women. Perhaps too attractive. I haven't seen him this evening. Don't believe he's shown up. And

that's funny, when you come to think of it. He didn't arrive with Odette, for I saw her come in alone. Wonder if he's sick or something?"

Odette Cosway was wondering the very same thing. She had been wondering it all evening. Nevertheless, her large blue eyes were sparkling, her soft, perfectly-shaped lips murmuring, "It's sweet of you to say that. I'm so glad you enjoyed my pictures." Always with the same very sweet smile on her delicately shaped oval face. The smile that had made her famous. It showed a tantalizing dimple high on her cheek. A genuine smile that revealed the sweet idealistic child in her who had never grown up. Fame had delighted Odette, but it had never spoiled her. It was like a glowing golden ball that she tossed with slim white hands to Lance, and he tossed back to her; she adored it and him and the work that had first drawn them together and was drawing them even closer together now.

This night she should have been happier than usual. To-morrow Lance and she would sign their new contract which almost doubled their salary of the past year. It was a night of celebration, surely. They had planned to dine in her apartment, then come on to the reception together. But during the afternoon, Lance had telephoned that he couldn't come to dinner but would join her later. Odette had considered asking some one else, but had decided against it. If she couldn't have Lance she didn't want any one. So she had dined alone and drunk the special champagne, raising her glass to the absent Lance.

"To our success and our love, dear," she whispered.

It seemed Lance's deep-brown eyes smiled back at her. She could

visualize him so clearly, knowing as she did every detail of his face: his thick black hair that looked as though he had perpetually stepped out from under a shower bath, his low attractive forehead, his straight nose, his slightly heavily molded mouth and chin that dimpled when he smiled, the faint suggestion of freckles on his nose, the two pronounced freckles under his left eye. His body was perfectly made, the body of an athlete, with its fairly broad shoulders, its slim tapering hips. No wonder the women fell in love with him as they did. People often asked Odette if she wasn't jealous.

"Why should I be?" she'd say. "Lance and I understand each other. Nothing ever could go wrong between us." She'd touch wood, of course, and laugh. Odette had all the delightful silly superstitions of an intensely romantic nature. But she believed in what she said. Nothing *could* go wrong between Lance and herself.

His protracted absence this evening was surely nothing to worry about. But Odette found herself weighed down by a strange uneasiness as the evening progressed. A sense of restlessness, too, obsessed her. Almost, for the first time in her career, she became impatient with the crowd of people whom her success attracted. She thought, "I'll slip away and phone Lance's apartment. I do hope he isn't ill."

With considerable difficulty she managed to evade her admirers. She made the call through from one of the business offices on the first floor and found her nerves on edge as she waited for the reply. But Lance wasn't in his apartment. His man told her he hadn't been home all day. No, he hadn't even come back to change for the reception.

"That means he isn't coming," she thought. And, having replaced the receiver, she leaned against the large mahogany desk and felt a little sick.

The walls of the office were covered with innumerable pictures of Lance and herself in their various rôles. There they were as they had appeared in their latest success, "The Princess's Lover." How handsome and marvelous Lance had been as her gypsy lover! Almost as marvelous as he was in real life. Odette closed her eyes suddenly and tears stung her lids. She flung out her hands as though pushing some disturbing thought from her. "But nothing can be wrong," she muttered. "I'm only imagining that he's changed these past weeks."

She picked up her short jacket and hurried out of the office. A tall slight creature was Odette Cosway. As fascinating off as she was on the screen. Her wide blue eyes, gray flecked, held both laughter and sincerity; her mouth was full and generous, the corner of her lips twitched deliciously when she smiled. Her figure was the despair of every woman over thirty, and of most women under thirty. She was slim and graceful, yet with a slight suggestion of softly rounded curves. At nineteen she had first attracted a young director's attention; now, at twenty-three, she was an established success. How much of her present-day popularity was due to her happy association with Lance Furner, and how much his to her, no one could say.

Now she found she had

no desire to go back into the crowded reception hall. She pushed open a door and walked out onto the lawn behind the studio. A few supper tables had been set out here, but these were deserted, their shining white cloths blown back by the breeze, their gleaming cutlery disordered.

As she started to walk down the stone pathway she found herself face to face with a tall, thin man. She waited for him to step aside to let her pass, but he didn't move.

"This is luck." He smiled down at her. "I've been waiting to meet you all evening, Miss Cosway. I asked Luke to introduce us, but, at the time, it would have been like hewing our way through a dense jungle to get to you. My name is Paul Hershaw."

"Paul Hershaw?" She smiled up at him and wrinkled her forehead slightly. "I have heard of you, I know, though I can't place the name at the moment."

"Don't try to," he told her. "I'll tell you. I direct for the Gelway Studios." He chuckled and added, "Probably I've directed as many financial failures as you've acted in financial successes!"

"I do know you now," she told him, and her smile deepened. "You directed 'Voice of the North,' didn't you?"

He nodded. "Did you like it?"

"It was awfully impressive," she replied quickly. "Very real and artistic and——"

"Depressing?" he suggested, his lips smiling crookedly.



She laughed. "Well, it *was* a little depressing and cruel, I thought. Didn't you find it so yourself?"

He shook his head and his smile became a shade crooked. "Not half so cruel and depressing as I find your pictures, if you don't mind my saying so, Miss Cosway."

That startled her. Her blue eyes were wide open, surprise points in them. "Depressing? My pictures cruel and depressing?" She couldn't believe she had heard right.

He chuckled. "That surprises you, doesn't it? To me they are cruel and depressing because they're so unreal. They lead people to believe that life is what it isn't—beautiful and romantic with everything ending all right."

"But it is," she insisted, her color rising slightly. "Life is like that."

He shook his head slowly. He spoke rather as one speaks to humor a child. "Is isn't, you know. And, personally, I think people would be much better and happier if they faced facts instead of burying their heads, like ostriches, in a welter of romance." He smiled suddenly. "Forgive me for lecturing you. Won't you sit down with me and have a cigarette?"

She accepted. This tall, lean man with the high sensitive forehead, and the faintly ironical smile in his gray eyes intrigued her. She felt, even at first, that there was something different about him.

"You're a romantic, aren't you?" he murmured presently. "A slim, golden-haired merchant of romance—at so much a reel! Tell me, do you honestly believe in those silly pictures you act in?"

Her color heightened. She suddenly felt angry with him. He was attacking something that was very precious to her. "Of course," she told him. "And I, at least, don't

consider them silly. To me they're very beautiful stories, and I don't think them at all divorced from real life."

Again she saw the faintly ironical smile flicker over his features.

"Don't you? You're lucky. Do you honestly believe that every working girl who loves a prince will marry him in the end?"

"Well, no, not exactly. But I don't think it hurts her to believe it. I think any belief that keeps you happy should be encouraged."

"Even though it makes you more miserable in the end?"

"But it needn't." Her small husky voice had become rather fierce. "There's no reason why real life romances shouldn't be as beautiful and happy as screen ones."

"Isn't there?" he asked. He threw his cigarette far into the night and added softly, "Forgive my being personal, but you've found your romance as wonderful as any you've ever acted in, have you, Miss Cosway?"

She nodded, and glanced down at her slim white hands clasped in her lap. For a moment she didn't reply, but a tender smile curved her lips. Moonlight touched her ash-blond hair, making it gleam white and silver. The man caught his breath sharply. He had never seen anything as beautiful as she in that moment.

Presently she raised her head and looked straight into his eyes.

"Yes, it is," she said, and he noticed that the husky note in her voice had increased, "much, much more beautiful than any romance I have ever acted in."

"I'm glad," he said, and, for once, the irony was absent from his smile. "I hope it will remain so."

"Oh, but it will," she assured him, with a fervor that amounted almost



Moonlight touched her blond hair. The man caught his breath sharply. He had never seen anything as beautiful as she in that moment. She raised her head and looked straight into his eyes. They were both silent for a moment.

to passion. "It must. If I didn't believe that, I think I should die!"

They were both silent a moment. Odette found herself feeling a little self-conscious about her outburst. In a queer way, that she couldn't explain even to herself, this slight lean man with the thin, interesting face made her feel self-conscious.

"At least I'm glad to find you sincere," he said at last. "But I might have known you would be. People may try to achieve success with their tongues in their cheeks, but I don't think they ever succeed. It's the greatest and best slogan in life, 'Sincerity pays.'" He smiled twistedly and added, "I'm sincere, too, you know."

"But life as you depict it is so bitter!" she protested.

He leaned toward her, both his arms folded on the table. "Haven't you ever found life bitter?"

She shook her head. "Never. I've been very poor, of course. I was brought up in a tiny cottage in the country——"

"With rambler roses and a duck pond, eh?" His gray eyes twinkled.

She stared at him in surprise. "How did you know?"

"Just guessed," he told her. "Any other sort of poverty would have made you bitter. And, I suppose, you have recently bought the cottage and intend sometimes to slip away from the wicked city and hide yourself there?"

Her blue eyes were wider now. Her voice was little and faint. "But you can't possibly know that. I've never even given it out in an interview!"

He laughed softly. "Mere guesswork. It's what any girl as delightfully romantic as you would do. Now if I'd been brought up in a cottage, I'd pray I'd never be again in this world or the next!"

She looked slightly shocked. "But why!"

He considered that, tapping his lean, bronzed knuckles on the table. "Because it wouldn't have been your sort of cottage. It would have been small and dirty, with cabbages instead of rambler roses, and a pigsty instead of a duck pond!" He laughed, rather bitterly, she thought. "Life hasn't ever had any romantic trappings for me. Perhaps that's why I resent them."

She said impulsively—and, afterward, she couldn't imagine why she had said it—"Tell me something about yourself."

He shook his head, his lips tightened slightly. "Not now. I've kept you away from your admirers long enough. But, perhaps, some day I might call on you and we'll have another chat?"

"Please do," she said. "You know my address?"

He laughed at that. "The whole world knows your address and everything about you, Miss Cosway. That's the penalty you pay for being a star. Do you mind?"

She smiled, that slow child smile that was so utterly charming. "No, I don't think I do. In fact, I rather enjoy it. You see I have nothing to hide. I like to let the whole world is sharing my happiness."

"Still the little girl with ideals, eh?" softly.

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She shook

never be able

"I hope I won't, either," quietly.

Odette didn't go back into the large studio that was being used as

a reception hall. She thought "I can't go on talking to people to-night. I don't know why." But of course, she did know why. What could be keeping Lance Furner?

The doorman signaled her chauffeur and, a few minutes later, her big car slid up the drive.

The chauffeur opened the door and she stepped inside, and lay back in a corner and closed her eyes. She suddenly felt tired. Perhaps for weeks she had been under some mental strain she wouldn't admit. Perhaps for weeks she had been clutching the shining cloak of her happiness even closer to her, afraid, should she relax her vigilance one moment, it might slip. Lance had been difficult lately. Inclined to be moody, uncertain of temper, depressed. Not that it made any difference in her love for him. Nothing could do that.

She opened her eyes with a start as the car stopped. She hurried into the big apartment house and was taken up in the elevator to the large luxurious apartment she occupied on the top floor.

Her maid opened the door to her. "Mr. Furner is here, Miss Cosway," she said. "He's been waiting an hour. He said he had to see you to-night."

"Mr. Furner," she gasped, and a color rushed to her cheeks.

He was waiting for him this evening? Why hadn't he called?

She hurried to her room, wrapped up into the drawing room.

She found him leaning against the mantelshelf, smoking. The cluttered ash tray at his elbow, full of half-smoked cigarettes, suggested he had been smoking nervously and incessantly for the past

hour. His handsome face, with its low forehead, straight, perfectly shaped nose and attractive mouth, was drawn, almost gray looking; his square, well-set shoulders slightly hunched.

"Lance!" Odette stood just inside the doorway and held out both hands to him. In the soft lamplight, she looked exquisitely lovely; a dainty thing of light and shadow with her fair, almost white hair and the dull-gleaming, deep-blue dress. Her blue eyes shone, her breath came a little fast, as it always did when she saw Lance again, no matter after how short a separation. "You old silly," she laughed softly as she came farther into the room. "You've worried me all evening. Where have you been?"

But he didn't spring forward, as he usually did, and take her into his arms, with the quick impulsiveness that was so attractive on the screen and made women so dissatisfied with their own sweethearts. Instead, he continued to stand there and, after one quick glance at her, he didn't look at her again. He looked down at his feet, he looked about the room, anywhere but at her.

"I didn't feel like coming to the reception," he said lamely, after the pause had begun to drag.

"You're not ill, Lance?" Her small, husky voice was sharp with anxiety.

He gave a short, harsh laugh and ran a hand through his thick dark hair that curled close to his head like wet bird's feathers. "Oh, no, I'm not ill."

She gave a sigh of relief, and sank into a big armchair facing him, curling herself up in it, tucking her feet under her, like a little girl. "Give me a cigarette." She held out her hand. "And please don't look so glum."

He didn't answer. He merely handed her a cigarette from the square box and took one himself, but he didn't attempt to light either of them. For several minutes he stood, tapping one end of his absent-mindedly against the mantelshelf ledge. "What was the reception like?" he jerked out at last.

She commenced to tell him, but she saw, even before she had come to the end of the first sentence, that he wasn't listening. Her voice trailed away and, as the silence grew, the strange premonition of disaster she had had earlier that evening returned, stronger than ever.

"Lance," she asked at last, when she couldn't stand the silence any longer, "is anything the matter?"

Again he gave that short, harsh laugh. "Anything? Everything, rather. It's terrible, Odette. I don't know how to tell you."

She stared at him, the fear real and unmasked in her eyes now.

"But," she protested, her voice little and faint, "how can everything be the matter when we have each other?"

He raised his head and she saw, in the lamplight, that his eyes were strange-looking and bloodshot.

"That's just it," he said hoarsely, "we haven't each other any longer. At least, I've sacrificed all right to you. I wouldn't blame you if you never spoke to me again. You probably won't after you've heard what I have to tell you. And then I'll have lost everything, everything in the world. Oh, Odette"—his voice choked, something suspiciously like a sob was in it, and he flung himself down on his knees beside her chair, burying his face in her lap. "Oh, Odette," he whispered again, "I don't know how to tell you."

"Lance, dearest, don't carry on like this, please," she whispered, her

white fingers threading through the dark waves of his curling hair. "It can't be anything so very terrible and, even if it is"—her soft voice strengthened—"you know I wouldn't desert you. I love you too much."

He groaned audibly. For a minute he clung to one of her hands with a queer desperation. As though he couldn't bear to let it go. Then he got to his feet, stumbling slightly as he did so, and crossed the room. One curtain was but half drawn. He stood staring down at the flashing lights of motors, like cat's eyes, in the park; lights faintly aglimmer too, in the big houses that faced it; lights softly gleaming in the room behind him; lights, lights everywhere, but only darkness and chaos in his own brain.

"Oh," he thought, for the hundredth time that day, "why did I do it? But what else, under the circumstances, could I have done?"

Odette sat very still in the great arm chair and waited. She seemed lost in it entirely. The black satin covering threw her fair hair into exquisite relief. She waited with a tight breathlessness that was an actual physical pain in her chest.

"Odette," he said at last, without turning around, "I was married to-day."

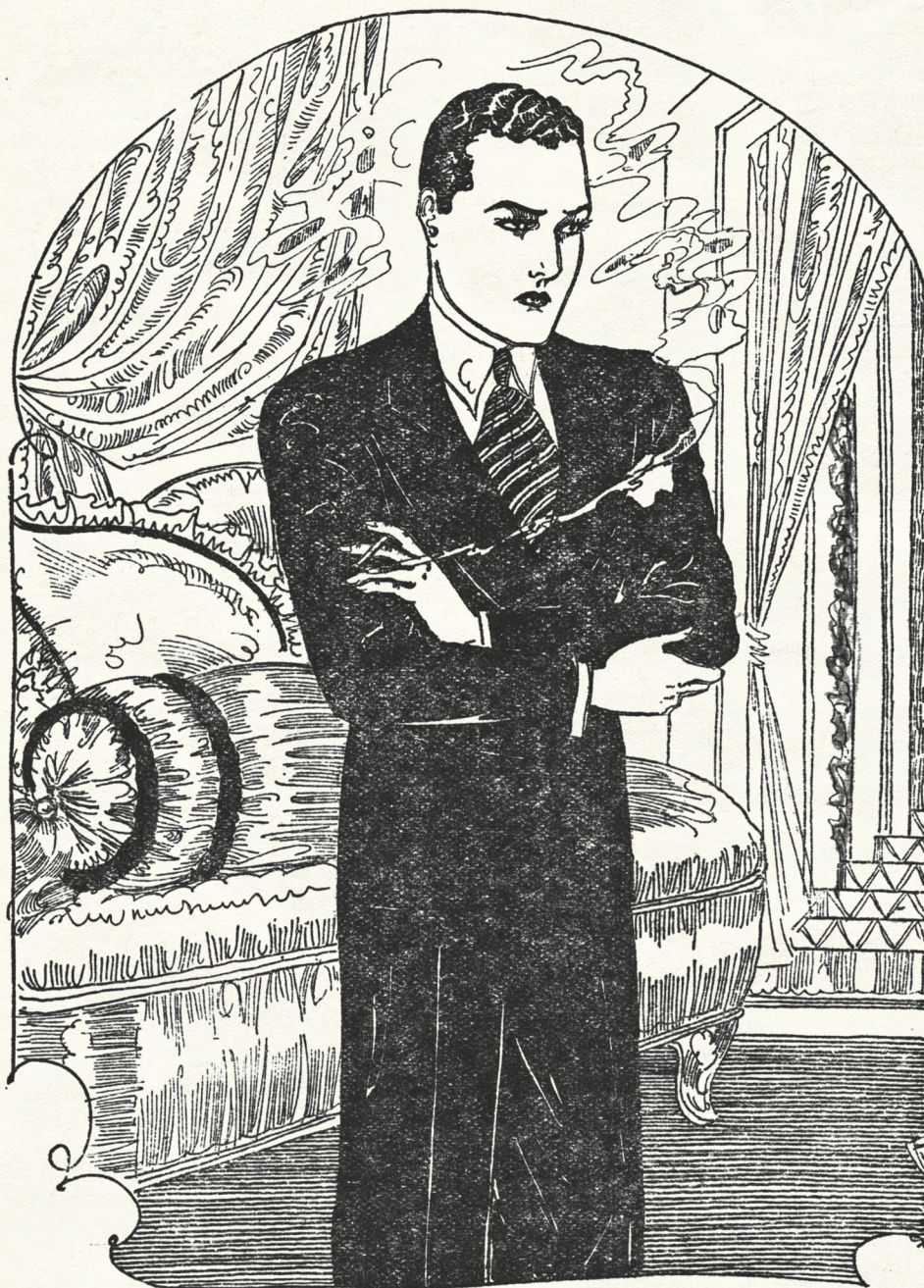
CHAPTER II.

She didn't say anything for so long that he thought she hadn't heard him.

"I told you I was married to-day," he repeated, almost roughly.

"Yes, I heard you," she said, and he was amazed at the coldness of her voice. It was like a chill draft in an overheated room.

"Oh, well," he began angrily, "if it doesn't mean anything at all to you——"



"I had to marry her. You understand, Odette, I had to. Her father swore he'd give the whole story to the papers, show me up as a cad unless I married her. I had no alternative. I was a fool, I know. But, the worst of it is that I love you."



Then she started to laugh, queer gasping laughter, while she thought, "Either I'm mad or he's mad. But it isn't true. Of course, it isn't true."

She was fighting desperately, fighting with everything in her, against believing it. Once she allowed herself to believe his incredible state-

ment, she would be lost altogether. She couldn't believe it. Lance, whom she adored with her whole heart and soul, and whom she had been convinced adored her, married to some one else? Oh, no, no; it was ludicrous, horrible!

He couldn't stand her laughter; it jarred in sharp discords on his over-taxed nerves. He came across the room and shook her sharply by the shoulders.

"Stop it, Odette. What's the matter with you? Have you suddenly gone crazy?"

"No," she gasped. "But you must have—saying you were married."

"But it's the truth. I am married. I was married to-day."

"Oh, no!" And just as suddenly as she had started laughing, she ceased. Again that queer stillness came over her. "You can't mean it, Lance?"

"Heaven help me, I do." Then with a sharp break in his voice: "Odette, darling, what am I to do?"

She stared up at him and seeing the misery in his handsome face, in his very dark eyes, she was convinced.

"Oh!" She lay back in the chair and closed her eyes. She was limp with anguish, with horror. She thought, "Let me die. Please let me die." And it seemed to her in that moment that she would die; that she couldn't live and face this incredible, terrible thing. Lance married to some one else!

Vaguely she realized that he was talking; trying to explain it in short, jerky sentences that she couldn't altogether take in. But every now and then she caught a few words; words that filled her with horror.

"I had to marry her. You understand, Odette, I had to. Her father, an influential man, swore he'd give the whole story to the papers, show

me up as a cad unless I married her, threatened to shoot me, too; not that I was afraid, but what could I do? I had no alternative. Oh, Odette, you see I had no alternative, don't you?" His voice was husky now, pleading with her. "I was a fool, I know. Everything else you like to call me. And I love you. That's the worst of it. I love you."

She stirred then, like a small frozen statue coming to life.

"If you love me——" she faltered, and suddenly she moved forward, burying her face in her white, shaking hands. "Oh, Lance," she whispered brokenly. "Oh, Lance."

He knelt beside her again; he tried to take her hands from her face, but she wouldn't let him. He put an arm about her shoulders and felt the long-drawn, shuddering sobs rack her frame. "Don't, darling, don't," he whispered, his lips close to her cheek. "It kills me."

She was quieter presently. She raised her face, her blue eyes misty with tears, her long dark lashes clinging together. Still kneeling he took out his handkerchief and wiped her face gently. And because it was such a natural action for him to wipe her tears away whenever they quarreled, she started crying again.

"Oh, Lance," she moaned. "I can't bear it! What made you do it?"

"You mean marry her?"

"No—the other thing." She shuddered pitifully. "If you loved me——"

"But I did, Odette," he interrupted hoarsely. "All the time I loved you. But I'm—well, I suppose lots of men behave like stupid, weak fools at times. She was pretty, she flattered me, she was in love with me, too. I never meant it to come to anything. It was just a passing

flirtation. But once I lost my head, only once. It's hard, darling, always to keep your head when women throw themselves at you."

"I know," she whispered. Her hand touched his bent dark head. An instinctive gesture, she couldn't prevent herself. He caught the hand and kissed it fiercely.

"I know," she repeated. "It's been hard for me, too, when women have made such fools of themselves over you."

"I've tried not to respond to them," he whispered. "But Jean—well, I admit I was slightly infatuated with her, and she is very pretty."

"Jean?"

"That's her name." He added harshly. "My wife's name."

"Don't!" It was an instinctive cry of pain.

"I'm sorry," he muttered. He got to his feet.

"Where is she now?"

"At the Palace Hotel, waiting for me. I told her I had to go to the reception. I said it was business. I even started to go. But I felt I couldn't face you before a crowd of people. I had to see you alone first."

"I'm glad you did," she whispered. The pause that followed was long and painful.

"What am I to do, Odette?" he repeated presently.

She made a vague gesture with her hands, like white birds flying against the dark background of the chair. "But there's nothing to do."

"I mean"—he wet his lips—"about signing the contract tomorrow."

She stared at him, uncomprehending at first. The contract? How could she remember contracts when all she had treasured—love, romance, her hopes for the future—lay lik

a beautiful shattered vase in fragments at her feet. She was drowned in misery, staring down at the ruins; the tears she wouldn't let herself shed ached in her heart, in her throat, in the tips of her fingers even.

"What contract?" she murmured.

"The one we are to sign together at the studio in the morning."

"Oh, yes," she murmured, as though she had to pull herself from a great depth to remember. "But we can't sign it now."

"You mean?"

"There's a clause in it stating that if either of us gets engaged to or marries any one else, the contract is automatically broken. After all"—her lips twisted faintly, bitterly—"I don't suppose they could have one of the world's perfect screen lovers married to some one else!"

He thrust his hands deep into his pockets. "It's tough, isn't it?" Then, after a pause, his voice curiously eager: "But supposing no one knew, Odette?"

Her eyes flew wide open. "No one knew?" she repeated.

"About my marriage, I mean."

"But doesn't every one know already?"

He shook his dark head. "No one except Jean, her father, and a couple of witnesses who are sworn to secrecy. You see, I explained at the time about this contract. I made both Jean and her father see it was to their interests as well as mine to keep quiet about the marriage." He laughed shortly. "I said I wouldn't have much to support her on if this contract didn't go through."

Odette turned toward him. "But surely, Lance, you have money set aside?"

He shrugged gloomily. "No, I haven't. I lost most of my savings recently in stock—that I thought were going to be my fortune.

I've lived pretty extravagantly, too. After all, a film star has to maintain a certain position and that costs money, you know."

She nodded slowly. She had always known Lance was wildly extravagant. At times it had worried her, though it had never made any real difference to her.

"You see," he burst out desperately, "if you give me away, Odette, I'll be ruined. The studio will be as mad as ten snakes with me. No hope of another contract there. And besides"—his voice softened, a note of pleading crept into it—"I'll never do half so well without you. We'd both lose our public if we broke up. We've become a national institution. They think of us together. I don't believe they'd have any use for either of us if we separated. Odette Cosway and Lance Furner— Why, darling, our names together on a bill have become the greatest box-office draw in the world. It would be a sin to ruin it!"

"Why didn't you think of that before?" she asked dully.

"Oh, Odette, don't keep harping upon that! I've tried to explain. I've admitted to being a fool, everything you want to think me. But don't hold it against me, please."

"I'm not holding it against you, Lance. Not any more than I can help," she added with a faint, twisted smile.

"Then you'll agree, won't you?" Again that eager note sounded in his voice. "After all, it can't hurt you, darling, just to keep quiet about my miserable marriage."

She didn't reply immediately. She dragged herself out of the armchair and crossed to where a box of cigarettes lay on a low table. She didn't smoke much, but she felt she had to have cigarette now

steady her nerves. Her white hand shook pitifully as she struck a match to light it. It went out. Lance darted across the room and struck another for her. But he didn't move away after the cigarette was lighted. He continued to stand there, staring down at her, his dark, unhappy eyes taking in every detail of her.

"You're beautiful," he muttered. "I never realized how beautiful you were until to-night!"

"Don't, Lance." Her voice was stifled and faint. "How can you—now?"

"But I love you. She doesn't mean anything to me."

"It's wrong to say that. Wicked. I won't listen to you."

"Very well. But you will let the contract go through?"

"How can I? What about our engagement? Once that's broken off people are bound to suspect something."

"Odette, need it be broken off? Can't we go on pretending everything's as it was, at least for a time? I don't see why we shouldn't. It's in both our interests—business interests, you know."

"You mean"—her voice was hoarse with incredulity—"to let the outside world believe we're still engaged even though you're married to some one else?"

"Why not? It's the only thing we can do. Anything else would be death to our careers." He caught her arm, drawing her gently to him. "If you love me at all, you'll agree."

She closed her eyes. The tears were there again. She tried to draw away from him, but the feel of his hand on her arm was magnetic, weakening her resistance. Could she agree? But if she didn't she might never see him again. He might go away from her altogether, leaving her nothing but memories. The

very thought made her feel limp, while her whole being was engulfed in a wave of agony. She'd rather die than that. If she agreed she'd have so much of him anyhow. The joy of seeing him, of being near him, of working with him constantly. "I'm a little fool," she thought. "A weak little fool. But I can't let him go!"

"Odette, what is it to be?" He had drawn her even closer. She

came without resisting, and hated herself for doing so. She ought to loathe, hate, despise him. He had betrayed her, and everything she held most sacred. But once he touched her she knew she couldn't hate him. "You're not going to let my foolishness ruin our careers?" he insisted.

There was a long pause. "I won't say anything. We'll keep up the pretense," she whispered at last.

TO BE CONTINUED.



LONESOME

YOU are away—

Why should I care—

My face a look of sorrow wear?

Why it is so, I cannot say,

But this I know:

I miss you so.

That days are drear,

And nights are long;

That in my heart there is no song;

That, oh, my dear,

Your face I see where'er I go—

I miss you so.

Yet, some day, sweet,

My heart tells me

An end to grieving there will be;

That joyously I shall you greet,

And never more occasion know

To miss you so.

ARTHUR WILLIAM BEER.



Cinderella irl

By Jessie Reynolds

ALLY, are you out of your mind? The idea of letting Barney Stevens, a stranger, a man you don't know from Adam, hand you a line like that—that you're John Caswell's daughter who was kidnaped fourteen years ago and never heard of afterward. Nonsense!"

Sally and Doug were standing in the service drive in the rear of the Maddox Department Store. It was late, long after closing hours, and except for a belated delivery wagon,

the place was silent and deserted. Against the alley's gray dimness, Sally's hair was a splash of gold flame, and her eyes, upturned to Doug's angry face, were gold-flecked pools of hurt.

"Darling," she cried, "try to be reasonable, please! Barney isn't a stranger. You know him; you acknowledged it yourself. John Caswell is his guardian, and you're Mr. Caswell's secretary. You've seen him around the office dozens of times. That's why I asked him to

meet us here to-night after I got through work, so we could go somewhere together and he could tell you the whole story."

From his six feet two of rumped, unhappy blondness, Doug stared down at her, his young face too boyishly honest to hide the bitterness that shadowed it.

"Why does he have to tell me?" he grumbled. "You've told me, haven't you? It's a swell story. I know it by heart. I know all about how he came into the store to buy some handkerchiefs and you waited on him, and how he knew right away that you were John Caswell's daughter. Sounds great, doesn't it?"

"He didn't know it right away." Sally's red lips quivered beneath Doug's sarcasm, and her cheeks flushed ominously. "You're twisting things, Doug Nelson, just because you're angry. I told you that he kept coming back day after day until he was sure he wasn't imagining things, until he was positive I looked as much like Mr. Caswell as he thought I did. At least, Doug, you could try to be fair!"

"I am trying to be fair. Oh, Sally girl!" Doug's grim lips softened and the sullenness left his voice to be drowned in an agony of pleading. "You say I know Barney Stevens. I do, better than you think. If you weren't the prettiest thing in this whole big city, do you suppose for a minute he would have cared whom you looked like? Do you suppose if your hair hadn't been like ripe wheat in the sun and your eyes brown agates streaked with gold that he would have come back day after day talking such nonsense?"

"Of course you look like John Caswell. I could have told you that months ago. I work for him, don't I? But looking like him doesn't make you his daughter."

Sally's small fingers crept up his sleeve. She was such a little thing, golden-haired, ivory-skinned.

"But I've got to be some one's daughter, haven't I, Doug?" Her voice was full of wistful pleading. "That woman who left me at the orphanage when I was four and never came back couldn't have been my mother! No mother would have been that cruel."

Tenderly, Doug's arms went out and drew her close. From beyond the alley's tunnellike opening, there was noise and hubbub, the evening sun shining warm on busy streets, but within it was quiet and still.

"What difference does it make whose daughter you are?" he pleaded. "What difference does anything make, Sally, dear, if we love each other? Think what this thing Barney is persuading you to do really means! Think of it from John Caswell's side, for a change."

"He's rich. I'll bet not a year has passed since that little girl of his was stolen that some one hasn't turned up with a claim like yours. They've been fake claims, every one of them, made by crooks after his money, but each one a knife in his heart. It's made an old man of him before his time. It's killing him. And now, you!"

Outside the vaulted entrance a car stopped at the curb. There were footsteps on the rough brick pavement, but Doug's voice hurried on.

"Stevens needs money, Sally. I know it. I heard the old man giving him a good talking-to, just the other day. Stevens knows well that the fellow who can give John Caswell his daughter back will be sitting pretty for life, and he's using you as a cat's-paw, a tool. I can't bear it."

"Oh, you can't? Well, what are you going to do about it?" It was

Barney Stevens, who, coming up unnoticed, had heard Doug's angry words.

Loosening his hold on Sally, Doug swung around with clenched fists and white lips to where Barney stood, smoking a cigarette, the taunt of a smile on his thin, dark face.

"I'm going to give you the beating of your life!" Doug snarled. "You're a crook, a sneak! You——"

"Doug! Barney!" Sally threw herself between them. "You mustn't fight! It's terrible! Doug doesn't mean what he's saying, Barney. He's mad; that's all. He doesn't understand."

"He's jealous," Barney flatly. "That's what's the matter with him. He knows that if you get a break like this he'll be finished with you, and he's scared. An underpaid secretary and a rich man's only daughter! fat chance he'd have with you n!"

Sally stamped her feet. "That's not true!" she cried, her golden eyes twin flames. "Doug knows I love him. He knows that nothing on earth could change my feeling for him, that I want nothing so much as his love."

"If that's true, then what are we arguing about?" Doug's words were bitter. "Why don't you send this fellow about his business and marry me? Heaven knows I've asked you often enough!"

Tears smarted in Sally's eyes. "And haven't I told you just as often, darling, that we can't live on love? We can't! We just haven't enough money to get married on. You don't know poverty as I do, Doug. It's terrible! You were born on a farm, with all you wanted to eat and drink and wear. You had a roof over your head, but I—— I'm more afraid of an empty purse than I am of death itself!

"If John Caswell accepted me as his daughter, think what it would mean for us, Doug! Think what we——"

And then the storm of Doug's love and anger and pride broke. Turning his back on Barney, blocking him out as though he had never existed, he swept Sally to him and held her there, staring accusingly into her eyes.

"Mean for us? Us?" White to the lips, he echoed her words. "Count me out of that! I can see what it would mean for you, all right—money, clothes, ease, luxury, the things I can't give you, the thing you are afraid to face life without. Another Cinderella girl? Is that the idea? From poverty to riches! All right, here's luck to you! Get them if you can; I'll keep out of your way." Then, pushing her from him, he strode toward the street.

For a stricken instant Sally watched him go; then she ran after him. A belated truck, honking into the alley, brushed by her. Out on the street the traffic was a dizzy whirl, but before she could lose herself in it, Barney had caught her arm and was holding her fast.

"For Pete's sake!" he cried, "what are you trying to do—kill yourself? That truck just missed you by half an inch, and you were making right for a street car when I got you. Get back here!"

Then, in a burst of irritation, he added, "What are we hanging around this alley for, anyway? It's dinner time. Come along. My car's out there by the curb, and you're eating with me."

Once in the car, however, his irritation gave way to an excitement he made no effort to hide, an excitement that made his voice crisp and his dark eyes snap.

"Look here, you're going through



"Doug! Barney!" Sally threw herself between them. "You mustn't fight! It's terrible! Doug doesn't mean what he's saying, Barney. He's mad. He doesn't understand."

with this thing, aren't you? You promised me you would. You're not letting a sap like Nelson get you down, I hope!

"Gosh, don't cry! You can't go through the streets crying. Where's your pride? Are you going to let him laugh at you, call you a Cin-

derella girl, and get away with it? Let's have a good dinner and dance, make whoopee. Come along—be a sport!”

Sally was young, pleasure-starved. They dined, she and Barney, with soft-shaded candles between them. They danced. Her tiny high heels were winged. As he looked down at her, Barney's arms tightened and his eyes burned.

“To-night,” he told her, “I'm going to call on Uncle John and make an appointment. To-morrow morning at ten I'll stop for you and we'll drive out. It's Sunday and he'll be at home, and I know he'll us. He'd never turn down any one who came on an errand like ours.”

His feet swung into faster dancing time. “Boy, oh boy!” he chuckled. “If this thing goes over—if it does——”

“If it does!” Sally's thoughts echoed Barney's words as her feet quickened also in a sudden ecstasy of happiness. “If it does! Think of all the wonderful things I'll do for Doug! He'll be ashamed then and sorry, and I'll forgive him, and we'll be so happy!”

Closing her eyes, she pretended it was Doug who was dancing with her, Doug's arms that were holding her tight, and gave herself over to them in a glory of blissful imaginings.

But by the time Barney had left her at her door, ecstasy had fled. With lights about her, music, and dancing feet, her quarrel with Doug hadn't seemed so bad, but here, in her dark little room, the memory of it swooped down on her like a smothering cloud.

At two o'clock, when she could stand it no longer, she called Doug on the hall phone. “I can't have you angry at me, darling!” she cried. “I can't sleep. It's awful.”

“I'll say it is!” Doug echoed mis-

erably. “You're not going through with this thing, are you, Sally? You called me to tell me you wouldn't, didn't you? And—you've sent Stevens away?”

It was Sally who hung up the receiver. “What's the use?” she asked herself. “What's the use of trying to explain? It's as Barney said; Doug is jealous. I won't give in to him! I just won't!”

She was glad when morning came, although it was to bring Barney with it; glad of the sunshine and the church bells ringing, glad even when Barney's car honked at the curb. She would have been glad of anything, it seemed to her, that would take her out of that room and the bitter thoughts that crowded it.

Unsmiling, she let Barney help her into the car. Unsmiling, she settled herself at his side.

His eyes swept over her, shrewdly appraising. “Still worrying about the boy friend?” he grinned. “Snap out of it. You've bigger fish to fry. When you're Sally Caswell, John Caswell's daughter, you'll wonder what you ever saw in that guy to lose sleep over.”

In scorn too deep for answer, Sally watched the city office buildings fade into homes, and the homes give way to long stretches of hedge-lined road, where on either side great estates loomed behind distant, leafy screens.

It was in one of these imposing houses, a rambling, old-fashioned place, white-pillared and sleepily remote, that Sally met John Caswell. He was waiting for her in a great book-lined room, where the light from a high window fell full upon him, and a pictured lady in a gold frame smiled tenderly from her place on the wall.

John Caswell was a tall, broad-shouldered man with blond hair

and gold-flecked eyes so like Sally's own that her hand flew to her throat in sudden shock. Those eyes seemed like lanterns turned on her very soul.

His hand on her arm, John Caswell led her to where a mirror stretched from ceiling to floor. He held her there beside him, while he stared down at her, his heavy brows meeting.

For what seemed an eternity to Sally, he held her there. She could feel the smart of tears behind her eyes. "If only he'd say something!" she thought. She was trembling with nervousness when he did speak at last.

"Barney, put up those shades," he ordered, "and call Nelson, my secretary. He's in the other room. Tell him to come here; I want him. Doug! Oh, Doug!"

Doug! At the sound of his name Sally felt empty and sick. The room swam about her. Often, she knew, Doug had spent week-ends with Mr. Caswell when his work demanded it, but it was unthinkable that he should be here now, that she must see him, face the scorn in his eyes.

Before her a door was opening. She felt Doug's presence and tried to keep her eyes on the floor. Yet in a frightened panic they lifted.

"Did you want me——" Doug began; then, as he saw Sally, the words died into the ghost of a whisper.

For a split second their gaze met and held, Sally's pleading, Doug's stern and angrily accusing. But before either could speak, John Caswell's voice was ringing through the room, trembling a little with emotion.

"Nelson! Barney! Before Heaven, I believe I've found her at last—my little lost baby—after all these years! Look! Her hair, her

eyes, the way she carries her head—mine, mine! Oh, there have been so many disappointments, so many failures! If this is a failure, too——"

Without warning, he broke down. Before Sally's frightened gaze he became an old man, feeble and pitiful and pleading. There were tears on his cheeks, and swaying, he would have fallen if Doug had not caught him and led him to a chair.

John Caswell motioned Sally toward him. "Child, come closer," he said. "Let me put my hands on your pretty hair."

On her knees beside him, Sally felt an agony of shame. Those gentle, caressing fingers hurt her as sharply as a blow. Lifting her eyes, she met Doug's, filled with blazing scorn.

She never went back to her old room again, not even to pack.

"I want you to leave your memories behind you," John Caswell told her. "I want you to begin again."

Sally laughed, a bitter little ghost of a laugh. Leave her memories behind her, leave Doug behind her! If only she could. If only she could pretend their love had never been!

Through the weeks that followed she went proudly, her chin up, her eyes defiant. The papers headlined her. Cameras clicked at her passing. She was "John Caswell's newly found daughter, the Cinderella girl."

That was what Doug had called her in his first fierce bitterness. How Sally hated that name and the thoughts it evoked! It seemed to her sometimes that she hated every one and everything in the world but John Caswell himself, that she would go crazy if she gave herself time to think.

She laughed and danced, went to teas, luncheons, theaters, dinners. She shopped for clothes, jewels, furs.

Department heads, seeing her coming, hurried forward to greet her. Sales people fought to wait upon her. John Caswell, happy in the thought that she was happy, urged her on, his heart growing more adoring, more exultant, with each day.

In order to spend more time near her, he did most of his business at home, and ordered Doug to stay with him.

"Doug will live here for a while, Sally," he said. "He's a nice boy and I want you to be friends, but you must promise not to break his heart with those eyes of yours if I leave you two together for a while."

"Doug's heart isn't the breaking kind," Sally said. "I know it better than you think I do, Daddy Caswell."

Alone, she faced Doug's twisted smile. Her voice was bitter with pent-up hurt. "You hate to see me have things, be happy," she cried. "You're jealous, just as Barney said. You think that by sticking around and looking at me all the time, you can make me miserable. I'll show you, Doug Nelson!"

He caught her hands and held them in a tight grip. Sally winced and choked back a cry of pain. His eyes were two coals burning in an ashen face. They frightened her.

"So that's what you think of me, is it?" he said slowly. "That's the way you rate the love I've given you?" Then almost gently, "You're lovely as a dream, Sally. You fit into a world like this. You belong here."

His gaze swept her, from gleaming, burnished hair to slender, beautifully shod feet; swept the room in which she stood, with its book-lined walls and softly cushioned chairs, and the broad vista of trees and lawn and flowers through the window. "You were never meant to be

a poor man's wife, Sally. I wonder—are you happy? Tell me. I'd like to know."

"I never was so happy in all my life!" Sally lied, and turning, ran from the room before he could see the tears in her eyes.

One evening, a few weeks later, Barney came to her, openly jubilant.

"Well, I guess it's in the bag at last!" he exulted. "They've tried their hardest. Uncle John was telling me about it to-day. The matron of the foundling home that took you in is dead. The records were burned in a fire two years ago. And—he's paid my debts, and doubled my allowance, and is settling two hundred fifty thousand on you outright tomorrow. Do you know what he asked me? He asked me if you and I were going to be married. Are we, Sally? I'm crazy about you—really, I am, Sally. I always have been—and think of Nelson! Would he get a jolt if you middle-aisled it with me!"

Sally glared at him. "We're not getting married," she said, "and I'll thank you to leave Doug Nelson out of this! Don't you ever mention his name to me again! I don't want Daddy Caswell's money! I'd love him if he didn't have a cent in the world. I was a million times happier when I was poor!"

Jerking herself free of Barney's restraining fingers, she ran out on the vine-shadowed portico that overlooked the garden below.

It was warm and close. Honey-suckle, heavy with bloom, filled the air with fragrance. Doug's office opened on the portico also. Faintly from where she stood, Sally could hear the *tap-tap* of his typewriter keys. Clenching her hands, Sally fought for self-control. There, not ten feet away, was Doug. The memory of his arms about her

was a living pain. She touched her lips. They were hot with the well-remembered kisses his lips had pressed upon them. Love? What was it that it could hurt her so, surviving hate and humiliation and scorn?

"Life isn't worth pain like this!" she sobbed to herself. "Nothing is worth it—nothing! I'm coming to you now, Doug, dear, and tell you so!"

She was almost across the chair-filled, flower-filled terrace, groping her way toward Doug's light-rimmed door, when she saw the woman.

At first, blind with tears, shaken with sobs, Sally had thought her just another of the blurred night shadows, but the moon, floating out of a bank of clouds, shone suddenly full and clear, and Sally felt herself go cold.

That coarse, heavy-featured face, those darting, shifty eyes, that cruel, loose mouth! "I know her!" Sally thought wildly. "I've seen her before! I know I have—in some awful place, some awful way!"

From the shelter of a canopied swing, Sally watched as the woman shuffled hurriedly by. "She's going toward Doug's office!" she thought in blank surprise. "It's some one to see Doug!" Then she found herself too amazed, too stunned to think. For Doug's door had opened silently, stealthily, and Doug, his face white in the moonlight, was hurrying across the terrace, his hands outstretched to warn the woman back. He had money in his hands, bills. He gave them to the woman.

"Are you crazy, coming here?" Sally heard his angry whisper. "I told you I'd see you to-morrow, didn't I?—and I told you where! Can't you trust me overnight? Do you want to upset everything?

What am I paying you for, if you don't do as I say?"

The woman complained, "How do I know you're not double-crossing me? How do I know what you're getting on the side? There's no harm in my looking the girl over, is there? I——"

Sally could no longer hear. Beneath Doug's urging hand, the woman was disappearing down the path toward the road, until at last her angry mutterings were lost in the noises of the night—locusts singing in the trees; the barking of a dog, and to Sally louder than everything else, the pounding of her own frightened heart. For a long moment she stood there, unconscious of Barney at her side.

When he had come, how much or how little he had seen, Sally neither knew nor cared. All she knew was that, as she turned, sick and unhappy, she saw his staring eyes, trembling lips, and the red point of his cigarette burning close to his unheeding fingers.

He felt her eyes on him and faced her. "You saw them?" he gasped. "Nelson and that woman? You heard what he said to her, saw him paying her that money? You know what that means, don't you? It means that he's dug up some one at last who'll claim she's your mother. It means he's just waiting until he can get his evidence together, and then it's good night for us. He's going to get you out of here, and he'll stop at nothing to do it!"

Pale as the moonlight that flooded her, Sally pressed her hand to her lips to hold back the cry that trembled there.

"I—I don't believe it!" she cried. "I can't! Doug wouldn't do that to me—pay a creature like that to say she's my mother! Even for spite, he couldn't do it; it's too awful——"



Doug had money in his hands. He gave it to the woman. "Are you crazy, coming here?" Sally heard his angry whisper. "I told you I'd see you to-morrow. Do you want to upset everything? What am I paying you for, if you don't do as I say?"

Her voice broke. She clung to Barney's arm.

"I'll marry you!" she sobbed. "I'll marry you to-morrow if only

you'll take me away where I'll never see Doug again! Put your arms around me, Barney. Kiss me! Make me forget!"

She was swept by hysterical fear—fear of Doug, who could hate so, who could plot so ruthlessly against her; fear of herself.

"If he came to me even now and
LS-2C

held out his arms," she thought, "I'd go to him. I know I would. But I mustn't let myself. I'd die of shame!"

Late that night, when she went up to her room, Barney's kisses hot on her lips, she found Doug waiting. From the curtained dimness of a recessed window, he stepped out as she passed and caught her, his strong hands on her soft, bare shoulders.

Sally tried to wrench herself free, but he held her in a tight grip.

"Sally!" he cried in a strained voice. "You must listen to me! You've got to get away from here! Don't look at me that way. I'm not crazy. I'm telling you the truth. You've got to leave here, and I can't tell you why. If you don't, there'll be trouble you'll always regret. Let's go West, Sally, you and I, out where I came from. There are mountains there, tall trees, a brook with trout in it——"

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, Sally, listen to me! It's your last chance, I tell you! Your——"

"My last chance for what—marrying you? Thanks, Doug." The lights in Sally's eyes were not golden now, but red. Her cheeks were red, too, and her lips were quivering with shame.

"What if I don't go away as you say? What if I don't marry you? What will you do then? Oh, Doug, Doug, Doug, I know. You'll try to disgrace me, humiliate me. You'll bring that awful woman in to swear she's my mother!

"Oh, I saw you out on the terrace to-night! I saw you paying her money! I heard every word you said to her. To think you could do that to me, when I've loved you so! To think you can look me in the face and pretend to love me when all the time you're plotting against me in

your heart! I'm going to marry Barney Stevens—to-morrow if he wants me—and then I hope I never see you again as long as I live!" Then, tearing herself free from his straining grasp, she ran to her room, and slammed the door and bolted it. "That's the end," she told herself dully. "I wish I were dead."

It was noon the next day before Barney called her. Mr. Caswell had driven down to the city in the morning, and taken Doug with him. From her window Sally had watched them go, and had spent the hours wandering listlessly from empty room to empty room. The house was a lonely place, full of futile, unhappy echoings.

Barney's voice, when he telephoned her, sounded strangely thin and shrill.

"It's done, Sally! That two hundred and fifty thousand is as good as yours! The papers are nearly drawn up, and they'll be signed to-morrow just as Uncle John promised. I told him we were going to be married. Nelson was there and heard it all. I wish you could have seen his face!

Sally couldn't answer.

"Say, aren't you listening?" he asked impatiently. "You're not going back on your word, are you? You're going to marry me, Sally?"

"Yes, I'll marry you," Sally said, and hung up.

Later, flowers came from Barney, and with them a note.

We're celebrating to-night. I'll be out for you early.

"I hate flowers!" Sally cried, and tossed the lovely things, their wrappings loose about them, on the table. Then she went outside and walked along the garden's winding, stone-flagged paths. Her mind was

a pool of torturing memories, memories that had slept, mercifully forgotten, since her childhood years. She tried to put them aside, but couldn't.

"It's Doug," she thought bitterly. "With his hate he's stirred up everything ugly in my life. And that woman I saw last night—I can't get her out of my mind." Wherever she looked, wherever she turned, the face haunted her. Evil eyes were staring at her, cruel lips mocking. Her mother! Suppose she really was her mother! How could Sally stand it?

Beside her, the bushes stirred, a rabbit darted out to scurry with tiny patterings through the grass almost at her feet. With a scream, Sally fled to the house.

She sought comfort in the library where the picture of the gentle lady smiled down at her from her gold-framed place on the wall.

Sally touched the pictured face with humbled fingers. "You're so sweet!" she whispered. "Oh, let me belong to you! I want to, so terribly!"

She was still standing there, her eyes tear-dimmed and wistful, when Barney found her. With him was the woman of the night before, with her cruel mouth and shifty, evil eyes.

Sally watched him as he drew the woman hastily into the room and slammed the door behind him.

"Who—where——" Sally's hands were ice-cold with fear. "Oh, Barney, who——" But before she could force the words from her stiff lips, Barney's voice was hammering against her ears.

"Who is she? She's your mother, Nelson's trump card that he's been holding out on us for so long! She's the woman he had out here on the terrace last night. The papers got

wind of that settlement Uncle John made on you; it's in the afternoon edition, and she's been hanging around this place like a vulture, ever since!"

He swung on the woman, his eyes wild. "You didn't lose any time, did you?" he snarled. "You're out for all you can get, aren't you?"

"And who's got a better right than a girl's own mother?" Insolent, yet cringing, the woman flung out her challenge. She turned to Sally. "Take a good look at me, dearie; a good, long look."

Her clawlike fingers clutched at Sally's dress. The woman's evil eyes stabbed at the girl. Sally felt that tortured conviction that something terrible was happening to her, something horrifying. The pleasant book-lined walls about her were fading, and the picture that had smiled down at her so comfortingly was fading, too, drawing itself away from her.

She tried to touch it; she couldn't move her hands. She tried to scream, but the scream died on her lips. She was a little child once more, cold and hungry and miserable; there was a woman who beat her when she cried, a woman who called herself her mother. Oh, it was this woman!

Then she heard the woman's shrill, cackling laugh.

"She knows me, all right! Look at her face. I'll say she knows me!" The woman's gaze flickered about the lovely quiet of the room, over its deep-piled rugs, soft-shaded lamps, and wood fire burning on the hearth; at the picture above the fireplace, and the roses drooping their crimson heads on the table; then, coming to rest on Sally at last, it burned hot with envy and greed.

"You've got it soft, haven't you?" she sneered. "Money and rich

clothes, and fine friends! You hold yourself pretty high, don't you? Well, you won't be so smart when I'm through. You and that double-crossing secretary of old man Caswell's—that Doug Nelson—were in this thing together, weren't you? You were pulling down a pretty penny between you, trying to pull the wool over my eyes, too! Do you know what he told me?

"He said that you were on the square, that if I went to you and tried to get anything out of you, you'd spill the whole thing to Caswell himself and I wouldn't get a cent. He told me that he loved you—sure, he did—and I fell for it. He said that he wanted to make you happy, and that he'd pay me fifty dollars a month to keep away from you and keep still!

"Imagine me swallowing a line like that at my age! And you with a fat settlement, planning to marry some one else and beat it! Well, I got wise just in time, didn't I? Those papers won't be signed until to-morrow, and if I tell the old man what I know to-night, they never will be.

"Come on, now; how much to keep still? How much? What's my share?"

It was almost as though Sally hadn't heard, as though she was aware of nothing but the white glory of understanding that was sweeping her. Doug hadn't been lying; he had been telling the truth to that awful woman! He loved her, wanted her to be happy, had been trying to buy happiness for her! He was willing to give up fifty dollars a month out of his small salary to buy her the happiness he thought she wanted, when all she wanted in all the world, all she ever would want, was his love! Doug loved her! He loved her!

She was whispering the words over and over to herself when first she was conscious of Barney's hand shaking her elbow and his words tumbling over themselves in a frenzy of pleading.

"Sally, snap out of it! Listen! We've got to buy her off. Who cares what Nelson's been telling her? What difference does it make? Uncle John is liable to show up here at any minute, and Nelson will be with him. With this woman here, how long do you suppose it will take him to queer things for us? He'll jump at the chance! It's what he's been praying for.

"Let's give her fifty thousand to keep out of the way until after those papers are signed to-morrow, fifty thousand until after we're married. How about it, Sally? Answer me!"

That was when Sally found speech at last—speech and a glorious exultation.

"Until after we're married?" She laughed. She had never before been so beautiful as when she stood there, golden-haired, her eyes golden stars, her lips crimson as the heart of a rose. "Barney, how can you be so blind as to believe I'd marry you now? And that money—as though I cared for it, as though I cared for anything but Doug's love! And he does love me! He does! Nothing can ever make me doubt him again!"

Dimly—how long before she couldn't have told—Sally had been vaguely aware of a noise on the drive, of footsteps on the terrace beneath the library windows, and of the closing of a door, but it was Barney's fixed stare that made her turn with a start. The room, in the late afternoon light, was shadow-filled and dim, but a streak of sun shining through the high-set windows cut it with a golden shaft and fell on two silent, listening figures, standing in

the doorway to Doug's office—John Caswell and Doug.

For an instant that was shorter than a thought, Sally hesitated. Then: "Daddy!" she cried. "Daddy! Oh, Doug, Doug, Doug!"

She ran to him, her arms outstretched. She felt his arms closing about her, and with a sigh of utter happiness buried her face against the rough tweed of his coat. Her tumbled hair was a mass of gold above his heart.

Through a mist of happiness, she was conscious of John Caswell's eyes upon her, tender, loving, kind. Twisting a little in the breathlessness of Doug's embrace, Sally smiled at him.

"It's all right, daddy," she said. "Everything is all right forever. You'll care for me just the same, I hope, even if that woman over there is my mother, and I'll care for you, and Doug's arms will hold me all my life."

"Sally! Precious little Sally!" There were tears in John Caswell's eyes. "Can't you give an old man a chance to talk? Won't you listen to what I'm trying to say?"

"That woman isn't your mother. You are my daughter, mine! Don't you understand? My child and"—his eyes sought the picture above the mantel, and to Sally it was as though the whole room were filled with the happiness that glowed in their flaming depths—"hers! That is your mother, dear, that woman who smiles at you from the wall, whose love has guided you to me at last!"

"But," Sally cried, her lips trembling pitifully, her mind a confused whirl, "I—I—remember this woman here with us; I remember an ugly room with her in it, and things she said and did, and her face when she was angry."

"Surely you remember her," John Caswell's voice soothed. "It's natural that you should. She's the wife of the man who kidnaped you. Her husband was sent to the penitentiary for murder right after you were kidnaped, and she was afraid to return you, and afraid to keep you, so she put you in the home. The man is dead. He died this morning, leaving a confession behind him, and the warden telephoned it to me less than two hours ago. We've been trying ever since to find this wife of his, so we could break the news to her."

There was a cry, the rush and swirl of skirts, the choke of frightened sobs.

"Let me out—let me by! I want to go to him! He's dead! Mike's dead! It was only to get him free that I wanted the money; I swear that was all! And—I didn't have anything to do with the kidnaping. I didn't want him to do it. I knew she'd be all right at the orphan asylum—that's why I left her there."

She clutched Sally's arm, pleaded with her. "Make them let me go! I'll never bother you again. I promise!"

It was John Caswell who led her to the door, and slipping something in her hand, closed it gently behind her. "Poor thing!" He shrugged pityingly. "Poor thing!" Then to Doug: "How did you happen on her, boy? Do you mind telling us now? It's the first time I've had a chance to ask."

Doug's eyes were shamed. "It was after all that Cinderella stuff came out in the papers, sir. I caught the woman hanging around the house. She had recognized Sally and was waiting for a chance to blackmail her. I—I was going to let her, at first. I thought I hated Sally and would be—glad to see her hurt, but

I couldn't. I loved her too much, you see. So I——"

"So you let her blackmail you instead; is that it? You were willing to give her fifty dollars a month out of your salary, so Sally could have the things you thought she wanted, even to a birthright you didn't believe she deserved, and another man's love.

"I don't say it was the right thing to do, Doug, but a love like that—— If I were a woman, I think I could forgive you everything. How about it, daughter?"

Suddenly Sally was alone with Doug, for John Caswell had disappeared through the door, taking Barney with him.

Seeing the cloud that swept over Sally's happy face, Doug nodded in quick reassurance.

"Don't worry about Barney, dear. Mr. Caswell will be easy on him. After all, if it hadn't been for Barney your father never would have found you, and he will remember that, always."

His arms tightened about her. "Sally, look at me! Look up so I may see your eyes. Do you suppose you can ever forgive me, sweet? Do you suppose you could try? I think I knew from the very first, down deep in my heart, that you were John Caswell's daughter, and I was

afraid. I was jealous, just as Barney said I was. Oh, my darling, I love you so terribly, and I have so little to give you!

"That—that ranch I was telling you about, Sally—if I asked you again, would you——"

"Are you asking me to go out there and live, Doug? Are you asking me to marry you?" Sally's voice trembled a bit with tenderness. "Because, if you aren't, I'm warning you, I'll ask you myself!"

Then when he said nothing, because if he tried to speak his voice would tremble so much that he couldn't; when the beat of his heart was like a drum in her ears, Sally pulled his head down to hers.

"Kiss me!" she pleaded. "Kiss me, Doug! I'm—starving for your kiss!" His fiery, passionate kiss thrilled her through and through. Sally clung to him in utter ecstasy.

Through the open window, noises floated in to them—the rumble of passing cars on the far-away road, the drone of bees, a bird's singing; lazy, peaceful, late afternoon sounds that neither Doug nor Sally heard.

Arms about each other, lips lost on lips, they heard nothing but the song of their own happy hearts, while the world stood still beneath them and the setting sun made a halo above their heads.





Victorious! ~ ~ By Doris Falbron

STEEL singing over ice! The dull thud of stick against rubber!

The very rafters of the Ice Palace echoed the enthusiastic cries of five thousand hockey fans, as Dan Woodring grabbed the puck after a lightning pass, and went winging like a scarlet arrow toward the goal.

Cristel Moir, just behind the railing, caught her breath as Dan shot behind the split defense. Her great blue eyes darkened with tenseness as he jerked his stick. Then she was on her feet with the others, shouting, almost sobbing, as the puck shot past the frantic Tiger goalie and thudded into the net. The score was tied now! There was another

minute to play, and with red-headed Dan back and playing in his old form, the Fighting Scots had a good chance to win.

Dan was smiling as he skated back. He waved toward her. Cristel's heart gave a queer little jump, and she leaned forward, breathless—to see his eyes gazing past her, with that strange glad light shining in them. She didn't need to turn; she knew. Rosita Dunlap was there, for only Rosita, with her midnight eyes and her hair shining like a crow's smooth wing, could bring that warm, happy glow to Dan's handsome face.

"Good boy, Danny!" Rosita's

shrill voice called. "Give us more like that!"

He grinned, and there was almost a swagger to his movements as he whirled easily into position. Cristel sank back, and beyond the heart-ache that filled her, whenever she saw him glance adoringly at Rosita, there was another worry. Dan was a keen player, the most brilliant on the team, but just a little erratic when he remembered that there was an audience. Cristel's father, manager and coach of the Fighting Scots, said that Dan was young and would settle down some day to being a star forward. But they did want to win from the Tigers to-night. It meant the League championship. Yet if Dan played for Rosita in the grand stand and it showed up in his work, their chances were sure to be lessened.

It did show up. The Scots center captured the puck, flicked it expertly over to Dan, who tore too recklessly into the opposing wing. He was almost checked, and as he lost his balance, Cristel's small hands clenched. But the next second he had recovered and was speeding on.

"Zip" Sharkey, opposing left defense, came to meet him. With his shoulders bunched, his body weaving, Dan tried to round him, but that momentary check at the start had slowed him. Zip cut him off. The next instant Dan stood, discomfited, watching a Tiger player with the puck speeding over the ice toward the other goal.

The Scots goal keeper made a desperate attempt to foil the play, but the rubber shot past him just as the gong clanged. The Tigers had won!

Cristel's hands gripped the rail as the crowd rose slowly. Dan was hurrying to the rail, and Rosita was

already coming down the steps to meet him.

"I'm so sorry, Danny," she soothed him. "You were marvelous."

"I was rotten on that last play," Dan returned honestly. "We'd have had another goal if I hadn't lost it." Boyishly, he took off his cap and rubbed hands over his red thatch of hair.

He sighed, and Cristel saw that his brown eyes were shadowed, weary-looking. She wanted desperately to draw his head to her shoulder and comfort him. Then she shook the feeling away irritably. There was no use feeling sorry for Dan. Those marks of weariness were of his own making, and his persistent breaking of training was the reason he had sat on the bench most of the last two games.

"I've been terrible lately," Dan offered humbly, his eyes begging Rosita for comfort.

"You haven't!" Rosita insisted. "You're too good for your little club team, anyway! Right now you're blue. I know what's good for that. We'll skate a bit, then we'll go somewhere and make you forget your work—that is," she added solicitously, "if you aren't too tired."

Dan flushed, and straightened his shoulders. "I played about five minutes," he reminded her. "I guess I can last a while longer."

He guided Rosita to a bench and knelt to put on her skates. The band was playing now, and couples were venturing out on the ice.

"You'd better stay and skate a while," a mild voice spoke at Cristel's elbow. She turned to see her father. "Maybe you can say something to Dan."

"I can't!" she cried sharply.

John Moir's kindly, troubled eyes followed the pair on the ice: beauti-

ful Rosita, like a flame in her red skating costume, and handsome Dan, his face shining with happiness. "Dan's a great player, and I'd hate to be sending him back to the farm, but when a hockey star begins to slip, you can't do very much about it. He's always liked you, and he might listen to you—but I don't suppose any man has any sense when he's in love."

Cristel's blue eyes blurred suddenly, and she turned to pick up her blue cap, blinking back the silly, exasperating tears. As she pulled the cap over her silvery blond hair her small hands trembled slightly, but her chin was set determinedly.

"I'll stay," she told her father, "but I do hate playing nursemaid."

Cristel had been raised on skates, and had lived most of her life around a skating rink, so there was never a lack of partners.

Usually she loved skimming over the ice on winged feet to the stirring music. When Cristel skated she became a moonlight sprite, small, graceful as a swallow, with hair like silvery moon-mist, and blue eyes with lovely, silvery lights in them. It was small wonder all eyes were upon her whenever she skated.

But to-night her feet felt leaden and her heart was a dull, aching burden. She tried not to look at that joyous couple—at Rosita, laughing provocatively up into Dan's face, pretending to stumble so that Dan might catch her and hold her tightly for a moment; at bright-haired Dan, gazing rapturously down at her, his soul shining through brown eyes.

Dan seemed to have forgotten Cristel's very existence; yet half an hour later he appeared suddenly beside her.

"Rosita was called to the phone," he explained. "How about a turn

or two? It's been ages since we've skated together."

Cristel could have told him why they hadn't skated together—because he had had eyes for nobody but Rosita since she had started to frequent the rink.

"Thanks, I don't care to, Dan," Cristel answered coolly, turning away, afraid to look at him.

"Why not?" he demanded.

"I won't help you break training! Oh, it isn't fair, Danny!" She turned to him impulsively. "You're not being fair to the team, to dad, to yourself. You——"

"Don't nag me, Cris," he returned impatiently. "I'm not doing anything."

"Not doing anything?" She stared at him, amazed. "You've missed most of two games! You lost that last score to-night, and——"

"I made the only score we got!" he pointed out hotly.

"You were fresh when you did," she insisted angrily. "The others were tired. A substitute had been doing your work. You scored once, but couldn't repeat it—when so much depended upon it!"

"Stop, Cris!" Dan's eyes were stormy. "You can't talk to me that way! Rosita says——"

All the accumulated anger and pain welled up in Cristel's heart, and the words rushed from her lips.

"Rosita—what does she care about the championship?" she flared. "She hasn't been with the team, hoping, praying, watching! She hasn't grown up thinking a flair for hockey was like a gift from heaven, and that to throw it away just for——" Her voice broke; then, angrier than ever at her own weakness, she went on breathlessly, "Dan Woodring, you're a show-off! You can't stand up under the strain of real playing! You haven't the



"Dan Woodring, you're a show-off! You can't stand up under the strain of real playing! You haven't the courage to stick to training! You're a coward!"

courage to stick to training! You're a coward!"

"Cristel!" Dan wasn't red-headed for nothing. He caught her wrists in his strong hands. "Cris, stop it! Nobody can call me a coward and get away with it!"

"I can!" she blazed wildly. "You are a coward!"

The music had stopped, and Cristel was suddenly conscious of the curious crowd watching them. The Fighting Scots' star player was being called a coward! Dan didn't seem to notice. He just stood there, his

face white with fury, holding her with cruel, hard hands.

Cristel broke loose, dashed like a hurtling arrow across the ice to a bench, and with trembling hands took off her skates. Then she stumbled up the steps, out into the soft moonlight.

She stole into the shadows of the long porch, trying to hold back her burning, stinging tears. She shrank deeper into the darkness as she heard a woman speak. Rosita! Cristel caught her breath, and frantically tried to wipe away the

telltale tear stains on her cheeks. Dan and Rosita must never know she had cried!

"You played marvelously," Rosita was saying. "I was thrilled to death when you made that last goal."

"I was pretty thrilled myself!" laughed the man complacently. "I'd begun to think Dan Woodring had cramped our chance to win!"

Cristel gasped. Dan wasn't with Rosita; it was Zip Sharkey, the Tigers' captain. And Rosita was praising him! She didn't care which side won! She was flirting with both men. She was a cheat—and Dan loved her so.

"And now," Rosita went on, as they passed Cristel, concealed in the shadows, "you must go home and go to bed, Zip dear. Don't worry about anything. It won't be my fault if you lose the championship."

They went on, leaving Cristel again swept by rage and hot, unreasonable pain. Why didn't Rosita treat Dan fairly, at least urge him to keep training, as she urged Zip? There was only one answer; Rosita wanted Dan to lose. Why?

Still puzzling, Cristel hurried through the grounds into the pepper-shaded street. She lived a mile away, but she wanted to walk and think.

But a shrill, familiar whistle made her slow her footsteps involuntarily. The next minute Dan was striding beside her, scowling, grim, determined.

"Haven't I—and your dad, too—told you that you're not to walk home alone at night?" he demanded irritably. "Why don't you take a taxi or wait for your father?"

"Don't worry about me," she answered. "I can take care of myself."

"Yes?" was his doubting retort.

They swung along together. Despite her anger, Cristel thrilled as

she always did when Dan walked beside her. They had often chosen to walk home after hockey practice, because they liked the feel of the salt sea wind stinging their faces. They would be filled with laughter and youth, and Dan would catch her hand and hold it as they walked. Sometimes when they reached the Moir cottage on the ocean front and found the Pacific all shimmery and calm, they would take Cristel's little speed boat, the *Starlight*, and go for a swift ride, leaving a glowing, phosphorescent trail, like a path to fairyland.

How Cristel had loved those nights! But Dan didn't care about walking home with Cristel any more. He went to Rosita, never dreaming that he was tearing Cristel's heart, for he never guessed she loved him with her whole heart and soul.

When they came to the hill above Cristel's home, they stopped for a moment, viewing the dark water that surged and pounded against the shore.

"The tides have been pretty strong lately," Dan observed. "You can see where the breakers have washed over your dock."

"I haven't had the *Starlight* out for several days," she nodded. "The surf has been rough."

"Well, don't you take that egg-shell into a heavy sea." Dan frowned to make his warning emphatic. "She wasn't built to ride big waves."

"I like the surf," she objected, but a warm feeling possessed her. Dan cared about her safety! "Anyway," she added, "since the championship games started, I've had to stay ashore to keep dad in livable humor."

They laughed. John Moir's good-natured patience was proverbial. They walked slowly to the Moir

cottage. At the gate, Cristel held out her hand impulsively.

"I'm sorry, Dan, about to-night. I had no right to call you names. But it has hurt to see you out of the games, out of training."

She shouldn't have said that, she realized. A red flush crept into Dan's cheeks, and his hands tensed.

"Training hasn't had anything to do with it," he said stiffly. "Your father's just wanted a chance to discipline me."

"That isn't why you've been kept from playing!" she flared. "You know it isn't! It's because you can't keep up to your old form. You're just a flash now—one good play and you're through!"

"Must we go through that again?" he cried, exasperated. "I can manage my own affairs! If I want to break training, or quit the team, it's my own business! I could even live without playing hockey," he finished, bitterly. "Rosita says that hockey's not so hot, anyhow!"

"Then why——" Cristel began hotly, but she stopped. Dan didn't know about that meeting on the porch. "Oh, Dan, you can't do this!" Her voice broke a little. "You can't give up so much, when you have every chance of becoming one of the world's star players! Isn't that worth working for? You can't give it all up, Dan—not for somebody who doesn't care a snap for you!"

Silence followed. Appalled, Cristel put her hand to her throat.

Dan's face was grim, cold, and when he spoke, his voice was like cold, sharp steel.

"If you mean Rosita," he said, "you don't know what you're talking about. She's the sweetest, dearest, most wonderful girl in the world!"

Cristel couldn't speak; too many sobs were welling in her tight throat.

Even though Dan was waiting for her to say something, she could just stand there, staring at him.

"Well, if you're the kind of girl that's unfair to other girls, I'm through!" He turned away abruptly. "I don't even want your friendship any more."

Then he was gone. Cristel stood there, numbed by her misery, watching him go up the hill, over the crest, into the darkness beyond, out of her life forever!

During the next three days Cristel felt as if she were wandering in gray, cold unearthliness. She stayed at home, with the angry sea pounding against the shore, sending salt spray up to the front porch, making escape with the frail, small *Starlight* impossible. She spent her evenings at the rink, watching the team practice, conscious always of Dan's cold, accusing eyes.

There was only one bright ray—Dan was playing better, not with the old grand-stand flash and brilliance, but steadily, doggedly, plunging in as if he meant to pit his strength against a hateful world. After practice, Dan always left as soon as he could, perhaps to go to Rosita, perhaps home. Cristel only knew that he left without a word to her, without so much as a glance toward her.

The night before the big game with the Tigers, a short early practice session was held in the Ice Palace. After practice, when the doors were thrown open to the public, Rosita hurried in.

"Hello, Cristel dear!" she said sweetly. "I wanted to see you and Dan—oh, there he is now. Danny boy!" she raised her voice, and Dan, tall and lithe in his faded practice sweater, turned toward them.

Cristel felt she couldn't leave

then. She had to stay and watch Dan's glowing eyes resting on Rosita's face, see the tenseness of his hands as they held her soft ones.

"Gosh, Rosita!" he exclaimed. "It was good of you to come!"

"I shouldn't have," she pouted, "after the way you've neglected me these past few days."

Cristel caught her breath. Dan had kept training!

"But I've forgiven you," Rosita said. "I've an invitation for both of you!" She turned to include Cristel. "Mamma's chartered a yacht for an all-day cruise to-morrow. There'll be deep-sea fishing and an orchestra for dancing in the afternoon. You'll both——"

"Oh, I couldn't—thanks so much," Cristel said hastily. "Not to-morrow! I couldn't be away."

"I'll be so disappointed," pouted Rosita. "Can't you persuade her, Danny boy?"

"I'm sorry, too," he frowned regretfully, "but the big game's to-morrow night, you know."

"We'll be ashore in time," Rosita promised.

"I'm sorry," he repeated sincerely, "but after a day like that, I'd be a terrible player. And since I lost that last game"—his voice was bitter—"I've got to stay and show any one who doubts it, that I'm not too much of a coward to stick."

"But, darling boy"—Rosita leaned closer, her voice a low caress—"is a game more important than celebrating my birthday?"

Cristel's eyes widened. To-morrow wasn't Rosita's birthday. Only last week Cristel had glimpsed Rosita's address book, on the flyleaf of which was inscribed,

To Rosita on her birthday, May 10th.

Cristel remembered, because that was her father's birthday.

"It's to be my birthday party," Rosita explained disappointedly, "and I'd counted on you, Danny boy."

"I wish I could!" Dan's eyes were thoughtful. "I—I just couldn't, Rosita!"

"Not even for a little while?" she persisted. "We'll pick you up in the afternoon. Won't you come just for an hour or so—to have some birthday cake?"

"I'll come out in a water taxi," he promised, "at—say, four o'clock, for an hour." Then his eyes passed Cristel's coldly, unseeing, but his voice raised a little. "I want to bring you a gift, Rosita, something very special."

"And I'll be waiting," Rosita said tenderly, caressingly, gazing at him with her gorgeous, flashing black eyes, "for your, something very special!"

They left then, and neither remembered to urge Cristel to change her mind and join the party. But Cristel didn't care. She was filled with bewilderment and pain, and fear for Dan's happiness. Why had Rosita lied about her birthday party, and why, if she didn't love Dan, did she want the very special gift which Cristel knew could mean but one thing—an engagement ring?

The next day dragged endlessly for Cristel. She tinkered with the flimsy *Starlight*, polishing, oiling, screwing down grease cups, filling the gas tank, while the waves, breaking in a thunderous surge, white-capped and rough, rocked the little boat.

In the afternoon she could see the yacht cruising off shore, waiting for Dan. The water taxi, with Dan aboard, approaching the yacht at four. Cristel tried not to think of how Dan would offer his very special

gift to beautiful Rosita, but something kept her eyes turning, fascinated, toward that boat, until the winter sun abruptly washed into the darkening waves, leaving only red-and-gold reflections shimmering momentarily behind. Then a dark dread settled over Cristel. The water taxi hadn't returned to the yacht to take Dan ashore.

Then it was time to go with her father to the Ice Palace. When they reached it crowds were already lined before the closed doors.

"We have a big crowd," John Moir observed. "They're expecting a great game."

Cristel shuddered. The heavy fear still hung over her. When they left home, the yacht had still been a faintly lighted blur, bobbing offshore. But of course, she assured herself, Dan must be down in the dressing room by that time.

Yet a little later, when she saw her father coming toward her worriedly, she knew—and fear clutched at her heart.

"Dan's missing," he announced briefly. "He's been gone all afternoon. And you can't blame Rosita Dunlap. There she is with her party crowd."

Cristel turned amazed eyes to Rosita, in a yellow ensemble, with a gorgeous fox fur trailing over her shoulder, sitting two rows above her. Cristel saw the girl nod affirmatively, with a significant smile, to somebody on the ice. Zip Sharkey was looking up questioningly; then he grinned widely and patted his hands together in silent applause.

Sudden anger flamed in Cristel. Rosita was to blame for Dan's absence—Rosita and Zip Sharkey! Cristel was sure of it. She scrambled recklessly over the fast-filling seats, and clutched wildly, madly at Rosita's arm.

"Where's Dan?" she demanded, her blue eyes blazing with anger.

"Dan?" Rosita shrugged. "How should I know?"

"He was at your party," Cristel accused, "on the yacht this afternoon!"

"We weren't on the yacht," Rosita answered coldly. "The sea was rough, so we went to the beach club."

"But what about Dan?" Cristel gripped Rosita's arm more tightly.

"Why ask me?" Rosita jerked away. "I sent him a note, as I did the others, but he didn't show up."

"Why, Rosita," one of her guests protested, "you said he'd gone deep-sea fishing!"

Momentarily fury flamed in Rosita's dark eyes; then she laughed lightly.

"I said maybe he had," she explained. "He——"

Cristel didn't wait to hear more. Dan had gone aboard the yacht, and had not returned. The referee's whistle started the game as she hurried out into the night. She sprang into her father's car, and drove off.

At the top of the hill overlooking the ocean, she gave a sigh of relief. The mysterious yacht was still anchored offshore.

She stopped the car at the house and rushed down the wooden steps to the boathouse. The *Starlight* was ready to go, and Cristel plunged it into the surf, plowing through foam and spray, headed for that faint, dipping light.

The tide was coming in, with relentless surging power. The speedboat's inadequate engine labored valiantly, battling through the waves. If only she could make it! If only the *Starlight* kept afloat!

Drenched, shivering with the stinging cold of wind and salty sea



Cristel had screamed as hands had caught her roughly and dragged her into the small cabin. Now she saw Dan's startled face, his bound hands.

spray, Cristel concentrated every ounce of her strength on keeping the *Starlight* headed toward that light.

At last, the yacht loomed beside her. With stiff, numbed fingers, she fastened the painter, then climbed precariously up the ladder. There was nobody in sight. The decks were wet with the washing waves. Cristel crept close to a half-open porthole and stood listening.

She heard Dan's voice, angry, shouting. "Let me go! If I ever get loose, there'll be two of you floating ashore, face downward!"

Another man said indifferently, "You came without being asked. Now you stay till the chief sees you."

"I tell you, it was a mistake!" Dan cried. "If you're bootleggers or smugglers, I won't tell! But I've got to— What's that?"

Cristel had screamed as hands had caught her roughly and dragged her into the small cabin. Now she saw Dan's startled face, his bound hands.

"Another visitor!" grunted one of the men. "This is our busy day.



Give me a light, will you, Steve?"

As the two men became intent upon their cigarettes, Cristel drew close to Dan. "Blow out the light," he whispered to her surreptitiously as a wild breaking of waves against the side of the yacht hid his voice from the other men. "Then reach in my pocket for my knife."

She barely nodded. Quietly she slipped off her opera pump, and suddenly threw it at the swinging ship's light.

There were cries, shouts, heavy footsteps in the darkness. Cristel kept close to Dan as he circled the walls. Shakily, she reached in his

pocket for his knife, opened it, cut his bonds.

More shouts, curses, followed. A sudden lurching of the ship sent them all sprawling, and opened the porthole wide, so that water flooded the cabin.

That lurch gave Dan the advantage. With a quick movement, he pinned down one man and cap-

tured his gun. Then, cautiously, he turned his pocket flashlight upon the other, who lay still in the corner, breathing heavily. He had been stunned by the fall when the ship lurched.

Dan led Cristel out on deck. Quickly they descended to the waiting *Starlight*.

It was easier going back, with the tide carrying them quickly, strongly, as if it knew they must be there in time. Dan's strong hands kept the boat to her course. As Cristel bailed steadily, she watched him guiding them safely back to shore.

Dan spoke once. "Good heavens, what if Rosita had fallen into their hands!" He shouted to Cristel above the wind. "She must be worried sick over not having heard from me."

"Perhaps." Cristel's hands clenched the bait pail she was using for bailing. A deep coldness clutched her heart. She had brought Dan back only for Rosita to play with some more! "Rosita may be worried," she said crisply, "but so is the team."

He caught the edge to her tones. "Don't be like that, Cris," he admonished gruffly. "Rosita is sweet!"

"I know it!" she snapped, for she was chilled and shivering with nervous strain. "Well, it's just that—I don't believe in Santa Claus any more."

They reached shore safely. As they got into Mr. Moir's car, Dan's face was grim and pale. Cristel sighed. With her unruly tongue, she had hurt him again.

When they reached the Ice Palace, they found there were ten minutes left to play. The Scots had let two goals creep past their defense, and had made none themselves.

Huddled in her father's sweater,

Cristel sat by the rail and waited. She saw her father's grim face relax as Dan appeared, noted how the team braced up, took heart. She listened to the wave of applause as Dan skated to the floor.

The whistle blew. Players swirled, fighting grimly, desperately. It was all so fast and furious that Cristel could scarcely follow the puck. First a Tiger player swept toward the goal, and there was the breathless, painful moment before the rubber was taken from him. A Scots player almost reached the net, but the puck was flung back again. Then Dan flew past as if on wings, and the puck sailed past the Tiger goalie, to thud victoriously into the net.

Cristel rose to her feet with the others, crying, sobbing. "Dan—Dan!" But Dan skated back to position, his face a grim mask of anger. Cristel sank back, trembling. Dan still hated her.

Zip Sharkey looked up into the bleachers with furious gray eyes. Turning, Cristel caught a glimpse of Rosita's face, pale with fright, as she stared down at Dan. But Dan would never believe Rosita had betrayed him and Cristel couldn't even tell him. Rosita would go on breaking his heart.

The minutes flew by. There were four more to play—three—two. The Scots had the puck, but the excited center slapped it back to his own end-boards. Cristel caught her breath as a Tiger swept forward; then she gasped in relief as Dan swooped in ahead, caught the puck with his stick, whirled, shook off the enemy, and gathered speed like a gunshot.

Farther down the rink Zip Sharkey blocked him determinedly, hatefully. There was no time for Dan to swerve. Setting his strong shoul-



"Dan!" Her blue eyes were shining with joy. "Dan!" He caught her hands in his, looked into her eyes, and said the sweetest words Cristel had ever heard, "I love you!"

ders, he launched into Zip, and the two went down on the ice together, a foot from the Scots goal. Another Scots player rushed in, and again the rubber thudded in the net. The score was tied!

Cristel's wave of happiness died when the players stood up, and she saw Dan clutch his gloved right wrist. He was hurt! He couldn't go on!

LS-4C

But he merely grinned grimly, shook the injured hand to restore feeling in it, and took his position.

There was only one more minute to play. Cristel's heart beat wildly as she saw the tight-set mouth, the pain-darkened brown eyes of the greatest Fighting Scot of them all—Dan Woodring, the man she loved better than all the world! And she had called him a coward!

"Don't try, Danny," she breathed, "a score doesn't matter. Nothing matters but you!"

They were playing again. The Scots made a triple pass. Dan rushed in like a bullet, caught the center's relay, slapped it to the defense man behind, took it back, and drove in, straight toward Zip Sharkey. Again they both went down, but not before Dan had whipped the rubber back to his own center.

He was on his feet again instantly. The center had muffed the play, and a Tiger forward was going through the opened back defense straight toward his own goal.

Dan followed like a scarlet arrow, faster, faster. Cristel saw his frown of pain as he gripped the stick with that injured hand, raised it, whirled and started back with a blinding rush, the puck was his again.

The time almost gone, but again Zip Sharkey rushed vengefully to meet Dan. They flashed across the ice, met, fell. There was a groan from the Fighting Scots fans, then a cry, for Dan had shaken Zip, was sliding on one knee, was up, sailing for that goal. His stick swished. The Tiger goalie hit frantically at thin air, and the net vibrated with the impact of the puck just as the game ended. The Scots had won!

Dan skated straight toward the railing, his face grave and stern. Cristel stood up, waiting, wondering. She heard Rosita's voice beside her.

"Danny boy, I've been so worried! You never came to my party, not even after I sent the note!"

"I went where you meant me to go!" Dan's voice was hard and cold, like skate edges freshly sharpened. "There's no need to pretend any more. I realize what a fool I've been! I overheard two subs talking, and I saw the look Zip Sharkey gave you when I made a goal."

"But, Danny boy," faltered Rosita, "I don't understand!"

"I think you do," he said shortly. "Your friends on the yacht were ordered to pose as smugglers or rum runners and keep me there. If it hadn't been for the stanchest little friend a man ever had——"

He turned to Cristel, and all at once she forgot Rosita, forgot the enthusiastic fans, forgot everything but the love in Dan's eyes.

"Can you forgive me, Cris?" he whispered huskily. "I don't deserve it—but I love you! I was too blind, too—cowardly to face the truth until I saw you out there on that yacht."

"Dan!" Her blue eyes were shining with joy. "Dan!"

He caught her hands in his, looked into her eyes, and said the sweetest words Cristel had ever heard, "I love you!"

It wasn't until later, when they were walking home together, that he kissed her. Then, with the sea roaring, the wind singing about them, he held her close in his strong arms, lifted her face to his, and kissed her lips, so soft and yielding.

"Cristel dear, could you care a little?" he asked huskily. "I'd do anything in the world to make myself worthy of your love."

Cristel put a slim finger on his lips. "You don't have to, Dan, dear." Her voice was soft and tremulous, full of magic happiness. "I'll always love you, no matter what you do—because now I know you could never really do anything to be unworthy of me. You're too fine."

His lips crushed hers, swiftly, passionately; his arms held her in a fiercely possessive embrace, and Cristel's life suddenly grew radiant with the knowledge of love fought for and won!



A Novelette

“Because I Love You”

By Helen Reid

CHAPTER I.

WELL, I suppose it's the end. To-morrow I'll be looking for a new job. What luck!”

Valerie Mansard, seated at the desk she had occupied for the past six weeks as a temporary stenographer in the firm of Howard Lester & Co., tried to laugh as she put the cover on her typewriter.

But the laugh had a trace of bitterness in it and it caught in her throat and almost became a sob as she opened her compact and hurriedly ran the puff over her face.

Every one else had gone. Valerie had heard two or three of the girls

chatting over a party to which they had been invited, and she had caught a glimpse of dainty evening gowns hung in the rest room.

“But I shall go back to my room and sit alone,” Valerie thought, with added bitterness.

She looked up quickly as the door opened, and Howard Lester, the head of the firm, came into the general office, and looked around.

“Every one gone, Miss Mansard?”

“Yes, Mr. Lester.”

“Well, I want a letter done. Will you take it, please?”

He disappeared into the inner room again, and Valerie picked up her pencil and notebook.

Not much good pointing out that she wasn't on the pay roll any longer and that he had no right to give her letters, she thought.

When Valerie got into his office he was standing by the window. He turned slowly and surveyed her from head to foot, as though he was seeing her for the first time.

Valerie felt the color rush to her face and she stood still, waiting for him to speak.

She had always feared and disliked the head of the firm. There was something frightening about his cold gray eyes and his thin lips that brought a shudder of distaste to her.

"Sit down," he said abruptly. "I want to speak to you."

She obeyed, and the man looked her over again, closely and questioningly.

There was no mistaking her beauty. She was as slender as a reed, with clear, wide gray eyes, and a lovely, curving red mouth. Beneath it her rounded chin showed more than a hint of determination. For all her look of fragile loveliness there was no weakness in her face.

Again his harsh voice broke the silence.

"I have something important to say to you, but first I want you to answer a question or two."

Valerie murmured something in answer. Her heart was beginning to thud unevenly. Surely this wasn't just a business interview?

She glanced at the closed door and following her gaze, Lester smiled. But that smile did not soften his hard eyes.

"First of all," he said, "let me assure you that you need not be afraid of me."

Again Valerie flushed, but she met his gaze squarely, and waited.

"Now," he went on. "The questions. You are leaving us to-day?"

"Yes," Valerie murmured.

"Got another job to go to?" he asked.

"No."

He nodded as though satisfied.

"You would like one, of course?" he asked. "To be out of work is not pleasant."

"No, it isn't," she agreed.

He leaned a little toward her, his hard eyes searching her face.

"Very well," he said quietly. "I will give you a hundred dollars if you will do something for me."

Valerie looked up and her deep gray eyes met his.

Again that grim smile touched his lips.

"Yes, a hundred dollars," he repeated. "I suppose that would keep you till you get another job? As well as that I shall give you enough extra money to enable you to buy yourself the clothes necessary to carry this job through. If you agree you will have a gay week-end instead of an exceedingly dull one."

He paused.

"But I don't understand," she said. "What do you want me to do?"

"I want you"—he began to walk up and down the big office—"to go to a house, the address of which I shall give you, and where there is to be a big house party. You will be expected. I want you to keep your eyes and your ears open, and report to my man down there what you have seen and heard. You will have to take another name than your own. We have cause to believe that a huge swindle is being planned and it is in the hope of getting some evidence that will enable us to put our hands on the swindlers that I am trying this thing." He saw Valerie's look of bewilderment, and added: "That is all I can tell you at present, but when you get there

my man will get in touch with you and give you detailed instructions. Will you do it?"

Valerie sat still for a moment. Before her eyes was passing a series of pictures—herself, returning to her room, with just enough money to keep her for one week, the weary, heartbreaking round of job hunting, the end of the next week, and having to ask her landlady to wait for her rent, her shoes worn with tramping. Then, coming to the last dollar.

Oh, she knew it all so well. She had been through it all before.

"Yes," she said clearly. "I'll do it."

The man's eyes gleamed.

"Good," he said. "Now I will give you full instructions, and the money."

The big office building was silent and still. The cleaning women had not yet arrived and Valerie was alone in the office of Howard Lester & Co., which occupied all one floor.

After she had agreed to her employer's strange proposal, they had gone out and together bought the clothes that she would need. In spite of her uneasiness, she had been thrilled, because what girl does not like to buy clothes?—especially when they are smart and expensive.

Now she slipped into a midnight-blue ensemble which made her soft hair gleam like gold. She was shaking with excitement as she put the last few things she needed into the suitcase lying at her feet and closed it.

Being alone in the big office made her nervous and she would be glad when she was out of it and on her way to keep the rest of her agreement.

"Take a taxi from the office to the Pennsylvania Station," he had told her. "Then buy yourself a ticket to

Charwood. A car will meet you at the station there. Give the name of Everard."

Valerie picked up the case, tucked her bag beneath her arm, and opened the door that led out into the firm's reception room.

Then she stopped and stood still.

Somewhere near, in the darkness, she could hear a sound. It was faint but unmistakable, the sound of some one breathing.

She leaned against the door, a hand to her lips to prevent herself from screaming aloud, and waited, feeling that the unknown intruder was waiting and listening, too.

Then, as though the person was reassured by the silence, came the sound of a footstep. Her heart gave a sickening throb.

She was terrified, yet something forced her toward the electric-light switch. She heard the click of the light and at the same time a swift intake of breath from the unseen intruder.

The light flashed on and she saw him.

Her first sensation was of surprise. She had pictured an evil-faced man, crouching there in the darkness.

She saw, instead, a tall, gray-clad man, grim-faced certainly, but otherwise nothing like what she had imagined.

His coppery hair was brushed back crisply from the temples, but it showed the suggestion of a wave. He was tall, tanned almost to bronze, and his eyes were steady and very blue.

His mouth was set in a hard, grim line, and his hand was outstretched, holding a revolver.

A look of amazement crept into his eyes as he saw her.

"And might I ask," he demanded, "what you are doing here?"

Valerie lifted her chin.

"I think it is I who should be asking that question," she said, and even to herself her voice sounded queer and shaken.

The man gave a short, hard laugh.

"I'm afraid your curiosity must remain unsatisfied." He advanced a step or two toward her, scanning her features as though they would tell him something. "Who are you? What is your name?"

She felt a strange desire to answer him, so strong was the power of his eyes.

Then she remembered her employer's last words:

"And remember, from now on, you are no longer Valerie Mansard. You are Constance Everard."

A queer unwillingness to give a name that was not her own filled her, and held her silent. The man looked at her grimly.

"I see," he said quietly. "Neither of us can afford to ask too many questions."

"But——" Valerie began. But he interrupted her.

"Come," he said, with a touch of impatience. "You must have a good reason for being here. I'm not inquiring what it is, however, and I suggest that you adopt the same attitude toward me. Just forget you've seen me."

"But"—Valerie began again, desperately—"you haven't got any right——"

He laughed. "Have you?" he asked.

"Yes," Valerie replied. "I'm an employee of the firm."

Again he laughed, and made a mocking gesture with his strong, brown hand.

"A poor little stenographer, working overtime, in the dark?" he suggested ironically. "And in those clothes, too. No, that won't satisfy me. I think you had better just

be silent. Then I can believe exactly what I choose."

He came a step or two nearer to her.

Valerie felt bewildered.

Undoubtedly he had no right here. But on the other hand, he was just as undoubtedly in command of the situation.

She could not call any one to her aid, for a single movement on his part would cut off her escape, and it was obvious he could easily overpower her even without the aid of his revolver.

"I hate to hurry you," he told her. "But I have an engagement later tonight that I'm afraid I must keep. Do you mind hurrying?"

"My suitcase is in there." She pointed into the smaller office and the man frowned.

"I'll go with you and get it," he said quietly. "You must forgive me if I appear unduly suspicious, but you may not be alone here."

They went together and got the suitcase, and Valerie noticed that he was close behind her as they made their way to the reception room and out into the outside corridor.

The elevators had stopped running and the whole place had a strange air of deadness. Valerie was aware of a queer feeling of excitement as they started down the stairs—she in front, he following with her suitcase.

It was a strange situation and it sent a queer singing through her blood, a quickening of her heart's beating, a strange mad tingling of every pulse.

It seemed as though some invisible bond linked her to this man, who came so close behind her that she felt his breath stirring the tendrils of her hair.

She felt as though something within her cried out to him, as



His mouth was set in a hard, grim line, and he was holding a revolver. A look of amazement crept into his eyes as he saw her. "Who are you? What is your name?" he demanded.

went down the dark and silent staircase.

Outside, the wind was cold, and the girl shivered as she drew the fur collar of the coat closer about her.

"We separate here, Mademoiselle Unknown,"

though life itself had waited until this moment to stir her heart with mad longing.

She heard her own breath coming quickly, and more quickly, as they

the man said slowly. "Here is your taxi."

He put his hand up, hailing a passing taxi. When it drew up to the curb he turned toward her.

"Where shall I tell the man to drive you?" he asked.

"Pennsylvania Station, please," Valerie replied.

She had a last glimpse of him standing on the pavement, a strange, puzzled expression on his face as he watched the taxi start off.

Then the driver turned the corner, and the man was lost from sight.

"Charwood, Charwood."

The conductor's voice roused Valerie from the reverie in which she had sat, huddled in her chair ever since the train had left New York. She picked up her case, and hurriedly left the train, conscious that she was chilled to the bone.

As she stepped onto the platform a liveried chauffeur touched his cap to her.

"For the Grange, madam?" he asked.

"Yes," Valerie replied, and followed him as he took her bag and led the way to a car.

As soon as she was seated, the car moved away from the station.

She leaned back, conscious of a queer sense of fear mingling with her curiosity.

But it was too late to draw back now.

The car breasted a long hill, and turned through wide white gates into a tree-lined avenue that led up to a large house, before which the chauffeur stopped.

A moment later the door opened and she was admitted into a dimly lighted hall where, apparently waiting for her, stood a beautiful smiling girl who surveyed her carefully.

"My dear"—her voice fell on Valerie's ears—"I am so glad you managed to come. I suppose Craig will come later? The party is in full swing. You two are the last arrivals."

She was smiling, but Valerie noticed that her eyes were watchful and unfriendly.

"Who is Craig? Am I supposed to know him?" Valerie asked herself as she murmured a greeting.

"Let me show you to your room and my maid can unpack for you," her hostess said, and preceded her up the staircase and along a corridor, chatting lightly as they went.

She led Valerie into a room that was decorated in green and soft almond-blossom pink, the bed soft-hued as a rose, and the lights arranged so that the soft pink radiance was diffused throughout the room like a sun-set glow.

Valerie had never seen such a lovely room before, and she stood still, the queer sense of unreality she had experienced all the evening coming back in full force.

The other touched a bell and a maid appeared.

"Marie, I want you to unpack for Mrs. Everard and see she has everything she wants," Valerie's hostess said and turned to her guest as she went to the door. "I'll leave you now. Marie will see to everything."

Again there was a hint of unfriendliness behind the smiling mask of a face. But this time Valerie was hardly conscious of it.

Standing inside the doorway of the lovely room as her hostess moved away, she seemed to hear her last sentence echoing through and through her brain.

"I want you to unpack for Mrs. Everard."

Mrs. Everard. Was her hostess mad? Or was it that she herself was losing her senses?

The maid was looking at her curiously as she advanced toward the suitcase.

For the moment Valerie knew there was no escape. She must

accept the position in which she found herself.

The maid unpacked for her, laid out her gown and hovered about as she dressed herself in the clothes Howard Lester had bought for her—the clothes he had bought for her to come here and pretend to be Constance Everard, Mrs. Everard.

Valerie felt again that queer sense of being trapped and the instinct to escape seized her.

But as she left the green-and-pink room behind her and came to the head of the stairs, the slim-fitting black evening dress she wore enhancing the clear pallor of her skin, she saw her hostess again.

There was no chance for escape now.

She was taken downstairs to a huge room, pillared and paneled in dull gold-and-green.

There was an orchestra playing, and beautifully dressed women and handsome men moved here and there. There was scented warmth and laughter and voices.

Quite suddenly, the fear she had felt all the evening left Valerie.

A sort of recklessness descended upon her. After all, what did it matter?

She was here. She was one of this well-dressed, laughing, chattering throng. She was beautiful and as well dressed as any of them.

What did risks matter? What did anything matter?

Yet she was conscious, the whole time, of something nagging and worrying at her, something that would make her unhappy if she thought about it. She found herself, time and time again, scanning the faces of the men present.

It was absurd, but she was looking for a face, lean and brown and hard, and a crop of copper-colored hair.

It was mad, because she knew that she would not, could not find it here.

The man in the office, the intruder in Howard Lester's offices, would never cross her path again. It was ridiculous to think of him, ridiculous to let her thoughts keep on going back to him.

But they did. She couldn't help it.

Her hostess introduced her to one or two people.

"This is Mrs. Everard—yes, Craig will be down later. He wrote to say he might be late. Meanwhile I want you to see that Mrs. Everard isn't lonely," and she smiled her charming smile and left Valerie.

But Valerie had a peculiar sense of something being strange about everything, above all, about the attitude of her hostess.

Once, long ago, when she had been on her vacation, Valerie had got cut off by the tide, and had had to climb a steep cliff to save herself from drowning. She had got nearly to the top when a ridge of rock beneath her foot crumbled away and she had snatched desperately at a tiny bush growing in a crevice and searched wildly with her hanging feet for something solid to grip.

She knew she would never forget the sensation she had had then as she glanced down at the drop beneath her, while she fought her fear.

She had something of the same sensation now. She was standing on the edge of a precipice and beneath her yawned something she dared not glance at.

Yet nothing happened. Nothing, that is to say, unusual. She danced, talked, even laughed as the evening passed, and at last the clock sounded out the chimes of midnight.

It was just after that, and Valerie, in search of coolness, had gone out-

side for a moment or two, when, on the threshold of the ballroom, something made her glance up.

A man stood in the entrance. He was tall and lean and hard, with a bronzed face and coppery hair brushed back from the temples. Bowing, he stretched his hands toward her gravely.

"We meet again," he said, and his eyes surveyed her mercilessly as she stood there, swept suddenly by a storm of feeling such as she had never experienced in her life before.

It was as though her heart called: "You! You!" As though she had been waiting, and this wild thrill was what she had waited for.

"Come. People will be staring at us. Come and dance," he said.

She let him take her into his arms and they joined the moving throng. She felt his arm about her and the knowledge of his nearness and the madness in her veins combined to bring the sense of unrealness to a climax.

Lest she should lose a single second of this mad, lovely dream, she leaned nearer to him and her breath fanned his cheek.

For a little while she did not even think.

It was enough that he should hold her like this. Enough that the music should be in her ears, a whispering thread of sound to which their feet moved.

Then, harshly, his voice fell on her ears.

"I suppose you're wondering what to say?" he said and Valerie looked up to meet the stern questioning in his eyes.

He went on, in the same curiously savage voice:

"I have never understood how nature ever allowed poisonous things to be so lovely."

She remembered then that she was

playing a part and that this man had seen her before she stepped properly into it.

For a moment a wild desire to tell him everything rushed through her mind.

It would be so easy and he would cease then to look at her with that hard, mocking scorn in his eyes.

But her desire only lasted a moment.

She had made a bargain. The bargain chanced to be a hard one for her. But it was a bargain, and she must stick to it.

Her own voice hardened a little as she spoke.

"I don't understand what you're talking about."

"Don't you?" he asked, and smiled a hateful, mocking smile. "I am suggesting that you are a cheat, a fraud. I'm telling you that I know it. What were you doing in that office playing the hard-working girl? You remember I remarked that I hardly believed it at the time. Now I find you down here, one of the guests."

"I don't understand you," Valerie said again faintly. "I've never seen you before. I——"

The music stopped, and with a sudden jerk she freed herself from his hold, catching her breath in a stifled gasp as she did so. The room seemed to sway dizzily for a moment. It seemed as though the music had changed to a thunderous roar. Then she forced herself back to calmness.

She turned swiftly, and the man at her side put out a hand to stop her, but he was too late, and she threaded her way through the crowd of dancers.

No one stopped her. She seemed to have the house to herself as she ran up the wide staircase.

She opened the door of the room

where earlier in the evening she had dressed and went in. The darkness was a relief to her tortured nerves as she groped her way forward to the bed.

From below came the sound of voices. The dancing was coming to an end and the house party was drifting toward bed.

But Valerie hardly noticed it as footsteps passed her door and voices came near and went on and trailed off into the distance.

She could still hear, dimly, the thrum of the orchestra, and the light subdued tinkle of talk and laughter. Apparently a few of the guests were making a late night of it.

She felt utterly spent and weary when at last she rose, and pushing her hair from her face stood in the warm darkness of the room.

But she had come to a decision.

Not for any money in the world, not for the certainty of being able to live and eat and sleep under a roof for a few weeks could she risk meeting that man again.

He would despise and loathe her if he knew the truth about her, that she was masquerading at the command of her employer for the sum of a hundred dollars.

He already despised her; his mocking eyes had told her that.

She could not and would not stay and endure his scorn again.

As soon as she could, she would go to Howard Lester and return his money. She would explain that she had failed in the work he had asked her to do. When that was over she would search for a new job.

She stifled a dry, tearless sob as she switched on the lights and looked about for the suitcase that she had brought with her.

Suddenly she turned her head and listened. Some one was coming toward her door.

For some reason a throb, half terror, half something else, stabbed through her heart.

Something made her start across the room toward the unlocked door. Just as she reached it, as her hand went toward the key, it opened.

She knew then why she had recognized the step, had known even before she saw him standing in the door, that it was the man she wanted to avoid.

He shut the door, and she heard a strange sound—a strangled, gasping breath, and did not know it came from herself.

As she tried to speak something seemed to catch at her throat.

"What are you looking at me for—like that?" she whispered, and thrust out her hands. "Don't!"

It came as a shuddering, terror-stricken sound, but still the man standing just inside the door did not move.

Suddenly Valerie put her hands up to her face. She couldn't endure his look any longer.

At last he spoke.

"You're Constance Everard—Mrs. Craig Everard?" he asked slowly.

"Yes?" Valerie replied, more as a question than an answer to his own question. Then her gaze shrank from his again. "What is it?" she whispered. "I don't understand."

He laughed, and a queer sound it was.

"You don't understand," he cried. "That is funny."

He came closer to her, and his hands shot out and gripped her. He held her mercilessly, her two wrists together, and bent down so that his face was within a few inches of her own.

"Have you ever seen me before this evening?" he asked.

Mutely, dumbly her eyes looked up into his. She shook her head.

Again she heard him laugh. Then he caught her to him as mercilessly as he had held her wrists.

He bent nearer.

"Liar," he said softly. "Cheat. You're Constance Everard—Mrs. Craig Everard? Then you ought to know me. I am Craig Everard, and you are my wife."

CHAPTER II.

Not until Valerie's body slid limply from his grasp did Craig Everard show any mercy.

Then contemptuously he lifted her and put her down upon the bed.

Valerie turned, crouching away from him.

But his voice came to her ears again.

"You're my wife," he said again. "I am fortunate, I think. It isn't every man who finds a wife ready-made, as charming, as delightful, as beautiful as you. I am human, and like most men I appreciate beauty."

"You are cruel," she sobbed.

"Cruel?" He raised his eyebrows in pretended surprise. "I try to show my appreciation of my wife's undoubted loveliness, and I am called 'cruel.'" He smiled slowly and bent toward her, stretching out his hands. "My name is Craig Everard," he went on. "I am rich Craig Everard who has suffered so long from a lost memory. But my memory is well enough now to know my wife. Come here, I say."

"No!" Valerie cried. "I'm not your wife."

"Not Mrs. Craig Everard?" he asked in pretended surprise. "But you are. You were invited to this house and you gave that name when you came. You were put into Mrs. Craig Everard's room. You are my wife, and I am here to claim you as such."



"I'm not your wife," she whispered. "You know I'm not."

"I should loathe to be so discourteous as to doubt a lady's word. And you have stated that you are," he retorted. "Are you coming to me, or would you like me to rouse the house and tell everybody that you say you are not Mrs. Craig Everard and call the police?"

He saw her eyes dilate.

Then her head was lifted, and Craig Everard, to his utter amazement saw the white-lipped girl draw her slender body erect.

"Yes," she said. "Do that. I'd rather you did that."

Their eyes met, and for the first time Valerie saw an expression of surprise in those of the man. Then as he looked at her the mockery came back.

"You'd let me call the police?" he asked unbelievably. "You mean



Lest she should lose a single second of this mad, lovely dream, she leaned nearer to him. For a little while she did not even think. It was enough that he should hold her like this.

you'd rather go to prison than play the game out, you—a common adventurer?"

The contempt in his voice stung like salt on a raw wound.

Before Valerie could answer he spoke again.

"If I go to the police with this story now, incomplete as it is, they'd take no notice. But——" He frowned as he looked at her. Then he looked at the suitcase that lay on the floor.

"I'll give you five minutes to pack that and change your clothes," he said, and turned toward the door. "We're both leaving this house, you and I. I'll go and get the car."

The door clicked shut.

Then there was another click and the key was turned in the lock and withdrawn.

"Are you comfortable?"

Craig Everard's voice was cold as he made the formal inquiry. Valerie leaned back against the cushions of the car and answered quietly:

"Yes, thank you."

"We've got a long drive in front of us," the man said.

After that he did not speak again, and Valerie, sitting beside him in the luxurious car, was at liberty to study the lines of his strong face.

The mockery and the brutality had gone.

It was the face of a strong man, but there were lines of laughter and humor about the strong mobile lips.

Surely this must be a fantastic dream—from the moment when Howard Lester had offered her that hundred dollars to this moment, driving through the blackness of the night by the side of this man who twelve hours before, had never crossed her path.

Yet now he had, he would be forever in her life. She had known it from the very first moment.

The car sped on, and the early hours of the morning waned, and gave place at last to a cold, gray dawn. Valerie sank forward a little, and the man beside her turned his head for the first time and looked at her.

His strong face wore a curious expression—almost of regret and pity.

A mile or so farther on he slowed down and gently moved her drooping head so that it rested against his shoulder.

Valerie was still asleep as the grayness moved slowly from the hills and the light began to grow stronger.

Perhaps it was intentionally that at last Craig Everard allowed the car to take a sharp hill with a jarring grind of gears, instead of the ordinary smooth way he had tackled the others.

Valerie's head jerked up and she awakened.

"We're nearly there," the man murmured, and Valerie, fresh from sleep, turned her head and looked at him.

Then memory came rushing back, and he felt her shrink away.

"Here is the place," he said in the same unemotional voice, and they turned in at big iron gates and went up a short drive.

"This is the house," he went on, and got out, turning his grim face

toward her. "You will permit me, I am sure, to take your arm. I want to assure you that it is utterly useless to think of trying to get away. I am a man, and I am stronger than you. If that were not enough, there are servants here who obey me unquestioningly."

Valerie had a queer sinking sensation as he looked at her. With his hand on her arm they advanced toward the house.

It was as lovely as the one Valerie had visited the previous day, but more simple. It was old, too, she thought, as they went through the wide hall, and Craig Everard pressed a bell.

"Ask Mrs. Mathers to come here, please," he said to the manservant who answered his ring, and a few moments later a rather severe-looking woman of the housekeeper type, appeared in the doorway.

"Oh, good morning, Mrs. Mathers," Craig Everard said quietly, and turned to Valerie. "This young lady is staying here for a short while. She is not to be allowed to leave the house, but in every other way she is to be treated with the utmost consideration and is to have every comfort. I want you to see to this personally, and I make you responsible for her in every way."

The woman looked astonished, but she murmured quietly:

"Very good, sir. Is there anything else?"

"Not at the moment," Craig Everard answered, but Valerie turned to him with hot flaming cheeks, and bright stormy eyes.

"Do you suppose I'm going to allow you to make me a prisoner?" she asked.

"I don't see how you can help it," Craig Everard said with a touch of contempt in his voice. "It is either

staying here or being handed over to the police. I don't imagine you would like that."

"I don't mind," Valerie retorted swiftly. "I've certainly done nothing wrong."

He raised his brows.

"Impersonation, with intent to defraud, is quite a serious crime, I think you'll find. You appeared at Charwood as my wife. You occupied a room intended for my wife, and you called yourself Mrs. Craig Everard. I think——"

"You haven't asked me for an explanation of the facts," Valerie interrupted, but he bowed mockingly.

"I haven't the slightest doubt but that you have an excellent explanation all ready and waiting for me. But at present I prefer to keep you here and manage this nice little plot my own way. Please go with Mrs. Mathers."

For a second Valerie stood looking at him.

There was a moment's silence, and she was aware of the fast beating of her own heart.

There had been a moment like this before, when she had preceded him down the stairs of the big office building. A moment when the ordinary things of life seemed no longer to matter, a moment of madness, filled with but one desire—to feel his arms about her.

He took a step toward her, his face suddenly paling beneath the tan, his eyes blazing.

Perhaps it was the sight of the housekeeper in the background that brought him back to himself. He stopped, and Valerie saw his hands clench at his sides.

"What is your real name?" he asked, in a curious, strangled voice.

She answered with the dazed sensation of having come back from another world. "Valerie Mansard."

"Will you go with Mrs. Mathers?" His voice was harsh, and stilted, and without any further protest Valerie turned, and followed the woman.

The day dragged along, and Valerie, with the watchful Mrs. Mathers constantly in attendance, found herself a prisoner; she was left in no doubt about that, although the woman was respectful, and treated her as though she was a guest.

But her vigilance never relaxed for a second, and even if Valerie had wished to get away, she would have found it impossible.

Night came again.

All day long Valerie had not seen the master of the house, or heard his voice. But when night fell, clear and starry, she heard down below the sound of a car stopping, and then his voice.

His voice! She would have known it among a thousand.

It sent the blood rushing to her cheeks.

"I'm mad," she whispered. "I must be mad."

She stood listening to the footsteps that were mounting the staircase and which came to the door of her room.

The key was turned, and the door opened, and Craig Everard stood in the doorway facing her.

Her first thought was that he looked worn and ill. Her second that his eyes were sterner even than they had been this morning, and his voice, when he spoke was abrupt.

"Come downstairs to my study. I want to speak to you," he said.

When they were standing facing each other in the book-lined room he began speaking at once.

"You said you had some explanation to give me. Will you please tell it to me?" he asked.

"Yes," Valerie said, with a touch

of breathlessness in her voice. "And then you'll let me go?"

"I'm not prepared to promise anything. Tell me how you came to be mixed up in this business."

She told him of the struggle she had had to find work, and of her good fortune in being taken on as a temporary member of Howard Lester's office. Then when the time came for her to leave the firm, and she knew the long bitter struggle was in front of her again, Howard Lester's offer, if she would go down to Charwood to the house where Craig Everard had found her, posing as his wife.

"And I accepted it," she finished quietly. "A hundred dollars was such a lot of money, and I thought——"

"I suppose what you didn't think," the man interrupted harshly, "was that there might be something crooked in the whole thing." He looked at her, doubt in his eyes. "How am I to believe you?"

He began pacing up and down, like a caged tiger, and Valerie watched him, a dull ache at her heart.

It was plain that he mistrusted and despised her.

He stopped in front of her at last.

"If it's any satisfaction to you, you've managed to puzzle me," he said in that harsh voice of his, that he seemed to adopt only to her. "You may be an innocent fly, caught in a particularly nasty web, and then again you may be a part of the web itself, and a wonderful actress. If I hand you over to the police——"

She grew cold, and her hands went up to her face.

"It'll be the end of you, and if you're innocent, that's a terrible thing to have happen," he went on. "On the other hand, you're beautiful and attractive. Even I find you at-

tractive and I give Howard Lester credit for knowing what he is doing."

"I don't understand," she faltered.

"Don't you?" He looked at her searchingly, and something about his look made Valerie fling up her head proudly, and give him back look for look.

At length he shrugged.

"Clever actress or utterly innocent," he said again in that hard voice. "In any case, I suppose I'm foolish."

He walked to the door and held it open."

"You're free to go, Mademoiselle Unknown," he said quietly.

Valerie's heart gave a sudden throb. She looked at his hard, grim face in wonder and perplexity. There was something that she could not understand. It was as though he had come to this decision unwillingly, and it went utterly against the grain for him to carry it out.

Again their eyes met.

For a second that seemed like eternity, Valerie fought the insane desire to go up to him, and force him to believe in her.

Then, with a little sound, she moved, and walked out the door.

She walked down the long drive, along which she had driven the night before, with Craig Everard beside her, and out into the road.

She had received instructions from Mrs. Mathers as to the best way to reach the railroad station, and before she set out along the quiet, deserted road, she looked back at the house she was leaving.

It was dark, save for one lighted window—the room where she had left Craig Everard, and a sudden wave of grief went over her as she saw it.

Why, oh, why should heartache and misery be her portion? She had



"You may be an innocent fly, caught in a particularly nasty web, and then again you may be a part of the web itself, and a wonderful actress. If I hand you over to the police —" She grew cold, and her hand went up to her face.

she must keep it, in order to go on living, when her strongest instinct was to go to Howard Lester and fling it in his face.

She set her teeth as she walked on. She didn't understand, even yet, what the events of the last few days meant.

She would go to Howard Lester, and demand an

harmd no one? Yet she had earned the contempt and dislike of the most attractive man she had ever met.

She felt weary, and hopeless, utterly disinclined for the fight for existence that once again was hers.

She had one hundred dollars, and
LS-5C

explanation from him immediately.

A car was parked some distance down the road, its headlights picked out her slender form as she walked full into their blinding glare.

As she approached she heard the unmistakable sound of voices—a

man's and a girl's. The air was clear, and the girl's carried to her ears.

"Are you absolutely sure it is she, Howard? It seems an amazing coincidence?"

"Positive," came the answer, and Valerie, as she heard that voice, stopped.

She knew the voice. It was Howard Lester's.

But at the same moment, something else happened. From the darkness beside her some one moved suddenly.

She felt arms grip her with merciless strength, she was lifted off her feet, and a hand was clapped roughly over her mouth.

"Quiet," hissed a voice in her ear. "Be quiet, if you value your life."

It all happened so suddenly that Valerie could not have resisted even if she had wished.

The man picked her up as though she had been a child, and carried her the few steps to the car. He put her in the back, and an arm reached forward and switched off the lights.

"She must have escaped and was running away," said the girl's voice. "In which case there is not a second to lose. Quickly, Howard."

"You see to the girl," said Howard Lester's voice, and he flung himself into the driver's seat, while Valerie and the other girl were jolted from their seats as the big car sprang forward.

Howard Lester took the New York road. Valerie managed to sit erect from the position into which she had been flung.

"What are you doing with me? Let me go," she cried.

Howard Lester turned to her savagely. "Be quiet, you little idiot."

The other girl turned and, for the first time, Valerie saw her face—per-

fect as a piece of marble, and as cold and hard and merciless.

"We came to rescue you," she said in a curious voice. "I understand that my husband abducted you last night and brought you to his house. You naturally wish to see that he is properly punished for such an outrage?"

She looked Valerie full in the eyes, and Valerie had a queer thrill of fear.

The eyes were like two pieces of stone, yet they had a curious mesmeric power.

They were like snakes' eyes, cold and deadly. Eyes that had the power to fascinate and hold, even while one was in terror of them.

She went on in that flat, expressionless voice.

"Unfortunately Craig suffers from a malady of the mind. He is not entirely sane. His treatment of you must be exposed and he must be——"

"But he didn't treat me badly," Valerie broke in. She had a sudden sense of fear for Craig Everard. "He certainly brought me here to this house, but that was all. I haven't anything to complain about."

The other girl's beautiful, hard face did not change. But Valerie saw a swift glance exchanged between Craig Everard's wife and Howard Lester.

Then the other girl spoke again.

"I understand that you're not in a very good position? You're out of work?"

"I suppose I am," Valerie said in surprise. She couldn't understand this sudden change of subject.

"Very well." The other leaned toward her, watching her with those curious eyes. "A thousand dollars will be paid you if you can assure us and one or two other people, that

Craig Everard abducted you and treated you disgracefully. The sum would be doubled if there was an assurance that he was an unfaithful husband."

From in front Howard Lester spoke, harshly and abruptly.

"Two thousand dollars. Think of it."

But Valerie sat still, looking at the face of the girl opposite her.

Suddenly she understood that which, until now, had been hidden. These two had meant to use her as a tool to gain their own ends.

A shudder went through her. There was something horrible and deadly about both of these people.

For a second anger swamped her. She wanted to strike at that beautiful, hateful face.

"Oh, you're vile, horrible—both of you!" she cried. "Do you think that I would lie, tell foul lies for money? Lies about him? Things like that? Let me go. Let me get out of the car."

"Be silent!" Suddenly the girl's voice had become ugly. "How dare you speak to me like that? As for letting you get out of the car, I'm afraid that's out of the question."

Valerie shrank from the look in her eyes, and from the front Howard Lester spoke uneasily.

"What are you going to do, Estelle?"

"I haven't quite decided yet." The girl's voice was smooth again, and again she looked at Valerie.

Then she turned, as she had done several times, to look through the window at the back of the car.

"I think there is a car following us," she said.

Howard Lester showed that the statement gave him a shock as he stepped on the accelerator.

"Nonsense," he said sharply. "Who——"

"Craig, of course," the girl said. "Craig, who laid this neat little trap for us, and we walked into it. He must have seen us grab the girl. He must have known we were there. Fools. Both of us. He's scored all along the line."

"You're sure it's he?" Howard Lester asked savagely.

"Yes, I'm sure!" Valerie heard the raw savagery in the other girl's voice. "Our only chance now is to outdistance him, drop the girl and deny we ever saw her."

The car had already increased its pace.

Now, savagely, Howard Lester put his foot down on the accelerator and the speedometer needle slowly crept up.

"Well?" Howard Lester's voice came to them again. "Has he gone?"

"He is keeping exactly the same distance behind as he has the whole time," Estelle Everard told him, and a queer mad thrill of joy went through Valerie's heart.

She wasn't afraid any longer. Craig Everard was there and he would know at last that she had spoken the truth.

He must know it already, if he had seen Howard Lester drag her into the car.

Lester uttered a savage exclamation as he swung the great car around a curve in the road. He spoke jerkily over his shoulder, as the needle crept up toward seventy.

"We've got one chance," he said. "There is a blind turning a mile or two farther on and a drive in it with another exit. If we can get there before him and get in unseen, we'll be O. K. Are we gaining?"

"No," Estelle Everard replied, and soon the needle passed the seventy mark.

"Now we are," she said a second

or two later. "He is slowing down for that crossroad we just passed, something is coming the other way."

Up went the needle of the speedometer, and to Valerie the rocking sensation of the car as it tore along brought a horrible sense of excitement and fear.

"The turning is another half a mile," said Howard Lester in the same jerky voice. "Is he in sight?"

"Not yet," replied the girl's voice, and the car rushed on.

"In sight?" the driver asked again.

"Not yet," came back the answer.

"Then we've lost him."

The car slowed a trifle, and Valerie saw Howard Lester's hands jerk the wheel.

She had a momentary impression of blinding lights being flashed into her eyes from something that was upon them. She heard a shrill horrible scream, a ghastly, grinding crash, then pain so intense that it was like nothing she had ever known.

For days, and years, for countless ages after that it seemed, Valerie could only remember pain.

Pain and blinding lights, and dim, white-coated figures that spoke in low voices. But pain was her only real memory, and it went on and on, endlessly.

Then, there was Craig Everard.

Not a real Craig—she knew he couldn't be real, because he was so kind, and he said things to her that the real Craig Everard had not said.

He said once in a curious broken voice:

"Get well. You must. Do you hear me, Valerie?"

Then one night this unreal Craig Everard sat with her hand in his and talked quietly, talked each time the pain came to drive her to the edge of madness and beyond.

The sound of his voice made the pain bearable, and the touch of his hand took its sting away.

She talked to him, and told him how she loved him, and that unreal Craig replied with the same words:

"I love you. Do you hear me, Valerie? You must get well, because I love you."

At last Valerie came back from the unreal world of shadows where she had fought for her life for ten days, and found herself lying in a white bed, with white walls surrounding her and a table beside her piled with flowers. She turned her head and looked about her.

A nurse came forward quietly as she moved.

"I must get the doctor," she said. "Lie still."

Then people started coming and going, and touching her, and bending above her, and at last she heard a man's deep voice.

"Yes, she's through it. She'll live now."

After that there were long hours of sleep, and waking again to things only half remembered, and a nightmare that was somewhere in the back of her mind, and that she couldn't put together.

The days went on and merged into a week.

The second week started, and Valerie began to mend.

Memory, slowly and haltingly, came back.

The dark road, and the car, tearing along. That was part of the nightmare, and Estelle Everard's beautiful cold face, and Howard Lester's, gray with fear.

The last thing she remembered was his hands on the wheel, wrenching it around, then the crash.

"What happened," she asked suddenly one day, "to the other two in the car?"

The nurse's face had a hint of surprise in it.

"You remember the accident, then?" she asked.

"Yes." Valerie wrinkled her brows. "Yes, I remember. What happened to them? Were they hurt?"

"Both of them were killed. The driver instantly, and the girl died half an hour after being admitted to the hospital," the nurse told her.

"So Craig caught them," Valerie murmured.

"Yes," the nurse said.

"He wasn't hurt?" Valerie asked, and her voice shrank to a queer whisper.

"No, he wasn't hurt. Would you like to see him? He has waited every day thinking you might ask for him."

Valerie turned her head. She was sitting in a big chair now, her head still bound up, and her arm in a sling. There was something in her eyes that made the nurse hesitate a moment.

"Waited," she repeated, "thinking I might ask for him? You—you mean Craig, did that?"

"Yes," said the nurse, with a curious glance. "He is waiting now. Shall I tell him you would like to see him?"

Valerie could not speak. She nodded her head, and the nurse went out.

It seemed as though the world hung, waiting, while the heavy throb of her heart seemed as though it would stifle her.

She got to her feet as Craig Everard opened the door and came in.

With a cry he crossed the distance that separated them, and Valerie felt his arms about her.

Swept by the passionate aching need of each other, they stood there,

forgetting the world about them, forgetting the days that had been in this one moment of rapture.

"It all seems like a dream," Valerie whispered suddenly, and put up her hands to touch Craig Everard's face.

He laughed and drew her closer to him.

"It begins so long ago, Valerie," he said, with a sudden sobering of his voice. "It begins with my marrying a beautiful, heartless girl. But no, I mustn't say that," he checked himself, and added quietly, "she is dead and she loved Howard Lester, my cousin."

"I was rich, Howard was poor," he went on, "and she loved him but married me. Afterward we found that we could not live together happily, and I went abroad. I had an accident, during which I received a blow on the head that, temporarily, made me lose my memory, and when I returned home I did not know either Estelle or my cousin Howard, and it was then that the plan came to them, for they were already lovers. They planned to get me certified as insane, so that Estelle could get control of my money. They also planned for Estelle to be enabled to divorce me, so as to be free to marry him."

Valerie raised her head in horror and he smiled down at her white face.

"It was not a nice idea," he said grimly. "But it was doomed to failure from the beginning. I went to a specialist, a particularly clever man, and he cured me in next to no time, and I had every faculty keenly alert, for by then I had begun to realize what was going on. The night you and I stumbled across each other in Lester's office, I had come for what I wanted—proof that my wife and my cousin were carry-

ing on a guilty intrigue. I was miles away from realizing that you, whom I fell in love with the moment I saw you, were being used in the plot against me."

"But he told me it was to keep watch on some one else who was planning a swindle that he sent me down there."

Again she saw Craig Everard's grim smile.

"You were sent down to that house, where a well-paid hostess pretended to accept you as my wife, to trap me. Estelle wanted a divorce and she didn't care what lengths she went to." He made a gesture with his hands. "And it fell through because you are you, Valerie. Then, when I took you away and they heard from a spy-servant in my own

house, as well as from their paid hostess-confederate, that their plan had failed, they realized that you, in my keeping, were a danger to them. If I produced you in court their game was up. So they came to get you away. I took a chance when I let you go, that they would. Then I followed. Their only chance was to get away from me and take you with them. Then"—he looked down at her gravely—"the smash came. You know the rest."

"Yes, I know the rest," Valerie echoed quietly, and was silent in the shelter of the arms that held her as though they would never let her go again. She knew that the future held no terrors for her now that she was safe in Craig Everard's arms, with his love.



THE LITTLE ROOM

DOWN in my heart I sometimes ache
For gayer highways, brighter lanes,
For paths the lords and ladies take,
Where Beauty with Adventure reigns.

Where lords and ladies take their ease
And marble columns line each walk,
Where gallant banners ride the breeze
And days are filled with gentle talk.

But when the corner standards bloom,
And shadows spill their dusty blue,
I'm grateful for one little room—
And one small street that leads to you!

BERT COOKSLEY.



Forced Landing

By Sally Noon Burrell

I DON'T believe it. You wouldn't dare. Not after——" Tamar paused, a queer, dazed look in her eyes. The handsome, young pilot continued to stare at her, brows arched questioningly.

"Don't be a medieval idiot all your life, Tamar. You don't mean because of that night that I should

marry you. Wake up, girl, this is 1934, not 1834."

"And the fact that uncle expects us to announce our engagement doesn't matter to you? You still insist on going on with your engagement to this Doreen Sangilt?"

"Your uncle is an old fuss budget," the pilot said unkindly;

"though you needn't tell him I said so. I happen to need my job at present."

Tamar bit her lip to keep it from trembling. "It seems I'm a fool—a silly, Irish fool, eh, Don? You're so glib with explanations, perhaps you'll supply one that will fix things with uncle."

For the first time a shade of uneasiness crept into the cocksure face of the pilot. "Don't be a sap. If he trusts you at all, he'll know everything was all right that night."

"I see, and all the talk about our forced landing and having to spend the night on the island won't make folks point fingers at me and snicker behind my back?" Tamar murmured, reddening. "So we are all washed up? That's your last word?"

"Oh, I wouldn't say that. Marriage isn't necessarily fatal to the patient. You're a nice kid, Tamar, and we've had a lot of swell times. If your uncle didn't have three girls of his own to keep you from being his heir, darned if I wouldn't marry you."

"Feature the big-heartedness of the boy. So it's money that's causing the trouble." Tamar looked thoughtful, studying the man before her. Was he worth telling?

"Of course, it's money. All I've got is my wages, and Doreen's simply rolling in do-re-mi, but don't worry, Tamar sweet, I'll always look after you. We'll have some swell times together again."

"Says you!" Tamar's voice was thoughtful. "Hello, where they taking the *Sick 'Un*?"

"It's to be junked. Got too many technical bugs in it to be safe. You're forgiving me, Tamar, for Doreen?"

"What? Oh, that. Sure. You're not to blame because I'm a sap. Be seeing you, old thing, when the

pitchforks are handed out." Tamar swung about to leave but the pilot stopped her.

"Not without a kiss," he said reproachfully.

"Even so, *Romeo*. Now laugh that one off." Tamar jerked herself free and walked quickly to the field offices.

They were deserted, for lately she had been meeting Don after hours; there'd been so much talk about the night they had been forced to spend together.

"Just a sap, a common garden variety of sap. Thinking I had him all sewed up because of that night." Tamar stood by the window staring out. Near by, two mechanics were wheeling the one-seater, known as the *Sick 'Un*, into line to make room in the hangars for the smart new plane her uncle would be flying the following morning.

"No one would know, if I took up the *Sick 'Un*, but what it had was ignorance of her condition that made me do it. A crack-up would be inevitable," Tamar mused, moody, dark-violet eyes watching the darkening field.

"They might even say, remembering that other time we had to bail out, that I was a punk flyer, or that I'd probably had a few drinks and got a sudden whim to go up, and crashed. Bad young moderns, let Tamar O'Rourke be a lesson to you."

The mechanics were leaving. Old Jimmy, the watchman, would soon be the only one on the field and Tamar knew his habits to a T.

Don Racey stuck his head in at the office door. "Give you a lift to town, Tamar."

"I'm waiting for uncle."

"But he's not coming in to-night," he told her.

"Maybe you know his plans

better than I," she replied airily. "Breeze along, big boy."

"Gee, Tamar, I can't go like this. I'm crazy about you—honest. It's just the money. I'm head over heels in debt."

"O. K., *Romeo*, run along," Tamar said indifferently. She watched him go, smoky eyes sullen.

"Just a sap," she muttered again, and this time she wasn't speaking altogether of herself.

With a lift of her shoulders she went out into the deserted field.

It was a ghostly place now with all the big ships housed and the landing lights breaking the darkness here and there. The big finger of the searchlight pointed this way and that, as though searching for Tamar.

The girl walked over to the plane and touched her with a gentle hand.

"Like a last hop, old lady? Like to go down in screaming glory rather than be picked to pieces? Well, I'd rather go like that, too, so we'll go together."

Tamar went softly to the watchman's shanty at the gates and looked in. It was empty. Then she saw old Jimmy in the tiny roadside stand across the road, consuming his nightly bowl of soup.

"Couldn't be better," she murmured, under her breath. For a moment, she stood looking around the field. She loved every silver ship, even to the field's bad actor, the *Sick 'Un*.

Well, it was giving uncle a dirty deal—he had always called her his boy—but the girls would be glad. They had always hated their cousin. Hated her for her smoky-black hair and sultry-violet eyes, her wide, sweet, Irish mouth and petal-white skin. Hated her because she dared fly the heavens while they stayed safely on the ground.

Tamar started the propeller and

kicked away the chocks, then swiftly climbed into the cockpit. She saw old Jimmy run to the door and stand there silhouetted against the light, then come at a gallop, pulling out his gun. She leaned far out waving her hand reassuringly, then taxied the *Sick 'Un* across the field.

It was a sweet take-off. The *Sick 'Un* was a queen of a ship if she hadn't had the bad habit of developing technical defects in the air. No one had ever had to bail out of her but it was only by the grace of the gods and good flying.

Well, Don had always claimed she, Tamar, was a queen, too, but she'd had some kind of a bug in her make-up or she wouldn't have been taken in by his smooth words.

Good joke on Don though. Tomorrow, or whenever they found the remains of the two queens, he'd find out through the papers, that she could have bought and sold her uncle, only her mother had thought it best to have Tamar brought up as simply as Terence O'Rourke's girls.

The *Sick 'Un* seemed to know this was her swan song, for she mounted steadily, sweetly, purring to herself. Her ceiling was high, far higher than any of the other ships on the O'Rourke field, and Tamar pushed her to the limit.

Up in the air things cleared for Tamar, as they always did. She couldn't kill herself over a fool like Don. What an idiot she always was down on the ground. She'd go away and live down the silly cackling of the tabloids—if she could get the *Sick 'Un* safely to earth again.

As though the ship read her mind and guessed the end was not to be a glorious tailspin into eternity for them both, she began to splutter and gag and, when Tamar righted her the plane dropped a wheel from her landing gear.

Tamar, leaning out to gauge her distance to the earth, since the plane had been stripped of instruments, saw the wheel go sailing earthward.

Of course, they'd probably started dismantling the plane and had the wheels ready to pull, for, as the plane lurched, then steadied under Tamar's firm hand, the other wheel went sailing after its mate.

"So what?" muttered Tamar. "Well, we'll just have to do without wheels." She had seen pilots land on one wheel but she didn't try to remember whether they had ever come in without any landing gear whatsoever.

She studied the scene below. The water was dotted with islands. She'd simply pick one with a good wide beach and try to fall free as the plane nosed over, otherwise she'd be just one part of a grand funeral pyre.

Dying no longer looked like a good way out. Tamar was as determined now to live as she had been a while back to die.

Her island chosen, she circled it slowly, looking for a likely landing spot without too much brush; then warily approached it.

In spite of her skill, the *Sick 'Un* struck sickeningly hard on her maimed axle, and nosed over sharply. Blackness, deep and complete, wrapped island, pilot and landscape.

"Heaven certainly needs its windows washed," Tamar muttered, blinking her long lashes at the sunshine as seen through dusty glass.

"Pin Wee, the missy says your windows are dirty," a crisp, cold voice remarked, from some place out of sight, and Tamar turned her head slowly to look into frosty-gray eyes.

"Master Pamp knows glest loom not used," grumbled a silky voice,

and Tamar dizzily made out a yellow face that scarcely came to the shoulder of the young giant with the ice-washed voice.

"Our error. We don't use the guest room so we do not wash its windows, and, sad to relate, since you seemed to expect it, this isn't a guest room attached to any celestial palace, but a very earthy one belonging to one Doctor Poynton Kettering of the island, *Two Souls*."

"And from your voice," weakly retorted Tamar, "you wish I had landed in heaven instead of here. Well, my dear benefactor, if I had landed anywhere else it wouldn't have been heaven, because I started out with the idea of ending the career of the *Sick 'Un* and myself; then changed my mind too late to turn back."

"You keep quiet or you'll be out of your head again and I've spent a lot of valuable time already, pulling you around."

"A lot of time," Tamar muttered, and started to lift her hand to her head to rub it, then discovered she was too weak to make the effort.

"A week and a day. Now drink this and go to sleep."

The next time Tamar opened her eyes Pin Wee sat alone beside her bed placidly darning socks. Except for a shorn head and bandaged leg, Tamar felt quite herself again and Doctor Kettering nodded approvingly when he came in at Pin Wee's call.

"I'll soon have you out of here. Sent word at once to your uncle but he was under the weather himself, so couldn't come."

"I told them I'd ship you home the first day you could hobble."

"Kind of you—sorry to be such a bother," Tamar spluttered spunkily. Now that she could see plainly, she was trying to remember where she

had known this big young man before.

"All women are bothers more or less, but an Irish girl— Somehow, one looks for grit in the Irish. If you had to commit suicide why on earth did you choose my beach to do it on?"

Tamar's black lashes flared away from surprised purple eyes.

"Why be choosy if the *Sick 'Un* had shed her landing gear? You had a good wide beach and that was all I was thinking about." There was plenty of temper behind the explanation.

Kettering nodded. "It was shed in the air then? So that's why you came a header? I wondered. Papers all spoke of you as crack pilot, though one young man did smugly hint that it was his engagement to another girl that made you attempt suicide."

"What!" Tamar reddened furiously. "Don said that?"

"Yes. Was it true?"

Tamar set her teeth on her lip then blinked at the pain.

"Not because of him but because they'd rehash all the notoriety about us when his engagement was announced. When I got into the air I knew I couldn't do it, so I tried to land and then the plane started shedding its gear. I could kill Don for saying that. How on earth can I ever go back now?"

Kettering nodded unsmilingly. "I thought you'd feel like that but it seemed you should know before you left here."

"Thanks," she murmured ungraciously. "I wish the *Sick 'Un* had finished me, too." Tamar twisted her fine, long hands together. "Oh, I hate the whole tribe!"

Kettering put his hand on her clenched ones and straightened them out. "Keep still a minute. You

don't hate men any more than I hate women. They've made life miserable for me ever since I did a good job of something, all because I had a good-looking face. Ugh!"

Tamar's eyes widened. "I know now who you are. You're the young doctor who flew into an African village with a new serum and saved a whole tribe from some epidemic. I remember how the girls mobbed you when you got back. I was a kid in grammar school. I thought your face was familiar to me."

"The world had forgotten until you landed on my island. I thought you were a snooping sob sister who had dug me up after three years of peace," Kettering said savagely.

"And I wasn't, so what?" Tamar questioned.

"You don't want to go back and face the gossip and I don't want a mess of fool women organizing crush parties to my island. Suppose we make a bargain? I need six months at the most, maybe only two, to finish this experiment of mine. Suppose folks are told you had known me for a long time. That you were on your way to call on me and cracked up, not knowing the plane was already partially dismantled. That we decided now was as good a time as any to get married."

"What!" spluttered Tamar, struggling upon her pillows.

"Would you rather go back and have this pilot guy smirk every time he sees you? Or would you like to turn the tables on him and throw his silly story in his face?"

"You know the answer to that one, only this is what you don't know. We were up one night and had to bail out and stayed all night on an uninhabited island. We weren't found until the middle of the next day."

Kettering shrugged. "We can go

"Suppose we make a bargain? Suppose folks are told you had known me for a long time and that we decided now was as good a time as any to get married. In that way we'll both be protected."



on from there. I knew all that."

Tamar wet her lips because suddenly they were dry and stiff.

"Thanks.

It's a go. I'll keep away the females so you can work in peace, and in return you will tell the press a more romantic tale than Don's. Will his face be red?"

"Right! Then when I'm ready to hop off to Africa with my new serum, I'll land you anywhere you say, and you can quietly get an annulment."

Tamar drew a deep breath and held out her hand, and rather re-

luctantly the young doctor shook it, then left her.

"Can you tie that?" Tamar said to herself. "He's a swell number, too, with that bronzed skin and

honey-colored hair on top of six-feet-two or three of real male. Well, Tamar darlin', you're his body guard and he's your protector. Six months from now, maybe sooner, he leaves you—just like that!"

Tamar was able to be out on the beach, in a wheel chair propelled by Pin Wee, when a familiar plane made a perfect three-point landing and Don Racey stepped jauntily to the ground.

"Wait, Pin Wee. Run and tell your master at once that the bears are out of the woods," Tamar ordered, and Pin Wee went running, his silk suit flapping in the land breeze.

Don strode toward the chair, both hands out.

"My darling! At last!"

"Says he dramatically," jeered Tamar, eyes cool as mountain lakes. "All that emotion, my dear Don, and no audience. And where's the wife? Isn't she with you?"

"That was a mistake, Tamar. I knew it the moment old Jimmy phoned me you had taken off in the *Sick 'Un*. My lovely, bad, head-strong Tamar!"

"Wasn't I? I was fit to be tied, thinking I was honor-bound to marry one man, loving another."

"Honor-bound, loving another," Don repeated.

"Sure," in her softest Irish voice. "I've always been mad about Pamp Kettering but, somehow, I thought it was only a school-girl's dream and when you came along and seemed next best— Well, when it came out in the papers about our accident, I soon heard how Pamp felt about me. Soon as you assured me I didn't need to marry you to save your precious name from being sullied, I rushed off to Pamp. And that's that. You can run back to

little Doreen because I'm marrying my prince."

"And her prince is marrying the little Irish schoolgirl who gave him an armful of roses and the key to the city five years ago, and was never forgotten afterward," a cool, pleasant voice added, and Kettering, crisp and smiling in his spotless white uniform, stepped up beside Tamar's chair.

"So you dug that up?" thought Tamar, in surprise.

Don Racey looked from the girl to the man, helpless confusion in his manner. "I don't believe it," he finally muttered, sulkily.

"I don't believe I know your contradictory friend, Tamar," Doctor Kettering said smoothly.

"Don Racey, my uncle's pilot— Doctor Kettering."

"And her sweetheart," Don added nastily.

"Oh, these kid crushes! When the real thing comes along, how we laugh at them," the doctor said, casually.

"It was pretty real, nights spent on desert islands and so on," growled Don. "You're a doctor and—"

"And you're a cad, so what?" borrowing Tamar's phrase. "Tamar, I don't like him so well standing up."

Tamar gasped, unable to follow the swift left that spread the unsuspecting Don at her feet.

The pilot scrambled up, purple with fury and squared away belligerently. Kettering rocked lightly forward from heel to toe, all smiling menace, while Tamar looked appraisingly at the two.

Don was the heavier but plainly afraid, which surprised her, because the pilot had always been over-ready with his fists.

"All right, all right," growled Don. "She isn't worth getting mused up over." He turned and swung back to his plane, shouting over his shoul-

der, "I suppose her being worth a fortune helps you overlook her past."

Tamar, scarlet-faced, caught Kettering's arm. "Let him go. Don't pay any attention to him, please."

The tall doctor knelt beside her chair, put his arms around her, and drew her close against his shoulder. "We'll give him a good movie to take back with him, shall we?" and laid his cheek against Tamar's so it looked to the man above them as though he was passionately kissing her.

The plane roared around the island, down over their heads at a too-short distance to be safe and was away toward the mainland. Kettering rose, when the plane was a mere speck in the far distance.

"The mail boat gets in to-night with a justice of the peace who is also township clerk in the little village on the mainland. He's bringing a license, unless you've changed your mind."

"No," Tamar emphatically declared. "I'll never go back. Maybe when you go, you'll let me stay on here."

"That could be arranged, but you're young and six months is a century to the young."

"Says you," murmured Tamar, but he was already on his way up the hill to his laboratory. She stared after him. "You're walking on silly Tamar O'Rourke's heart and don't know it. I *would* fall out of foolishness right into real love. I'm that silly and he's just thinking how his being married will take away the glamour so the girls won't bother him, and it will, too."

Two hours later the mail boat came, bringing Terence O'Rourke. He kissed Tamar and scolded her in the same breath. "You bad colleen, to take the *Sick 'Un*. You could have had any of the good ones."

"I know, but the *Sick 'Un* was the only one on the field and I was in a hurry," Tamar said contritely, and that was all that was ever said between the two who understood each other so well.

Finally, the mail boat left, taking her uncle and the clerk back, and leaving the newlyweds standing on the shore, albeit Tamar still had to lean pretty heavily on her husband's arm.

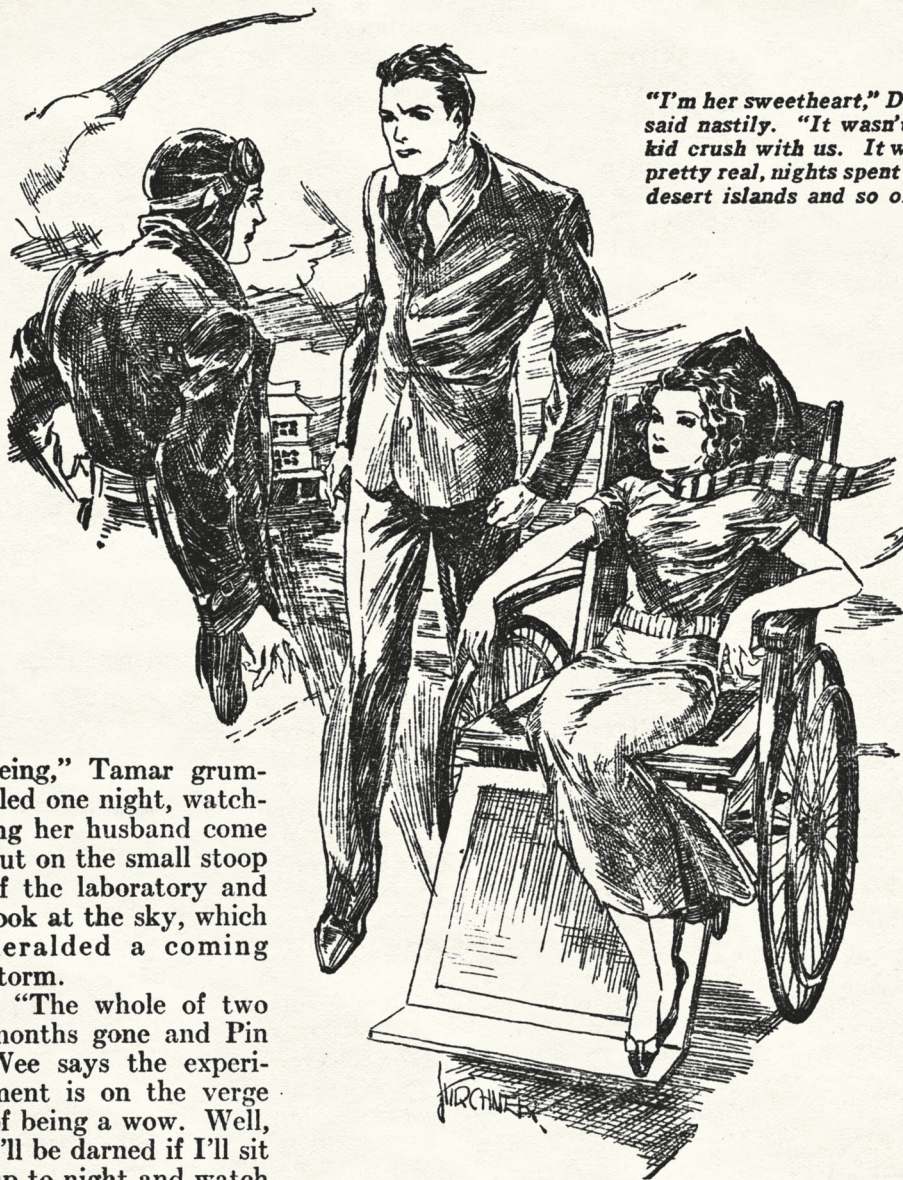
"That being that, if you'll excuse me, I have a batch brewing I should be looking after," Kettering said firmly, putting Tamar in her chair. He strode away up the hill, leaving Pin Wee to wheel the bride to the bungalow.

"Laugh that one off, Tamar O'Rourke," Tamar whispered, watching Kettering enter the laboratory. "Put in her place and forgotten on her wedding night." Under the jeering tones she was one sick ache. She had to laugh because the O'Rourkes didn't cry—much.

Planes and fussy motor boats cluttered up beach and water when Tamar got up the next morning. Reporters swarmed over the bungalow, laboratory and island, taking pictures and quizzing Kettering and Tamar. Pin Wee suddenly could speak nothing but broadest Cantonese. Sob sisters gushed over Kettering and looked daggers at his lucky bride, but after a few days of this, every word in the gush-language had been used over and over and the island became once more a place of peace.

Sometimes the young scientist would remember and put aside his work for an evening to try to entertain Tamar, but he usually fell asleep over his pipe.

"A long ways you've gone toward making him know you're a human



"I'm her sweetheart," Don said nastily. "It wasn't a kid crush with us. It was pretty real, nights spent on desert islands and so on."

being," Tamar grumbled one night, watching her husband come out on the small stoop of the laboratory and look at the sky, which heralded a coming storm.

"The whole of two months gone and Pin Wee says the experiment is on the verge of being a wow. Well, I'll be darned if I'll sit up to-night and watch him fall asleep over his pipe. That's too much!" Tamar grabbed her book and hurried to her room as her husband started reluctantly toward the bungalow.

She was in bed when the storm struck. "If I were a fool like the girl in this book, I'd run screaming to his arms," she reflected, as the lights went out. "But I'd feel like

an idiot, when storms don't scare me a bit, so what?"

It was a regular tornado, but the low stone bungalow had been built to withstand just such storms so it stood stanchly, though it twisted the tall poplars and as a grand finale sent one crashing through Tamar's windows.

For a moment, Tamar lay quite

still, feeling the pungent wet leaves across her face, then her door crashed open and her husband shouted her name.

"All right. I'm quite all right. You can see I was born to be hanged," Tamar said, and wryly thought, "Fool, here was your chance and you muffed it."

"Lights are on the blink. I was watching and saw the tree fall through your window. You'd better come into my room while we clear up the damage. Here's your robe."

"Sorry, but you'll have to help me. I seem to be fastened down," Tamar said in surprise. "I'm all messed up in the top branches."

Kettering came to the side of the bed and bent down. "Put your arms around my neck and let me see if I can pull you out."

Tamar obeyed and he lifted her free and carried her into his room, calling Pin Wee.

"Clear out the mess in missy's room."

There was an oil lamp burning beside Kettering's bed, and he stalked over to the bed with his burden. "You'll be all right here."

Tamar put her head back against his arm and looked up at him.

"Doesn't the miraculously-saved wife rate a chaste salute from her thankful husband after being saved from sure death?" she gibed.

"You want me to?" in a startled voice.

"Well, it was something of a shock having a tree climb into bed with me. I feel as though I'd like some one to, at least, pat me on the back and tell me it's great I came through safely. Silly, isn't it? Run along and take the couch or wherever you plan to sleep?"

"Don't talk so much. You go too fast for my weak brain. I *am* glad you are safe, funny thing. Hold up

that mug of yours and I'll deliver said salute."

"You'd better make it a good one after all my embarrassing efforts to get it," grinned Tamar, reddening.

She was slightly breathless when he freed her.

"All right?" he taunted.

Tamar nodded. "Thanks a lot for humoring me."

"And this one isn't because you asked. This is because I want to. I didn't know it would be such fun to kiss one of you little pests. I guess I was never this close to one before."

From away off came Pin Wee's meek voice, "Missy's bed leddy."

Kettering looked startled.

Tamar chuckled. "Missy doesn't want her bed to-night. Right?"

"Right, funny one. Go to bed, Pin Wee."

Tamar cautiously opened one eye then the other. Of course, it was a dream. The great Kettering had never descended from his throne to be her husband for one night, but the dent on the other pillow said so.

She flushed rosily and yawned and sat up, smiling. "So what?" she asked of the bowing, worried Pin Wee, who appeared at the moment with her breakfast tray.

"So master velly mad," he replied solemnly. "Guinea pig mashed by stlorm."

"He can feed another one his precious serum," Tamar said airily.

Pin Wee shook his head. "Stlorm smashed bottles, thlity-thlee months' work gone dogs."

"What!"

Pin Wee nodded and clattered out.

"Can you tie that? Maybe I'd better go help pick up the pieces." Tamar pushed away the tray, dove into the bathroom for her tub, then dressed rapidly. She was ready to

leave the room when Pin Wee came back.

"Missy go vvisit honorable uncle; master says come chop chop living loom."

Not understanding, Tamar hurried down the hall.

Her husband, in flying leathers, was pacing back and forth, scowling at the innocent furniture. He wheeled as her high heels sounded and his scowl didn't lessen.

"Pin Wee tell you? Three years' work at a climax while I, like a fool, was absent playing the fool. I've got it all to do over, and I can't do it with a woman on the island. I should have known. I'm taking you back to your uncle. You can make him a visit, then go on to Paris, ostensibly to meet me, only you can get a divorce once you get there. I'm sorry, but you can't stay here."

"All right. Don't let it worry you. I won't make a scene. It was always a business arrangement, anyway."

"Until last night," he put in meaningly.

Tamar lifted her shoulders and out of her own terrible hurt struck. "Oh, that? Don't be old-fashioned. I'll help Pin Wee pack."

Eyes hard and bright, she packed her bags and left the room in its former masculine primness.

"Come home soon," Pin Wee chirped, as he stowed her cases in the waiting plane and trotted off toward the bungalow.

Tamar dashed her hand across her lashes. "Pin Wee got under my skin, I guess. Sorry to leave the old chap, he's been swell." She mounted to the rear cockpit in unsmiling silence.

"Exit Tamar," the girl said unsteadily, watching the erect back of her husband. "What next?"

At her uncle's field the mechanics rushed to help her out and her uncle,

evidently forewarned of her coming, trotted from his office, face beaming.

"If you ever need me, Tamar," Kettering muttered hurriedly. "You might, you know."

"You're telling me? Thanks, I'll be all right. I'm making it *my* life work to find out why I can't keep a boy friend. I'll study the ads, probably my friends are keeping something dark. So long, sorry I messed things up for you."

Her uncle was tugging at her arm and she turned, still smiling.

"H'lo, uncle darlin'. Pamp can't stop a minute even, he's got to be tearing back. Things have gone to smash in his lab." Firmly she took her uncle by the arm and urged him toward his offices.

"Cracked up, eh Tamar?" asked Terence O'Rourke.

"Cracked entirely. Come along before I cry all over the hideous tie you're wearing. I bet Jane chose it."

"O'Rourkes don't cry."

"This one does," and did.

"The girls are away," Terence said, furnishing a dry handkerchief when the storm was over. "They can't get back before a month."

"Thank goodness for that. Maybe I'll live after all," and that was all from Tamar O'Rourke Kettering about her heart trouble.

"You're restless as a banshee, Tammy," grumbled Terence. "You've been here two weeks and worn the nap off my best carpet entirely, what with your mad pacing."

"It's the planes—every time one goes over the house I think it might be Pamp. Silly, isn't it? I rush to the window and it's only some fat fool taking a dollar's worth of ride to tell his grandchildren about."

"You're thin, too, and all eyes."

"I know. I'm getting out tomorrow, somewhere where I'll never

hear a plane again." She started nervously, as another plane went rushing over the house at the edge of the landing field.

"I'll see if I can't get away and come with you," Terence said, and grabbed his hat and trotted out and left her alone.

"The old dear, he can't. I'd drive him crazy. I'm crazy myself." Tamar dropped into a chair and dug her fingers into her ears. She wouldn't listen any more.

If she could stop seeing, even with her eyes closed, the island, washed in sunshine, golden with pointing poplars. Pin Wee, in his flapping yellow suit, trotting from lab to bungalow. Her husband—Tamar shook her head and sprang to her feet.

Suddenly, she stopped in her head-long rush out of the room, and rubbed her eyes and looked again at the unsmiling man in the doorway. Of course, this was part of another of those mind pictures that were driving her crazy. She had been seeing him on the island and now here he was showing up in her uncle's drawing room. Maybe she'd better try to see a doctor, too.

"I can't go on, Tamar, no use."

It was the same cold voice, only different now. "I can't get up a spark of interest in stuff to save natives off in Africa when you're here. Do you know what I see all the time?"

Tamar shook her head, secretly digging her nails into her flesh. Yes, she was awake. That had hurt like everything.

"I see you, mocking me, taunting me into kissing you. If you were back there now you'd never have to ask. You needn't try to find out why you can't keep a boy friend. Whether you want me or not, I'm yours for always. We'll do anything you say, go anywhere, if you can forgive me for being such a blind fool."

Tamar drew a long, shivering breath.

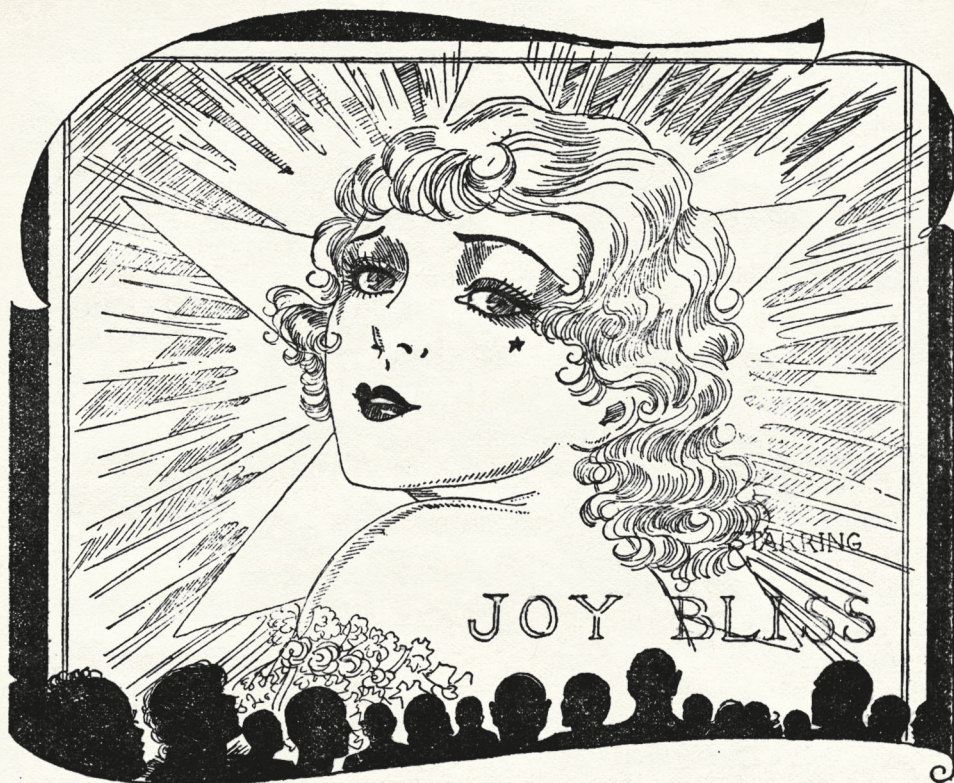
"I'm a fool myself. Let's go back to Pin Wee. I'm sick for a sight of the man. If I let you work days, will you be falling asleep over your pipe nights, doctor-man?"

"Come here and see," but this time he went to her, as though he couldn't wait to get his arms about her or enough of kissing the red softness that was her mouth.



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A New Star ~ ~ By B. Virginia Lee

STRANGE how her own disappointment had lost its bitterness! Up until now she had wanted more than anything else to have the test click, as they called it in the studio. But it hadn't; that was plain; even though it had really been the first break she had had since she came to Hollywood.

Larry Flynn had given her that break, at what cost to himself she didn't dare guess. She remembered how Larry's eyes had twinkled and how his fine face, under his thatch of curly red hair, had impressed her that day when he had stopped her as she was leaving the studio, after the casting director of Super Pic-

tures had told her there was no work for her.

"I beg your pardon, but I watched you out there, waiting," he had said, nonchalantly waving toward the C.D.'s room. "Maybe I can arrange a test for to-morrow." He had grinned. "Flynn's the name. Ask for Larry Flynn. It isn't a promise; I may not be able to fix it, but they seem to think I'm necessary around here for their own prosperity. What's your name?" he had asked with interest.

"Joy Bliss," she had told him, liking him instantly. There was something in the way he grinned that made Joy feel that her life was

just beginning and that its promise was play, laughter, and love.

"That's a swell name! Did you pick it out yourself or get a numerologist?" he had asked with that electric smile which sent little prickly sensations racing down Joy's spine.

"Neither. It's the name my mother gave me." She was laughing. It was so easy to laugh with Larry Flynn. "The fact is," she told him, "it was the bother of my life until I came to Hollywood, but now it seems the only redeeming feature in my make-up. I've actually come to believe mother was wise when she gave it to me!"

They had both laughed; then Larry had saluted her and they parted.

When she had called the next morning Larry Flynn had met her with his big grin. "I've pulled some hot stuff here, but I can make the test. Come along. Le Vay let me do this against his better judgment." Larry had grinned again and in mock solemnity, frowning profoundly, had imitated for Joy's benefit his scene with "Big Boss" Ben le Vay, of Super Pictures.

"I tell you, Larry, I'm right," he says. "You're not made for drama! You'll regret this foolish idea of yours, taking money to make a test. I know it won't amount to anything!"

Larry had shrugged and waved his hands about frantically to make the scene he was enacting seem more real and true to type. Then he had continued:

"Knowing the boss as I do, I had my say and then left it like this. I said to him, plain and simple, 'You've always been right, Ben, but maybe this time you're wrong. I think she'll click. I'll take the chance. If she doesn't, it will just

show that you're right and I'm wrong.'"

"And what did he say then?" Joy had hardly been able to wait for the rest.

Larry had looked straight into her eyes, and she had known he was pleased because he was really enjoying his little play.

"For a while Ben just looked at me. I know him so well that I knew just what he was thinking, so when he outs and gives me the dope straight, I take it. 'Larry,' he says, 'I'll give you the chance, and if she doesn't click I'll fire you because you've made me decide something against my better judgment, and I won't have a man around who persuades Ben le Vay to do something against his better judgment! Understand?"

"But he won't fire you, will he?" Joy had asked with startled gray eyes.

"Don't think about that. If you rate what I think you'll rate, I'll have a lifelong desire gratified—real drama, a farewell to comedy and a new star discovered!"

"And if I don't rate——" she had persisted.

He had shrugged. "You'll rate, all right, but if you don't I'll be looking for another job. The old man's funny that way; he'll fire me just to satisfy a whim, but he'll take me back sooner or later. I'd lose my job just to make him feel he was giving me a lesson!" Larry had laughed.

"But you wouldn't really lose your job, would you?" she had found herself asking.

His laugh silenced her fears.

"What?" he had asked with mock dignity, sticking his thumbs in the armholes of his vest. "Super Pictures giving Larry Flynn the gate? For your own information, lady,

you're gazing on their prize package in the way of director *par excellence* of comedy. I'm not worrying."

It had all been done in such a spirit of gayety, but now as they stood there, after Le Vay had seen the test in privacy with Larry and the verdict had been pronounced, Joy wondered just how much of what Larry had said about his job was true.

"Are you going to lose your job?" Joy found her heart sinking, like a heavy piece of lead dropped into a well.

"Yeah." He said it in a matter-of-fact tone, as though it didn't make any difference to him at all, but Joy knew it did.

"You see, I'm only an assistant here," he was saying. "I haven't much say on anything. I'm the one to blame. I'm paid for comedy, and I've always dreamed of an exquisite star, a great story, and heart-twisting drama. When I saw you I thought my prayer had been answered. You're so darned beautiful! Don't think about me. This won't be permanent. Le Vay is just giving me schooling, as he calls it. He wants me to keep to the thing I was made for, so he's placed me on the dunce's stool before the class, which is all of Hollywood, to teach me a lesson. He'll take me back sooner or later. I'm not worrying."

Joy stifled her impulse to sympathize with him, to tell him how utterly sorry she was about everything. She found that the words would not be uttered. He wouldn't want sympathy from her, anyway, she knew.

"It wasn't quite fair of me to raise your hopes," he was saying with that grin of his she liked so much, "and then let it all come to nothing. But you stick around, kid.

Don't leave Hollywood. You've got big stuff in you, and some guy will get wise sometime. I'm sorry it wasn't my luck to click you. Is there any place I can take you?"

Up to that moment Joy Bliss had thought the success of that test meant everything to her, but now a sudden rush of feeling clutched at her heart and she knew that the only important thing was living up to Larry's estimation of her. She had failed him. He was taking it with wonderful sportsmanship.

"It's been splendid to know you, Mr. Flynn, but you'd better not waste any more time on me. Besides, I've got to get my dinner before I go home. I live in a furnished room."

"Hold everything!" he said. "I'll be with you in a second, and we'll drive to the beach for dinner before you go home. O. K.?"

Riding in Larry's blue roadster, Joy felt that the evening had been designed especially for them. It made her realize that she'd been waiting for just such a man all her life to see the beach with at sunset!

And when night hurried in across the sky, Joy thought the silver moon that suddenly appeared had never before been so filled with magic, nor the dampness of the ocean breeze so gloriously cool and inspiring.

They had dinner in the restaurant at the end of the pier—a delicious shore dinner ordered in just the proper way by Larry. It was delightful to sit opposite him and listen to his talk. He bubbled over with stories of adventure. Never once did he mention the studio or his job, and Joy was secretly glad of the opportunity to forget everything except his compelling personality.

When they had finished dinner, he said, "I'd like to take you some place to dance. I imagine you can

do it rather well, but the fact is, I've a lot of ends to pick up to-night, and I've got to get back."

When they reached her home he helped her out of the car and took her to the door. There he offered her his hand.

"You're a great kid," he said, and she did not miss the little pressure his hand gave hers. The warmth of it shot through her, and she wanted with all her heart to tell him he was the only thing that mattered, but she couldn't be sure he would be interested. He even seemed to have lost interest in her picture possibilities.

"You've been so good," she managed; "I mean, so kind about my failure."

"Oh, forget it! It's just one of those things. It was entirely my fault. The trouble was that I didn't rehearse you. I didn't tell you anything about self-consciousness. There'll be a next time, kid, and when it comes, forget there's even a camera; forget yourself, and just let those emotions of yours work. Give them all you've got and you'll make history. You stick around!"

"I'll stick around; don't worry about that."

The next moment he was gone. She watched his car vanish into the warm night air, and she remembered his grin with a sense of happiness. She'd see him the next day, she told herself. Ben le Vay wouldn't really discharge him. Hadn't Larry Flynn persuaded Ben le Vay to allow the test? When any one could persuade Le Vay to do anything like that, that some one wasn't in much danger of losing his job.

But Joy Bliss didn't see Larry Flynn the next day, even though she went to the Red Wheel for

lunch. Every one went there. Larry always went there. But Larry didn't go there that day, nor the following days. Joy even stopped at Super Pictures to inquire, but they wouldn't give her any information at all. She didn't even know whether or not he had been fired.

Then suddenly fear came over her. Maybe he didn't want to see her. Maybe he had told her he was going to lose his job just so she wouldn't be apt to look him up. If he had lost his job, she couldn't see why Super Pictures wouldn't tell her so and give her his address.

Yes, Joy decided, a hard lump coming to her throat, it was all very plain. It was obviously just his way of making her forget him. Probably he had seen at the beach that she was in love with him, and had decided to stop it in the beginning. What a fool she was!

But though she went the rounds of the studios, Joy had no more breaks. There were no more Larry Flynn's to give her tests, and with luck against her, she remembered him all the more—the way he talked, his grin, his red curly hair, his eyes. But when she remembered his last handclasp she knew he was not intentionally avoiding her. Something within her told her that, surely and truly. He had probably been sent some place on location, and the studio wouldn't give out information. That was the way they always did. She couldn't believe he really had been fired. She'd find him soon enough. She'd stick around as she had promised him she would.

Joy knew she couldn't stick around without work. Already her funds were dwindling. For two days she stood across the street from the Red Wheel, watching the people go-



She was conscious that Larry was watching her closely. His twinkling eyes that could say so much were caressing her, appraising her, confusing her.

ing in and coming out. Some day Larry would go in there, but she couldn't very well stand outside and watch until he did come. She laughed at the absurdity of things,

yet she knew with a strange sort of intuition that sooner or later that was where he'd appear, and Joy made up her mind that when he did come she'd be there. She applied

for a job there, and to her surprise, got it.

She became a cashier at the Wheel, and her smile—the same smile that had rocked Larry Flynn's senses—made her the secret hope of all assistant directors and the despair of lonely young men seeking feminine companionship. She never ceased to listen for a remembered voice, never ceased to look for a funny grin that had done something to her heart.

But Larry didn't come. She didn't hear a word of him until one afternoon she caught a bit of conversation that electrified her attention.

"Yes, there's a good crowd at Super Pictures. But you should have been there when Larry Flynn was there. He did comedy stuff—the original sunshine boy. He lost his job giving some ham a test against Le Vay's better judgment. Le Vay hated to let him go at that, but it was a sort of get-even gesture on the old man's part."

Joy closed her eyes. So he had really lost his job because of her! He had told her the truth, and she had let herself think it had merely been an excuse to get rid of her. But yet, hadn't she known in her saner moments that he had been telling her the truth? This was only a confirmation of her true feelings about the matter. Larry Flynn had been a square shooter with her in every way. She remembered him so vividly as he had been that evening—so full of good cheer, grinning and playing and vanishing! Suddenly she wanted to scream. She wanted to cry out, "Larry!"

Spring fled into summer. For months now—over a year of them—she had searched the faces at the Wheel. It had become second na-

ture to her. There would never be any one else in her heart except Larry Flynn.

Then suddenly one day she was looking into his eyes! The same old smile was on his face. Joy could hardly believe her eyes. She rubbed them to see if the vision was real. "It's really you!" she laughed in delight.

"I should hope so," he answered, and then they were talking.

"But it seems rather queer," she said after a while, "that you haven't something to tell me. Why did you vanish? There's been gossip here, and of course, you told me you'd probably lose your job, but I just couldn't believe it." She flushed suddenly, then went on quickly, changing the trend of conversation to hide her confusion, "You know Bina South, don't you? Well, she came in sobbing this morning. They turned down her pet story. She says it's the best she's written, but she can't put it over. It's all about a boy and girl who—"

She was conscious that Larry was watching her closely. His twinkling eyes that could say so much were caressing her, appraising her, confusing her.

"And Cal Evans is in the same boat," she went on. "Do you know Cal? I met him here at the Wheel. You meet every one here and get all the news there is. Well, Cal's worried about whom he's going to sign with. He struck a snag in his last contract. But let's forget all that. Tell me what you've been doing."

"Me?" He seemed surprised that she would want to know about him. "Well, as you see, I've come back, the same as ever. I'm with Super Pictures. Flynn's the name—Larry Flynn, in case you forget."

Joy dimpled, feeling an irresistible

impulse to kiss him. "Oh, yes, I remember now," she mocked. "The good guy, the one who got Ben le Vay's goat by giving a ham a test —" She stopped before the rest slipped out.

"I couldn't forget that name, Mr. Larry Flynn," she said seriously. "I was ultra-marine-blue after my failure, and you put courage into me again. I forgot I was a flop." She didn't tell him how poignantly she had really remembered.

"I asked about you as soon as I got back," he said. "I found out quite a lot about you, and about Cal Evans, too."

"What about Cal?"

"Oh, nothing much except that he's got a crush on you." Larry started toward the door. "Of course, it's none of my business, but I've been thinking about you all this time, working only for one thing, and no one likes to see somebody butting in on his discovery. Why, I wouldn't have come back if it hadn't been for you!"

Her heart jumped unaccountably. Her eyes grew misty. She said with a little gasp, "Oh, I don't care about Cal that way. He's only interested in my picture possibilities."

"Well, what do you think I'm interested in?"

His tone was bewildered, and Joy wanted to cry, but he had not meant to be unkind. He didn't realize that she had loved him all that time, that she had dreamed of finding him again, and had refused to regard any other man seriously. A chill swept over her. She spoke evenly, determined that he should never guess how desolate her days and nights had been.

"Of course, I know what you meant. That's what I meant, too," she lied. "That's why I've waited so long. I knew you'd come back.

You see, I wanted to make good because—because you lost your job."

"Oh, that didn't matter," he said quickly. "The thing that does matter is the discovery of a new star. I think I can do a better job this time."

When he was gone Joy put a trembling hand to her throbbing head. From every corner of the Red Wheel came his words, "Discovery of a new star! Discovery of a new star!"

"Oh, who cares about being a star?" she murmured brokenly, trying to hold back the tears.

That sobered her up a little. She powdered her nose. She sat up very straight in the high cashier's chair. As for Larry Flynn, she decided, if all he wanted was the glory of discovering a new star, she'd give him his wish. If all he felt for her was a proud determination to make good with her in pictures after failure, she'd take it on the chin, and heaven would fall before she'd let him know how much it hurt!

An hour later Larry was back at the Wheel. "Come on! The boss said I could bring over my find!" He grinned and laughed a little. "He's going to get a shock when he sees who the find is, but don't mind what he says. The truth is I am good at comedy, much as I hate to admit it, but he agreed to a clause in my contract saying that I can direct one serious dramatic picture, selecting my own star for it, every year."

Joy got her hat and went with him. All the way over he rambled on about how she wasn't to worry about the boss. "He'll say anything that comes into his head, but don't you mind. Take it on the chin. That clause is in my contract, airtight, and it can't be broken. No

matter what he says, just take it on the chin."

Joy felt herself dangerously close to tears. Wasn't that exactly what she had decided to do—take it on the chin? Here he was, glowingly enthusiastic over her picture possibilities, and she had lain awake nights dreaming, praying that he'd come back and fulfill the promise of her life with play, laughter, and love! This was all she was getting for her dreams!

Once inside the sanctum of the president of Super Pictures she saw a new Larry. He was nervous, excited, determined.

Ben le Vay, whom she had seen only once before, was rather stocky. His hair was graying, and he had beady black eyes. The minute he saw her, even before Larry introduced them, he shook his head.

"You can't pull this on me, Larry. Cool off. She's tried every lot in Hollywood and flopped. She's the one who didn't click on that well-known test you gave. It's nothing doing so far as she's concerned. And that's final."

Never before had any one talked about Joy in her presence and yet so utterly disregarded that very presence. She wished she might find a secret opening in the floor and escape through it.

Larry seemed to be unaware of her, too. He ran his hands through his hair, then walked up and down, pounding his fist in his cupped hand, trying to make Le Vay see what he saw.

"I don't care who turned her down! Why did they turn her down? I'll tell you why—because you told them she didn't click. No one had the courage to take a chance on her. But she's got everything I've wanted to direct all my life. She'd make a tremendous hit!

She'd have the whole country crazy about her!"

"Oh!" Joy thought despairingly, "if he could only mean that about me as a girl, not as a discovery."

But his words were drowned out of her mind by the boom of Le Vay's. "Yes, I know. She's got you going, all right. But the point is this—even if I do give her a chance, how am I to know she'll click this time? To my mind and half a dozen other minds who have made picture history here in Hollywood, if a person doesn't screen once, he'll never screen at all."

"We hashed that all out once before. The trouble before was that I didn't rehearse her, didn't give her the proper tips. I was a sap that time, but I've learned my lesson."

Joy felt uneasy. Here were two men fighting over her. As a little girl she had dreamed of men—great men in armor—fighting for her love, with the victorious one carrying her off in his arms to smother her with kisses, but here were men fighting about her, and it had nothing to do with love. How she wished it did!

"Well, even if I did give her a chance," Le Val was saying, "you couldn't handle drama. You're comedy. And to cap it all, where's the story?"

"South's got it, a wow of a story. Nobody's grabbed it yet."

"Larry, it would cost half a dozen comedies to make what you want, and I haven't the cash to back a flop." He smiled up at Larry's strained face. "Don't see how it would click, Larry. There's got to be some one well known in the cast, anyway. No one knows her."

"Listen, Ben." And now Larry seemed to be conscious that Joy was in the room with him. "I don't really care if I direct her or not—I just want her to have her chance.

Take a look at her, and if in the end you decide I'm not the man to direct her, it will be O. K."

Through Joy's senses raced little bright thoughts of sudden realization. Here Larry was saying he really didn't care if he directed her or not. Here he was reversing everything she had believed. Maybe, after all, he did like her, just the tiniest little bit. If he did, she'd make him like her a whole lot!

But in the next moment her castle tumbled again. Le Vay's voice was booming away.

"And whom have you got in mind for the male lead?"

"Cal Evans is loose."

Ben le Vay laughed. "Playing right into the little lady's hand, aren't you. I've heard Cal has the inside track there."

"Is that so?" Larry's voice was colder now. "Well, get this straight; I'm interested only in her picture possibilities!"

During the next weeks Hollywood buzzed with gossip about the picture. Super Pictures had signed Cal Evans for the male lead in a big new production, but who under the sun was Joy Bliss? Bina South, to be sure, had done the story, and Larry Flynn was having his first fling at straight drama in directing it. Everywhere she went, Joy heard about it. Overnight she had achieved a sort of preliminary fame.

It was astonishing, every one on the set said, as the picture got under way, that Joy Bliss, who had flopped in a test a year before, could come back and give such a perfect performance. Something was in the air! Such things just couldn't be true! But they were!

It was evident that Ben le Vay thought things couldn't happen that

way. He was on the set every day, chewing fifty-cent cigars and trying to appear optimistic. Joy herself took no notice of the super-charged atmosphere. Perhaps her inexperience accounted for it, or her supreme confidence in Larry Flynn. The only thing she did notice—with a private thrill—was Larry's eyes when she played the love scenes with Cal Evans. Those eyes of Larry's seemed puzzled.

As the picture progressed, she began to pay a good deal more attention to how things were going. Cal spent as much time with her as possible. Whenever she was resting, it was Cal who was with her, talking, suggesting, making her comfortable. She saw very little of Larry; when she did, he smiled vaguely, looked at her coldly for a moment, then hurried off to attend to some detail.

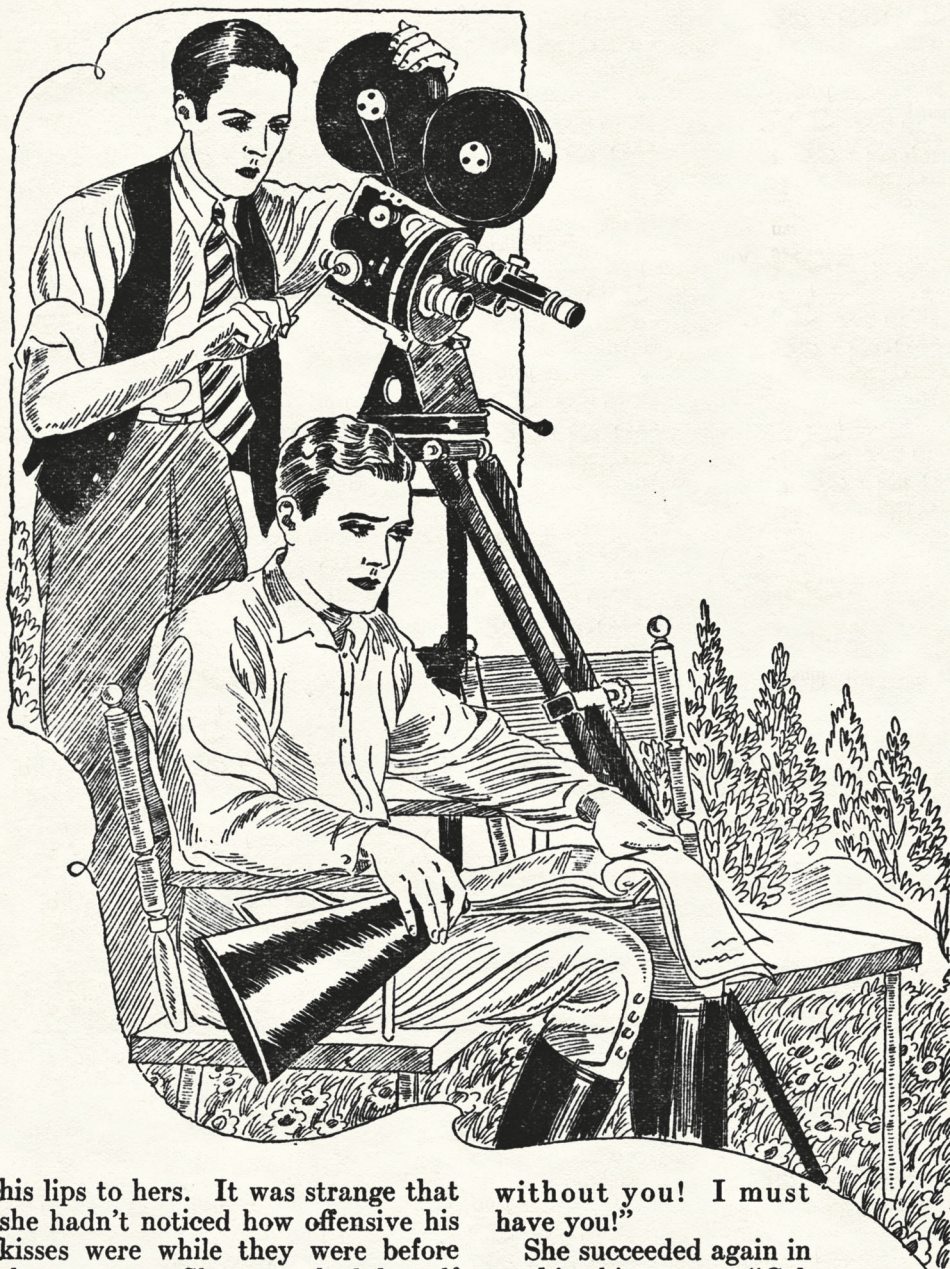
It was at those times that Joy played up to Cal. She'd die, she told herself, before she'd let Larry know that she was desperately lonely for him, that she loved him, and that in her heart there was a constant, dull ache because his actions proved that he cared only for her picture possibilities. Almost as if to verify the fact that Larry cared only for her career, not at all for herself, Cal Evans, as he drove her home one afternoon, remarked casually:

"All Larry lives for is to make a success out of this picture. I guess it's more to show Ben he was right than anything else. These picture boys go in for such silly feuds."

"Well, I think Larry is a good director."

"Yes, I know you do. That's all very well, but you ought to be thinking admiring thoughts about me. I'm made, you know."

Before she could stop him, he had his arms about her and was pressing



his lips to hers. It was strange that she hadn't noticed how offensive his kisses were while they were before the camera. She wrenched herself free.

"Cal, I'm surprisd!"

But he wouldn't stop; he had her in his arms again and he was kissing her even more fiercely than before. 'I'm mad about you! I can't live

without you! I must have you!"

She succeeded again in pushing him away. "Cal, you're out of your mind!"

"If I am, it's just because you're so wild over Larry. I'm not going to give you up, though—do you hear me? If it weren't for Larry you'd care for me. If it weren't for him,

you'd even marry me. You would, wouldn't you?"

Joy felt afraid of him. "No, Cal, I wouldn't. I wouldn't marry any one."

He laughed a vicious laugh. "If you won't marry me, I'll walk out

on this picture, and he'll have to shoot it all over. Le Vay won't stand for that. Flynn will be ruined. You'd better think twice before you decide."

Joy was suddenly cold. That was the truth; Larry would be ruined if



Joy noticed—with a private thrill—Larry's eyes when she played the love scenes with Cal Evans. Those eyes of Larry's seemed puzzled.

Cal did such a thing. Why, it was unthinkable!

"You wouldn't do that," she protested.

"Wouldn't I? I'm asking you when we'll be married!" His tone was hard and metallic.

Joy shuddered. "Well," she said finally, "let's wait until the picture is finished."

"You won't walk out on me, then?" he asked, and she felt a new kind of contempt for him. He was so like a child, so unlike the great actor he thought he was.

"At least," she promised him, "I won't marry any one but you, as long as we're working on this picture."

"Not even Larry, if he asks you?"

Joy's heart fluttered. Oh, if Larry only would ask her! But of course, he wouldn't, and even if he did, she'd have to refuse him, because she knew only too well what it would mean to his career.

"No, not even Larry," she said in a very low, soft voice.

The next time she played a love scene on the set with Cal, she forgot him and thought of Larry. By a supreme flight of imagination, it was Larry who was holding her close, Larry whose lips were pressing hers with such fire. The camera-men snapped to sudden attention. Larry, in the dead silence of the talkie stage, became electrified with the reality of the performance. On the outskirts, the big boss himself glowed, despite tradition. It was the real thing, the glorious realism all stars fight for and few achieve.

Cal Evans was as astonished as the rest. His own portrayal took on added zest. Joy's inspiration flooded through him, and together they went through the love scene which was destined to become the envy of every team in Hollywood!

And then it was over!

Larry's voice came to Joy. "We're all through. Rest, all of you. Marvelous work, Joy—and Cal!"

The others were coming toward her. She wrenched herself from Cal's arms. She wanted to go over to Larry, to tell him she had acted that love scene gloriously only because she had been thinking of him. But the others were crowding toward her again. She was aware of Cal at her side, his arm going around her. She shuddered at his nearness. Then she caught Larry's eyes. There was triumph in them. She started toward him. His smile brightened. He reached out his hand to take hers. He was about to speak when Cal came rapidly up to them.

"Wasn't it great?" Then turning, he said to Joy, "I told you all the time if you put the same feeling into it as you do when we're alone, you'd make movie history!"

Joy's heart turned to ice. She stared past Cal's smile into Larry's face. He moved away without looking at Cal.

Late one afternoon she was called to Larry's office.

"Miss Bliss, you don't click on the love scenes. Can't you just repeat your natural love scenes?" He strode back and forth restlessly.

Joy's eyes misted. How could she tell him she was afraid of Cal? How could she tell him Cal had threatened to ruin the picture if she didn't agree to marry him when it was finished? It was so hard. There was nothing she could do but just listen to Larry.

"You've got to get more feeling into them! If you don't, you'll never get another chance, and I'll be sunk."

She heard herself speaking slowly, forcing out the words:

"I guess if I could close my eyes every time and imagine Cal was some one else, I could do better. You see——"

Instantly Larry was all attention. "You mean you're not in love with Cal? Why, I thought you were!"

"I know what you thought. But I'm not in love with him. I never was. He used to try to date me at the Wheel, and I did go out with him once or twice, but I stopped and I didn't go any place with him again until we started working on the picture. I—I'm scared to death of him. He's a cad. Oh, I wish you could see!"

After a long moment he said gently, "I see. I see a little, Joy. Something will be done. Don't worry."

He pressed her hand as she left the office. There was in it that same vibration she had felt that evening long before when she had realized that her heart had unalterably been given to red-headed Larry Flynn.

When they shot the final scenes of the picture, Joy had eyes for no one. She must make those love scenes click for Larry, she told herself again and again. Success meant everything to him.

At last she heard Larry tell the boss it was all over. She saw the Super Pictures president take Larry's hand and smile. Then she saw Larry abruptly turn and stride toward the street without a glance in her direction. He was like a judge leaving court.

"Larry!" she cried. "Come back!"

But from the faces about her she knew the words hadn't left her lips. They had caught in her throat and would never be uttered.

That night, alone in her room, Joy worried miserably. She had told

him she didn't love Cal. But how could she be sure that Larry cared whether she did or not, that he gave a thought to her beyond their careers? If she thought he did care, she'd search him out, wherever he was, and let him know what was in her heart. Her mind restlessly turned to Cal Evans. Why had Larry been so critical of her love scenes?

Then she knew! Jealousy! It wasn't because Larry was madly in love with her; it was because he was jealous of her work. He had been the only one who had anything but praise for her love scenes. Every one on the set had noticed it. Professional jealousy! It had cost her the man she loved. Well, at least she hadn't let Cal ruin Larry's future by walking out on the picture!

She went to the phone and called Larry's hotel. He was not there. She called Ben le Vay's home. After she had asked him where Larry was, she could feel him hesitate in answering.

"He made me promise not to tell, Joy, but I'll let it out because I've an idea what's troubling him. He's sailing on the *California* for New York at midnight. . . . Yes, out of Wilmington. He said he needed a rest, and turned in his resignation, the idiot!"

"Isn't he even going to have a look at the picture?" Joy's voice faltered.

"I guess not. It's too bad, too, because this will clean up for us." Then, as if recalling something imminent on his mind: "By the way, Joy, tell me; how did you put that last scene over so well? I know you're crazy about Cal, but how can he inspire——"

"He didn't!" sobbed Joy. "That's just it; Larry thinks he did, in spite of all I've told him!" Joy didn't

wait for him to comment. She slammed the receiver down; she was thinking of other things!

In less than half an hour she was speeding in a taxi down dark alleyways between piers and warehouses. Coming out on a dock platform she saw the *California*, a great, gleaming palace of the sea. The ship was preparing to leave. Joy went, breathless, to the purser's office.

"But he left strict orders to be left alone, madam," he pursuer told her when she had asked the number of Larry's stateroom.

Joy looked up at him and smiled. The purser found himself half inclined to return the smile. "But it's so urgent," she said imploringly. "I must see him before you sail!" In her anxiety she put a slim hand on the purser's arm.

The officer nodded. She thanked him hurriedly, then followed a cabin boy. At last she found herself standing in Larry's stateroom.

"I just had to explain, Larry. I—I couldn't let you go like this. I—oh, forgive me, Larry! I've loved you ever since that day you gave me the test. I waited because you told me to. Then in those love scenes I forgot Cal existed and imagined that it was you whom I was kissing, you whose arms were about me!"

"What about Cal's remarks? You must have given him some grounds or——"

"That's what I wanted to tell you, Larry. Don't you see that he was jealous of the way I put it over? He wanted credit for inspiring me. All the time it was you." She was weeping. She didn't tell Larry she had half promised to marry Cal, so he wouldn't walk out on the picture.

The next instant Larry had her in his arms. A wild thrill of ecstasy went through Joy as he held her in his possessive embrace. This was the happiness she had dreamed of, longed for ever since she had first seen him. This was the answer to all the tempestuous yearning of her heart.

"I love you, dearest girl," he was whispering against her hair. "I want you for my own! I didn't dream you could care. Oh, darling, my whole heart, my whole life will be dedicated to you!"

His eyes were on her soft, bright-red lips, so tremulously close to his own. Slowly he bent his head and pressed his lips to hers in a long, soul-satisfying kiss. Joy's eyes closed in perfect rapture. She clung to him, her whole being thrilling to his nearness.

Dimly she was aware that from outside came the repeated cry of, "All ashore!"

Larry's arms tightened about her. "Darling—you mustn't leave me! Stay aboard; marry me! The captain's a good friend of mine, and I'm sure we won't have any trouble persuading him to marry us once we're out at sea. I can't let you go—not even for a minute. Say you'll stay and marry me, sweetheart!"

Any director in Hollywood would have given a year of his life to have been able to put Joy Bliss's smile on celluloid at that moment. Radiantly, her eyes meeting Larry's adoring gaze, she said, "Yes, Larry, I will." Then she gave herself up to the thrill of his kiss. "Who wants stardom?" a small voice cried in her heart. "All I'll ever want, always and always, will be the love of Larry Flynn!"

A SERIAL—
Part II.



Framed! By Louise Franklin

CHAPTER III.

THE tiny balcony on which I stood was inclosed by a railing of wrought iron. As I clung to it, staring sightlessly into the fast-gathering darkness, it seemed to me that by my one act of folly and stupidity I had changed the course of my whole life. It seemed that nothing could ever be the same again.

I thought that I had plumbed the depths of despair and shame, but I did not know the anguish that was yet before me.

The iron rail was sharp and it cut deep into the palms of my hands.

LS-7C

It brought me back to reality, and as I let go my desperate grip and turned around, there swept over me an overwhelming desire to reach my

THE STORY SO FAR: Roxane Page, daughter of Dudley Page, powerful politician, is in love with Ward Cochrane, her father's lawyer. She confesses her love to him one night and he makes passionate love to her. Days go by with no word from him and Roxane believes that he was just playing with her. Desperate, she welcomes the companionship of carefree Jack Malloy. After much urging, she consents to accompany Jack on a trip to the State capital. On their return trip home he stops at a "friend's" house, but once inside the place Roxane learns that she is a prisoner, held by political enemies of her father's.

father. I must get to him somehow, by any means, at any cost.

I stepped back through the window into the big room. At the same

instant the key turned in the lock, and the door swung open. Jack and I faced each other across a space lighted only by two flickering tapers in the heavy brass candlesticks on the dresser.

For just an instant he stared at me furtively, uncertainly, then he smiled with all his customary assurance.

"Feeling more kindly toward me now, sweetheart?" he asked.

"Don't come over here!" I gasped. "I heard every word that you said just now over the telephone. How could I guess that you were that sort of man, Jack?"

"What sort?" he demanded.

"The sort who would stoop to treachery and deceit to frame a girl, who wouldn't hesitate to bring dishonor to a proud man."

"But, Roxane, I swear that I love you!" he cried. "I got into this mess before I knew you, and I had to go through with it. Anyhow it will be to your father's advantage to let Dix Reiman have what he wants——"

"Oh, how I hate you," I sobbed. "I wish that I had never seen you. I only want to get away from here and never, never see you again."

"Oh, come now, be reasonable. Your father will agree to Reiman's terms; then he will come for you."

"I can't wait for that. Don't you realize that I can't?" I cried wildly. "I can't wait here and have D. P. find me. I never could face him again."

"You'll have to, sweetheart. Listen, pretty Roxane. You know you like me. You'll have to admit that you met me halfway every time, right from the very first."

"But I didn't know it would end like this!"

"You're no child! Let's make the most of this opportunity. Might as

well have the game as the name, eh? You are terribly beautiful—I can make you forget everything. You know you wanted me to kiss you, little Roxane."

His fair skin was flushed and his blue eyes were blazing. I knew that he had been drinking heavily.

"I don't love you," I choked. "I loathe you! I detest you!"

As he came toward me with outstretched arms, the uncertain light in the room seemed to change him into something vast and menacing.

I was torn by an agonizing fear—a fear so sharp, devastating, that in that instant everything in my whole life was blotted out. I became merely a pitiful, elemental creature ravaged by a primitive fear.

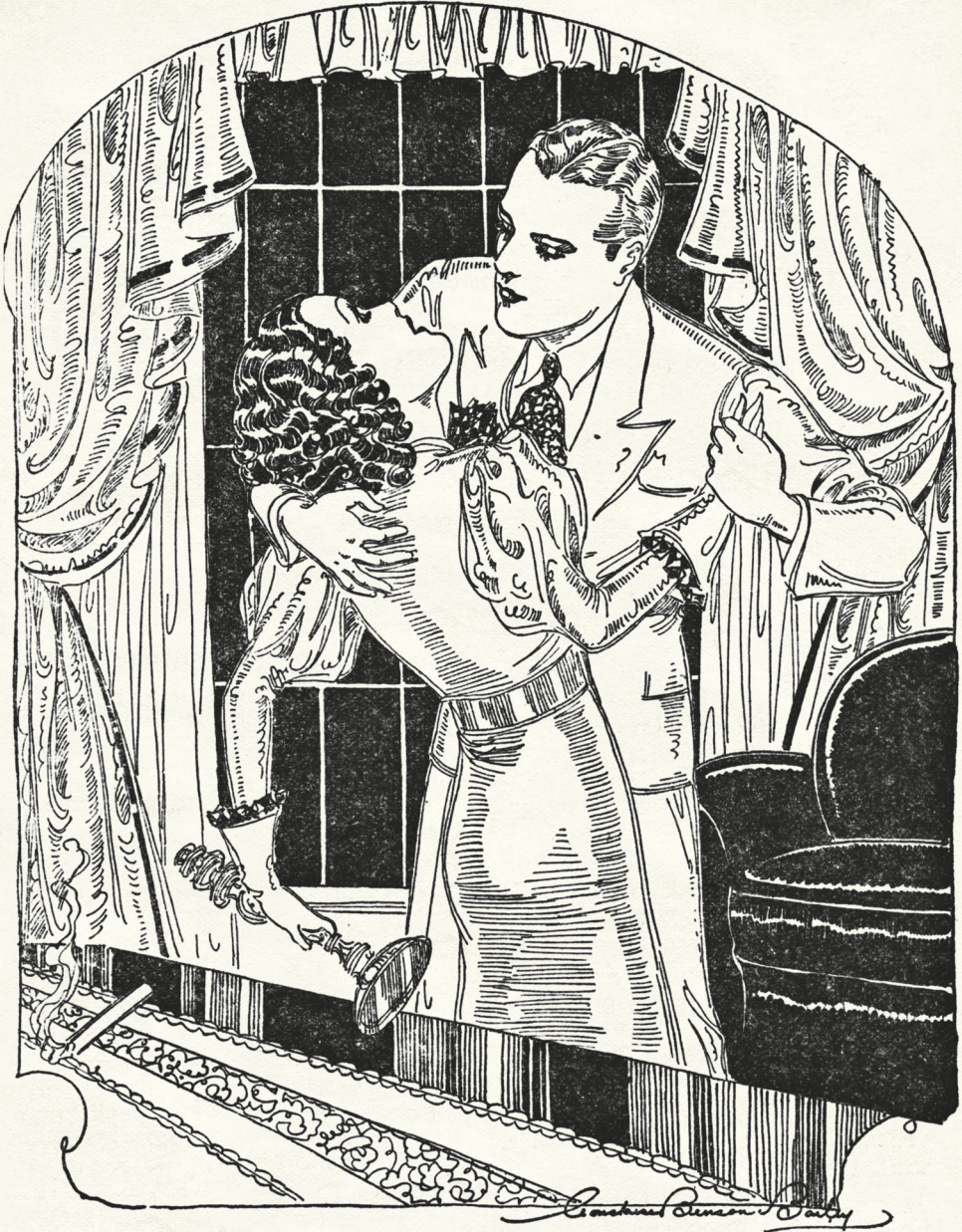
He seized me by one wrist, but I twisted away from him, leaning across a corner of the massive bureau as I did so. My free hand was reaching, groping for anything solid to which I could hold. The touch of solid metal brought me relief. It was cold, reassuring. One of the heavy brass candlesticks was in my grasp.

I pulled it toward me, lifted it, held it high aloft for an instant, then it crashed down upon Jack's head.

He made a queer little gasping sound as he crumpled to the floor. I saw an ominously dark stain spreading through his hair.

It seemed as if it surely must be a nightmare from which I would soon awaken—but Jack lay there at my feet without moving. It was all too dreadfully real. This was no dream.

Like a little frozen automaton I stole from that room, down the long shadowy stairway and out of doors, without being seen. Somehow luck favored me, for the man and his wife were in the rear of the house. I could hear their voices.



My free hand was groping for anything solid to which I could hold. Then one of the heavy brass candlesticks was in my grasp. I lifted it, then it crashed down upon Jack's head.

I ran down the long drive and the two rows of juniper trees seemed to tower over me like shadows of cruel fate. They silently scorned me as I sped between them. Then through

the gates I went, and down the dark lonely road.

My breath came in little shuddering sobs and I found it hard to run. Frantic with terror, torn by the

emotions which racked me, I knew only that I must keep going. Had I killed Jack? If so, there was all the more reason for running.

Somehow I must get to my father; that wonderful father who had loved me so dearly, that father who had been so proud of me.

The road was very dusty, but I stumbled along, uncaring. When, suddenly, the headlights of a car came flashing around a bend in the road, I was like a hunted thing, for my first impulse was to hide.

Too late did I seek the shadows of the trees along the road. The lights of the car blazed full upon me and I stood helplessly staring straight into the radiance.

Into that blaze of light stepped a tall man, and my joy was too deep for words as I recognized Ward Cochrane!

"Ward—oh, my dear—you have come!" I cried. "Is it really you?"

Relief flooded my whole being as I ran to him. Then I found myself in his arms and his lips were pressed down upon mine. So we stood there clasped in a wordless embrace.

Dear Heaven, how unreasonably, wildly happy I was in that brief moment, and how I loved him! Why, I had never stopped loving him! He had gone away from me, he had been silent after that wonderful night in the garden, but that didn't matter now. He, my darling, had come for me!

The magic touch of his lips against mine brought surcease from my shame and misery. For those dazzled minutes standing there I believed I wouldn't have to pay for my folly! He had come for me. He loved me, and he had come!

"Oh, Ward, I have had such a fright," I cried, clinging to him. "But it never would have happened if you had come back to me."

Then his shattering words beat upon my consciousness, bringing me fresh humiliation and shame. Instead of telling me that he had come for me because he loved me, instead of saying one word to comfort me, he was scolding me!

"We must manage somehow to keep this escapade of yours from your father, Roxane," he was saying sharply. "It would break D. P.'s heart if he ever found out about this."

I drew away from him then and it seemed that my heart was indeed breaking. In a terrible revulsion of feeling I flung myself from his arms, and for an instant stood there covering my shamed face with my hands.

So Ward had come for me, not because of any love he had for me, but because he was utterly devoted to my father! All he wanted to do was to spare "D. P.," his beloved chief, all knowledge of my folly. What a bitter realization for me!

Then I turned and faced him. I was rallying every bit of pride that I possessed for this encounter.

"How did you know where to find me?" I demanded. "How *could* you know?"

"It happened very strangely, Roxane. For the past few days I have been away on an important case. I left Dunnisford the next morning after——"

"After that memorable evening when you cut loose and kissed me in the garden," I interjected tauntingly. I managed to convey the impression that the scene in the garden had amused me a lot.

"Yes, I went away that next morning," he repeated. "When I returned to Dunnisford this afternoon, the first person I encountered was Avis Brandon. She immediately took me to task for breaking an engagement with her that evening."

"Avis Brandon would do that," I commented scornfully.

"And she seemed full of some news that she was dying to impart to me, yet was afraid, for some reason, to tell," Ward went on slowly. "I went home with her, Roxane, because something told me that her news was important. I used the most approved legal tactics to worm it out of her. Yes, even so, I couldn't believe it, Roxane, when she told me, at last, that you were spending the night with Jack Malloy down near the State capital."

"Avis Brandon told you *that*?" I gasped, then light began to dawn upon me.

I recalled that night at Brierly Farm when Avis had come for Ward and I had laughingly refused to call him for her. While she waited, Dix Reiman had come out, furiously angry with my father, and he had gone away with her. Had the two of them concocted a scheme which involved Jack Malloy and myself?

"Avis isn't fond of you," Ward went on. "She wanted me to know the truth."

"But she's *crazy* about you. I think she's a horrid cat!" I retorted furiously.

"Oh, I don't know about that," he shrugged. "Anyhow I got her to tell me where you were to be found. Malloy had confided his plans to her. Yet I wouldn't believe it until I had driven out to Brierly Farm, had interviewed Margaret Sloan——"

"And after that you were willing to believe *anything*," I broke in bitterly.

"Avis never dreamed that I'd come after you, but I started immediately without even taking time for dinner."

"What a shame for you to miss your dinner just for me!" I jeered, and the shrill laugh which accom-

panied the words seemed to come from a stranger. "So darling Ward missed his dinner and came way down here to save me from the worst, eh?" I went on tauntingly. "But I ran away from Jack just now of my own accord. He had been drinking too much and was no longer interesting. I'm afraid he was maudlin, Ward."

"Roxane, you are talking like a fool," he said angrily.

"Oh, I could tell you a lot more if I cared to," I rushed on recklessly, thinking of that crumpled, inert figure lying on the floor of the huge, shadowy bedroom. "But I wouldn't harrow your sensitive feelings, darling, by going into all the details."

I was glad that I had hurt him. Glad that I had made him furiously angry.

"I'm going to take you back to Brierly Farm anyhow," he said grimly. "I must do that much for D. P.'s sake." Then in a different tone: "Don't kisses mean anything to you, Roxane? I was afraid all the time that you were just amusing yourself with me."

I laughed again wildly, then my voice broke. But he didn't notice the tears.

"Oh, what could kisses mean to a girl like me?" I cried. "Just different kinds of thrills. But I'm not going back to Brierly Farm with you tonight. In fact I'm going back to the inn. I must go back."

"You are going with me if I have to take you by force!"

"I don't have to obey you," I cried stamping my foot. "Don't you dare touch me, Ward Cochrane. I hate you. I detest you!"

I struggled desperately as he lifted me in his arms, and I fought him every inch of the way toward his car. I was like a wild thing, crazed with anger and pain. Nothing



I had decided that I would go to see Ward. I would explain everything to him and clear myself in his eyes. As I looked at myself in the mirror, it seemed incredible that the cruel events of the preceding night could have happened to me.

seemed to matter any more—nothing.

"You believe every horrid thing that Avis Brandon insinuated about

me," I went on furiously. "I'd rather stay on this road all night than go one foot of the way with you!"

At last, holding me high in his arms, he reached the car. It was just at that moment that the sound of another car came tearing through the stillness, and lights blazed upon us through the darkness. Brakes shrieked and huge tires churned the sandy road as a powerful roadster came to a sudden stop beside us.

My father, strangely disheveled in appearance and with every indication of wrath written on his face, alighted from the car.

"Roxane, come here," he commanded. "Get in my car and keep still while I deal with this—this man." He turned to Ward. "Cochrane, I would never have believed this of you, if I hadn't seen you here with my daughter," he said slowly. "I have had so few close friends, but you were one of the closest and the one I trusted most. What are you doing here at this hour of the night with my daughter?"

Ward was simply too astounded to reply. Before he could frame an answer D. P. went on:

"I knew you spent an hour or two with Roxane in the garden the other night, Ward. I permitted it because I happened to know that she was fond of you. And I trusted you."

"So you thought that I brought Roxane here to-night to—to harm her?" Ward asked quietly. "You believe me to be that sort of scoundrel, sir?"

"What am I to think?" my father retorted. "What would any one think?"

And I remained silent. I was too angry with Ward to even attempt to defend him. Ward didn't know I had been framed, I realized that. He thought I had planned to spend the night with Jack at that furtive inn in the hills because I was bold

and bad and reckless. And my father thought that Ward, of all people, had brought me here!

I laughed aloud at the thought. I couldn't help it. The sound of my laugh evidently was the last straw. Ward became perfectly furious.

"D. P. will you please go now and take Roxane with you?" he asked in a tone of such bitter exasperation that for an instant I pitied him. "Take her home. Lock her up. She needs it. She's a spoiled brat, D. P. She isn't worthy of the love you lavish upon her. She is utterly unworthy of any man's devotion. She is beautiful and uses her beauty for her own ends. She is reckless and selfish and cruel. Take her away before I slap her."

We did drive away immediately, and I cowered in the seat beside my father, smarting under Ward's cruel words. I was in a state bordering on collapse.

We drove for miles in silence.

"When Dix Reiman came to me to-night," my father said at last, "and told me that you were at an inn near the capital with some man, I wouldn't believe him. I telephoned to Brierly Farm and the housekeeper told me you left home early this morning."

"Did she tell you with whom I went?" I asked in a small frightened voice.

"No, and I didn't ask," he confessed. "I was frantic. In order to find out where you were I had to promise Dix Reiman everything he wanted from me. I didn't hesitate when you were in danger. I've been proud of being called 'The Incorruptible' but I'll never get that name any more."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," I sobbed brokenly. "My world is in ruins, too, D. P."

"Reiman wouldn't tell me where

you were until he had telephoned to his associates and had me talk to them, also. It was a clever plan, but after he told me where you were to be found I gave myself the pleasure of knocking him down."

"And yet you didn't know the name of the man I was with?"

"I never dreamed of Cochrane," he groaned. "That hurts worst of all. To think the man I loved and trusted more than any other man would double-cross me. Somehow I can't make it seem real yet. What a strange world this is."

"It wasn't Ward," I confessed; then I poured out the whole miserable story.

"Ward had hurt me so much that I was glad to humiliate him in your eyes," I concluded. "It was no worse for you to believe evil of him, than for him to believe it of me. But I'm afraid that I may have killed Jack."

"He deserved to be killed," D. P. growled.

Never before in my life had my father been really angry with me. He was now, and it was a cruel experience. Oh, I deserved it, but instead of riding with my indulgent, adoring father I seemed to be with some aloof, formidable stranger, a man who didn't love me at all, a person who viewed me with cold, angry amazement.

When we came to the next town he stopped before an all-night drug store and got out. He was gone a long time.

When he returned to the car he looked strangely old and tired. New, grim lines had been etched on his face during the last hour. My heart cried out with pity and sorrow, but his manner chilled the repentant words I would have uttered.

"I called up that inn. Had quite a time rousing the landlord," he

said with painful emphasis. "He assured me that there had been no noise, no disturbance in your bedroom. At first he refused to disturb his guests, but I convinced him that he'd better investigate. To think of my daughter being in a place like that! Roxane, you must have been out of your mind!"

I hung my head, and the scalding tears rolled down my face.

"I must have a talk with Cochrane at once," he went on. "I have an apology to make to him. And I want you to see him also."

"I won't apologize to him," I muttered. "You are the one he cares for. He despises me. I won't go to him after the things he said tonight."

"You goaded him when you laughed," my father retorted. "I insist that you make amends."

On all that long drive home we argued and quarreled. The sun was coming up over the hills as we drove into Brierly Farm.

Before I went to sleep I had a terrible struggle with my pride, but at last my love for my father conquered.

CHAPTER IV.

When I awoke a few hours later I was refreshed and almost happy. I had decided that I would go into Dunnisford to see Ward. I would explain everything to him. I would clear myself in his eyes and I would beg him to forgive my father's harsh words.

Dad would be pleased with me then and all would be well again. My anger had evaporated. I admitted that I had been, indeed a "spoiled brat." I would hurry to Dunnisford before my father awakened. When I looked in his room I saw that he was sleeping



"Ward doesn't want to see you. He is very tired and completely out of patience with you," Avis said smoothly. I stood there, helpless before her cool assurance.

heavily. I began to hurry. I wanted to get to Ward. I was impatient to see him, to see the old welcoming smile on his fine face.

Ward had hurt me intolerably, but he could also make me very happy.

I had a smart new outfit all in

lovely shades of green, even to the shoes. I decided to wear it this morning. As I looked at myself in the mirror it seemed incredible that the cruel events of the preceding night could have happened to this clear-eyed, sparkling creature.

My small car was clean and oiled and shining, and as I drove to Dunnisford my spirits rose and soared. In spite of my father's worries I was almost happy again.

But in Dunnisford a new and unpleasant experience awaited me.

Avis Brandon's aunt, Mrs. Leslie Simms, was a social leader in the town, an arrogant woman of the wealthy dowager type. She was sailing majestically along the sidewalk when I drew up to the curb before the building in which Ward's office was located.

"Oh, hello, Mrs. Simms," I called out. "Lovely morning, isn't it!"

She inclined her massive head toward me, favored me with a stare of utter disdain, then moved on without replying.

Hot color flooded my neck and face as I sank back in the car. To think that that woman would *dare* to snub Roxane Page! I hadn't believed it possible.

While I sat there four girls from my own crowd came along. They were talking excitedly—arguing, really—but when they saw me, they immediately fell silent. I got out of the car and sauntered up to them.

"For heaven's sake, tell me what ails Old Lady Simms," I said clearly. "The old cat cut me dead just now!"

"Oh, hush, Roxane," my best friend, Thalia Arnold, whispered nervously, "don't you know what ails her?"

My heart sank. So Avis had spread the story!

"Of course your friends know there is a mistake somewhere,"

Thalia went on, "but there is a horrid story going all over town like wildfire this morning."

"What is it?" I asked faintly.

"They say you spent the night with a man who was visiting your father's tenant farmer, and that your father heard about it and went after you and brought you home."

"What a hideous way to put it!" I cried hotly. "I *was* there, Thalia—innocently enough, certainly not to stay all night. It was part of a plot against my father, but no one will want to believe that."

"Oh, I believe you," Thalia assured me. "We may do foolish things, sometimes, but nothing like that! But just the same I'd advise you to lay low for a while, for all our sakes. You know"—she dimpled roughly—"the fathers and mothers are wild about some of our escapades already, and this story about you is the last straw. You've always had more freedom than any of the rest of us, and you aren't very popular with the parents this morning, old thing."

"Did you take up with this wild Malloy fellow because Ward got engaged to Avis Brandon?" another girl asked slyly. I never liked Betty so well after that moment!

"Ward isn't engaged to Avis!" I retorted.

"Oh, yes, he is," they replied in chorus and with such certainty that I was silent for an instant.

I told them bitterly that it would be a long time before they saw me in Dunnisford again; I wouldn't listen to anything more they had to say, but rushed into the office building, glad to get away from the sound of their voices.

Even Thalia, my best friend, had advised me to "lay low"; had advised Dudley Page's daughter to do a thing like that!

I was too impatient to wait for the elevator, so hurried up the stairs pell-mell. All women were cats, I reflected, as I rushed tumultuously upward.

I flung open the door of Ward's office without knocking, then halted abruptly. Ward was not to be seen, but Avis Brandon sat at his desk. She was smiling, was exquisitely dressed, and very sure of herself. Apparently she was in full possession of his office.

"Where is Ward?" I demanded with all the insolence I could summon. "I must see him."

"Oh, Ward?" she laughed. "Ward is in a very important conference. I wouldn't dream of disturbing him." The smoothly spoken words seemed coiled in the room like poisonous snakes. Yet they were the words I had used on that other occasion.

"You've been spreading a dreadful story about me," I cried, advancing toward her. "I'll see that you suffer for it, Avis Brandon."

"Really?" she shrugged. "What a ridiculous child you are, Roxane. So undisciplined, so willful. If you were found in a questionable hotel—surely you can't blame any one but yourself if the truth leaks out, can you?"

I stared at her. Somehow I didn't have an answer ready.

"Now, Roxane, let me give you a word of advice," she went on swiftly. "Ward doesn't want to see you this morning. He is very tired, and, to put it very mildly, is completely out of patience with you. It would be far better if you planned to see him another time."

I stood there, helpless before her cool assurance. If Ward did come in and did humiliate me before this woman, it would be unendurable.

Then I saw her ring. Avis was smiling as she looked down at it—a

new *solitaire* which glittered splendidly on the third finger of her left hand.

She caught my glance and her complacent smile tore to shreds the last remnant of my poise and pride.

"The engagement isn't announced yet, but you'll be hearing the news soon," she drawled. "Ward is wonderful, don't you think? And, by the way, why don't you leave with me any message you may have for him?"

"Not with you, not now or ever," I cried. "You'd better let Ward announce the engagement, Avis. Wouldn't you hate to be disappointed in your plans as you were before?"

I saw by the look on her face that my shot had reached home. She had thought that to marry my father she had only to announce her engagement to him, but the scheme hadn't worked!

I didn't wait for her reply. I knew that I couldn't cope with Avis. She was a subtle, experienced woman and I was an undisciplined girl.

I drove back to Brierly Farm like a whirlwind, and found Margaret Sloan waiting there for me. As soon as I drove up and stopped she appeared. Her plain, honest face was filled with concern as she greeted me.

"Oh, my dear, you've had a terrible time," she cried. "My heart aches for you, and I've been so worried and so wretched for fear I did the wrong thing in letting you and Jack take that trip."

Her sympathy brought tears to my eyes.

"Oh, it's all right. I'm just learning about people," I replied wearily.

"I've come to plead Jack's cause," she continued rapidly. "Please listen, Roxane. He returned home

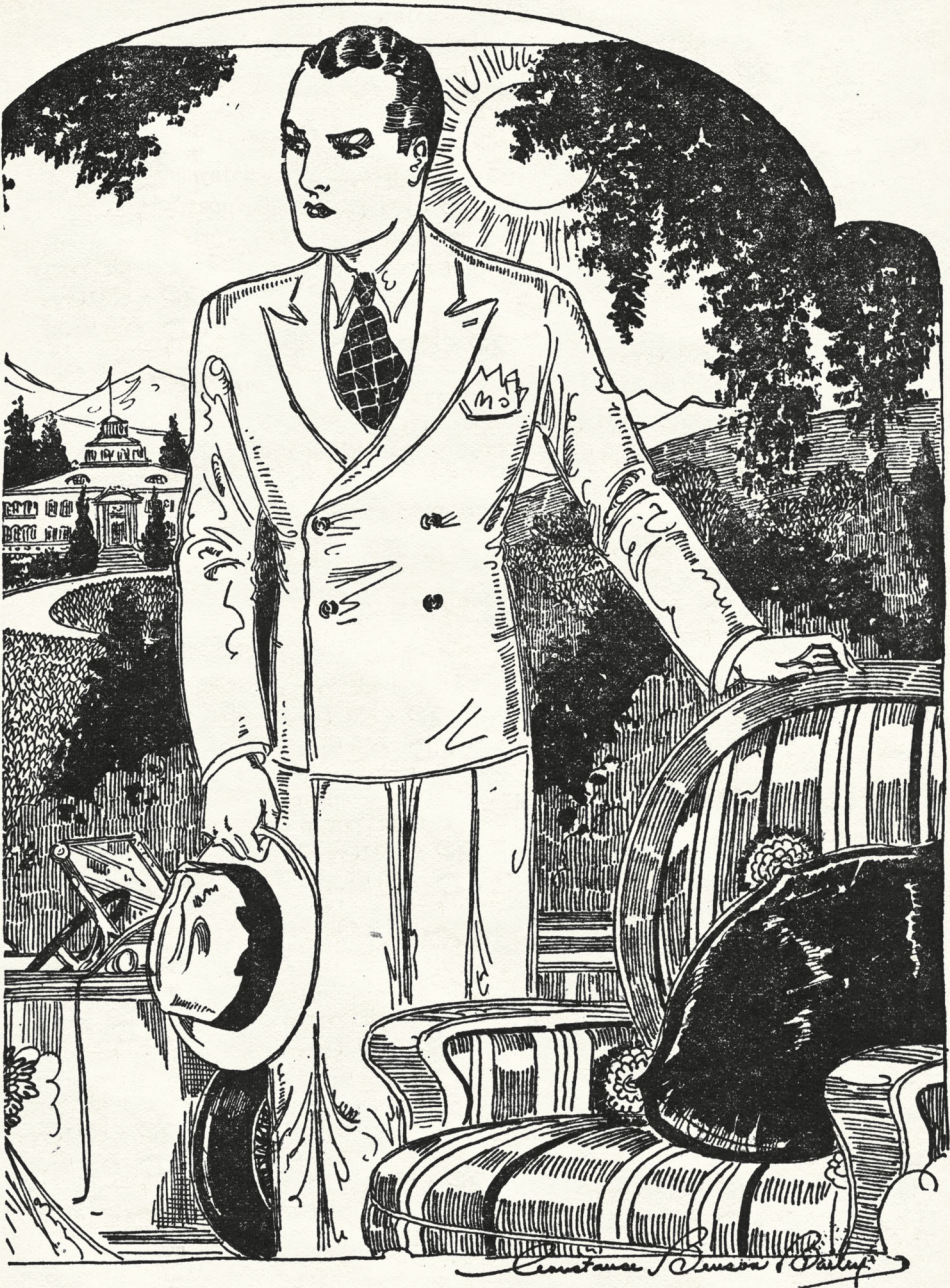


"Last night you were willing to believe the worst of me. I don't want to hear anything you may have to say now. But you can go back to Avis Brandon and tell her—tell all of them—that Jack Malloy is making an honest woman of Roxane Page!"

just a little while ago, white as a ghost, with some man driving his car for him."

"So he was able to travel!" I exclaimed.

"Barely able to," Roxane. He is



very ill. Won't you please—for *my* sake, not for his—come to see him? I beg of you to do it. Don't refuse me. You have so much, he has had so little happiness. Be generous, dear."

I knew that Margaret was utterly sincere, and I knew that she loved me. I also knew that she didn't guess the extent of Jack's perfidy. I argued with her for some time, but at last I allowed her to persuade

me to do as she wished. Perhaps that interview with Avis had something to do with it!

At any rate, Margaret got into my car and we drove over to her home.

Jack sat on the porch in a deck chair. His color was ghastly, and his crisp light hair stood up about the bandage on his head. An unsightly bruise disfigured one cheek. Margaret went into the house and left us alone.

"Roxane, I didn't dare let myself hope that you'd come," he said brokenly. He caught one of my hands between both of his. "Darling, you'll never know what agony I've suffered since last night."

"Maybe you think I haven't suffered," I reminded him, drawing my hand away.

"I do know! Roxane, I want to implore your forgiveness," he pleaded. Somehow as he lay there, bruised and battered and weak, he was more appealing than he had ever been before. "Listen to me, darling. I swear that I love you madly. Only give me a chance to prove my love for you—just give me a chance."

"There is nothing you can do now."

"If you'll marry me I'll do anything. I've been a wanderer, an adventurer, perhaps, but I have talents and I have friends. Marry me, Roxane, and I'll show up Dix Reiman. I swear it."

"Could you do that?"

"The day you become my wife I'll issue a sworn statement clearing your father, telling all of Dix Reiman's part in our affair, and explaining your conduct. I can do it, and I will do it, my darling—for you."

I had been so dreadfully hurt, so torn by conflicting emotions, that I couldn't think clearly. His reason-

ing sounded perfectly plausible to me.

In addition to that I must confess that even, after all that had happened, Jack had an undeniable attraction for me. I'd never have taken that trip with him if I hadn't liked him amazingly.

"Roxane, my darling, only give me a chance," he whispered, stroking my arm. "Dear girl, by rights you ought to hate me, yet you don't. Out of the blessed kindness of your heart you came to me to-day, like an angel. I'll make you happy, dear. I'll swear it."

I sank into a deep chair beside him and his wonderful voice flowed on and on. I was profoundly tired and his magnetic voice soothed me.

I knew I was being a fool, but I didn't care! Everything was spoiled, anyhow; so I let myself drift and listen.

I made him no promises, though. I only shook my head dreamily, and then he talked some more in that musical voice that made me forget everything.

And then, out of the quiet, I heard a car tearing along the graveled road that came from my home to the Sloan cottage. It came furiously, grated to an abrupt stop, and Ward Cochrane sprang out.

He looked very tall and determined as he came toward us.

"Roxane," he exclaimed, "this is the last place in the world where I would have expected to find you. I have just learned the truth about Malloy. He is an adventurer. My dear, he framed you!"

Then I stood up and faced him, my head held high.

"You can't tell me anything that I don't already know," I said proudly. "Last night, on the road, you were willing to believe the very worst of me. You are too late with

your news, Ward. When I saw you last night I was running away from Jack. But you—you showed how you felt toward me."

"But, Roxane, I didn't understand. Won't you listen to me?"

"No! I don't want to hear anything you may have to say. This man may be, as you say, an adventurer, but I am convinced that he cares very deeply for me."

I looked him straight in the eyes, and when I saw him wince it gave me a cruel sort of satisfaction.

"Love—real love," I added, "isn't found every day. Jack has been honest with me to-day, at least."

"But, Roxane, surely you can't be thinking of throwing yourself away on this fellow!" he cried. "I won't permit it."

I took fierce delight in the pain I heard in his voice.

"You have no right to even ask my plans," I told him. "But you can go back to Dunnisford and you can go to your dear Avis Brandon and tell her—tell all of them—that Jack Malloy is making an honest woman of Roxane Page!"

He whitened as though I had struck him.

"But I came out here to talk to you," he stammered. "Roxane, I was utterly exasperated last night.

I was tired from a long journey. I said things I should have left unsaid. I know that I misjudged you terribly——"

"Oh, and does the great Ward Cochrane actually admit that he might have been at fault?" I interrupted, tauntingly. "I am honored, I am touched, that you should come and make such a painful admission to the spoiled brat! Remarkable!"

They were bitter, cruel words; my voice made them an insult. I said more than that, driving each remark home with deadly relentlessness. I had no mercy on him or on myself.

My tirade, born of heartbreak and despair, was at last ended.

"I deeply regret intruding upon you," Ward said at last with stiff lips that would scarcely form the words. "I am very sorry that I came at all. You are despicable. You are venomous. You will make a fit mate for this—this man."

Without a glance toward Jack, Ward bowed to me, then got into his car and drove away.

"That settles everything, Jack," I cried. "I'll marry you right away—the sooner the better."

Then, without warning, I sank down into a chair at his side and cried as though my heart would break.

TO BE CONCLUDED.





The Way Women Love

By Aline Morley Ballard

THE speed boat—saucy thing—danced toward shore, whirled with a flick of white ruffled petticoats, and darted out again.

"Look at me!" it seemed to say.

But to the men on the big table rock that jutted straight out into the lake, speed boats were no novelty. Neither was surf-board riding. They watched idly as the boat cut sharply to the left, whirling the girl who rode behind in a red, flashing arc which swept down until the clutching foam fingered a brown arm. There was a slithering second before she flashed up again, a slim flame shot across a gray-green waste of space.

Then, as one man, they turned back to the girl who sat in their midst. Rena had put on a good show, but no man wants to be an audience for long—not when he can occupy the center of the stage. Marienne had a way of making each one of them feel that he played the lead. Dressed in lavender beach pajamas, she looked like a dainty little girl.

"You all know how to do such wonderful things," she offered wistfully.

Not one of them could have matched the performance just witnessed, but they didn't say so. On the contrary, they vied with each

other in their promises to teach Marienne anything she wanted to learn.

Already they had started to teach her so much. Bill, watching her pretty fumbling on the golf course, had felt that his own eighty was a pretty fair score, after all. Nicholas, when he answered her naïve questions about margins and placed a little on this or that for her, remembered comfortably that the crash had caught other men besides himself. Even Rick, teaching her to swim, forgot that his own wife could match him stroke for stroke. That was sheer witchery on Marienne's part, for a man does not easily forget when a woman shows him up.

Particularly if that woman is his wife! Rick remembered now, and scowled. Rena had looked so dauntless, riding that confounded surf board—free, mating with wind and wave!

Marienne interrupted his reverie. "It's like busting a broncho," she said artlessly.

A roar of laughter greeted her remark. "The child knows her Westerns," Bill cried.

Even Rick laughed. But his hand stole out and caught Marienne's soft fingers, holding them close under the concealing swirl of her lavender beach pajamas.

The sudden burst of laughter carried across the water to the speed boat and the girl riding so gallantly behind it. She jerked the rope.

"Let me in, Jim," she called.

"Tired, Rena?" the man in the boat asked, when she slumped on the seat.

"Frightened. There's no use pretending. My chin's on my chest for the first time in my life."

"Do you mean—Marienne—and Rick?"

She nodded. "You saw them at the dance last night."

LS-8C

"Well, make him jealous," he suggested bluntly.

Rena shook her head. "And hurt some other woman? No, even if I could, I wouldn't do that."

"I'm here," Jim remarked laconically. "No other woman would be hurt if you played around with me."

Rena laughed. "No; Rick's used to you—all the men are."

"Yes, I suppose so."

It wasn't like Jim to waste words. Possibly he was tired of being safe, Rena thought. He ought to stop playing around with the married crowd and marry some nice, dependable girl. The faithful sort! Perhaps, if she hadn't married Rick, she and Jim would have gotten married. But that was absurd! They were just good friends. There had never been any one but Rick for her.

That brought her back to her own problem. "Marienne shan't have him!" she told herself doggedly. "I thought men wanted women to be good sports."

Then: "I wonder," she said aloud, "if longer skirts mean we've got to change our tactics, go back to the methods the gay '90s favored."

"Long-skirt methods!" Jim said, half in fun. "Why not?"

"I don't like them," Rena objected. "I don't know how to play the game her way."

"Make her play yours," Jim suggested.

"Oh, yes?" Rena said. Then, less scornfully, "How?"

Suddenly she jumped up, answering her own question. "I've got it! Jim, you're a darling!" She gave him a swift hug. "Come on; full speed ahead! We're going where long-skirt methods won't work!"

"Where long-skirt methods won't work?" Jim repeated, puzzled.

"Yes; Rick's paradise—the fishing lodge." Her eyes gleamed. "What

those North woods won't do to chiffon and helplessness!"

"Will she go?" Jim wondered.

"Of course. She'll jump at the chance. Don't you see? It's a chance to have Rick to herself. Besides, she won't know what it's like. She'll picture another place like this—we pretend we're roughing it here—with bathrooms, hot water, ice, servants. Wait until she sees it!"

"You like it," Jim said.

"Yes, I like it now, but I can remember how I felt the first time we went there," Rena argued. "We got there after dark, half frozen; it had rained all the way. There was no fire, no oil in the lamps. That was before Rick hired Pop to take care of the place. I wasn't so soft, either, but I had lots to learn."

There were other things Rena had had to learn. Marrying into Rick's crowd hadn't been easy. He had never guessed how afraid she had been—afraid of failing him, afraid of the women; keen sports, all of them, dead sure of themselves. They could do everything. Well, so could she now, better than they—swim, golf, ride—well, not ride, maybe. Rick had bought her a horse the first year they were married, but some things she could never learn right. Her heart still sank when she rode at a barrier; the second before the horse went up, she had to fight sheer panic. But nobody else knew that.

No one would guess that she had ever been afraid of anything. Balanced on the bow of the boat, she looked absolutely fearless, eager, too, and rather gallant. One hand rested casually on the side; her legs stretched out in front of her, long and brown and straight. Wind and water had slicked her hair off her face in a sleek, dark cap. Her forehead seemed lower than it really

was because of her straight eyebrows. They made her gaze seem extraordinarily direct and level.

Rena was like that—on the level. Jim was conscious of a sudden inability to understand Rick. Rena's love should be enough for any man.

"Who is she—this Marienne?" he asked.

"A school chum of Kate's; they were at Miss Perth's together. Kate ran across her in the city a couple of weeks ago and brought her down. Marienne's husband died last year. I have an idea she wasn't any too happy—she probably doesn't think much of marriage. Bill's crazy about her, but Kate doesn't care. She figures it might as well be Marienne as some showgirl. For that matter, all the men are crazy about her. She's so different from the rest of us—sort of a——" Rena groped for the right phrase.

Jim supplied it: "Baby doll."

Rena laughed. "Maybe, only instead of saying, 'Mam-ma,' she says, 'Aren't you wonderful!' to the men. They eat it up."

Suddenly Rena sobered; the fingers of one brown hand clasped and unclasped spasmodically. "Rick never went in for that sort of thing before," she said. "Jim, you'll help me. You'll come." It was a statement rather than a plea.

"Of course," Jim said. "We'll take this Marienne person up North, and when we've washed the paint off the pink-and-white bisque and the curl out of the golden locks, she'll be nothing but sawdust."

It was a long speech for Jim. Rena looked at him with quick suspicion. Was it a mean trick? Did he think so?

He was intent on steering, for close to the shore the beach was rocky, but he felt her eyes and reassured her.

"It's all right, Rena. It's a fair scheme."

Any slight compunction Rena might have felt vanished in the rush of getting her party started.

Rick drove and Marienne sat in the front seat with him. She had made it look as if Rena and Jim wanted to be together. It had been clever, Rena conceded. That it had been done purposely, to conceal Marienne's own preference for Rick's company, Rena hadn't a doubt. She remembered that in accepting the invitation Marienne had purred innocently, but not innocently enough to hide the claw, "Is your friend Jim coming, too?" Rena had let it go at "Yes." There would be time enough later to settle that score.

The car was crowded. Marienne had two suitcases and a box that looked like a first-aid kit, but which, being Marienne's, probably contained cosmetics. She put it carefully on the seat next to her, on the side toward the door. There wasn't room for a toothbrush case between her and Rick. Ordinarily, Rick and Rena prided themselves on traveling light, but to-day he didn't seem to mind the excess baggage.

Marienne's lashes curled up at him. "Aren't you wonderful," supplied Rena to herself, but Marienne had more than one term in her vocabulary of adulation—"clever to arrange things so comfortably!" she cooed. Jim had packed the car, but it didn't matter. "Only my feet won't quite reach," Marienne added plaintively, and stuck them out for Rick to see. In their soft kid, fragile, high-heeled pumps they looked very tiny and altogether bewitching.

"I'll soon fix that," said Rick, tucking a cushion under her feet, as if making her comfortable were his only mission in life.

"Be comfortable while you can!" a little imp in Rena's mind jeered at Marienne, but the voice in her heart drowned it out, chanting, "Please, Rick, look at me!"

She made a gamble of it: if he turned around, she would win. She knew herself for a fool, but she couldn't help it, not where Rick was concerned! He was so big and blond and dear. She loved the crinkly lines around his eyes that sun and wind had traced—or was it laughter? Laughter deepened them now as he looked at Marienne, and she remembered suddenly that she had seen them less often of late.

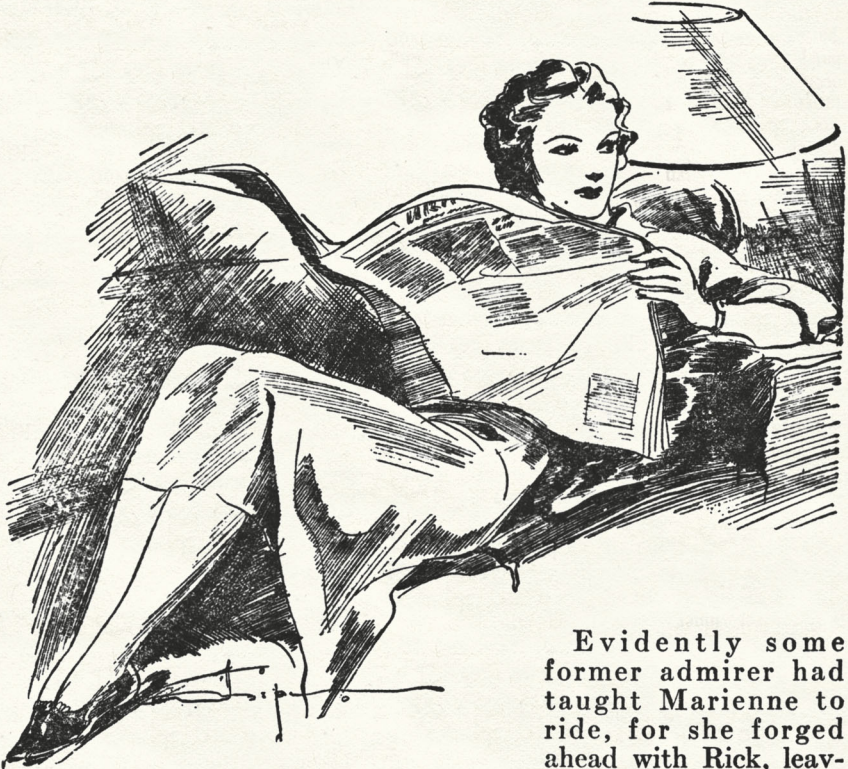
Rick had been laughing less; all at once she was sure of it. She had been so busy since spring, first with the women's golf tournament that had made her State champion, then with the big aquatic carnival. His face, when she had shown him her State trophy, came to her now like a picture scarcely noticed at the moment of seeing, but etched on her consciousness. His mouth had drooped; it had looked—"sulky" was the word that suggested itself. She dismissed that as absurd, and fixed her eyes on the back of his head where the hair rippled down in two shining waves. Rick was too open and honest to sulk.

She went back to her game. "Look at me, Rick!" she commanded silently.

"Oh, let's get started," Jim said in a bored voice.

Rick half turned then, but Marienne claimed him, and he bent toward her instead. Rena found it necessary to console herself. "Wait until he gets up in his beloved wilds! When he's on the trail, he won't be so eager. And if she makes him lose a trout—wow!"

Marienne wasn't stingy with her charms; she took the back seat into



her confidence, turned a frequent battery of eyes and lashes on Jim. Some of her tricks were amusing. Rena laughed, as one laughs at a visitor's little girl whom one would like to spank. The trip, to her surprise, wasn't tedious, not even during the long ride after lunch.

They were to leave the car and pick up the horses in Breyling, a tiny settlement that marked the end of the railroad and the beginning of the foothills; from there they would ride up to the camp. They changed their clothes in the little room in back of the general store.

Rena noticed with the scorn of the old-timer that Marienne's riding habit was new. But she had to admit that it was well-cut and serviceable, built for comfort. Her boots were good, too.

Evidently some former admirer had taught Marienne to ride, for she forged ahead with Rick, leav-

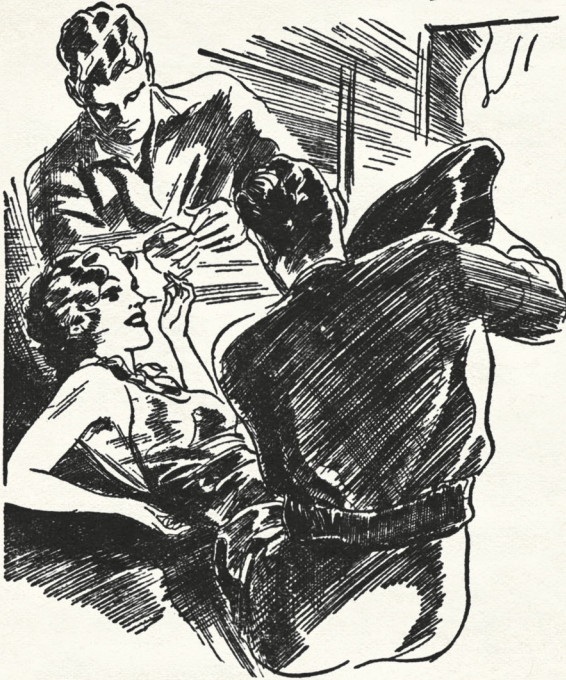
ing the other two to follow at Jim's more conservative gait. Rena and Jim rode steadily and in silence, since the wind made talking difficult. When they came out on the level, the moon showed them two figures waiting on the long, low porch.

"Well, hello!" called Rick sheepishly.

The lodge was a black hulk. Rena looked beyond it, toward "Pop" Bancroft's little log house. There was no light there! Her heart sank. That was more than she had bargained for. When Jim smiled at her accusingly, she said sharply:

"I did telegraph—three days ago—and told Pop when we were to arrive."

"Never mind," said Rick, struggling with the door. "What do huskies like us care?" He sounded



The men were Marienne's slaves. It hurt Rena to look at them. It was, "Rick, bring me a cushion, like a dear," or, "Jimmy light my cigarette."

awfully happy, but then Rick never fussed when plans went wrong. He might lose his temper occasionally at people, but not at difficulties.

He got the door open, finally, and touched a match to the big pile of wood in the fireplace. It flared up and lighted the heavy rafters and beams, and Marienne exclaimed, "Oh, isn't this a love of a room! I'm going to explore."

"You won't get lost," Jim said dryly.

It was all there in front of them. The room was big, forty-five feet long. At one end, beyond curtains, were the sleeping quarters, tiny rooms, each with two bunks built Pullman style, along the wall.

"I want to sleep on top," called Marienne to Rena.

But Rena was examining the cupboard shelves. The result was disheartening. Her search was re-

warded with a can of lard, a jar of honey, a can of corned beef hash, and coffee.

"Thank Heaven for the coffee!" said Rick cheerfully.

"Oh, for a fat porter-house!" sighed Jim, hunger conquering his tact.

"Or even soup," wailed Rena. Until now she hadn't realized how much she had been counting on Pop's good supper.

"How about hot biscuits?" trilled Marienne from the doorway.

"Or lobster thermidor or truffles?" said Jim with sarcasm.

Rick laughed at Marienne. "Temptress! They don't come in cans. Rena can't cook."

"I can," said Marienne calmly. "There must be flour and baking powder."

She dove under a shelf. "There is!"

"Aren't you wonderful!" exclaimed Rena, to whom food just then seemed the most important thing in the world. At Jim's grin, she realized what she had said.

"I'll make coffee," Rick volunteered.

"And we'll let the quiet bachelor over there wrestle with the cans," said Marienne.

Rena, feeling unnecessary, set doggedly to work making up the bunks. The bedding had to be hauled out of boxes. Usually Pop had this done before they arrived, when he knew they were coming. Rena tugged and pulled. Pride forbade her calling either of the men from their work. Every now and then Rick's big laugh boomed out, followed by Jim's slower chuckle.

Rena banged her head on the top bunk when she tried to make up the

lower; she mussed the bottom one up while she made the upper. Her arms ached from stretching. This was a man's camp, all right!

Then the coffee began to send out a tantalizing fragrance. She was so hungry she could have eaten hard-tack if there had been nothing else. The biscuits were perfect. "Wonderful!" she said with a defiant look at Jim. Even the hash, fried brown, was good.

You can't help feeling kindly toward the person who feeds you, Rena discovered. Anyway, Marienne seemed to take it for granted that every one, Rena included, liked her. She was as engagingly affectionate as a kitten, and as hard to snub. She praised Pop's cooking—he put in an unperturbed appearance the morning after their arrival—and he became her immediate slave, outdoing himself thereafter in culinary dainties for her special enjoyment. All the men were her slaves. Rick and Jim fixed boot straps and fishing poles, wound reels, untangled lines, and loved it, except when she fell in and Rick had to bring her home.

"The biggest trout in the stream was watching my fly," he told Rena. "He won't come out again for a week."

Was he provoked? Rena couldn't tell from his voice. Perhaps this was the moment to offer sympathy, but something stopped her. She only said, "Jim and I are going to ride over to the big pool to-morrow. Do you want to come?"

He shook his head and walked away.

In the end she went by herself, for Jim was giving Marienne a belated lesson in casting. Rena was glad to be alone; it gave her a chance to think. Nights found her too

drowsy for retrospection or introspection. Invariably she was asleep before Marienne had finished her endless ritual of cold cream. Marienne never seemed to tire, and they lived strenuously, as four people will when they love the outdoors. Marienne really did like camp life; there was no pretense about it. Fishing was the only thing she flopped on. She could ride; she knew how to shoot. She abandoned hats, and her hair waved better than ever; her skin turned into riper peaches, its cream becomingly spattered with a few small, golden freckles.

Only in the evening did what Jim had designated as "long-skirt methods" appear. She loved to curl up on the floor in front of the fire, clad in dainty lounging pajamas. Then it would be, "Rick, bring me a cushion, like a dear," or, "Jimmy"—it was "Jimmy" now—"light my cigarette."

Sometimes they played bridge. Marienne's partner always forgave mistakes, for, if their side won, it was "your wonderful playing," and if they lost, it was "my stupidity." The night before Rena rode to the pool, Marienne and Rick took a long walk in the moonlight and came in breathless—Rick, big, shining, and dearer than ever; Marienne looking a trifle abashed. It hurt Rena to look at them.

The next morning when she reached the pool, she tethered her horse, Pat, then sat down on a log, her rod and tackle idle on the grass. She supposed she'd have to face the truth—her plan had failed, and she couldn't invent another, wouldn't have if she could! She knew now that no one should try to trick love. This scheme, which seemed so cheap now, had been a chance inspiration suggested by Jim's casual remarks.

Jim hadn't been much help lately. He was always ready for conversa-

tion, of course—perhaps that was it. He was too voluble; the more he talked, the farther away he seemed. And she couldn't talk to Rick!

Rena's head went down on her arms. She wanted to go back home, to the lake, anywhere, away from this place that had seemed so alluring two weeks before. But she didn't cry.

"If you get to feeling sorry for yourself, you're sunk," she admonished that shrinking, lonely part of her.

After a while she got up, collected the fishing paraphernalia, which she hadn't used, after all, and mounted Pat.

She rode hard. The sun was halfway down the sky when she turned toward camp again. She had made up her mind—but that was before she saw them.

Rick's Thor and the little mare Marienne rode were tethered to a lone pine tree on the brow of the hill. Marienne was kneeling in the deep grass, part way down the hill. Rena couldn't see Rick, but as she hesitated, wondering whether she should interrupt them, two arms reached up, caught Marienne by the shoulders, and drew her down.

Rena whirled and rode madly, blindly back the way she had come. When Pat stumbled she dug him with her heel, spurred him on. "Rick!" she kept saying. "Rick, how could you!"

She knew now that she had been fooling herself, protesting that she would give Rick up, making a magnanimous gesture for her own benefit, when all the time, deep down in her heart, she hadn't really believed that it would be necessary.

This showed her up, called her bluff. She wanted him, wanted him back on any terms. Her heart and her soul and her mind poured them-

selves together in one vast yearning for him. It was a long time since she had wanted Rick like that. But she had known he was there, had taken his love for granted.

A woman should never do that, Rena realized. Marienne would never make that mistake. Women had to let men know they needed them.

The barrier was suddenly before her, not high—a fallen tree, with brush piled on it; witches' arms reaching out to clutch her.

She knew she couldn't make it; unreasonable panic made her pull the reins. Pat swerved, reared. Rena went through space down the bank. "Rick!" she murmured once, and lay still.

When she opened her eyes, darkness was all around her, yet the sun was shining. That sun fascinated her. It was so small, and it seemed to be very close—a yellow spot just above her head on the top of the bank. It bobbed up and down in the queerest way.

It talked, too. She distinctly heard it say, "Darling, don't cry!"

But she wasn't crying—or was she? She felt too tired to think about it.

Presently the bright circle disappeared altogether, but the voice went on: "Marienne darling, don't cry so."

Of course! Marienne was "darling." But why should Marienne cry? She had Rick.

Rena sat up suddenly. Rick and Marienne on the hill—she remembered now. But where was Pat? Poor old horse!—she had failed him. All at once she felt very sorry for Pat. She began to cry softly, the tears rolling down her cheeks. "Pat!" she called weakly. "Pat!"

A horse neighed in answer, and she recognized Thor's deep grumble.

Rick was up there on the bank then! Of course! They were searching for her. She thought vaguely that she ought to call.

And then the voices came back. "Rick's probably found her by now," some one said. "Pat will take him to her."

That was Jim. Apparently Pat wasn't hurt. But where was Rick?

She called quite loudly, "Jim!"

He came stumbling down the bank, flashing wildly here and there the light that had so puzzled Rena. Marianne slid, and got there first.

"Darling!" she kept saying, laughing and crying. "Are you all right?"

Such a lot of "darlings"—Rena thought crazily, even while another part of her mind went right on trying to puzzle the thing out. At last she heard herself ask, "What's Jim doing with Thor?" The words said themselves; they rang loud and hollow in her own ears.

They must have sounded half hysterical to the others, for Marianne spoke soothingly, humoring her. "Hush, dear; Rick's all right. He's looking for you. Jim's had Thor all day—his horse went lame this morning, you know."

"No, I didn't know. How should I know?" Rena said wildly.

Then it had been Jim on the hill with Marianne!

"I want Rick!" she said childishly.

Marianne needn't think she could have both men! Quite inconsistently Rena thought: "Poor Rick! Marianne has no right to treat him like this."

She wished Marianne would stop talking and let her think. Jim was just as bad. He kept coaxing in his slow, stubborn way, "Stand up, Rena; see if you're all right. Try to stand."

She supposed he would persist until she got up. She didn't want to

move. She wanted to stay right where she was.

Marianne came to her rescue; she ran deft fingers along her arms, down her back; touched each ankle. "No bones broken," she announced finally. "There are bruises, but I'll fix those. I'm sort of good at first aid," she finished shyly.

"You're good at everything," Rena said. The words were the perfect tribute. Hearing them, Jim knelt down suddenly and kissed Rena. "Long skirts or short," he murmured cryptically, "she's just about right, isn't she, Rena?"

Marianne caught the last words and protested gently. "I'm dreadfully ignorant beside you people. I lived too long on the ranch—until—until my husband died." She shuddered delicately. "I thought I couldn't stand it, but I learned."

"Women are always having to learn something," Rena said clearly. "I wish I knew where Rick was."

A moment later, he came. He plunged down the hill with giant strides, brushed the others aside, caught her in his arms.

"Pat brought me the long way around, the silly old thing! Darling, are you all right?"

It was just what Marianne had said, Rena thought. Of course she was all right now! Couldn't they see? Why didn't they leave her alone with Rick?

"Go away!" she told them flatly.

Rick held her close in a tender, passionate embrace that told her more eloquently than words that he loved her. Her hands crept along his shoulders, touched his face, his hair. "Do you care very much?" she whispered.

"Care?" Rick said. "I thought I'd die when Pat came home, dragging the reins! We'll get rid of him."

"I mean about Jim and Mari-



"I could never really stop caring for you—you're in my blood; you're part of me! It will always be that way with me." Their eyes met in a long look of perfect understanding.

enne," Rena explained carefully. "Don't you know?"

Rick drew her suddenly closer. "She told me last night that she was crazy about him," he said. "Rena, I was a fool, but it was just for a

little while, just at first. I—she made me feel——"

Rena put her hand over his lips. "I know," she said. "Both of us—let's forget it."

Presently she remembered what

he had said about Pat. "Rick," she confessed, "Pat didn't throw me. It was all my fault."

"Nonsense!" Rick said sternly.

"But it was. I lost my nerve—I've always been afraid on the jump. I tried, but I had so much to learn so you wouldn't be ashamed. I wanted to be good at everything so you'd be proud of me."

"Dear Heaven!" Rick said. The words were almost a prayer. Supplication was in them and a great thankfulness. "Sweetheart, I'd be proud of you even if you couldn't swim a stroke, or catch a minnow, or walk the slowest old nag in the country around a ring. I'd love you under any circumstances; I know that now. I could never really stop caring for you—you're in my blood; you're part of me! It will always be that way with me."

Their eyes met in a long look of perfect understanding. Then, his arms tightening about her, he kissed her. Rena's lips surrendered to his; she gave herself up to the utter magic of being in Rick's arms, knowing the thrill of his kiss. The old happiness, which she had thought never to feel again, flooded through her, giving her new life, warming every corner of her heart.

"Dearest—my dearest!" That was all Rick said, but it told Rena

everything she wanted to know—that he loved her, was completely hers.

Suddenly he laughed—his old laugh. "Jim and Marienne!" he chuckled. "Good old Jim! She'll keep him busy."

"But happy," Rena added wisely.

Her arms slipped around his neck. "Let's go home, Rick."

"Can you walk?" he asked.

"I don't think so," she said hesitantly.

Rick carried her to the top of the bank. They found Thor waiting patiently, for Jim had thoughtfully taken Pat with him. Rick lifted Rena up on the big horse. His voice sounded happy as he asked, "All right, dear?"

She leaned toward him. Their lips met in a long, sweet kiss.

"You're so strong," she murmured, "so wonderful!" It was the sort of thing Marienne would have said—the Marienne whom she had once hated, whom she now understood. But Rena didn't care if it was. All that mattered was that she loved Rick and he loved her. She wanted to say all the things that were in her heart; she was going to say them, as long as they both lived! That, Rena knew now, was the way with women when they loved—the way men loved them to be!



MORNING

CAMELLIAS, crushed from dancing all the night—
A few pale stars with sleepy little faces—
Cool wind, and in the east the first faint light,
And on my lips remembrance of kisses.

VIRGINIA BRASIER.



Cross Currents

By Walter Marquiss

THE moon was a great yellow face, hovering low, as Loyola stood alone on the dim upper deck of her father's little steamboat, the *Anna*. She smiled at her fancy that the moon was trying to decide whether to climb on up into the sky, or sink back to hide its face again behind the black trees on the Illinois shore.

Loyola always had fanciful thoughts when she was happy. She liked to dramatize herself in a poetic love story, like a beautiful movie. The wide Mississippi made a wonderful stage setting for her, with its whispering sounds, its dancing flashes of silver on the tops of little waves.

Her life had been like a romantic movie ever since her first meeting with Tod Forsythe, weeks before. It was all there, hero and heroine, even to the dark-faced villain lurking in the background as a scowling menace to happiness.

Loyola was dramatizing herself to-night as she watched the moon. A happy intuition told her that Tod was coming toward her along the deck, searching for her. She pretended to start nervously when his hand dropped suddenly to cover hers, and his resonant young voice sounded close to her ear, "Hello, pretty girl!"

Lips slightly parted, she looked up into his smiling face that seemed

handsomer than ever in the moonlight.

"Tod! You startled me!" she fibbed with a perfect simulation of breathlessness.

"That being the case, my next move will probably scare you to death!"

As he spoke, he drew her into his arms. She smiled up into his deep-blue eyes, so close to her own warm brown ones. His arms tightened about her lithe, slender form.

She tilted her face a little. His lips sought hers, found them. Her arm crept up and stole about his neck. They clung together in a long, throbbing kiss.

"Oh, Tod!" she murmured happily. "I do love you so!"

"You're sweet," he answered tensely. To Loyola, the night fairly reeled with happiness.

Holding hands, they leaned over the rail to look down at the dark water with its dancing flashes of silver, then up at the moon, which finally had decided to leap upward to shed a blessing upon the joy of young lovers.

They were silent. As she stole sidelong glances at Tod's profile, it dawned gradually upon Loyola that he had something on his mind besides their love.

As if sensing her thought, he turned toward her. His face was grave; she caught a look in his eyes that was like nothing she had ever seen there before.

"My brother's aboard to-night," he said abruptly.

Loyola caught her breath, for while Tod loved her, his brother was her enemy. Harry Forsythe was the villain in the love drama of her life.

"What—what's he doing here?"

Tod seemed to hesitate, turning his gaze far out over the water and the black line of trees beyond. For

no reason that she could understand, Loyola felt her spirits sag slowly to the toes of her little shoes.

"Tod!" she cried in a strangled little whisper.

He spoke slowly, without looking at her. "It's no use, Loyola. He's right. There's too much difference in our families for us to hope to make marriage a success. You see, for nearly a year I've been engaged to a girl I practically grew up with and——"

He paused, biting his lower lip. The muscles of his face worked nervously, causing shadows about his mouth and eyes.

"I—I see," Loyola said in a hard, dry voice.

"I knew you would!" he cried, eagerly turning toward her. "And of course it's not going to make any difference between us, honey. I love you too much to give you up!"

The world seemed to totter before Loyola's reeling senses. She wondered why she didn't scream, why she didn't whirl and flee from him as one might flee from a plague. Instead, she stood tense, still facing him.

"You—love me!" she cried bitterly.

"Yes." He reached for her, but she drew back sharply.

"No! Don't touch me!"

He blinked at her.

"I thought you said you loved me."

"I did. Oh, I did love you!" The words seemed to tear themselves from her throat, leaving a void to be filled by a rushing sob. "No, don't touch me!"

"But, Loyola, honey, I thought you'd understand!"

"I do understand," she returned, "too well! Girls up in town, girls with money and social position—they're the ones your kind marries!

Girls who live down on the river are just playthings, supposed to feel highly honored when you're in the mood to come down here!"

Choking, she turned away. Tod caught her arm.

"But, Loyola, honey——"

She faced him, her chin up, eyes alight.

"I despise you, you and your kind! Despise you, do you hear?"

His hand dropped from her arm, and he stepped back as if she had struck him. For a fleeting instant she stared at him; then she wheeled about again and quickly ran along the deck.

In her tiny stateroom she sat on the edge of her berth, a wide, dry-eyed stare in her eyes. It hadn't happened! Such a thing simply couldn't have happened to her! In the morning she'd wake up and find it had all been a bitter, cruel dream. She'd wake up laughing to think that she'd ever believed it real.

She rose suddenly to her feet as a sob welled in her throat. The walls of the narrow room seemed to press in on her, squeezing the breath from her lungs. It made her want to scream aloud.

Impatiently she hurried to the companionway that led to the pilot-house deck. There was air up there, and the stars, and the far-flung reaches of the river.

At the foot of the stairs she met her father coming down. From his tall height he glanced down sharply at her face that looked ghastly in the white moonlight.

"What's the matter, dear?" His big bronzed hands came up to grasp her slender shoulders, shaking her with tender gentleness.

"Oh, nothing, dad." She turned her head quickly. "I'm just—I'm all right."

At that instant a dark figure ma-

terialized out of the blackness behind the captain. A man's voice said:

"Beg your pardon, sir, but the engineer wants you to come below. Something's wrong with the dynamo."

"I'll be right down," Captain Maguire snapped over his shoulder. Then he turned his deep-shaded eyes back to his daughter's face.

"Loyola, you're not fooling your old dad a bit," he declared with gruff kindness. "I'll see you a little later, and you can tell me all about it."

He dropped his hands from her shoulders reluctantly, and turned away. She heard him go striding along the deck toward the lower companionway.

Loyola crept softly up the stairs, then went over to the rail and stood, staring out across the dark water. The moon had leaped high above the trees on shore. It looked cold and hard; it seemed to be laughing at the comedy of the earth, where romantic maidens fancied themselves the heroines of poetic love scenes!

The boat's streaming searchlight swept about in a wide arc, and winked out. After a moment it flashed on again, and came rushing back.

Down on the lower deck, a dozen yards from Loyola's feet, was the lone figure of a man leaning upon the rail. She caught her breath sharply and drew back, for she thought the man was Tod. On closer inspection, however, she saw her mistake. His bare hair was a shade lighter than Tod's, his profile slightly more rugged.

But there was a marked similarity in bearing. The proud lift of the head was identical with Tod's. It swept over Loyola at once that the man below was Harry Forsythe, Tod's aristocratic brother, who



"There's too much difference in our families for us to make marriage a success. For a year I've been engaged to another girl. But it's not going to make any difference between us, honey. I love you too much to give you up!"

doubtless had come aboard to make certain that Tod cut short his ridiculous affair with a river girl!

All at once a surge of bitterness rose in Loyola's heart, bitterness in which anger mingled with a thirst for vengeance. Particularly against Harry Forsythe, this rush of hatred turned. It was he who was responsible for her anguish. It was he who had taken Tod away from her with ruthless cruelty!

Men like Harry Forsythe, who was strutting now on the deck below, never knew what it was to want and grieve. Money bought them everything they desired. They lived in serene security. Broken hearts were never part of their experience.

All at once her heart began to beat faster with painful excitement. Perhaps rich young men's hearts were not always as invulnerable as they seemed!

She had aroused something in Tod—love, perhaps, though now she scorned to call it love. Could she arouse the same sort of feeling in Tod's brother? Might it be possible to set his pulse a-throb with longing, lead him on and on until he was irretrievably in love with her, then leave him dangling in a vacuum of emotional and mental torture, as Tod had left her?

Staring down at the dark figure, Loyola played with the idea, with a half-formed determination to try it out. When he moved, she saw that he wore a light-weight topcoat, and for the first time she realized that the evening had turned chilly. Still, though she shivered, she did not stir.

After a while the young man backed from the rail. He glanced idly about, and walked slowly toward the stern. Suddenly Loyola seemed to come alive. Whirling, she hurried to the companionway and down to the stateroom deck. Running on tiptoe, she reached the forward end of the narrow cabin and there she stopped, waiting, listening.

The sound of slow steps came to her. Still she waited, until she knew that the approaching man was just around the corner. Then Loyola stepped forth briskly.

Her movement was perfectly timed. As she swung out of the cabin, she ran headlong into him.

"Oh!" she exclaimed quickly. "I'm so sorry!"

"It's quite all right," Harry Forsythe answered in a pleasantly low voice. "I'm afraid it was my fault—I should have looked where I was going."

"It's so nice out on deck," Loyola murmured, smiling up at him, "that I hated to stay inside."

He glanced around, and drew a deep breath.

"It is nice on the river, isn't it?"

"At night, especially," Loyola said. "There's something about night on the river that gets into one's blood. When it's quiet, like this—and there's a full moon——"

She stepped across to the rail, all but holding her breath as she wondered if he would follow. As he joined her, she felt a stir of something like triumph. Could it be that her bizarre scheme was already beginning to work?

"There's something fascinating about a full moon over the water," Harry said slowly. "I don't think I've ever noticed before. I have to thank you for showing it to me."

He turned to look at her. Loyola's pulse quickened as she detected the dawn of admiration in his eyes. She wanted him to admire her. She was determined to keep his thoughts on her and on the soft, moonlit night, the gentle whispering of the river.

"No one could spend as many nights as I have on the river," she said, low, "and not love it. All the beauty comes out at night; the water turns to ebony and silver, and the shores seem like far-away fairy lands." She drew in a deep breath. "I can't help getting sentimental about my river!"

"I don't wonder," he returned. But he was not looking at the river; he was looking intently at her upturned face. And Loyola let him look, for she knew that she was lovely in the light of the full moon.

Abruptly the huge beam of the searchlight swept about in a long arc, and was blotted into darkness. It drew Harry's attention momentarily.

"That searchlight seems to be rather erratic to-night," he commented.

"Yes. There's something wrong with the dynamo."

She moved her hand; it touched his fingers, as if accidentally; then she raised it to replace a straying lock of hair. Harry pretended not to notice, but Loyola saw that he shifted uneasily.

Talking on, always of the river, she pointed out many features which would otherwise have escaped him. His interest deepened; time after time his rapt gaze returned to her animated face.

All at once it occurred to Loyola that she was enjoying herself and Harry Forsythe's company. She had forgotten that a little while before she had been in the throes of heartbreak! She had to take a rigid hold upon her emotions to remember that she was here with a grim, relentless purpose in mind!

The night breeze, freshening from upstream, cut keenly through the fabric of Loyola's dress. Involuntarily, she shivered.

"Cold?" Harry asked.

"No, not especially," she fibbed brightly. "But we might go over by the smokestacks. It's always warm there."

Side by side, they walked forward to the two smokestacks. Between them nestled a pair of steamer chairs, inviting, intimately close together. Loyola sank into one, looking up at her companion. He stood before her, smiling down at her with increasing admiration. Then, with an energetic movement, he sat down beside her.

"As a matter of fact, I seldom mind the cold," Loyola continued. "I often go swimming as late as November."

"I've never learned to swim." There was a note of regret in his voice, which ended in a mirthless kind of laugh. "I guess there are lots of things I've never learned—lots a girl like you could teach me."

"Swimming, for instance?" She pursed her lips, with a roguish lift of her eyes. "You'd have to wait till I got a new suit. The one I've got is—well, there isn't much to it."

The remark silenced him for a little time. Perhaps his mind was busy with imagination, as she had deliberately intended it should be. His eyes, less smiling but still alight with appreciation, lingered on her face.

"You know——" He reached his hand toward her, but drew it quickly back. "I'm really sorry about—the way my brother's been acting."

"Oh!" she whispered, dropping her eyes quickly.

"Now that I've seen you, I don't wonder Tod fell rather hard. But—well, he's been engaged for quite a long while, and he certainly wasn't being fair to his fiancée. That's why father and I told him to snap out of it!"

"I—I understand," Loyola said. She was a little surprised that she could speak so calmly.

"I'm glad you do," he answered.

Loyola said nothing; she looked out across the water.

"As a matter of fact," Harry went on more slowly, still regarding her, "it would be rather surprising if any man could meet you very often and not fall in love with you!"

She gave him a sidelong glance, intentionally arch.

"That's another of the beauties of night on the river. It inspires men to such pretty compliments!"

His hand flashed out to clasp her fingers.

"That wasn't just a compliment," he said earnestly.

"Oh! You're not going to tell me you've fallen in love with me! Already?"

He released her hand, and laughed aloud.

"Well, hardly that!" he exclaimed. But, looking at him, she saw the mirth drain quickly out of his eyes, to be supplanted by a peculiarly eager expression. "But I doubt if I could see very much of you without falling," he concluded somewhat huskily.

"I think I'd better go inside," she said, rising. He stood up without letting his gaze wander from her face.

"You know, it's a good thing you do stay out here on the river," he said. "If you lived up in town you'd be sure to start a war or something mighty near one."

"Why?"

"Because you are so beautiful."

She lowered her glance quickly. Then she looked up again. She was breathing a bit more rapidly. The vivid perfection of her slightly parted lips seemed to fascinate the young man—just as she had intended it should. He took one step forward, and hesitated.

Still looking at him, she swayed almost imperceptibly. It was a ruse, and the result was as immediate as it was inevitable. Before either knew just how it had come about, Loyola was fast in his arms; his lips pressed hers ardently.

Triumph welled up in Loyola's heart as she responded to his kiss. And in that moment, as if a ghost had risen from the deck, a man stood close beside them, a man who growled something deep in his throat.

"Oh, hello, Tod," Harry said, drawing away from the girl.

"So that's it!" There was a rasp in Tod Forsythe's voice. "So that's why you keep preaching loyalty to me—my fiancée! You're trying to keep me away from Loyola because you want her for yourself!"

"Listen, Tod——"

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Harry's sharp words were cut short by a smashing right which caught him full on the mouth. He staggered backward, coming up short against the rail.

Then it happened, so quickly that it seemed impossible that it had happened at all. Tod followed his brother with a mad rush. There was the sound of another blow, a sharp cry of alarm, then a heavy splash in the water twenty feet below!

For an instant Loyola stood as if stunned. She saw Tod Forsythe bending over the rail, peering down. She heard his breath catch with sharp terror; his voice mumbled something that might have been either a curse or a prayer.

Like a flash, Harry's words, spoken only a few minutes before, leaped into her mind: "I've never learned to swim."

Suddenly Loyola's mind was as clear as a bell. Her nerves, though taut, were coldly calm. Her hands flashed upward to her shoulder to unhook her dress. She wriggled her arms through the sleeves, and the garment dropped to the deck, circling her feet.

Loyola stepped out of it, kicked off her shoes, then mounted the rail. Momentarily clinging to an iron support, she stood poised in her brief underthings, like a shapely nymph of the night.

Behind her a man's voice rose sharply. "Man overboard!" As the shout went echoing over the boat, Loyola sprang far out in a long, clean dive.

"Man over——"

The echo was cut short as rushing water closed about her ears. She curved her hands upward so that she rose speedily to the surface. Treading water silently, she looked about. Already the *Anna*, thrashing the water with reversed paddle-



Harry's words were cut short by a smashing right which caught him full on the mouth. He staggered backward, coming up short against the rail. There was a cry of alarm, then a heavy splash in the water!

wheels, was yards upstream, and moving onward.

The long, white arm of the searchlight darted about, stabbing the dark surface of the river. The girl's eyes followed it frantically. A sob caught in her throat as it winked out. She cried out in relief when it flashed on again and continued to dart about, searching for an infinitesimal black dot which would be a man's head.

Loyola prayed.

And as if in answer, the light passed swiftly over a bobbing spot far downstream. The searchlight swerved and came rushing back, steadying to hold the dark object in its brilliance.

Loyola struck out downstream, swimming with a long, clean Australian crawl. She wanted to call encouragement to the struggling man, but she knew she must save her

breath for swimming. Even if she reached him, she would need all her strength to keep afloat until the steamboat could swing about and return.

Suddenly the light went out again. That time it did not come back. The recalcitrant dynamo had chosen that moment to quit cold!

Still, Loyola had marked the spot in her memory. She swam on, fighting against the temptation to strain her muscles in greater speed. Presently she slowed up, treading water, listening. The faint sounds of splashing came from her right. She lunged toward them. A moment of straining her eyes in the semidarkness brought reward. She located Harry's struggling body, only a few yards away, and dove to catch him just as he sank slowly from sight.

"Steady!" she cried sharply, and brought his head above the water. "Relax!"

"All right," he answered in a strangled voice that sounded scarcely human. "I won't struggle! I won't be much trouble to you."

She felt a sudden sharp thrill at his courage. He needed courage to keep away the panic that so often makes a drowning man a danger to his rescuer.

Loyola glanced back up the river. Her heart sank, for the distant *Anna* was broadside of the stream; minutes more would be needed to make the turn in the narrow, treacherous channel. Meanwhile, the current was sweeping her and Harry Forsythe rapidly downstream, widening the breach between them and their hope of rescue!

Besides, with its searchlight dead and black, it might be hours before the crew of the steamboat could locate the two tiny specks upon the water—a man's head and a girl's.

"You shouldn't have come after

me," Harry gasped. Her heart leaped again. She felt a strange wave of sympathy and admiration for this man who had been her enemy.

"Don't talk!" she commanded tersely.

Downstream, on the left, she saw a low black blot in the surrounding shadows, and realized that the current was bearing them inshore, past an island near the middle of the river. Clutching Harry's inert body in a correct life-saver's grip, she struck out to make landing.

The current fought with her like a fiendish live thing intent upon making sure of its prey. The water seemed to beat against her fast tiring legs and arms, making her muscles feel like lead. Still she fought on, with all her strength and courage.

Her breath came in sobbing, choking gasps. More than once she seemed on the point of sinking. She was almost ready to welcome the final savage clutch of the river, which would pull her down and end this torturing fight against such seemingly impossible odds.

"You can't make it!" Harry gasped painfully. "Let me go; do you hear? Let me go, and save yourself!"

His words gave her a surge of fresh strength. She fought on, but futilely. Despair closed over her like a blanket of darkness as the tip of the island slipped past.

Almost immediately, however, she sensed a change in the situation. She had been caught by a slow eddy, and now she and Harry were being carried into comparatively calm water in the lee of the island. Her dragging feet touched sand.

Loyola tottered as she tried to wade ashore. Her legs collapsed, and she fell. Now it was Harry's

turn to assist her. He gathered her up in his arms and staggered forward. Through water breast-deep, then to the thighs, knees, ankles, he struggled. At the shore line he sank down without further strength, gasping and fighting for breath.

Half unconscious, the two of them lay on the bank, while the *Anna*, far out in the stream, steamed southward on its futile search of the river's surface.

It was the night wind, whipping down the river, all but freezing her scanty clothing, that stirred Loyola to action. She struggled to her feet. As if her movement had aroused him, Harry, too, stood up, and turned to peer out at the distant lights of the receding *Anna*.

He turned his head to look at the girl, and caught his breath sharply. All her exquisite beauty of face and figure was revealed in the white light of the full moon. The girl was shivering and her teeth chattered.

"You're cold!" he exclaimed. With a swift motion, he whipped off his soggy topcoat and flung it about her shoulders. She caught the edges, drew them close about her. The wet covering was welcome, for it fended off the keen edge of the night wind.

Harry turned to stare out across the river.

"It wouldn't do us any good to yell at them," he said. "They won't find us until morning, so we might as well make ourselves as comfortable as possible."

He went off on a brief search, returning shortly to lead her to a low, overhanging bank, back a few feet from the water. It afforded wall and roof, which kept the wind away when Loyola crouched back in its shelter. Still she was cold. Her teeth chattered audibly.

Harry sat down beside her.

"There's only one thing to do," he said. His arms went around her; he held her close against him. She felt the comforting warmth of his nearness, and for no reason that she could understand, tears began to course down her cheeks.

For what seemed a long time they sat there, close together, silent. Then at last Harry said, very low:

"Loyola—remember I told you I doubted if I could see very much of you without falling in love?"

Her breath and pulse quickened, but she made no reply. For now she was remembering the purpose with which she had set out deliberately to stir Harry Forsythe's emotions. He went on earnestly:

"I don't mean I believe in love at first sight any more than you do, darling. But we lived a long time out there in the water. It was almost a lifetime—for we almost died together!"

She shivered a little at that, then, stirring out of his embrace, she gave a short, forced laugh.

"You—you love me?"

"Yes!"

"You mean you want me—terribly?"

"More than anything I've ever wanted before!"

Loyola sprang to her feet, about to tell him why she had led him on to this declaration of love. But before she could speak, the island was bathed in a blaze of light. The *Anna's* searchlight, working again at last, had swept swiftly up and down the river, until it had found them on the shore. Loyola sprang out from the bank, waving her arms. A blast from the steamboat's whistle told her that the crew had seen her.

She stood beside Harry, silently watching the steamboat edge its way inshore. They could hear men's voices shouting. Then, with a loud

splash, a skiff was lowered upon the water. Like a ghost boat, it crept toward them, oarlocks creaking.

Even before the skiff's keel scraped sand, a man leaped out and waded ashore. Captain Maguire caught his daughter in his arms, too filled with emotion to speak.

Within a few minutes, Loyola and Harry were safe aboard the *Anna*

again. Loyola saw Tod approach his brother, his eyes filled with a kind of shame; she heard the low, diffident murmur of his voice. She saw Harry put a hand on Tod's shoulder, as if in forgiveness.

Loyola turned and hurried through the cabin to her stateroom. Stripping off the wet topcoat and her clinging undergarments, she got



Still she was cold. Her teeth chattered audibly. Then Harry's arms went around her; he held her close against him. She felt the comforting warmth of his nearness, and for no reason tears began to course down her cheeks.

into a soft, dry nightgown, and into bed. Shaken, her emotions in turmoil, she expected to lie awake for hours. But exhaustion came rushing to her relief. Loyola was soon sound asleep.

When she awoke, it was to a full-fledged realization that something tremendous had happened to her, perhaps during her slumber. She knew, then, that she never had been really in love with Tod Forsythe. In her youthful inexperience, she had merely imagined that she loved him. He had never inspired such a devastatingly joyous sense as that which swept over her as she thought of Harry.

She remembered Harry's kiss; all Tod's kisses were forgotten. She remembered how he had begged her to leave him to drown, while she saved herself. She whispered his name against her pillow, and thrilled to the sound of it.

Presently she got up and dressed. Her father sent in the cook, with a bowl of steaming broth. Drinking it gratefully, Loyola felt strong again and gloriously alive. She opened her door, and slipped quietly out.

Lounging against a wall a few feet away, Harry stood, regarding her. He looked as if he had been there a long time, watching her door. She turned and hurried out of the narrow cabin. Following quickly, he caught her at the edge of the deck, in the bright, warm sunlight.

"Loyola!"

He raised his hands to clasp her shoulders. It was as if the scene on the island had been transferred to the deck, without a moment's intermission. Life went on from the point where it had left off last night.

"Since you saved my life," he began with husky earnestness, "it really belongs to you now. Why did you do it?"

She did not answer. She couldn't just then.

"I know you're a brave girl," he continued, "but that took more than just courage. Why did you do it, Loyola?"

"I don't know."

"Why?" He shook her very gently. "Tell me! Say it!"

"Oh, please!"

"Why did you do it?" he insisted, his face very close to hers. All at once his eyes seemed to capture her own. As if fascinated, she watched them come closer, closer; then she felt his lips crush hers.

"Harry!" she gasped. "Oh, Harry, if you had drowned!"

"I didn't," he returned promptly, "and I'm waiting for you to tell me why I didn't. It's because—because you love me, isn't it?"

She reached her arms to circle his neck, and tilted her face for his warm, thrilling kiss.

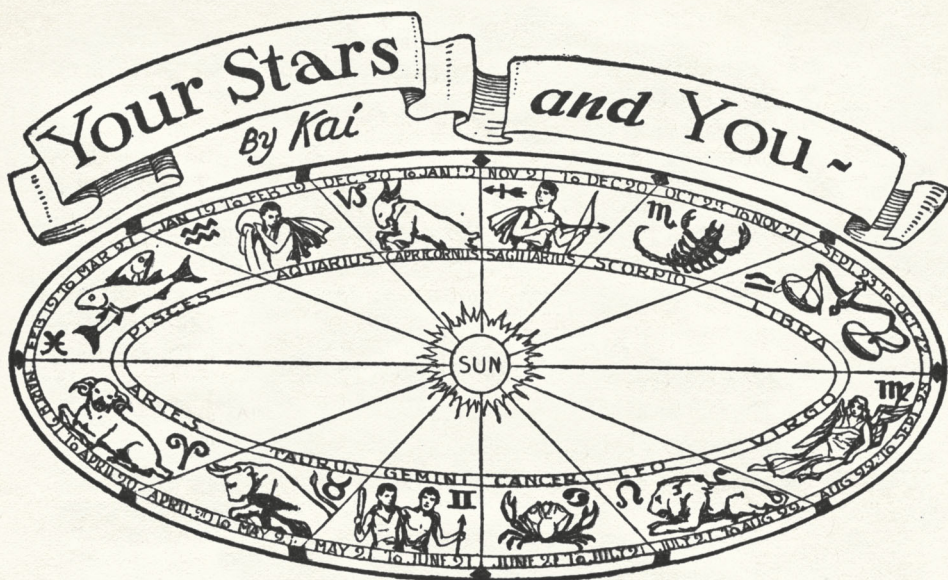
"Even if I said 'No,' she said softly, her lips against his, "you—wouldn't believe me!"

"I won't believe anything you say," he returned, "until you tell me you're going to marry me!" He tightened his arms around her.

Loyola smiled a bit tremulously.

"In that case," she murmured, nestling closer, "what's the use of denying it?"

She didn't deny it; she just gave herself up to his kisses, responded to him with all the ecstatic fire of her heart, and thanked the cross currents of existence that had swept illusion out of her life so that real love might glorify it.



YOUR WEEK

These seven days are filled with many undesirable factors for a peaceful existence. Each day will bring its problems, and the most satisfactory day for general routine and activity is Friday. We have a new Moon at eight thirty-five a. m., Monday, January 15th. This brings a set of conditions which will prevail for about fourteen days. One may expect upset emotions, mental upheaval, money troubles, and restricted effort. There will be disappointments especially in affairs of the heart. Some folks will be able to utilize this period for profit commercially—look in the “Born Between—” section—but the fact that the planetary influences bring a climax to personal affairs will be uncomfortable. This is a time for all persons to pay special attention to health matters. Live moderately and take sensible precautions.

DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time

Saturday, January 13th ♄
This is a day for caution and mental equilibrium. The planetary influences are such that the emotions and feelings will be difficult to control, leading to impulsive actions which may bring regrets. The day begins actively and harmoniously, and the

morning period is better than later on. Avoid quarrels around two thirty in the afternoon. There is a quiet and dull period between five and seven p. m. The evening hours are very erratic and unstable. Be careful and wise.

Sunday, January 14th ☺

In many ways, to-day is a duplicate of yesterday. The morning period is negative and brings nervousness and excessive imagination. The better hours are between one p. m. and six forty-five p. m. During that time, put your mental house in order, deal with older people, adjust misunderstandings, write letters, and take care of duties. Make plans for the coming week, and do not change your mind later. The evening hours are upsetting emotionally and mentally. Following wild impulses will be a mistake. Watch your speech.

Monday, January 15th ☾

There is a new Moon this morning at eight thirty-five. This lunation brings a new set of conditions. However, the planetary outlook is not promising, and conservatism is advisable. Only the strict-

est observance of known rules for personal and business procedure will bring desirable results. Do not allow your physical and mental self to wander into dangerous fields to-day, especially before five p. m. The evening period is slightly better than the preceding hours, but caution is still the keynote.

**Tuesday,
January
16th**

♂

This day begins in an alarming fashion, and subsequent influences are not comfortable, either. Turmoil, the liability to quarrels, a tendency to be morbid, rashness, lack of finesse—those are the indications to-day until six forty-five p. m. The afternoon brings forcefulness and intensity. Take things as they come with deliberation and balance. Be prepared for the unexpected. The evening period is good. Deal with the opposite sex and enjoy yourself. There will be harmony, expansiveness, and a feeling of good-will toward others. Make this a festive evening, because to-morrow brings its special problems and difficulties.

**Wednesday,
January
17th**

♀

Until noon the hours will not be so bad, but there is an undercurrent all day and throughout the evening which is depressing and intense. Execute all important duties prior to the noon period, but do not be surprised if you do not have desired results. The afternoon will be difficult. No one will feel exactly right. Some individuals will be able to force issues, but it will not be easy to live through the conditions. Try not to be too personal in your dealings. Be careful with your eating, and keep those emotions balanced. Avoid the opposite sex this evening; live moderately.

**Thursday,
January
18th**

24

The morning brings nervousness and instability. Do not believe all you hear, and avoid speculative interests.

**Friday,
January
19th**

♂

Be careful of what you write. The people who will benefit by to-day's influences are those engaged in artistic, creative, and inspirational lines. The afternoon is disturbing mentally. Be careful in your dealings with those in superior positions until after three thirty p. m. The evening hours are steady and balanced, and moderate pleasures will afford enjoyment.

This is a pleasant, active day and satisfactory as far as individual effort is concerned. Make contacts, seek interviews, write letters, deal with superiors, and expect your brain to function efficiently. The hours until nine thirty p. m. should bring results. The period after that hour is not favorable from a planetary aspect, and matters related to pleasure will bring undesired results. During the better hours indicated above, those engaged in literary work, the written or spoken word, will find the planetary conditions most favorable for production.



IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN

March 21st and April 20th

(Aries ♈)

—Aries people will find the current period stimulating and upsetting. This is a time when they should work hard and be willing to ignore petty matters which will interfere with their progress. It is not the best time in the world for you Aries people, but you are part of the whole and you have courage. Do not worry about surviving; you will. Be careful about money and take your pleasures lightly. Your friendships will cause you concern this week. Be most cautious about impulsive and erratic changes.

April 20th and May 21st

(Taurus ♉)

—Taureans will not experience a comfortable week. Many small problems will arrive which will require immediate solving. Expect unsatisfactory conditions in connec-

tion with business and do not try to force issues. Control your temper and your emotions. The best indication for you at this time from planetary influences is the use of common sense, an alert mentality, help from relatives, and a keen intuition. Be wise, restrained, and conservative. Patience is always a virtue, too.

May 21st and June 21st

(Gemini ♊)

—Geminians have conflicting influences during the current seven days. You will be busy; you will have minor health complications; you will try to force issues, and you will be successful to a degree. But all Geminians have their personal difficulties at this time, and even though the planetary indications are favorable, eliminations must be made. Work will be paramount in your life, and results will come later. Changes are in order, over which you have little control, but those born under this sign are always able to make a come-back, and that is the procedure for the future months. We ask you to make plans for the future that are based upon practical factors. If you do not hold yourself in check, the planets will do their part to force you to such a course.

June 21st and July 21st

(Cancer ♋)

—Cancerians will not like the trend of the week so well. There will be petty annoyances, minor irritations, restlessness, discontent, and domestic worries. This is a week for balance, and each day will bring its problems and difficulties. Conservatism and control are the keynotes for those born under this sign. After all, these conditions are temporary.

July 21st and August 22nd

(Leo ♌)

—Leo people will have a hectic week with domestic and business partners. Take no chances. Live quietly and take your pleasures lightly. There is opportunity ahead for those who place their intelligence above physical needs. Take care of your health and be philosophical about the changes which are transpiring. Be sensible and be willing to give up some of the luxuries of life. We are not trying to preach. Common sense is a necessary part of this existence. Do not quarrel. It will not help matters, and it is so useless, anyway, not

to mention the fact that it is as disturbing to you as it is to the other person.

August 22nd and September 23rd

(Virgo ♍)

—Virgo people will find their physical welfare at this time undergoing a change. Your job will be important, and the current week brings dissatisfaction in this respect. However, if you are wise, you will live each day calmly. Go after that part which you think you are entitled to, and produce to the best of your ability. You folks have talent and you can use it. But manipulation and subtlety are your best bets at this time. Do not be shy in using your talents if you wish to add to your material status.

September 23rd and October 22nd

(Libra ♎)

—Librans will have to be very alert this week in order to derive the most benefit from the current planetary conditions. There will be petty annoyances and the tendency to indulge in superficial pleasures, but to all of you let us say that this is one of the most important periods in your life. Everything you do now is related to your future welfare. Do not waste opportunities. Make each day a part of the whole of that goal you wish to reach.

October 22nd and November 21st

(Scorpio ♏)

—Scorpians have a mixed set of planetary conditions this week. Your judgment will be good and there will be obvious chances for efficient action. But domestic and home conditions will be disturbing, and if you depend upon your emotions too much you are likely to meet trouble. Those of you who are involved in legal difficulties at this time, or who wish to dispose of property are likely to succumb to impulse. A bad idea at the moment. Deliberation is imperative, and shrewd judgment is your safest course. You people have good judgment; use it. Expect little from personal contacts, and do not try to force your opinions upon others. An aggressive attitude at this time will bring regrets.

November 21st and December 20th

(Sagittarius ♐)

—Sagittarians will experience a very satisfactory week. Your judgment is good, and you will fare well if you do not get

involved in any "fly-by-night" proposition. Personal relations should be satisfactory, and those changes which are transpiring, even though upsetting, are beneficial to you eventually. Make this week a good one for yourself, and use each day for progress personally and materially.

December 20th and January 19th

(Capricorn ♑)

—Capricornians will experience an energetic and stimulating week. The mind will be alert. Work on problems and conditions which have been existing for a long time. Forget your morbid and abnormal reactions. Use that excellent judgment of yours and extricate yourself from complicating conditions. Be careful how you spend your money, and if there is any health difficulty, take care of it, if possible. Do not be afraid to bet on yourself as long as you maintain a conservative viewpoint.

January 19th and February 19th

(Aquarius ♒)

—Aquarians will undergo personal reactions of a distressing nature this week. All the planetary conditions are directed toward you at this time, and you will have to do your best to meet them. You are intelligent people but erratic under certain circumstances. Be patient with others who are interfering with your enjoyment of life, and be willing to make sacrifices. We know this is a difficult time for you, but control is imperative. Use your head and think about the future. Try to be understanding and kind. Conditions related to heart interests will be disappointing, but there is an opportunity later to improve them.

February 19th and March 21st

(Pisces ♓)

—Pisceans will find the current week better than those previously experienced. Your days will be busy ones, and your mind will function satisfactorily. Forget your past errors and look toward the future. There will be difficulties, surely, but work and forget your inhibitions. You people are inclined to be very sensitive and brood, but your imagination is working overtime. Do nothing which will reflect upon your reputation, and, by all means, stay away from shady deals. Believe half you hear, and bend backward in following a strict code of ethics.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ THE STAR QUESTION BOX ★
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MRS. E. M. B., born February 13, 1889, West Virginia, noon: Yes, hold that business. You and your husband have been operating under most inauspicious planetary conditions for the past two years, but 1934 brings improvement. The summer period is especially good. It would be inadvisable for you to sell or make a change prior to that time. Your profits will not increase overnight, but there will be a steady change and advancement. If you wish to reorganize your business interests after June, it is all right to do so. There will be opportunities for expansion, and it will be O. K. for you to take advantage of them.

Miss E. B. K., born February 17, 1904, New York, two a. m.: You will have two opportunities to marry in the near future. The early fall months of 1934 and the summer of 1936. I think it is extremely likely that you will accept this first proposal, and it will be all right for you to do so. This year is very good for you, but you will have difficulty in seeing it in that light. Keep your mind clear of the cobwebs, and your head level. Force yourself to act conservatively and restrainedly.

Miss M. R., born June 26, 1916, West Virginia, ten p. m.: Yes, indeed, your chart indicates musical talent. You are young and you are persistent enough to hold on until you have reached your goal. Of course, you know you must study and work hard. Cultivate poise, work hard on your vocal lessons, get the best teacher you can find who will allow you to sing naturally while you are learning the technique. Remember that when you appear in the public eye you are there to entertain, not only with your voice but also with your presence. I am telling you these obvious facts for a reason. You have a condition in your chart which makes you sensitive and very shy at times. You need to build up your self-confidence and to, as I said before, cultivate poise. Work hard. You'll get there.

Miss S. M. H., born June 28, 1916, New York, eleven p. m.: It is a question of just which course for you to take in the

line of a career, because so many fields are open to you. You must meet the public and have a certain amount of freedom for yourself. You would do well in real estate, banking, advertising, or some form of artistic work. I think you have talent in the arts, and believe you would be very happy in the work, such as designing. You may wonder what relation I attach to art and real estate. Well, you see, you like the elemental things of life, and you like to build and secure a firm foundation. So you might combine these attributes and go in for architecture or landscape gardening. I believe, knowing yourself as you do, you will get my point. Make up your mind that your occupation will be an unusual one. No four walls of an office for you! You have my best wishes, and if I can be of further assistance, let me know.

MISS I. C. G., born October 29, 1909, Ohio, five thirty a. m.: Thank you for the nice letter. What do you mean "old maid"? Very silly at your age, my dear. Of course you will marry, but now is not the time to be thinking about it. You will have the opportunity to marry in the summer months of 1935, and will probably do so. Just be patient and wait for that right person. You will not be sorry.

MARIE, you say you were born between "10—12," May 26, 1905, Texas, but you do not say a. m. or p. m. You have been very patient, and I can see from the general positions in your chart that you were never meant to be confined to an office position, where there is nothing but monotonous routine. I suggest you affiliate yourself with some phase of newspaper or publishing work, if possible. You would also do well in connection with the hotel business. There should be plenty of opportunities in your city, and 1934 is an excellent year for you. Proceed with all confidence.

MISS H. O., data omitted by request: In my opinion, it is advisable for you to continue with your studies and obtain your degree. You do not have favorable planetary conditions for marriage until the summer months of 1935. You have been operating under aspects which have brought you deception in connection with the men in your life; but, to be fair, the young man you mention has not been sure of himself or of anything else. However, I do not think he is the proper mate for

you. It is so much better to wait and be certain.

MISS G. W., born March 25, 1933 (?), eight twenty a. m.: So sorry, my dear, and many thanks for your kind letter, but you stated the year of your birth incorrectly. No answer, of course. Nevertheless, there was an article about you Aries people in the issue of October 28, 1933, of this magazine, which I hope you noticed. It might have assisted you with your problem. I hope so. Best wishes.

MISS B. Z. S., born February 28, 1914, Massachusetts, nine a. m.: My dear young lady, do you not know there is a struggle connected with anything we attempt in this life? You have an excellent chart for nursing, and I am sorry to hear you gave it up. You will find there is great effort connected with anything you may try to do. You have a failure complex, and you should try to overcome it. Do not say to yourself, "I may fail in this I am doing." Without trying to preach, I say very emphatically it is bad psychology and completely demoralizing to your efficiency. I suggest you go back to your nursing training. Yes, it is hard work, one of the most difficult professions in the world; but you will have to force yourself to the routine, and the first six months are the hardest. Your other alternative is a commercial work and the monotony of an office. I cannot decide for you, of course. Make your choice and stick to it. Your planetary influences are better than they were previously.

C. A. V. W., born September 7, 1906, England, eleven a. m.: It is unfortunate that you did not state the nature of the business you contemplate entering. However, your indications for earning money at this time are good if you are practical and cautious. Be sure all your papers, leases, and contracts are thoroughly inspected, as there is likely to be deception in such matters for you. Your best period for earning is in 1935—beginning in November, 1934—but I do not advise you to wait until that time necessarily if you are in a position to proceed at this time.

"BUNTY," born June 30, 1877, England: It is hard, as you know, to be able to judge a chart well when I do not have the time of birth, but the general positions in your chart look very encouraging. It is all right for you to sell your

home if you are offered a fair price. Your planetary conditions are improving steadily and become better and better as 1934 progresses. Look forward to the late fall period and be prepared for some of the things you expect and hope for throughout the winter of 1934-35. Cheer up! When matters seem at their worst, they usually get better. I am not being false about this. They certainly look better to me as a star observer. Thank you for your kind letter.

Miss H. V. F., born October 8, 1917, Pennsylvania, ten p. m.: Well, it seems to me you have the qualifications to be a good linguist, but I do not think you would be contented with the work. You have all the resources for social adaptability and are naturally inclined in that direction. On the other hand, if you decide to become a social secretary, your being an adept at languages will not impede your progress, surely. Why not combine the two studies? You have excellent planetary influences in 1934 and 1935, and you will progress, no matter whatever you undertake. However, if you are compelled to make a choice, I advise the social work.

Miss E. L., born October 29, 1919, Hungary, seven thirty p. m.: It would certainly be unwise for you to contemplate matrimony until November, 1934. I think it is very likely that you will marry a professional man, but am unable to tell you about the doctor unless I have his hour of birth. Next year will bring you undesirable conditions personally, but you must not be discouraged, and you should be very cautious in any dealings with men, especially one for whom you care deeply. Do not try to force matters.

Editor's Note: Questions for this department are answered only through Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine. Each reader is allowed to ask one question. Be sure to give the following data in your letter: date, month, year, and place of birth, the hour of the day or night, if possible, and sex. Address your letters to KAI, care of this magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Miss M. F., born December 14, 1915, Connecticut, eleven a. m.: It seems advisable to me for you to continue with your secretarial course. Your chart is adapted for that type of work, and you will do well in commercial activities. The year 1934 is a period when you will acquire knowledge, and a good time for you to launch your career. I believe your restlessness at this time should be curbed, and you will make a mistake if you change. The year 1935 is splendid for you, too.



WHY QUESTIONS ARE NOT ANSWERED

Kai does not send answers by mail.

H. S., Wisconsin: I do not give complete horoscope readings.

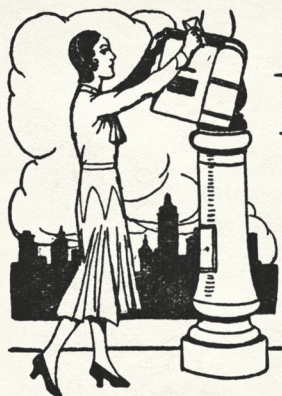
Mrs. F. R., August 27, 1905: Your question was too general for me to answer without complete information. In the September 9th issue of this magazine there was an article dealing with Virgo people which, I believe, will be of help to you.

S. A. C., Rutherford, North Carolina: You gave me so little information that it is impossible for me to answer you. What kind of business are you in? What changes do you wish to make?

MR. H. H. H., February 14, 1892: I am not a fortune teller.

Mrs. J. H. M., March 19, 1899: I do not give complete horoscope readings. Reading the article dealing with Pisces people in the October 21st issue of this magazine may help you plan for the future.





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.

ARE you interested in the theatrical, circus, and carnival life? Showgirl Irene can tell you all you want to know about it. For the past few years it has been her life, until an accident prevented her from going on with the show. She has been to many places while on the road; perhaps you have seen her! Anyway, write to her. Help her to forget dull days not filled with the thrills of circus life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young girl of twenty. For two years I was on the road, playing in different musical shows. Then I joined a trapeze group as an aerialist acrobat. A heavy wind blew me off the rigging and I was badly hurt. The troupe went on ahead, but I'm at home recovering from my injuries. I can tell you about the life show people lead, and of the interesting cities and towns I've been to. Maybe I have been in your own city or town, maybe you have seen me! Write to me, girls; I have so much to tell you.

SHOWGIRL IRENE.

England, here's a call for you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl seventeen years old who is looking for Pen Pals. I am five feet four inches tall, with light-brown hair, blue eyes, and I'm a junior in high school. I will tell all Pen Pals about the historic State of Massachusetts. I would love to hear from girls in England and away out West.

MASSACHUSETTS LIL.

Western boys, answer Renée's plea.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like very much to correspond with young men, particularly from the West, as I spent my childhood days in Wyoming. I am a young man twenty-one years of age, and have blond hair and gray eyes. I am interested in sports of all kinds. RENEE.

This fourteen-year-old girl is lonesome.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a fourteen-year-old girl and am living in a small suburban town. I love all sports, can play the ukulele, and go to high school. I'm

about five feet one and a half inches tall, have blond hair, and blue eyes. Would like to hear from girls out of the State of Illinois. Will exchange photographs. Come on, girls, be good sports and write.

ILLINOIS DOT.

Cheer up this lonely boy.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: How about finding some Pen Pals for a lonely sixteen-year-old boy who is five feet four inches in height, weighs one hundred and twenty-four pounds, is dark in complexion, and has a pug nose? But never mind my description, Pen Pals, come on with those letters.

FEELING BLUE.

This college girl will tell you about her travels.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like very much to correspond with some Pen Pals. I'm a girl twenty-two years old, go to college, and work part time in a candy shop. I like music and all sports. I really can write interesting letters as I have had the pleasure of visiting some of the important parts of the United States. Come on, girls, let's get to be real Pals.

A PAL.

Girls, write to Dixie; she needs Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I have been reading your Corner for two years, but have never felt the need for Pals so much as I do now. Please find me some real Pals—the kind that stick by you through thick and thin; especially girls between eighteen and twenty-five.

DIXIE.

Here's a Pal for you younger girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to join your Corner. I am thirteen years old and live in Buffalo. My favorite sports are swimming, tennis, baseball, and bicycle riding. Please, Pen Pals, answer my plea. I promise to answer all letters.

E. P.

Pat has recently lost his dad and wishes letters from every one to help him forget his loss.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a boy of twenty, with blue eyes and brown, wavy hair. Since I lost my dad I have been terribly lonesome and would like to hear from some real Pals who can make a heart that is sad beat with joy. I am very fond of

dancing and reading, and all sports. I will exchange photos and promise a quick answer to all who answer me.

PAT OF MAINE.

Dotty Janet will be satisfied with just a line from some Pen Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a fifteen-year-old girl and am a senior in high school. I love to dance, swim, sing, collect snapshots, and write and receive letters. Won't some one please drop me a line?

DOTTY JANET.

Honey would like to hear from girls who live in the West and South. How about it, girls?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a lonely girl of twenty-one, and would dearly like to have some Pen Pals. I will answer all letters; however, I would especially like to hear from girls from the West or the South.

HONEY.

Hicky is a young married woman who desires Pen Pals from Kansas, her home State:

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am eighteen years of age, married, and have blue eyes and reddish-brown hair. I am very fond of swimming, dancing, and ice skating. I would like to hear from girls around my own age; especially those living in Kansas, the State in which I was born, and in California.

HICKY.

Do you want to know all about the making of pictures?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man five feet eleven, with dark-brown wavy hair and hazel eyes, am in my early twenties and single. Have worked in pictures. I enjoy writing, sports, music, and sure love to travel. Would like to hear from fellows from twenty to thirty-five from all over the country, whose ideas are like mine. I'm looking for real Pals.

THOMAS.

Sophie wants girls who attend boarding school to write to her.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl, seventeen, and would like Pen Pals from all over. I have finished school and as yet have nothing to do. If possible I would like to hear from girls attending boarding

school but letters from any one will be more than welcome. I am fond of dancing, parties, movies, swimming and riding.

SOPHIE.

Who will be the first to answer Southern Girl and learn about the fascinating city of New Orleans?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please get me some Pen Pals? I am a girl of twenty-two, and have brown hair and eyes. I am interested in books, movies, dancing, and I have a pretty large collection of songs. I can tell you many interesting things about my city, New Orleans. Come on, girls, fill that little mailbox of mine. I promise to answer every letter.

SOUTHERN GIRL.

Married women all over the world, write to New York Wife.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young married woman of twenty-three and have a son four years old. My husband works nights every other week so I have plenty of time to write. Am interested in most everything. So won't every one from all over the world write to me. I'll surely answer every one.

NEW YORK WIFE.

Loyal Pal hopes to be a rich man some day.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young man twenty-five years of age, and am interested in finding a good Pal who is of a quiet nature like myself, and not so deeply interested in the opposite sex. I enjoy a good time and am much of a dreamer. My one ambition is to some day become rich and a good friend to all the world. Won't some one share this ambition with me? I will answer all letters.

LOYAL PAL.

Brown Eyes is full of pep and anxious to have letters from England and France.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a sophomore in high school, a girl sixteen years old, full of fun and pep. I love dancing, singing, the movies, and reading. I'd like to hear from girls in all parts of the United States and foreign countries, especially England and France. I promise to answer all letters, and will exchange photos. Come on, girls, get acquainted with me.

BROWN EYES.

A Lonely Exile wants Pals who can be faithful.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Friendship has always played such an important part in my life that having had to leave the city and my friends and come down here to a small town where I am a total stranger has been a bitter blow indeed. The only solution to my difficulty seems to be in having a few faithful Pen Pals. I am a man thirty-eight years old, a musician by profession. I'm an ardent lover of all things artistic and my contact with life in all its phases has given me a tolerance and broadmindedness that I consider indispensable. I do hope that I will get many letters from those who have the same ideas on friendship that I have. Please write to me, men of all ages. It will mean much to

A LONELY EXILE.

Who is going to help her forget her shyness and make new friends?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please find me some Pen Pals? I am of a rather shy nature and find it hard to make friends. I am a young girl, twenty-three, and have green eyes and light-brown hair. I would especially like to hear from girls living in Connecticut.

SHY MARGARET.

Ohio Ann needs a word of cheer to help chase away the blues. Answer her plea, Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am very much in need of a few Pen Pals as I am very blue and lonely. I lost my fiancé just about a year ago and I still think of him. I'm broken-hearted and need some real Pals to cheer me up. I'm a girl of twenty-one. Come on, Pals, help me, please!

OHIO ANN.

M. R. has had her share of sorrow, too, and would like to find a little happiness in making new friends.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is an urgent S O S call for new friends. I am a widow of twenty-seven. I like most all sports, and am very fond of dancing and housework. My pet hobby is collecting songs—especially songs of the West. I would like to hear from folks all over the world and to the first Pal from overseas I will send an assortment of picture cards of my sec-

tion of the United States, and a photo of myself. The offer goes for the first letter from the United States, too. Now, hurry up, folks, and get busy!

M. R.

Miss Pennsylvania would like to hear from girls who live on ranches.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am anxious to have Pen Pals from "way out West," and "far up North." I love to write, and I am fond of outdoor sports. I would like nothing better than to hear the adventures of Pen Pals from those places. I am a girl almost fifteen with blond hair and gray eyes. Won't you please find me some Pen Pals?

MISS PENNSYLVANIA.

Basket-ball fans, here's a chance to do your bit and cheer up Lonely Gerry.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a boy of sixteen, with dark-brown hair and eyes. I'm a freshman in high school and am fond of all sports, basket ball being my favorite. Come on, fellows, help cheer a lonely guy up!

LONELY GERRY.

People interested in California and Hollywood can find out all about both from this young man.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young man here in California, lonesome for friends. I am very understanding and never without a sense of humor. To any one interested, I can furnish some interesting news concerning Hollywood. Please write, every one.

BUDDY OF CALIFORNIA.

Margo craves for more friends and lots of mail.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a blond, Jewish girl of twenty. I have "oodles" of friends but not enough. So come on, everybody and write to me. My hobbies are dancing, reading, swimming, and bowling. I recently lost my girl friend of eleven years standing, and I am very sad. I live in Canada. So write, everybody.

MARGO.

Answer this girl's plea, Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Pals, Pals, and more Pals, is what I would love to have. I would like my Pals to be lovers of nature, horses, dogs, and the water. As for me, whv. I am a sixteen-year-old girl. with

red-brown hair and blue-green eyes. I hereby faithfully promise to answer every single letter. Please, Pals, answer my plea.

KEEPER OF THE FOREST.

Pals, write to Mother And Daughter; they're lonesome.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you suppose there is a small space for a lonesome mother and daughter? The mother is thirty-seven years old with brown hair and eyes, and five feet six inches tall. The daughter is eighteen years old with brown wavy hair, brown eyes, and five feet one inch tall. We are fond of swimming, dancing, going to shows, church, and all outdoor sports. We are often taken for sisters. Now come on, Pals, and sling some ink this way.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

Boys, here's a regular fellow. Make him your Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please help me find some true-blue Pen Pals? I would like to write to fellows who are not interested in girls very much. I am twenty-two years old, and have light-brown hair, blue eyes, and am six feet tall. I am interested in all the sports that can be mentioned in the athletic world.

SPORTY JERRY.

Let her tell you how to keep from being lonely.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a fun-loving girl from New Jersey. I am eighteen years old, tall, have light-brown hair, and hazel eyes. I'm not lonely, but I crave Pen Pals of my age from everywhere. I am very fond of all sports, dancing, music, movies, and reading. I will exchange snapshots with every one, so please, girls, keep my mailbox filled.

JERSEY ELLA.

Kansas City, Happy Bride-to-be wants to meet you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please find me some Pen Pals in their twenties who are living in Kansas City, for I expect to move there in the spring—a new bride? Come on, girls, married or single, write to this twenty-three-year-old brunette, and make her acquaintance. You won't be sorry. I shall be many miles away from home, and will appreciate very deeply every friendship I shall make.

HAPPY BRIDE-TO-BE.

LS-9C

Help Tennessee Mary enlarge her photograph collection.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a dark-eyed, dark-complexioned girl of fifteen. My hobbies are reading, music, and collecting photographs. I will send my picture to every one who writes me and don't forget to send me one of yours, too.

TENNESSEE MARY.

Let Torchy chase your blues away.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young man of twenty-one, and quite interested in music, but especially singing for that is my profession. I am a torch singer in a Chicago night club. I want to hear from you, you, and you. So come on, boys, although my songs are blue, my letters are cheerful.

TORCHY.

Oklahoma Maiden has interesting things to tell.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young girl of twenty-two, five feet two and one half inches tall, and have brown hair and eyes. I live in Oklahoma which was Indian territory at one time. I have traveled a lot and can tell some very interesting things about the places I have been to. Come on, girls, write. Please send photos of yourselves and I shall do the same.

OKLAHOMA MAIDEN.

West Virginia Flo comes back for more.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll answer my S O S for Pen Pals? I'm five feet three and a half inches tall, have brown hair, green eyes, and have seen eighteen summers. My occupation is working for Uncle Sam in the post office, also helping my dad in his store. I have several Pen Pals, but want more. I promise answers to all, and snapshots, too.

WEST VIRGINIA FLO.

Give M. of Arkansas a chance to write to you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young married girl of nineteen. My husband works at night and I have a lot of time to write, if I had some one to write to. I love all sports, housekeeping, shows, dancing, and music. Please won't some one write to me?

M. OF ARKANSAS.

LS-10C

Learn all about the thrills of horse racing.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would appreciate it if you could find room for a lonely rider in your corner. I am nineteen years old, weigh one hundred and twelve pounds, have very dark hair, and dark-brown eyes. I am a jockey and have been riding for two years, and can tell some peppy racing yarns. I promise to answer all letters, and my word is as good as gold. Would like to hear from Arizona, as I used to live down there. Will exchange snapshots.

JOCKEY BOB.

Are you lonely? This girl will make you happy.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm reaching my arms out trying to catch some Pen Pals. Do you think I'll get them? I am a girl of sixteen and would like to correspond with girls from fourteen to twenty. I'm five feet seven inches tall with brown hair and eyes. I love dancing and the movies. I play the guitar and the organ. I also am interested in art and writing. Am I happy? And how! I prefer hearing from girls in the South as I'm a real Southern girl. I'd also like to hear from girls out West.

MICHIGAN'S WILD ROSE.

Tell Florida Grace about your State, girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Is there room for another girl in your Friendliest Corner? I am a nineteen-year-old Florida girl. I have not had a chance to travel except in my own State, so would like to hear from girls in other sections of the country. Won't you please write to me?

FLORIDA GRACE.

Exchange snapshots with Chubby.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a lonesome girl of thirteen. I have sandy-colored hair and brown eyes. I am fond of all athletics, especially swimming. I also enjoy reading and the movies. Won't some one please write to me? I will answer all letters promptly and will exchange snapshots with any one.

CHUBBY.

Men past fifty, this actor wants to hear from you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young man thirty years old and would like to receive

letters from men older than myself—men past fifty. I am sure that men of this age would like to write to a younger man who has spent several years on the New York stage.

W. F. P.

Let's get together, girls, and help Old-fashioned forget her loneliness.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will some one take pity on me and answer my plea for Pen Pals? Help me forget my loneliness. I am an old-fashioned Italian girl, live on a farm, and am twenty-nine years old. Won't some girls of my age from everywhere write to me? I promise to answer every one who drops me a line. Hurry, girls! Don't keep me waiting. OLD-FASHIONED.

Foreign Pals can correspond with Nurse Ann in their native tongue.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of eighteen winters and a high-school graduate. I can read, write and speak Spanish, German, Russian and English. At present I stay home and take care of the house for my father, but I intend to enter nursing soon. I would like to have a lot of true Pen Pals, so write one and all. I'll answer every letter and send a snapshot to every one who writes. NURSE ANN.

Young mothers, here's a Pal for you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl twenty-one years of age. I am blond with blue eyes, married, and have a boy three years old. I am fond of dancing, shows, reading, letter writing, and lots of things. Won't you girls please write to me? I am alone all day and so have lots of time to write letters. I promise to answer all letters promptly. DOTTIE OF PHILLIE.

Women haters, here and there, drop a line to this lonesome fellow.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would you please help me to get some Pen Pals from here and there? I'm just a lonesome young fellow, and want a few true-blue Pals. I am modern, broad-minded, very understanding, and a confirmed woman-hater. I'm interested in sports, books, and travel. I promise to answer promptly all letters that I receive, so come along, fellows, drop a line my way and let's get acquainted.

TWENTIETH CENTURY GEORGE.

This girl can tell you all about sports.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to receive letters from Pen Pals, too. I am sixteen years old, five feet two inches, and have blond hair and blue eyes. I like all sports and go in for all of them at school. Please, girls of my age and older, write to me. I will answer all letters. BLONDY.

These twins want to hear from other twins.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are twins seventeen years of age and seniors in high school. We are interested in anything that spells a good time, especially dancing, swimming basket ball, corresponding, and dating. Being twins we naturally do things together. We are both dark complexioned. Paul has brown eyes and Polly has blue. We look very much alike. We would appreciate letters from other twins and other boys and girls from all over the world.

PAUL AND POLLY.

Try to interest this young man, Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a man of twenty-seven, five feet eight inches, with brown eyes and brown wavy hair. Would like to hear from young men who realize the value of friendship, but will only answer letters that interest me. I have a college and business education. So, let's go, fellows!

BLUE EVERETT.

Lu asks for true friends.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl eighteen years old and live in a little city along the Jersey coast. I have brown hair and eyes. I love all sports, especially swimming. I have few true friends. Please help me to find true friends among the Pen Pals.

LU.

Another Pal comes back for more.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I live on an estate in the country. I work in the summer, but have a good time at home during winter. I have some Pen Pals, but would like more. I am seventeen with medium-brown wavy hair, gray eyes, and a fair complexion. I enjoy all outdoor sports, also singing, sewing, embroidery, and knitting. Come on, girls, and don't disappoint

SMILIN' THROUGH.

Don't let her be disappointed, girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl twenty-four years old, very fond of all sports, and particularly fond of corresponding. I am looking forward to receiving a lot of letters and will answer each one promptly.

DORIS.

Girls, this Pal is a stamp collector.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please give me a place in your Corner? I do so want some Pen Pals. I am very fond of writing and receiving letters, am quite short, have brown hair and brown eyes, and go to junior high school. My hobbies are hiking, stamp collecting, and music. I will be very happy to exchange snapshots.

STAMFORD MARY.

Western Pen Pals in particular are wanted here.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a Pennsylvania girl and am lonesome. Won't you please help me? I'm nineteen years old, blond with blue eyes. I love to hike, dance, read, and listen to music. Would love to correspond with girls from the West, but will answer all letters. Come on, girls.

FUN-LOVING CASSY.

You won't be lonely much longer, Arizona Sister.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I have a place in your Corner? I want some Pen Pals because I'm so lonely. I am five feet one and a half inches tall, have brown hair and gray-green eyes, and am fourteen years old. Please write to me. I promise to answer all letters and I will tell you anything you want to know about Arizona and about myself.

ARIZONA SISTER.

This lonely widow has lots of time to answer your letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder if you could find room in your Corner for a lonely widow. Am in the early thirties and would be glad to hear from any one. Am very lonely and promise to answer every letter I get from far and near. I live in a small town near a large oil city.

I work in a large factory, but have lots of time after work to read and answer letters. Now come on, one and all, and write me a few lines. Will also exchange photos and views with any one who wishes to do so.

A LONELY WIDOW.

Show Joey you'll be his Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I have just moved into a new community and haven't got acquainted with many boys my age. Therefore, I should enjoy hearing from any Pen Pals from sixteen to eighteen years of age. I am five feet four, with black wavy hair and black eyes. I like all sports and go out quite often. Come on, fellows, and write to

JOEY.

She wants to hear from England, Scotland, and Australia.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm calling for Pen Pals—every one of you! Am a girl twenty-two years and live in dear old Canada. I'd love to hear from Pals everywhere, especially those far across the ocean in England, Scotland, and Australia. Am interested in various sports. Girls, I'll be a true friend. I promise all an answer.

CANADIAN FARMERETTE.

Texas Girl can tell you all about the thrills of broadcasting.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a blond-haired, blue-eyed girl of seventeen, considered pretty and popular. I love dancing, swimming, horseback riding, and golfing. My hobbies are keeping scrapbooks and collecting photographs. I have played the piano and sung popular music over the radio, and have also sung with a dance orchestra. I'd be tickled pink to hear from any one and I hope to find some real Pen Pals. I can tell you all about Texas.

TEXAS GIRL.

This lucky boy has traveled.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am making a plea for some Pen Pals. I am a boy of seventeen, with brown eyes, black hair, and a dark complexion. I have traveled from coast to coast. I will answer all letters received and exchange snapshots. All you Pals write to me.

EDWARD.



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.

FROM reports it seems as though Dan Cupid is not the peppy little fellow that he used to be. In the past young people were married when in their teens or at the latest in their early twenties. Now men are in the middle thirties and forties, girls in their late twenties and thirties before they walk down the aisle and say, "I do." Many reasons are given for this change. One is that marriage today is a luxury out of reach of the young man who earns only a small salary. Another is that men stay single because they want freedom and are under the impression that they need not marry to enjoy the comforts of married life.

However, it is only natural, I suppose, that in these times when pay envelopes are leaner than they were a few years ago, a young man may feel terrified when faced with the prospect of supporting a wife who is used to personal luxuries, in moderation, but which he cannot possibly provide for her on his present income. And it is hardly encouraging

for a young husband to find that his in-laws are unsympathetic and apparently ignore the fact that a pay check can be stretched only to a certain point, and severely criticize him for his inability to satisfy his wife's demands.

Kenneth L. S. believes that girls who want to marry are neither trained nor willing to start from scratch. On the other hand, many a girl, like Georgine, is of the opinion that any man can afford to marry if he loves the girl enough to give up his "single blessedness."

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a young man of twenty-one. Two years ago I met and fell in love with a girl. I didn't intend to consider marriage for some time, because I was clerking in a bank at a moderate salary and studying law at night, and I wanted to avoid being tied down until I was more securely established. But a year ago we were married without asking her parents' consent.

She was more responsible for the marriage than I. I argued with her that my salary would not stretch for the things she'd been used to, but all my talk got me nowhere.

Her father has always provided a comfortable home for his family, so my wife

thought it would be better to continue living with her parents. But her parents insisted that it was my job to support her. I didn't object and admitted they were right.

We could not afford a place of our own, so we boarded with my married sister. My wife, who is twenty, didn't know a thing about housekeeping or cooking. Most modern girls can't be bothered with these things. My sister was willing to teach her, but she wasn't interested.

About four months after our marriage I noticed a change in my wife. She said she was terribly disappointed in marriage, and in me, too. She complained that she didn't have enough money for clothes; other similar complaints came up often. But what did she expect?

Then she started to run around with a boy she'd known before we got married. I didn't think there was anything in it, and I wasn't jealous. I was studying hard and knew it was no fun for her to stay home. But for the sake of appearances I asked her not to go out with him. She paid no attention to me and didn't change her conduct.

One day she complained to her mother that I wasn't providing for her. The next day her parents came over and upbraided me for that. There was no use putting up an argument; their criticism discouraged me terribly. A few days later my wife went home to her folks. This wouldn't have happened if I'd had more money.

I doubt if three girls out of ten possess dependable qualities. Small wonder that men hesitate to get married. Girls are not willing to start at the bottom (like their grandmothers did). Besides, with modern freedom so much in evidence, men are not really obliged to marry.

I have decided to let my wife do as she likes and learn her own lessons. If she loves me and comes back to share my lot, then all will be well. If she doesn't, then she's not the kind of wife I want. I think my story makes clear the fact that to a fellow with a modest income marriage is a luxury out of his reach and shouldn't be attempted.

KENNETH L. S.

Whatever opinions others may have of the above statement, the fact remains that many women are willing and eager to lighten their husbands' duties by bringing home their own pay check. I gather that your wife has never been obliged to

work, so it probably didn't occur to her that she might have tried to improve the situation until more prosperous times were in evidence.

Rather than attribute the outcome of your marriage to lack of a fat pay check, I am inclined to think that you and the girl you've married failed to adjust yourselves to the changed conditions your marriage brought about. Don't be discouraged; there's a chance that she does love you, and after she thinks things over, she may come back. Her loyalty may yet surprise you.

It's an admitted fact that the present economic condition presents a difficult problem for many young married couples. And if in-laws are unwilling, or cannot help cure financial ills from which their children suffer, they might at least extend their sympathy and understanding instead of finding fault with the young husband who fails to cater to their daughter's demands.

Your story does not exactly prove that a young man who earns only a modest salary should regard marriage as a luxury to be looked at from a distance, my boy. And I wonder how many of our readers will agree with Georgine, whose letter follows below, that it is not so much the lean purse, but the desire to hold onto their "single blessedness" that makes young men fight shy of marriage.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I suppose that after digesting my letter, your men readers will snort: "She's only a dumb jane and doesn't know what she's talking about." I'm not considered a sour old maid—not yet. I'm popular, and have more invitations from men than I've time for. I'm just an ordinary, peppy, friendly, and passably good-looking girl of twenty.

I love dancing and outdoor sports, and I also like to stay home and cook dinner for the family once in a while, just to test my culinary skill. I like housekeeping, and think that most girls should make marriage

their career. And I frankly admit that I'd like a home of my own and the affectionate companionship of a husband.

But I have found men very disappointing. They don't come up to a girl's expectations at all. I could do more than shake any man who imposes on a girl, monopolizes all her time, but avoids mentioning marriage and broadcasts his appreciation of bachelorhood instead.

The average young fellows, who draw an average salary, seem to have enough spending money to take out half a dozen different girls every week. But when it comes to making a choice between wedded joys and single bliss, these shirking slackers cry: "We can't afford to get married just yet."

I've been dating boys for the past three years. A year ago I met a young man of twenty-three. He had no family obligations, and was making twenty-nine dollars a week. We went steady for ten months. He asked me to give up all my other boy friends, and I did. He practically lived at our home. He was there for dinner five nights a week; brought his boy friends over, read our newspapers, and even raided the ice box whenever he was hungry.

I believed that he loved and intended to marry me. I considered myself engaged, though we never definitely discussed marriage. He, somehow, skidded around that subject if any hints were thrown around. Finally, my father asked him when the wedding was coming off, and he at once began to hedge. Then he made the excuse that he "couldn't afford to get married." Soon after that we quarreled and all was off between us.

Please don't think this experience has set me against men, but it certainly broke up several of my fond ideas about the masculine sex. Plenty of boys may want to date a girl, but mighty few of them ever ask her to say "Yes." My belief is that any young man can afford to marry if he wants to. Please print this, Mrs. Brown. I'm anxious to know if other readers think as I do. GEORGINE.

The question why men side-step marriage can no doubt cover a lot of ground. Do they avoid marriage from selfishness, or from discretion? Let us hear more of your side of the story, men.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: About a month ago my brother asked me if I wanted to help out at the club where he was working.

They needed extra help because an army corps was going to be stationed in that town, which is twelve miles from where we live.

I had never worked before, having graduated from high school last June, and I didn't like the idea of helping around in the dining room, but I thought I might as well earn some extra money.

I came in contact with many good-looking officers, but paid no attention to any of them, until I saw a lieutenant whom I hadn't noticed before. He came into the kitchen to help make some cocktails, and we got acquainted.

He offered me a drink, but before he could have a drink with me he was called out. My drink had made me dizzy, so I went out and sat in my brother's car. That's where this lieutenant found me.

We talked for a while, and he told me his name, where he lived, that he wasn't married, and that he was going home the next day or so. I told him a lot about myself. Before we parted that night we made a date for the next night.

When I finally got through with my work he was waiting for me outside. It was about ten o'clock, and I was thrilled at the idea of his taking me home, but that was spoiled. My brother happened to come out just then, and said that he, and no one else, was going to drive me home.

I was furious. I told my brother he wasn't my keeper and that I could take care of myself and knew what I was doing, but the lieutenant said he was sorry and that he should have asked my brother first.

Well, I had to go home with my brother. I felt terribly blue and defeated. I cried for hours after I got home, thinking that my lieutenant must hate me and think me a little fool. I told my mother about it and she said my brother ought not to have interfered, that she could trust me.

I ought to mention here that when this lieutenant and I said good night that time, he promised to get in touch with me, but that was a month ago and he has neither written or called since then. I wonder if his intentions were of the best, though I hate to think that he meant any harm. But why hasn't he at least written?

One thing I'm sure of is that he's old enough to have a mind of his own. He is ten years older than I, though he looks younger. Don't you think he ought to know whether he likes a person or not?

He lives only a few miles away, in the

next town. I have been thinking of going to work, and thought I might find a job in his town where I would be likely to meet him when he comes home.

I am longing to see him, if only once, and even if nothing comes of it. Do you think that it would be all right for me to write to him and tell him that I am sorry my brother spoiled our last evening together a month ago? Shall I try to get work in his town? Your advice would mean so much to me. **DISAPPOINTED.**

It is never wise for a girl to openly pursue a man, Disappointed. A little more experience in the line of friendships with the masculine sex will probably convince you that when a boy seems enchanted with the prospect of being good friends with a girl, and then forgets the way to her front door, he wasn't as anxious as he had first seemed.

No doubt your brother felt it his duty to look after you, and acted accordingly. You can hardly blame him for that, my dear.

However, if your friend hasn't tried to get in touch with you as he had said he would, then I'm afraid that he wasn't serious. Besides, when a girl is eighteen, ten years makes quite a difference not only in age, but in ideas, tastes, opinions and, on the part of the girl, very often fascination is apt to be mistaken for something deeper.

If you find it necessary to look for work, I'd suggest that you look around elsewhere first, instead of going directly to this young man's home town. I'm sure that if you try to be interested in other boys, you won't find it so very difficult to forget him. Under the circumstances, my dear, I think this would be the best thing for you to do.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have read your department for several years, and I believe that you can help me decide what to do.

I am twenty-three years old and in love with a widower who has two children. He says he loves me and wants me to marry

him soon, but my mother thinks that I am not old enough to take on the responsibility of raising two children.

Mother wants me to marry a man I hardly know, and whom I do not love, though she likes him very much. Besides, the young man who is my mother's choice has no steady employment, and it would be impossible for us to marry and have a home of our own unless I help him.

I have refused to marry the man my mother wants me to marry, and we have quarreled. I hate to go against my mother's wishes, but don't you think that I ought to marry the man I love, even if he has two children?

I'm so puzzled and torn between my mother and my sweetheart, that I don't know what to do. **EVELYN MAY.**

It would hardly be advisable for any girl to marry a man she didn't love. That way doesn't lead to happiness, and every girl has the right to marry the man she loves.

Although I understand your desire to please your mother in the matter of a son-in-law, you are now of age and can marry whoever you wish. If you were to ask mother whether she wanted you to be happy or unhappy, what would she answer? Surely she would not want you to marry a man you didn't love and would be miserable with.

As for your marrying the widower, though marriage is always a gamble, it would hardly be fair to consider his two children as a definite obstacle to happiness. If the man you love is not very many years older than you, and you are sure that he loves you, then the fact that you'd have to play stepmother should not prevent you from marrying him.

Of course, you'll have a job on your hands; you can't get away from that. But children of thirteen and eleven are fairly well able to look after themselves and can be a lot of comfort to you. True love can overcome many obstacles, my dear, and life isn't easy no matter which way you look at it.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I've been reading your department for some time, and have closely followed the argument about girls being let down by boys because they won't go in for necking. The trouble is, I think, that girls are weak-kneed, and they'd rather neck than stay home dateless, even if they may not fancy necking very much.

I'm not trying to make myself out a he-man, but I don't care for girls who drink, pet and smoke, and I know many other fellows who feel just as I do.

Maybe it's narrow-minded, but I couldn't possibly marry a girl who smokes like an imitation chimney, and doesn't care how many boys kiss her. That's what happened to my girl after we'd been going together for two years.

We weren't actually engaged, but I took her out three nights a week, treated her nice, and was under the impression that she cared for me. But was that a bad guess! One night I came in late at a party to which another fellow had invited me, and who do I see in a corner necking but my girl friend. That put the skids under my romance for good.

Now I am going with a girl who doesn't smoke or drink, and doesn't believe girls should be wild in any way. I smoke, but smoking was intended for men, and women are only trying to show off.

I've had two years of college, and let me tell you, the boys don't think much of the girls who smoke. Personally, I think a girl only degrades herself if she smokes, and as for drinking "to be sociable," well—I wouldn't want to pick a girl like that for a wife, and I know many fellows who feel the same way about it.

I don't approve of drinking, even for men. My father is fifty-six and never drank a drop, and he and mother have always been happy. I think that many broken romances could be avoided, if the girls stopped going in for the modern manners and tricks with such a big bang.

PARTICULAR.

How about it, boys, would you marry a girl who smokes? I'm not advocating that girls should smoke, Particular, but the point is that girls do smoke, and men fall in love with them, and marry them, and live happily with them. You've a right to think anything you like, of course, but you can't deny that every day men marry girls who smoke. What's your answer to that?"

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am eighteen years old and have been married only a year, but I am terribly discontented. My parents died when I was three, and until a year ago I lived with different relatives.

Every relative I have lived with was rather strict with me. I couldn't go out with different boys; I had to go steady with one boy, and if we broke up, then only could I go with another. I didn't get around very much. When I met Don a year ago, I thought I was in love with him. I had a quarrel with my cousin's husband (the cousin I was living with at that time) and when Don asked me to marry him, I did—the very next day, too.

Don and I knew each other only four months, and I don't think any one could treat me better. I have a lovely apartment, but I long to go around with different boys and girls. I'm crazy about dancing, but Don doesn't like it.

I get so restless, and it makes me nasty and quarrelsome. I don't think I'm ready to settle down, and feel that I should see more of life.

I've told Don that I want to leave, but he cries and begs me not to, and I feel so sorry for him that I hate myself for hurting him when he treats me so decently. Sometimes even his love-making gets on my nerves.

Maybe if I left Don I would regret it, but I think it would be best to find out whether I really love him enough to spend the rest of my life with him or not. Thank you.

ROMANTIC RED.

When a girl marries she would get a good start on the road to happiness if she made up her mind not to fall down on the job, especially if she has married a man who loves her. Life isn't a made-to-order affair in which you can reach out and grasp whatever your fancy desires. Life is a tangible, real thing filled with excitement and adventure.

You wanted freedom from your relatives' fault-finding and a home of your own, and you have these things, but you are not giving yourself a chance, dear. No need for you to stagnate and merely wish for friends and good times. Even if your husband doesn't care for dancing, he might accompany you to a dance once in a while. Or you

might ask friends in and dance in your own home; or join a club where you'll be likely to meet young people. You can have a good deal of fun, in moderation, even if you are married.

The mistake many young couples make is in shutting themselves away from the rest of the world. Marriage wasn't meant to be a sort of prison sentence as regards friends and good times.

Instead of planning to leave your husband, see if you can't fill your life with things of interest that are within your grasp now, dear. Discontentment is a poison; it gets into your mind and heart, fills you with dissatisfaction, resentment and unrest, and makes you want to reach out for things that might prove disastrous.

So cheer up, Red. You've a better chance to find out if you love your husband by staying, than if you leave. Give him a chance to make you happy, and don't think so much of your own personal reactions. Keep busy, find new interests and make friends. It'll make all the difference in the world and you won't have time to brood and feel lonely.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am very discouraged and don't know which way to turn. I married at nineteen, and we were very happy for almost five years. We have a little girl; she is seven now.

My husband and I moved to the town where he was working, and all was well until my husband's boss started paying attention to me. He was forty-two years old, and I thought him rather fascinating. I fell for him; I've always liked older men.

This went on until my husband found a letter. We had trouble, and lots of it. My husband forbade me to talk to his boss, or dance with him, if we met socially. This man's wife was very jealous, too.

Later on my husband and I moved to the town we are now living in, but I

couldn't forget this man. One night we went to a dance and I met another middle-aged man. He was a dentist, and I started to see him as often as I could. By this time my husband began to notice other women.

This went on until a year ago, when a strange woman moved into our community. My husband liked her very much. But before he fell for her, I became rather friendly with her and we used to go out together. She smoked, drank, and we exchanged confidences.

I know now just what a fool I was, and realize my mistakes. The other day I found a letter from her to my husband, in which she discussed his plans to divorce me and marry her.

I realize now that I really love my husband. Our little girl needs us both, and I just can't face the thought of giving him up. I want him to go on—we could both forget the past and try again, but he thinks he can't hurt this woman by giving her up.

What can I do, Mrs. Brown? I intend to be a good wife and never cheat again. This woman was accepting my husband's attentions and pretending to be my friend until I found her out. Please help me.

MURIEL VAN S.

There seems to be no explaining for these lapses of human behavior, though sometimes, as in your case, foolish missteps lead to a clearer realization of one's ideas about love and marriage, especially when there are children to be considered.

It doesn't seem to be so much a question of hurting the woman in whom your husband is interested, as it is of wanting to try again. Have you tried to talk things over with him and make him see this problem from your angle, and that for the sake of the child it might be well worth while for you both to forget the past and try again?

If you are willing to forget about this woman, it seems to me that as a truly repentant wife you have the right to another chance. It takes character and a big person to really overlook and forget the foolish, tragic episodes called "mistakes," and rebuild a marriage that has

touched the rocks of misunderstanding. The main issue, after all, in spite of discouraging moments, is to succeed where you two have previously failed.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am an only child, and though we are not rich, we live on the main street in our town. I have a few friends, but they are all girls. I am seventeen, and have been out of school two years because of poor health.

When I was going to school I wasn't quite so miserable because I had something to do. But now time hangs heavy on my hands. I'd like to have boy friends, but the reason boys avoid me is because I am lame. My foot looks perfectly normal, and it is only when I walk that I limp a little.

People often turn and stare at me from pity or curiosity, and no one knows how it hurts when they do that. Sometimes I even dread to go out. My mother scolds me for moping around the house, as she calls it. I am invited to very few parties, and though I am considered pretty and dress nicely, the boys only stare and don't make any effort to be friendly. I feel I could die if I have to go through life like this. Do you think that some day I may meet a boy who will love me in spite of the limp?

I have often felt so embarrassed, that lately I stopped accepting invitations.

LONELY BILLIE.

Girls who are in some way handicapped make a great mistake if they cling to the idea that life can hold no joy for them because they are not physically perfect. It isn't your limp that is holding you back from having more friends, Billie dear, it's being so sorry for yourself all the time that you give yourself no chance to think of other people and find other interests.

It will be a little while before you can master that self-consciousness that makes you think of your limp all the time, but once you have firmly resolved not to let it keep you from enjoying love and life and making friends, you will see that it isn't half as hard to get around as you thought.

Make up your mind to stop noticing whether or not others feel sorry for you; learn to expect people to accept you as you are, and like you for yourself. One of the happiest girls I know is also a little lame. She, too, was as sensitive about it as you are, but she realized that if she was unhappy it was her own fault because she was keeping herself away from people. She joined a girls' club, took an interest in it and tried to be friendly with every one. Now she arranges all their entertainment programs and keeps busy in other ways.

Perhaps the following letter from Marjie will cheer you up a bit.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I would like to say a few words to Candida, and other girls who are in some way physically handicapped.

I was in the same situation as you are in now, Candida, and I hope that my letter will help a little. I was left with a limp and a scar, both very noticeable, from an operation I had undergone as a child. The doctor said I would have them all my life. But regardless of either, I have always enjoyed myself.

First, you must forget all about your limp, and stop wondering what others may be thinking about you. Don't forget that little saying, "Laugh, and the world laughs with you; weep, and you weep alone."

I took piano lessons, and can play quite well for singing and dancing, because, of course, I can't dance. Learn to play cards, rummy, bridge, or even poker. Many a time I played poker with my brothers and some boy friends.

Then learn to bake a cake that folks will be able to eat without getting indigestion. What better ending to an enjoyable evening than a cup of coffee and a piece of good cake? I dare say your friends will want to come again.

If a boy wishes to take you out, there are concerts and movies. So why not go? I agree with Mrs. Brown, when she says, "If any boy likes you well enough to date you, you can be sure he will not ridicule his own choice in companions when you are out together."

I have been married for seven years, have two children, and my friends still

come to visit me. Even my in-laws like to come to our home because they know that they will enjoy themselves. So if your in-laws like you, I guess the foregoing must have a few grains of truth in it.

MARJIE.

That's right, Marjie. If you are not hunting reactions, chances are that you will be treated like any other girl. Adjustments are never very easy, and for some they are harder than for others, but if you do not shut yourself away from life, joy can be one of your close companions. I'm sure that your letter will help not only Candida and Lonely Billie, but other girls as well. Good luck to you, dear, and come again.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I will soon be thirty-two years old, and though I do not cherish the thought of remaining a bachelor and spending all my days alone, the time is passing quickly and I am still undecided.

Some years ago I fell madly in love with a girl, but our love affair didn't end in anything definite. However, I have kept socially active, and enjoy the friendship of several young girl friends. I have been seeing a lot of one girl and am very fond of her, but am not sure that I would like to marry her.

I have been constantly urged by relatives, friends, my five sisters and mother to get married, but I don't think I would be doing the right thing if I married any girl feeling the way I do about the whole matter.

Do you think that the cause of my indecision is the result of my former disappointment in love? I'd like to get married and, at the same time, I find it very hard to decide what girl I should ask to marry me.

The girl in question is twenty years old. Do you think there is too much difference in our age? Please give me your advice on this.

K. K. K.

You may say that marriage is what you want, but when it comes right down to brass tacks, my boy, you probably want the joys of bachelorhood still more. I doubt if your indecision to marry arises from

the fact that you've been in love once before and the affair didn't turn out according to your expectations. Many men have experienced disappointment in love, but that didn't prevent them from falling in love again, probably more deeply than ever before, and marrying the girl of their heart.

The fact that you can't decide which girl to marry shows that you're not in love with any one girl, and it certainly would be most unfair to marry a girl who believed that you loved her, when you were merely fond of her as you would be fond of a friend whose friendship and respect you valued.

Though you may not agree with me, to a young girl of twenty, twelve years would make a difference after the first thrilling days of marriage have passed. If you intend to marry, it would be more advisable to look for a girl of at least twenty-five.

Don't rush into marriage, not even to please members of your family. And if you're in doubt, wait. You have plenty of time in which to find the right girl.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm an old reader of your column and once in a while some boy who writes in gets into my hair with his criticism of girls.

I'm twenty-four and even though I have been married, I have never met a real man. Most of the men are such four-flushers.

I married when I was twenty-one. I thought my husband was the kind of man who would take care of his wife, and that we could be happy together. We lived together for seven months, and then I left him. Why? Because he expected me to support him.

Three months after we got married he lost his job and, instead of trying to find other work, he simply sat down and said that from then on I would have to look after the bills.

For a short time I continued to work and tried not to mind, thinking that he

would change and see things differently if we talked it over. But no matter how much we talked things over, he said he saw no sense in trying to find a job when I was working and making enough to support us both.

After I left him he wouldn't leave me alone. So I moved to a near-by town, and he went to live with his sister. She told me that he loved me and said he would find work and ask me to come back, but he said the same things so many times before that I couldn't believe him.

As time passed he made no move to improve himself and keep his promises. So that ended that marriage. Since then, I have been out with many boys, or young men, I should say, but all they think of is getting drunk and going on wild parties.

I had one boy friend who, I thought, was different. But when I was hurt in a wreck and had to stay in the hospital for over three months, he didn't once come to see or ask about me. After I came home he could have easily dropped in, but not a sign of him.

I'm only a poor girl, but even poor girls long to have friends. Sometimes I pray that I will find a man who will really like me for myself, but when I think of the past, I don't believe there are men who actually appreciate a girl for herself.

SKIPPER.

Fair-weather friends are never worth crying over, Skipper, and thinking about a disappointing past isn't going to make you feel more cheerful. It's true that selfish husbands do not contribute toward a happy marriage, so perhaps it is just as well that your first experiment with matrimony terminated as it did.

Almost any shortcomings in a man's nature are more easily forgivable than the domineering kind of selfishness with which some men unfeelingly regard the girl who believes that she is appreciated at least from the viewpoint of friendship.

It may help you to feel less bitter, and to acquire a more optimistic outlook on life in general if you make a definite change in your routine. You might drop all the men

friends you have, for instance, and see to it that you meet a new crowd of people and make new friends. Whenever we must get out of a rut, the thing that helps most is when we make a round about turn, and try to profit by previous experience.

Try not to feel so badly about the men friends you've had, my dear. I'm sure many of our readers will be glad to tell you that there still are quite a few young men left who, when they marry, wouldn't dream of allowing their wives to support them. Right?

As a beginning in that direction, here's a letter from Trumpeter Ted who tells us about his ideals.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Having read Blondie's letter, I feel it is necessary for us men to say a few words.

I am a musician in a dance orchestra. I'm not yet twenty, but have seen much of life, and know what I am talking about. I've had quite a number of "puppy" love affairs, but I seem to have recovered from them without serious damage.

To me, girls are the finest creatures God ever placed in the world. I idealize them, and for this reason other fellows think I'm a back number. Even what I have seen of the unfortunates who have slipped up in one way or another hasn't shattered my ideals and ideas about girls. If more people would look back on their own faults, they wouldn't be quite so eager to condemn those who have made mistakes they couldn't cover up.

No girl has ever gone home alone from a date with me, and I firmly believe that friendships between men and girls should not exclude some of the fine manners with which gentlemen used to treat the ladies of long ago. I have no objection to girls smoking, because I smoke myself.

I don't think it's fair for men to expect a girl to pet, if they are allowed to hold her hand, and I don't believe that a girl should be asked to make any sort of payment after a fellow takes her out. Petting is not necessary to popularity. The girl I go with is very popular and I know that she doesn't pet.

As for drinking, unless it is done very moderately at home, I think it cheapens a girl when she makes a show of herself in

public. Maybe I'm wrong, but as far as I know, fellows do not respect girls who don't know when to stop drinking when they are out.

Maybe some of the readers will think that I consider myself "God's gift to women," but that isn't so. I'm just a hard-working fellow with ambition, not good-looking, but try to make myself agreeable to the fair sex, and most people like me.

I merely wanted to show Blondie and other girls who are "sour" on the masculine members of humanity, that there are some men left who believe that a girl ought to be treated squarely with all the respect due them. TRUMPETER TED.

I hope that Ted's letter will make you feel more optimistic, Skipper and Blondie. It would be interesting to hear from men who agree and those who disagree with Ted. What's *your* opinion, young man?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I can't discuss my trouble with my friends, so I am coming to you for help. I have been happily married for a year, but the one thing that mars our happiness is our everlasting arguments. It's more my fault, I guess, than my husband's. He hates arguments, and though I've tried not to argue, I can't seem to stop it.

About three months ago we had a bitter quarrel because I argued with a friend of his about politics. I told my husband I was sorry and wished I could change. He thought he could make me change, and I said I was ready to try anything once.

The next time I started to argue about something, he said nothing, but when I least expected it, he punished me as if I were a naughty three-year-old. Afterward he kissed me and said he was sorry, but he wanted me to learn to stop and think before I started arguing.

He was quite right, but it meant that I would become either a "yes" woman, or a person who agreed for the sake of agreeing. So I still argue, though not as frequently. Of course, his method is humiliating. I have tried to explain to my husband why I sometimes find it very necessary to argue on some viewpoint, but he is very unreasonable and won't listen.

I couldn't possibly bear being treated this way, were it not for his obvious love for me, and I can't help but love him. In every way he is good to me. He gives

me anything I want within reason and is extremely thoughtful and otherwise kind.

His home was broken up because of quarrels, and he thinks that because I argue, (although seldom with him) that I am going to develop into an argumentative, quarrelsome woman like his mother.

I am ashamed of myself for allowing him to humiliate me so, but I don't seem to be able to leave him, and I should lose my self-respect if I became a "yes" woman.

Mrs. Brown, I can't leave my husband because I love him, and in other respects he is everything a woman would want in a husband, but I can neither reason with him, nor talk to him and tell him my views, because he considers it arguing.

Won't you, and some of the readers, tell me what I should do in this case? G.

Sometimes it seems that once a man's ideals are set, they are about as movable as the Rock of Gibraltar. One can't exactly blame you for not wanting to give up all your rights to your own opinions, my dear, but why not air your views in such a manner that your argumentative streak won't show?

A great many men seem to consider it their own special privilege to fill in time by discussing their pet theories and ideas. But the moment a woman shows a symptom along this line, they at once assume that she is "arguing." Maybe your husband belongs to this group.

It might prove effective if you would use your intuition as to when and how you should tackle your husband when you want to reason with him in order to hold your viewpoint against his. Try to talk things over with a smile; a smile goes farther than dead-seriousness.

Want to lend G. a hand and tell her your opinion, readers? Should a wife hold onto her own opinions, or "yes" a husband regardless of whether he's right or wrong?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: It's terribly hard for any girl to admit that the man she has loved and was engaged to, practically jilted her. That's what happened to me,

and I feel so badly that I'll take any advice you give me to help me forget. I think I'll never get over this blow.

Danny and I have been going together for the past four years. He is twenty-six now, and I am twenty-two. We planned to marry within six months after we announced our engagement, but he got a cut in salary, and thought we'd better wait a while until things picked up a bit. That was almost three years ago.

Since then, things have gone from bad to worse, it seems. Danny lost his job; he was laid off. Then he found another one, but the salary was low, and since then he hasn't saved a cent.

Three months ago we had a very serious talk. He's a proud sort of a fellow, and says that unless he can support a wife, he will not get married. I told him that I am willing to throw in my lot with him, and manage on whatever he makes, but he said we couldn't possibly get along.

I still love him, Mrs. Brown, and I don't think I will ever be able to forget Danny. Do you think I will? Since we'd broken off, I have been out with different young men, but I can't get Danny out of my mind. All the men I meet don't come up to the same high opinion I've always had of Danny. I've called him up since then and thought that if I again said that I'm willing to marry him, he would weaken, but he's still stubborn and determined not to marry until he can support a wife.

Our friendship and the time we've been engaged has been spent together in a beautiful relationship. I'm so blue and feel terribly lonely and sort of lost without him. My folks tell me to forget him, and that if he could give me up so easily he didn't love me, but I don't want to think that.

He has told me that if things pick up he will come around again, but I'm not at all sure that he will. He doesn't seem to mind when I go out with other boys. I have heard that he goes out with other girls occasionally.

What shall I do, Mrs. Brown? If I could forget him, I suppose I would feel better. But I still love him, and think of him. I try to interest myself in a man who is very fond of me; he's young and handsome, and quite sincere, but the moment he so much as touches my hand, I freeze up. Please help me. DOTTY BLUE.

You have all my sympathy, dear. It's very hard to keep a firm hold on

romance in the face of stern realities. The only sure remedy that you can rely upon to ease the ache in your heart and make your memories less painful, is to let Father Time's healing hand touch your heart. And even if you think that other men you meet do not measure up to your former sweetheart, you might give them a chance.

Meanwhile, though it is important to every girl not to wait too late to marry, you are still young enough not to worry about that angle of it. I'm inclined to agree with your folks that perhaps your former fiancé didn't love you quite as ardently as you loved him, if he preferred to break off the engagement and take a chance on losing you, rather than take you at your word that you were willing to share your life with him on his income without further prolonging the engagement period.

Long engagements are never to be recommended; there's too much wear and tear on a young couples' heartstrings, and poor business conditions make a long engagement even more of a gamble. Many young men would do well to realize that they might as well compromise with present conditions and take their happiness when they find it.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: For quite a while I have wanted to write to you, but I was afraid that you might think me a terrible girl. However, I need your advice badly.

Three years ago I met a fellow I liked very much. We went together for over a year, and he never even tried to get fresh. He told me that he loved me, and I believed him.

One night we quarreled and I told him I didn't want to see him again. For a week I didn't see or hear from him. Then I went over to a girl friend's home, and he was there. He had been drinking and asked to take me home. I said, "Yes," but to this day I wish I hadn't been so blind and foolish and had said "No," instead.

He didn't take me home, and I didn't really know where I was. What happened was one of those regrettable things. He said it was the only way he could make me marry him.

Afterward, I never wanted to see him again, and hated him. I told him so, too, and he stayed away. Two weeks later I met Bill, and we fell in love. Bill didn't know about the other boy, and I thought that I could forget him. But things didn't turn out that way at all.

I didn't want to have anything to do with the other boy, so I didn't get in touch with him when I found that I was in trouble. I planned to go to some institution and then put the baby in a "home" for adoption. You see, I didn't tell my mother about what happened, and I hope I never will have to, unless you think that I ought to.

When Bill asked me to marry him I changed my mind about going away. I knew he'd probably find out how things were, so I told him what had happened. He offered to take me away until everything was over, and that later we could be married. In the meantime, I could get away from home.

We told my mother that we were going to be married quietly and live with a relative of Bill's for a while. Bill took wonderful care of me, and after my baby was born and placed in a "home," we came back to our home town and I went to live with my mother. Bill is living with his sister.

I know that Bill loves me, Mrs. Brown, but he hasn't asked me to marry him. I love him too much to give him up. He bought me a wedding ring which I still wear; he comes to see me almost every night and buys me clothes, but never asks me to marry him.

My folks and our friends are beginning to wonder why Bill and I don't live together. I know I've done wrong, but many a nice girl makes a mistake for which she is sorry.

No one knows about the baby except Bill, and I know he would never tell. But I don't know what to do now that he never mentions marriage to me. We have been going on like this for four months, and I'm beginning to worry as to what I'll ever do. So far, I merely said that Bill and I can't afford to go housekeeping, and he said the same thing to his friends.

I can't hold out much longer, and I don't know what to do. Shall I tell my mother? She is, and always has been good

to me. I don't know what she will say when she finds out the truth. Do you think it would be better for me to tell her? I think if she knew, she would tell me to go to live with my aunt in another State and pretend I'd gotten a divorce from Bill. I thought of this myself, but if I do that I'll have to tell her the truth.

WORRIED CATHERINE.

It is a great pity when young girls make such tragic errors. But before you confide in your mother, why not talk it over with Bill? You might as well face facts and find out exactly where you stand with him, though it looks as if Bill had bitten off more than he can chew, if he is now reluctant to go through with the marriage. However, I feel sure that he must love you or he would not have looked after you before and after the baby was born. Maybe there is some other reason that he has not told you about that is preventing your marriage. Is he financially able to marry you or does he have to help his sister?

If he says that he has changed his mind about marrying you, I would advise you to tell your mother the whole story. Secrets of this kind generally manage to leak out sooner or later and it might prove less of a shock to her if she heard the story from you, instead of from a neighbor. If you could go away for a while, you might be able to work out your idea of getting an imaginary divorce, if only to avoid scandal for your mother's sake. It isn't easy to look trouble in the face, but it's better than going on from day to day with fear and anxiety destroying your peace of mind and shutting out all normal enjoyment of life.

Troubled At Heart, Norfolk, Virginia. Please send me your name and correct address. I will be very glad to advise you.

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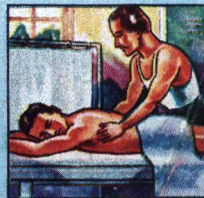
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