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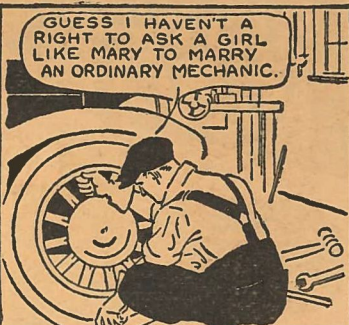
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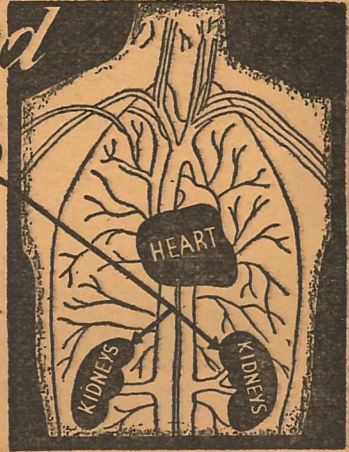
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If your kidneys slow down and do not function properly and fail to remove approximately 3 pints of Acids, Poisons, and liquids from your blood every twenty-four hours, then there is a gradual accumulation of these Acids and Wastes, and slowly but surely your system becomes poisoned. Kidney dysfunctions often may cause many troublesome conditions, such as Nervousness, Getting Up Nights, Leg Pains, Dizziness, frequent Colds and Headaches, Rheumatic Pains, Swollen Joints, Circles under Eyes, Backaches, Loss of Vitality, Burning, Itching, and Smarting, Acidity.

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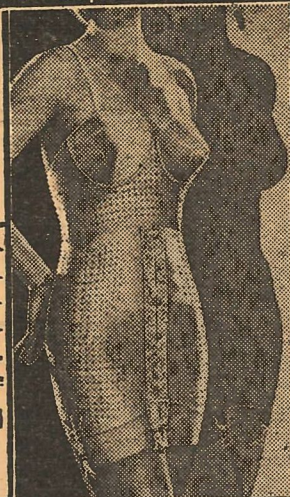
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# Remember My Beloved

*By Raymond Kresensky*

**REMEMBER** my beloved  
In the pattering of chilly rains,  
Remember her  
When nothing else remains.

When the sun shines brightly  
Or the moon climbs high,  
When the wind blows fiercely  
And the flowers die—

Remember my beloved  
When waves lift out of a troubled sea;  
Remember her,  
For my beloved remembers me.







# New Joy

By Hope Hall

A Novelette

## CHAPTER I.

SO you are going to marry Michael, are you?" asked Gregory Price with his twisted smile. "Well, all the more reason for enjoying life while you can. I can't imagine life being very amusing for you after that takes place."

His smile deepened as he watched

the blush on Kay Walters's cheeks deepen with indignation.

"You think you are being clever, always jeering at Michael, don't you?" she cried. "Well, you're not. You're only being cheap and nasty."

He laughed outright.

"If you were my wife I would anger you a dozen times a day," he declared. "With that color in your



cheeks you look more adorable than ever."

He left the window overlooking the lawn and approached the chintz-covered chair in which she was sitting.

He stood for a moment watching the graceful movements of her white, shapely hands that held her knitting, then he leaned over the back of the chair.

"There isn't a thing about you that is not beautiful," he murmured.

She tried to rise, but his hands, pressing her shoulders, kept her prisoner. His lips were brushing her soft hair, and the scent of it added fuel to the burning light in his eyes. His voice grew husky.

"Listen, Kay, if you had met me first——"

"It would have made no difference," Kay put in angrily. "Take your hands off me. Michael might return any moment."

"And if he did?" His tones were quiet, but ominous.

She sprang to her feet as he released her and faced him. A queer look had crept into his eyes, a look that caused her pulse to quicken.

He moved closer to her.

"If you were in my arms at this moment and he came into the room, shall I tell you what he would do?" He paused a moment to give effect to his next words, then: "He would do nothing."

Kay laughed scornfully.

"You say that because you do not know Michael," she declared.

"I say it because I do know him," was the retort. "I repeat that if he found me kissing you now he would do nothing, because he dare do nothing."

The conviction behind his words chilled Kay's heart. Some instinct told her that this was not mere bravado.

This man, with his handsome face and bold, glittering eyes, had some knowledge which was hidden from her; some knowledge which she sensed was bound up with the peace and happiness of the man she loved.

She felt suddenly afraid. If only Michael would come.

The door opened and Michael's mother, Mrs. Howard, entered the room. She was a delicate-looking, sweet-faced woman.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Price. I had no idea you were here."

"I just stopped in to have a chat with your son," was Gregory's smooth, though untrue, answer.

"He has gone down to the village, but will soon be back." Mrs. Howard seated herself and motioned to a chair. "Won't you sit down and have a cup of tea with us? Kay, dear, would you mind ringing the bell?"

"I was congratulating Miss Walters on the happy home she has with you, Mrs. Howard," said Gregory Price, sinking into a chair and following Kay's movements with his eyes.

Mrs. Howard smiled. She had a genuine affection for the girl who was going to marry her only son, and never ceased to be thankful that Michael had not chosen one of the pretty, empty-headed girls one saw so much of nowadays.

Michael was right-hand man to Robert Carruthers, millionaire sportsman, and was responsible for looking after all his property. Priory Lodge was owned by Carruthers, and in it Michael lived with his widowed mother. One of the rooms at the back of the house did duty as an office, and it was there that Michael transacted most of his business, with the help of Kay, who did the typing and kept the books.



Kay lived with the Howards and during the six months she had been there she and Michael had grown to love each other.

Life at Priory Lodge had been one long sweet dream for Kay, until the coming of Gregory Price. He had recently come from New York as one of John Silverton's guests.

John Silverton, a retired lawyer and a friend of Michael's, had introduced his guest one day, and since then Gregory Price's visits to Priory Lodge had been frequent. He was charming, witty, and gay, but there was something about him that repelled Kay, and, though he did not say so, she knew that Michael did not like him.

As the maid entered with the tea, Michael returned. He, too, had good looks, but they were the rugged, keen, bronzed good looks of the open-air man. He was dressed in tweeds, and between his strong, white teeth there was an old briar pipe, which he removed on his entrance.

His gray eyes darkened at the sight of Gregory.

"Afternoon, Price," he said.

The other nodded his greeting and smiled. For the first time Kay realized that there was mockery in that smile which hinted at some mystery. She wondered uneasily, what was at the back of his mind.

Michael turned to Kay. As his eyes met hers they lighted up with the warmth of his love for her. He never tried to hide his feelings. His love for Kay was the best thing that had ever come into his life, and he did not care if the whole world knew it.

At that look, all Kay's fears vanished.

When tea was finished, Michael lit his pipe again and turned to his mother.

"Those new chicks have just arrived from Saunders. Want to have a look at them?"

When the door had closed behind them, Gregory Price turned to Kay, who was gathering the tea things together on the tray.

"It is to be hoped that you, too, are interested in new chicks," he said.

She did not answer.

He rose and stood behind her.

"Perhaps you're not," he murmured. "Perhaps you are more interested in kisses."

The next moment he had swung her into his arms, and his lips were pressing hers with kisses that seemed to sear her very soul.

Then as swiftly he pushed her aside and stood tense, slightly crouching, like a tiger defending its kill. Kay recovered herself and she, too, became rigid.

Michael Howard was standing in the door. He stood like a statue, his lips taut and grim, his eyes cold with anger. Yet he did not move or speak.

Gregory Price's words flashed into Kay's mind. Why did Michael not say something? Was it fear that kept him inactive?

Gregory Price evidently thought so, for with a shrug and a sneering smile he relaxed.

"Well?" All the insolence at his command was conveyed in that one word.

Still Michael Howard did not speak, but he moved quietly and deliberately across the room till he was within a single step of the other man.

"Now we are going to enjoy some melodrama," Gregory Price murmured.

"Put them up." The words snapped like a pistol shot from Michael's lips.

"My dear man——"





"Put them up, you hound." There was no mistaking Michael's intention, and for once fear dulled the glitter in Gregory Price's eyes.

"Be reasonable——" he began. The words were choked back as Michael's fist crashed on his jaw.

*"So you think I want to marry you, do you?" His lips curled. "You little fool! If that is all you can offer, you have overvalued yourself."*

The force of the blow sent him into the fireplace, where for a moment, he lay helpless.

Still with that deadly deliberation, Michael lifted him up by

the collar of his coat and held him at arm's length.

"You cad!" His voice rang with



contempt and scorn. "You thought I was afraid of you, did you? Now you know whether I am or not. Get out—get out before I do something I may regret!"

He thrust the other across the room with a force that sent him stumbling to his knees.

Silently Gregory Price got to his feet. Then he turned and faced the other man, and the hatred on his face was such that it brought a cry of horror from Kay.

His lips twisted into a diabolical smile.

"You fool—you poor fool!"

That was all he said. Then, with a laugh that sent shivers down the spine of the girl, he vanished.

Kay turned to Michael Howard.

His face was pale and drawn, and there was a look in his eyes that brought her, sobbing with fear, to him. For a moment he held her close to him, then, kissing her, he released her and made as if to move away. But, in a passion of love and fear, she clung to him.

"What does he know, Michael? What will he do?" She wanted to share his secret.

"What he knows, every one will soon know," was his reply. "And that will mean the end of everything here—this job, this home, my mother's happiness—" He broke off and looked down at her. Then crushed her to him again. "Thank heavens, I have you, Kay. Whatever happens, I have you and your love, and with you beside me, I can face anything."

She looked up at him. "But what is going to happen?"

He began to pace the room. "You have heard of Daniel Forsythe?"

Kay considered for a moment.

"Do you mean the man who was convicted last year of fraud, and then died in prison?"

He nodded.

"That is the man, the great financier and swindler who made his name notorious throughout the country. He was my father."

"Oh, Michael, my dear." Pity and understanding surged through her heart.

"He did one decent thing in his life," Michael went on. "He kept his business affairs separate from his private life, and so spared his family public shame. Apart from myself, only one man knows he was really Richard Howard. That man is Gregory Price. Even my mother does not know to this day. She was seriously ill throughout the whole of the trial, and she still believes he died abroad. If she learned the truth, it would kill her."

Kay could not speak.

"It is going to mean the end of my job here. You know the sort of man Carruthers is—old-fashioned and bigoted, who will never employ any one whom the breath of scandal has touched. There is not a chance that he will continue to employ me when once he learns I am the son of Daniel Forsythe."

"But, Michael, you are not responsible for what your father did," Kay cried.

"In Carruthers's eyes the stain will be on me, and it would reflect on the good name of his family and his estate to have me in his employment. I know him."

He took a cigarette from his case and tapped it. Reaching for the box of matches on the mantelpiece, Kay struck one for him.

"But how did Gregory Price learn that you were Daniel Forsythe's son?"

"I don't know," he answered. "I know nothing about him, and neither does Silverton. He met him at his club, introduced by some



friend, and, when he learned that Price was anxious to spend a few weeks in the country, he invited him down here. The first time we were alone, Price said to me, in that cool way of his: 'Did you happen to know Daniel Forsythe?' I told him I did, and he smiled—you know the sort of smile. 'I thought so,' he said, 'and intimately, too, I expect.' I guessed then that he knew everything."

He flung away his cigarette and held out his hands to her.

"Whatever he does, he cannot take away the most precious thing in my life, darling—your love." He drew her to him. "That will always be mine, won't it?"

She raised her face to his.

"Always, Michael, always—till I die."

Later, in her own room, Kay told herself that it was not enough to share the trouble that might come upon Michael. She must prevent Gregory Price from telling others what he knew about the man she loved. But how could she do it?

Her brain worked with the speed of desperation.

Was Gregory Price really in love with her? If he was, then she had that power over him which every girl has over the man whose blood she fires. If that were so, then she would not scruple to use it.

Half an hour later, she was in the telephone booth in the post office. She dared not telephone from Priory Lodge, lest some one should overhear her.

As she waited for her number, she prayed that Gregory Price might be in. She dared not let the night pass without seeing him.

"Hello—Oak House? I want to speak to Mr. Price, please."

Finally, the familiar cynical voice was sounding in her ears.

How she hated it—yet she must disguise that hatred.

"Kay Walters speaking. I must see you alone this evening. Will you meet me somewhere?"

"So it is little Kay." She could imagine the twisted smile on his lips. "My dear, I would travel to the ends of the earth to meet you. Name the place and I'll be there."

She had already planned their meeting place.

"I thought the back road, by the edge of the woods."

"Excellent. And the time?"

"Nine o'clock." It would be dark then, but she was not afraid.

"Splendid. I'll be there."

As she replaced the receiver Kay was trembling, and for a moment her resolution wavered. Then her weakness passed. She had to go through with it for Michael.

"Hello, Kay, going out?"

Kay caught her breath.

The house had been so quiet as she descended the stairs that she had thought she would have no difficulty in getting out unseen.

But she had scarcely reached the bottom step when the door of Michael's office opened and he appeared.

"Only for a little while," she answered, wondering what she would say if he offered to accompany her.

He looked worried, but his eyes were tender as he gazed down into hers.

"Restless, sweet?"

She caught at the suggestion.

"Yes, dear. I want to think over things and——"

"Look here, darling, all worrying in connection with this matter is my business. You're not to trouble about it."



"Can I help it? I love you so much, dear."

She offered her lips to him and he kissed her hungrily, holding her to him with a strength that forgot for once the frailness of her slender body.

"If I should ever lose you, Kay," he murmured huskily.

He let her go at last and moved to the door and opened it.

"I wish I could go with you, sweetheart," he said, "but I've things that must be done. Don't go far."

Trembling, yet relieved, Kay left the house.

The air was close and heavy, the moon obscured by dark clouds. A muffled crash of thunder sounded and rumbled away into the distance.

She hurried on till trees began to loom overhead.

Then a man's form detached itself from the dusky background and Gregory Price stood before her.

He wore a loose-fitting raincoat and his slouch hat was tilted above his handsome face. His air of easy, devil-may-care romance clung to him, even in the semidarkness.

"I don't need light to tell me how beautiful you look," were his first words.

He was already drawing her close to him. She knew he had come expecting her to yield to his love-making.

Conscious of her power over him, she forgot her fear. His hunger for her was playing him into her hands. But at all costs, she must hold him off till her end was attained.

Heavy drops of rain began to fall with quick thuds on the dry road. Then followed a mighty roll of thunder overhead, and soon the drops were tapping on the leaves above like a miniature machine gun.

"We're in for a downpour," cried

Gregory. "Let's hurry—I know where there's shelter."

He took her hand and led her, running, along a deeply-rutted road which ran through the woods.

As the gloom of the great trees swallowed them she began to feel frightened.

"Where are you taking me?" she asked.

"There's a shack near here," he jerked out, tightening his grip. "Come on. We'll be soaked to the skin, if you don't."

They reached it a minute later. He pushed open the door and drew her into the pitch-black interior.

"Stand still a moment. There's a lamp here somewhere."

She heard the scrape of a match, and a flickering flame stabbed the darkness.

"Ah, there it is."

He moved to the wall on which, suspended by a nail, was an old tin lamp with a dented reflector. The glass chimney was missing and the flame could not be turned up very high without it smoking, but the light, small as it was, was sufficient to dispel the darkness.

He closed the door, while Kay, shivering, looked about her.

The shack was roughly furnished. There was a cupboard in the far corner. In the grate was a pile of ashes, and beside it a blackened kettle.

"The hunters use this place," he explained, lighting a cigarette. "I discovered it yesterday. Rather fortunate, as it happens."

A peal of thunder partially drowned his last words, and the rain beat furiously on the roof.

Kay shivered again and he laughed.

"It will soon be over. These thunderstorms don't last long. Not that I'm in any hurry to leave," he added, with a note of meaning in his



voice. "It isn't exactly a palace, but it is as good as one to me, when you're in it."

He flung his cigarette away and taking her hands seated himself on the edge of the table.

"So Fate brought you to me," he murmured softly. "I knew it would."

He was drawing her slowly to him.

The look in his eyes told her that she must hurry or the situation would be in his hands without her having accomplished anything.

She threw back her head, straining against his grip.

"Gregory, wait," she gasped. "I want to speak to you about Michael."

His eyes narrowed at the name.

"Gregory, I've come to plead for him. I know everything. You must spare him and his mother—it will kill her."

"So that's why you came." The passion in his voice had struck a soft note till this moment. Now it hardened.

Kay was breathing hard. She knew she was up against the biggest fight of her life.

"Gregory, listen. I'd sacrifice anything to save Michael—anything. Only leave him alone to live his life and do his work in peace. Think of his mother——"

"I'm not interested in his mother, and I'm interested in him only because I hate him."

"But why should you hate him?"

"Because you love him and because he struck me. He is going to pay for that blow."

She swayed toward him in an abandonment of self-sacrifice for the sake of the love that was burning in her heart.

"Oh, Gregory, let me pay the price."

He stared at her.

"What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean. I can't let him be ruined and broken. I will do anything you want. I will marry you to-morrow, if you will only spare him."

As she looked into his glittering eyes she knew she had failed.

For the moment anger raged within him. His pride was stung. He knew that she cared nothing for him. She was offering herself to him, not out of love, but as a sacrifice for the man she loved.

"So you think I want to marry you, do you?" His lips curled. "You little fool, that is the last thing I want to do. Marriage does not appeal to me. If that is all you can pay, you've overvalued yourself."

Her heart sank.

"Nothing you give me is going to stop me from having my revenge," he went on harshly. "Nothing, do you hear?"

He released her so suddenly that she staggered back against the wall, staring at him with wide eyes.

There was a tense silence. The rain had ceased, and the muttering of the thunder was dying away.

His eyes continued to fix their gaze on her with grim intensity, then his anger began to cool.

No anger could withstand such haunting, appealing beauty. His died, smothered by the passion that was rising once again in him, higher and higher.

She was the loveliest thing he had ever seen. She had offered herself to him.

Very well, he would take what she offered. But there would be no conditions.

His eyes betrayed his thoughts, for Kay was aware of what was in his mind, and as he slipped from the table to his feet she sprang erect, every nerve in her body tense.



As she did so her fingers touched something. It was the handle of a woodman's ax, propped against the wall.

Her fingers closed upon it. The very feel of it gave her new courage.

But there was no movement, only a deathlike silence.

The weapon slipped from her fingers, and the sharp thud of it woke her to life.

"You've killed him. You've killed



"If you come a step nearer to me," she cried, "I'll knock you down."

He made no reply. He barely saw the weapon. His eyes, blazing with passion, saw only the loveliness he desired. He stepped toward her.

She swung the heavy ax high above her head. Then with all her force—blindly, desperately—she struck.

She watched him reel, twist around on his feet, and fall to the floor.

Paralyzed, she stared down at him, waiting for him to move, to make some sound.

him!" The words seemed to scream through her brain.

She wanted to rush out into the night away from that ugly, huddled form, and for some moments she fought with her panic.

Then trembling, she knelt beside him, telling herself that he was only stunned. She peered down into the white face with its closed eyes, but in the dark shadow cast by the table she could see nothing but a blurred outline.

She must have more light.

Stumbling across the room, she reached for the lamp. She got it off





its rusty nail with some difficulty, but even as she did so her trembling fingers failed in their grasp.

The lamp had crashed to the floor, and before her paralyzed brain could prompt her to action the dry old timber, now soaked with oil, had caught the flame. In a moment the

*The throbbing of his pulses as he looked at her warned him that she was still the most desirable thing in the world to him, and that he would get caught again unless he kept an iron grip on himself.*

small place was ablaze.

Kay dragged madly at the body of Gregory, but she had not moved it far when the flames were upon her and, turning, she ran madly out of the shack.

Kay opened her eyes to find herself lying in the undergrowth. She raised her head and saw that the shack was a blazing furnace. The flames were leaping through the door and window. Even the roof



was ablaze and already beginning to sag. In a moment, she knew it would crash in with a thundering roar.

She stood swaying, fascinated with horror. Suddenly, she became aware of the distant voices of men who had seen the flames and were hurrying to the spot.

They must not find her there.

With a sob, she turned and fled into the shadows just as the first of the rescue party burst into the circle of lurid, leaping light.

Kay was back in her room at Priory Lodge.

No one had seen her reënter the house and she was left uninterrupted to carry out the only plan she had been able to think of.

She had saved Michael, but there could be no question of marrying him now. She had killed a man.

Even though the blazing shack would successfully cover up all trace of her secret, she knew that to let Michael marry her now would be to commit an unpardonable crime against him.

She must leave him, but before she went out of his life forever she must complete that night's work. She must let him know that he was free from all danger and that he could live his life in peace.

As she was searching for pen and paper, the silence of the house was broken by the sound of excited voices and hurried feet.

She could hear Michael calling out to his mother.

"There's a fire in the woods. I'm going out to see what has happened."

Then silence fell again as Mrs. Howard and the two servants went outside to watch.

This was Kay's chance to get away unseen. She had already filled

a suitcase with some clothing. Nothing remained to do but write that note.

DEAR MICHAEL: I hope this will not hurt you too much, but Gregory and I are going away together. We are going abroad. Please forgive me. You need have no fear that your secret will ever be made known. It is quite safe. KAY.

Putting it into an envelope, she sealed and addressed it.

Then she left the house.

## CHAPTER II.

Kay gazed at the gay, glittering scene before her with eyes that still held wonderment in their depths.

In her heart she couldn't get used to it, though she had been in the place three weeks now.

The Blue Persian night club was famous for its scenes of revelry, but to-night it seemed more sparkling than ever.

There was not an empty table in the place. The great room, with its blue-and-chromium paneled walls, was filled with guests dancing to the music of the most famous dance orchestra in New York.

The infectious mixture of lively music, gay laughter, bright lights and colors stirred Kay with a feeling of intoxication.

She was a very different Kay from the girl who used to run Michael Howard's office, dressed quietly in sports clothes.

The smart powder-blue tulle frock which she now wore, lent the right note of contrast to her warm, creamy skin and gleaming hair, giving to her a new allure that Michael had never seen.

She was resting between dances, looking about her, and telling herself she was glad to be there. In no other surroundings, she felt, could



she forget the cruel pain in her heart or the horror of her memories.

Surely Fate had taken a hand in bringing her there.

Her first thought on leaving Michael had been to get to New York. Some instinct told her that there, if anywhere, she could find forgetfulness.

She had met Sam Leven, owner of the Blue Persian night club, on the train. Intrigued by Kay's unusual beauty, he had got into conversation with her, and she had told him she was going to New York in search of work.

He told her he could offer her a job as professional dance partner—that is, if she could dance and was able to look after herself.

She had looked at Sam. She had liked his fat, comfortable, good-humored face. She had accepted.

A few lessons from a professional had put the finishing touches to her natural gift for dancing and now she was on the staff of the Blue Persian, quite happy in her work.

But the nights in her room were an agony of restless tossing, of heart-breaking yearning for the man she loved.

She rose from her chair as a guest approached. Placing a hand on his shoulder, she glided away with him across the polished floor, falling into conversation, a smile on her lips.

She seemed the embodiment of alluring, carefree happiness, and many eyes tried to catch hers.

Suddenly she became aware that one pair of eyes was regarding her, not with admiration, but with amazement that turned into contempt.

They were the eyes of Michael Howard.

The blood drained from her face, the room swam and she swayed.

Her partner stopped dancing.

"What is the matter? Are you ill?"

She recovered quickly.

"I'm sorry—just a touch of giddiness."

She shook her head at his suggestion that she should rest, and they moved on once more. She glanced again in the direction of Michael's table. There was no mistake. It was he.

He had turned to the girl who was with him and Kay heard her laugh happily; and an aching bitterness filled her. How quickly he had found consolation.

Michael and his companion were on the floor now. How splendid he looked in evening dress.

She saw him later pay the bill and escort the girl to the exit.

With a throb of wonderment she saw him speak a few words to his companion and then return alone.

He was coming toward her.

Though his eyes were still cold, there was a throb in his voice when he spoke that recalled his old tenderness.

"I thought you had gone abroad," were his first words. "What are you doing here?"

"I am employed here," she said unsteadily.

"That means Price has left you?"

She nodded miserably.

How could she tell him the truth without letting him know that Gregory Price was dead?

"When did he leave you?"

Her eyes filled with tears.

"I haven't seen him since the night I left Priory Lodge."

Michael had told himself many times that his love for her was dead, that a girl who could desert her fiancé for his enemy was beneath contempt.

But the throbbing of his pulses as he looked at her warned him that



she was still the most desirable thing in the world to him, and that he would get caught again unless he kept an iron grip on himself.

"Do you still love him?" For the life of him he could not help asking that question.

Her eyes flashed beneath the tears.

"I hate him!" she cried.

"Because he deserted you so soon?"

The words were cruel and wrung a cry of pain from her.

"I'm sorry," he apologized. "I didn't mean to hurt you. I know what it is to give all one's love to some one unworthy of it."

In spite of his apology, he was turning the knife in the wound he had inflicted.

She was crying as she suddenly caught his hand in desperation.

"Oh, Michael, listen to me," she cried. "I never loved him. I always hated him because he hated you. I have not seen him since I left your place, and I never want to see him again."

He wrenched his hand free.

He would have given anything to believe her, but he could not. He had learned his bitter lesson only too well.

"Once I would have believed everything you said," he cried. "Now I can believe nothing. Good night."

He turned and left her.

As Kay watched him disappear, her heart seemed to die within her.

A moment later Sam Leven's plump hand fell on her shoulder. He jerked his head sidewise.

"Come into my office," he said.

She followed him into his private office, a room comfortably furnished with deep easy chairs, boxes of cigars and a cocktail cabinet.

He shut the door.

"What has come over you to-night, my dear?" he asked in his blunt but kindly way. "You're not ill, are you?"

She blinked back her tears.

"I'm all right, Mr. Leven," she replied.

He nodded understandingly.

"Something you don't want to talk about, eh? Well, it's not my business, my dear, but I don't like to see that sad look on your pretty face. I've never seen it before. You always seemed such a happy thing. But there, we've all got our troubles hidden away somewhere."

A knock sounded on the door. Sam swung around.

"Come in."

The door was pushed open and a man stood on the threshold.

Kay staggered to her feet, staring wild-eyed, horrified.

"Gregory Price!" she cried.

He shut the door swiftly and stood with his back to it. There was astonishment in his eyes, but there was fear, also.

It must have been some instinct which had brought his name to her lips, for as he stood there, his appearance was very much changed from what she remembered it to be.

He no longer wore a mustache and his face, darkened by some preparation, seemed at first sight that of quite another man.

He was obviously in disguise, and angry that her intuition had penetrated it so swiftly.

Sam was looking from one to the other, amazed.

"What's this, Delane?" he asked. "What does she mean by calling you 'Gregory Price'?"

Gregory Price bit his lip. He moved toward them.

"I'll explain later, Leven." He paused, then continued: "Would you mind letting me have a few





*Michael threw open the French windows and bent over the girl huddled there. As he did so, a cry broke from him. It was Kay! Tenderly he lifted her in his arms and carried her inside.*

words alone with Miss Walters? You and I can do our business afterward."

Sam shrugged.

"Sure," he said. He turned to Kay: "That all right with you?"

She nodded, and he left the room.

Kay continued to stare at Gregory Price, a feeling of relief surging through her as she realized that the burden of crime was lifted from her shoulders.



In some extraordinary manner he had escaped death. How, she could not think.

He came closer to her, his eyes fixed as intently on her as hers were on him.

"What made you shout my name at the top of your voice?" he demanded.

She sank back into her chair.

"I thought you were dead," she said. "It was a shock, seeing you like that, so unexpectedly. I can't understand now how it is that you are alive."

In a few words he told her. His escape had been a narrow one. As he lay stunned on the floor of the shack, a creeping tongue of flame had licked at his outstretched hand. The stinging pain of it had roused him to consciousness, just in time to enable him to stagger to his feet and rush out, blinded with smoke, to safety.

That must have been while she was lying fainting in the undergrowth, Kay thought.

"What are you doing here, disguised like this?" she asked.

He did not answer. He was pacing up and down the room. He was asking himself a question.

Should he take her with him, now that he had found her again, or was the risk too great? He had always condemned as a fool any man who risked his safety for a girl.

But this one had got into his blood. If any girl was worth taking a risk for, she was. It was not only her looks—there was something else about her that set fire to his blood and stimulated him like wine. With her beside him, he could fight the whole world, if necessary. Without her—

His mind was made up. His restlessness vanished and he seated himself on the edge of the desk.

"I'll tell you when we are on board ship," was his answer.

"What are you talking about?" Kay demanded. "I'm not going on board any ship."

His lips twisted into the smile she knew so well.

"I think you are, unless I've misread you. And I've never misread a girl."

Experience had taught her that when his words veiled a threat he was not indulging in empty bluff, and alarm filled her as she waited for him to continue.

"You once promised to marry me on certain conditions," he said. "Does that promise still hold good?"

His words recalled the power he had held over the man she loved.

"What have you done to Michael?" she cried.

"Nothing—as yet. I've had other things to think about. Does your promise still hold good? My threat does."

She was back exactly where she was, as much in his power through her love for Michael as she had ever been.

"But you said that to marry me was the last thing you wanted," she reminded him.

"Absence makes the heart grow fonder, and more appreciative," he answered promptly. "I didn't know then that I needed you. I know it now. Nature had ordained that every man shall have a mate to help him in life. You were ordained to be mine."

"But I don't love you."

"You will. A girl always grows to love the man who needs her."

She thought of another man who once had needed her.

"What do you want me to do?" she asked, in a voice stifled with emotion.

"The *Amiano* sails for Rio de



Janeiro at midnight, and I shall be on her. Come with me. We can be married on board, and Michael Howard will never be troubled by me again. Refuse, and I'll write a letter to his employer before I leave this room. You can guess what will be in it."

Her suffering softened him for the moment. He took her hands and drew her to him.

"Can't you give me time?" she pleaded.

"I can't. That boat leaves at midnight, and I must be on her."

As he spoke the door opened, revealing the figure of Michael Howard.

Michael, rejoining his cousin, Mary Elton, had taken her home. Having come to New York for the week-end to be best man at her sister's wedding that morning, he had spent the rest of the day in Mary's company, glad of any distraction that would relieve the bitter thoughts that were haunting him, night and day.

He had given no sign that his unexpected meeting with Kay in the Blue Persian had shaken him, but it had.

In the taxi he could see her before him all the time—beautiful, desirable, and as he thought of her, doubts had begun to creep into his mind.

She had said she hated Gregory Price, that she had never seen him again. Was it possible that she was telling the truth?

By the time the taxi stopped outside Mary's home he had convinced himself that Kay was telling the truth.

Bidding a hasty good-by to Mary, he ordered the driver to take him back to the Blue Persian as quickly as possible.

In answer to his question, a waiter

told him that Miss Walters was in Mr. Leven's office and showed him the way to it.

Eager and impatient, he could not wait for an answer to his knock.

He opened the door, but he never took a step into the room.

He knew the man was Gregory Price.

At the sight of Michael, Kay shrank back, jerking her hands from Gregory's grasp.

She stood trembling, tongue-tied.

The very picture of guilt, thought Michael contemptuously.

She took a faltering step forward, her hands reaching out toward him.

"Michael!" she whispered his name tremulously.

He kept silent. His eyes—scornful, bitter, accusing—told her all he thought of her.

There was no need for words and without opening his lips, he turned, and the closing door hid him from sight.

Gregory Price had not moved.

He waited, watching the girl silently with eyes that seemed to smile in triumph. The game was in his hands.

After this, he knew, she would struggle no more.

"You'll come, Kay?"

She nodded slowly. "I'll come."

He lost no further time. Going to the desk, he scribbled down an address.

"Meet me there at eleven o'clock. Can you do it?"

She glanced at it.

"I can, if Mr. Leven will let me go at once."

"I'll fix that. You slip off now—and mind, not a word to any one."

Kay had left the office hardly a minute when Sam Leven entered.

"Well, Delane," he said, taking a cigar from his waistcoat pocket, "I suppose you've come about that



deal. But I thought you were coming to my house in the morning to discuss it."

The other shook his head.

"I couldn't wait till then, Leven. The deal's off. I'm going abroad."

Sam looked at him.

"Abroad? When? Where?"

"First thing in the morning. I'm going to Paris," said Gregory, deliberately.

Sam puffed his cigar.

"Something better on, eh? Well, I hope there's money in it." He paused, looking at the other shrewdly, then: "What made Kay call you 'Gregory Price'?"

Gregory reached for his hat.

"When one has more than one love affair, Leven, it is sometimes convenient to have more than one name."

Sam, who had no idea that the other had a much more urgent reason for changing his name, gazed after his disappearing figure angrily.

"So he's that sort, eh," he muttered. "Glad that deal's off and I'll see to it he doesn't lay his hands on Kay, either."

He went to look for her. But Kay had gone.

Michael Howard was sitting before the fire in the drawing-room at Priory Lodge. With him was John Silverton, the lawyer with whom Gregory Price had stayed.

It was a wild night outside. A storm had been raging for two days and had not yet subsided. The wind howled about the house.

John Silverton had dropped in a few minutes before, on his way home from the station.

"I thought you might be interested in the closing chapters of the Gregory Price mystery," he said, leaning back in his chair as he slowly stuffed his pipe with tobacco.

Michael Howard was not smoking. He gazed into the fire, looking very thin and worn. His face tightened at the other's words.

"You remember my telling you," John Silverton went on, "that the night of the fire Price came in looking very groggy, as if he had had a shock. No sooner had he entered the house than some one phoned him. What the message was I didn't know, but it seemed to terrify him for the moment. The next morning he had vanished."

Michael nodded.

"I remember."

"It happens that the Commissioner of Police in New York is a friend of mine," the other continued. "I spent the day in town and had lunch with him. That is how I got the news I'm going to tell you."

His next words caused Michael to start.

"Do you remember the Daniel Forsythe case? I expect you do. Forsythe was a chap who, in spite of everything, always claimed my sympathy, somehow. There was something big about him. It was well known that he had a partner, equally as guilty as himself, but nothing could extract a word from him concerning the identity or the whereabouts of this partner, and he died in prison, still keeping his secret. The police, however, have never ceased their investigation all this time, and at last, a few weeks ago, they succeeded in solving the mystery. The wanted partner was Gregory Price."

Michael gasped. So that was how Gregory Price knew the secret of Daniel Forsythe's identity.

What a treacherous cur he was to threaten to betray the son of the man who had stood by him so loyally.



"Well, what happened then?" he asked impatiently.

"It seems that Price had a pal who was in touch with police activities, and it was this man who phoned him at my house, telling him his number was up unless he vanished. Price did. The police lost trace of him for some weeks and then learned—too late, as it happened—that he went to New York, changed his name, and adopted some sort of disguise. He hoped he had shaken them off and could carry on with his business of company promoting under this new name—Maurice Delane. Finding the police were getting hot on his trail again, he suddenly decided to make a bolt for Rio de Janeiro. He got away all right—on board the *Amiano*."

"The *Amiano*!" Michael said. "Wasn't that the ship that foundered off the Jersey shore last night in the storm?"

"That is the one," said John Silverton. "Terrible business it was. Not a soul on board saved."

Michael's face had gone deadly white. He did not speak.

The other glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece and rose to his feet.

"Well, it's getting late and I must be going. Good night, Howard."

When John Silverton took his de-

parture, Michael Howard suffered the bitterest anguish his soul had ever known.

He took a letter from his pocket and reread it slowly. He had received it the morning after the *Amiano* had left port. It was from Gregory Price:

I swore I would have my revenge for that blow and now I am taking it. I promised Kay that I would say nothing about your father. I'm not going to. But I can hurt you even more by telling you that Kay loves you—always has loved you. She is coming with me to-night on condition that I spare you. She loves you, but I've got her. You will never see her again. That is my revenge.

With the letter crushed in his hand, Michael Howard moved about the room in torture. The groan that burst from his lips died as, in a lull in the storm, he heard a strange sound outside the French window.

He swung around in time to see a girl crumple up and drop to the ground.

In an instant he had thrown open the windows and was bending over the huddled form.

As he did so a cry broke from him. It was Kay.

Tenderly he lifted her in his arms and carried her in and laid her gently on the couch, brushing away



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the wind-blown hair from her white cheeks. At the sight of the tear stains on her closed eyelids, he bent and kissed her.

He called his mother, and with the help of a maid, Kay was put to bed.

Some time later Mrs. Howard came to Michael and told him Kay had recovered consciousness and was asking for him.

Quietly he entered the room and tiptoed to the side of the bed.

Her eyes were closed and he thought she was asleep.

At last she opened her eyes. Then clinging to him, she began to sob bitterly.

"Darling, what is the matter?" he cried. "You are safe now."

"Oh, Michael, I've failed," she sobbed. "I tried to save you, but I couldn't."

Though he did not understand, he soothed her with tender words and gradually drew from her what had happened.

For Michael's sake she had meant to go away with Gregory Price, but by the time she had reached her room and got ready, it was very late. Taking a taxi, she had told the man to drive as fast as he could to the address Gregory Price had given her.

He had done so, there had been a bad collision with another car, and she had known no more till she woke up in the hospital. They detained her till that afternoon.

She was filled with anxiety lest Gregory Price should have taken the revenge on Michael because she had not kept her promise, and as soon as she was released, although she still felt very weak, and her injured arm was still swathed in bandages, she had come to tell Michael, to be at his side should the worst have happened.

"Oh, my love, can you ever forgive me for doubting you?" he cried huskily when she had finished.

The dawn of a new hope began to creep into her eyes.

"Oh, Michael, you do love me, then?"

He crushed her to him.

"I've never stopped loving you, sweetheart, and I never will."

Still fear—fear for him—lingered in her heart till he told her that Gregory Price would never trouble them again.

She was silent then for a time, until suddenly she slipped her arms about his neck.

"He taught me one thing, Michael," she whispered.

"What is that, sweet?"

"That I could not go on living without your love. If that ceased, I should die."

He smiled down tenderly.

"Then you'll live forever, darling."

As their lips met, the past died, giving birth to a new life, radiant with joy.







# Ballerina

By Ethel E. Bangert

**T**HEY'RE mighty nice-lookin' but you'd never take them for show people. Look more like a bunch of coeds out for an early class," mused the broad-shouldered, tall young redhead, hunched under the weight of a great camel's hair overcoat.

He was watching the group of girls that were tumbling out of the Ballet Russe special into the chill early-morning air of the Los Angeles Southern Pacific station.

"Only one thing would give them away besides that battered hand luggage, and that's their feet. Gee, that toe-out waddle of theirs would stamp

them as *ballerinas* the world over," he reflected.

"Ah, there she is!" he said aloud as a tall, vividly blond girl with oddly shaped eyes rushed by. "Pardon me, Miss Planova." He put out a strong hand to detain her.

"Yes, what is it?" The soft-spoken words were almost a shadow of sound.

Directing the gaze of his unusually clear-blue eyes on her he said:

"I'm Bill Morley, of the Los Angeles *Messenger*. I'm here to get a human interest story for our feature page. As the prima *ballerina* of your company, you're good copy



and we want to know more about you."

A shrug of the slender shoulders and she replied:

"It's much too early for an interview. I must have my breakfast before I could think of answering questions."

She looked up at him, her eyes like drenched blue pansies, staring, taking him in, his fiery hair, his articulately collegiate clothes, his sureness of manner.

"Well, I'll trot along with you as far as the restaurant, if you don't mind. I could use a cup of coffee myself."

"Come along then. Perhaps you can show me the best place to eat."

She stepped forth in her flat-heeled shoes as though marching at the head of life, flaunting her youth as a priceless banner.

For she was young, very young. "She looks," thought Bill gazing at her sidewise, "in that yellow dress, like a daffodil, sending up its sharp, small quick flame. What a honey!" But there was something in her eyes that he did not like. In their shadowed dark-sapphire depths he caught just a flash of it. It was in the eyes and in the too sensitive mouth. Fear! That was it, and it did not become her. Unlike most of her countrywomen, she had no tragic beauty, and that look in her eyes seemed to take from her a bit of her natural luminousness and some of her light grace.

In the quiet intimacy of a small side street restaurant, Bill sat surveying her with the same intent abstraction with which he viewed anything that gave him pleasure. Reaching for the check he said impudently:

"Aren't you afraid you'll put on poundage eating like that every day?"

His companion looked up with amazement and then countered:

"What's the matter? Does the size of the check frighten you? Don't worry, I pay for my own meals."

Bill's face went two shades hotter than his rust-red hair.

"Heck, no," he exploded, "I was just kiddin'. I thought dancers had to go easy on the calories. Their figures, you know."

The girl pushed a strand of her lustrous hair away from the ivory oval of her face and replied:

"You evidently know very little about dancers, Mr. Morley. We eat, eat, eat. Nothing can stop a dancer when she's hungry."

"I noticed you didn't slouch along any gettin' over here—for that matter neither did I. Not to change the subject—but do you know, you speak unusually clear English for a Russian?"

"I'm not Russian, and about the English—well, I'm going into motion pictures soon and I've spent a lot of time studying it. I had to."

"Moving pictures, eh? I thought that was against the policy of the ballet?"

"It is. But we disband after tonight's performance and instead of taking a vacation, I'm going to make this picture. But I'm afraid I'll have to ask for my check, Mr. Morley. I have so much to do before the performance this afternoon."

"Forget about that check, will you?" Bill answered steadily and added, "Gee, don't run off yet. I haven't gotten my interview. You've been too busy eating for me to have the heart to disturb you."

"No, I'm sorry but I'll have to dash, have a lesson to take and a rehearsal to live through. Suppose you come to my dressing room—oh, about a half hour before the performance this afternoon."



And with that she was gone, leaving Bill with the memory of a brilliant smile and grave, wide-spaced eyes that had suddenly become the most beautiful gems he had ever seen.

"Gilt-edged," muttered Bill to himself as though in a coma. "Gilt-edged and twice as valuable. Oh, glory, she's beautiful."

Bill had a moment of simple pain. He had been so blasted sure of himself always, and now a slim vision of a girl with fear in her eyes and a smile like the sun coming from behind a cloud, made life something to wonder about. "Golly, prima ballerina," he thought. "That's about as high as she can go in that outfit, and I bet she isn't twenty years old. She'd turn a cold shoulder on my little three thousand a year, that would be a mere pittance to her. Heck, I bet all dancers have illusions of grandeur." He kicked savagely at an inoffensive paper bag that lay on the sidewalk before him.

Bill stopped before a drug store mirror to adjust his tie. He looked closely at the heavy lines about his mouth. "I didn't see those when I shaved this morning," he said and added, "Boy, oh, boy, has that dame broken the old pump in pieces?"

He paced through the next few hours, restless, his heart hammering hard within him every time he thought of the lovely young dancer. The effort it cost him to make his way, quietly, slowly along the street, when it was nearly time to meet her again, showed in his tense expression, he felt so urgently the desire to race to her side.

Bill's step was confident. More so than he felt. His newly found enthusiasm for the theater was tinged with uneasiness. But he made his way back stage and stopped a moment to watch the inferno of

canvas drops, iron bars, lights flashing without reason. And in the midst of all this madness, American stage hands and Russian musicians and directors fighting to bring art and beauty from unutterable confusion. Bill knew that when the socially correct audience came streaming down to their high-priced seats all would be running as smoothly as though poured through oil. But now, an hour before curtain time, the tension was almost tangible. As he stood there, half hidden by unused scenery, two low-pitched voices reached his ears.

"I want no mistakes, no slips this time. Do you understand? I want her, I want to marry her but she'll never have me as long as she can dance. I want her to-night, is that clear?"

"I understand. Don't worry, my friend, I won't make the mistake I did in San Francisco. She'll marry you, she'll be glad to, after to-night. I can't fail you, I need the money."

"You'll get it, you'll get it! As soon as she's my wife, you'll have all the money I promised you. But I must have her, I must!"

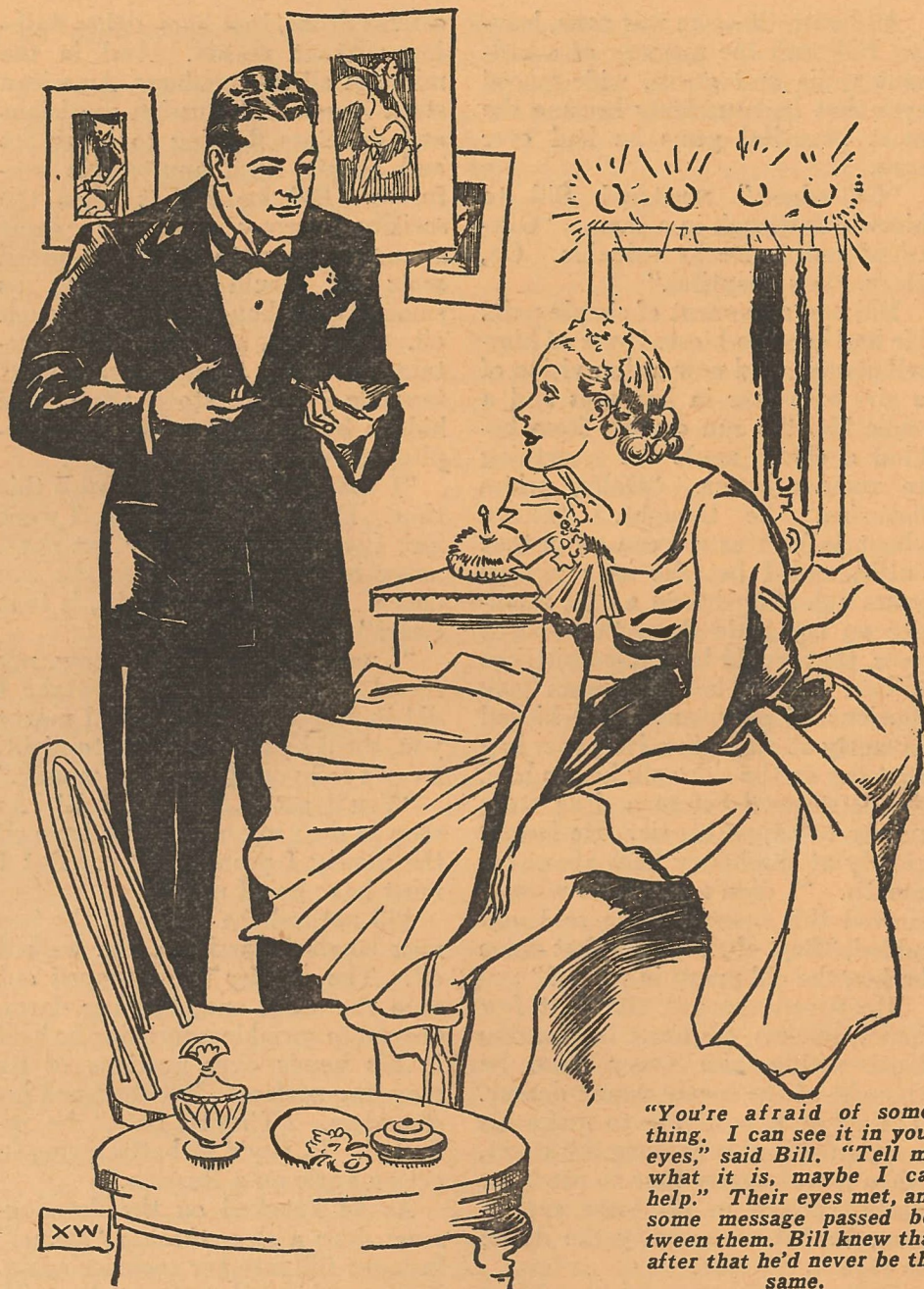
Bill noticed the larger of the two men laughed harshly as he walked off. The smaller man stepped out onto the stage and, bending down, seemed to sprinkle something he held in his hands over portions of its gleaming surface. Bill shrugged his shoulders. "They're nuts," he reflected. "A guy'd go batty trying to get an angle on a Russian."

As he knocked on the dressing-room door a clear throaty "Come!" brought Bill into her presence again. He found himself staring at her with his heart pounding in his temples.

"Hello, Mr. Morley. You're very much in earnest about your work, aren't you?"

Bill smiled and when Bill smiled





"You're afraid of something. I can see it in your eyes," said Bill. "Tell me what it is, maybe I can help." Their eyes met, and some message passed between them. Bill knew that after that he'd never be the same.

his mouth became for a time a young boy's mouth—gay, reckless, disarming.

"Keeping track of you isn't work. That's a pastime fit for a king and

it suits me right down to the last brick in the pavement."

The girl's smile flashed forth, her dimples dancing in her cheeks.

"You are one of the few gallant



gentlemen left in your profession, I see. Now, I'm going to ask a favor of you. It's only a few moments until the bell and here I'm not even dressed. I wonder if you'd mind, if I asked you to step in behind this screen for a few seconds while I make up? It's a funny thing to ask you to do but if you associate with dancers for very long you'll find they'll ask you to do lots of funny things."

Bill gulped and color rushed into his face, his pulse jumped about in an alarming manner as he allowed himself to be placed behind the large screen.

"Well, let's get this interview started," he said in a savagely hostile voice. "Reporter, eh? I'm nothing but a mutt," he said to himself as he got out his pad and pencil. "A love-sick mutt!"

"Oh, please don't be angry! I'll only be a few moments. If you want to get started then, my name is Marco Muir and I'm nineteen."

"Marco Muir?" Bill stared at the screen.

The door of the dressing room slammed and Bill turned around in his small allotted space. What he saw caused his eyes to bulge. For before him was a mirror that pictured everything that the screen denied him. A small silver-haired old woman was fluffing out a gauzy white costume and the girl sat in her seminude loveliness, putting on stage eyelashes. She stood up to allow the dresser to slip her into pink tights and Bill gripped hard onto his pad and pencil to keep from knocking the screen over.

He looked at her and loved her. Loved her so much that it was sheer agony; he loved her slim perfection, he loved her eyes, deep-blue, the pupils fear-filled and miserable; he

loved her hair, the way it shimmered as though the sun was always shining down on it. He wanted to kiss her, to caress her and more than anything he wanted her for his own. For always and ever. Instead he had to call out, controlling his voice:

"Let me get that straight, Marco Muir? Why the 'Miss Planova' then and how come them hair and eyes? You can't fool me, baby. You've got the mark of Russia all over you."

"No, you're wrong, Mr. Reporter. I'm an American. Born in Washington, Oregon. My grandmother was a Russian though, and I learned a little of the language from her. Studied dancing in Paris and we all take Russian names. It's all part of the tradition—do you see?"

"Yes, yes, I see." Bill had put the pad and pencil away. He plunged his hands deep into his pockets. If he didn't he would stride out and take her in his arms, for Marco was breathlessly lovely in her swan Princess costume that the dresser had sewed her into. She struck a pose before the mirror, and then, satisfied, sat down and turned to put on the all important slippers.

"It might interest your readers to know we use half a dozen pairs of these a month," she said, waving one narrow pink slipper in the air as she dismissed the dresser with a petulant gesture. "Are you writing all this down?" she queried when Bill did not answer.

"Yes, I'm writing it down on my heart," he rejoined. "Can I come out now?" he asked as if he were six instead of twenty-six.

"Yes, come out. I'm sorry, it must have been stuffy behind there."

"On the contrary, it was very refreshing."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Well, Miss *Ballerina*, did you



ever look behind that screen? There's a very accommodating mirror back there."

"Oh, you—you!" Marco's face lost all color. "You're just like the rest." She broke off, her lips stiff.

"I hope so," teased Bill. "But do you know it's surprising that some women should be so much lovelier than others. Skip it though, little one, I won't tell. Say, can I help?" Bill indicated with a nod of his head the slow slipper mending process. For Marco had carefully placed cotton between her toes and in the toes of her slippers, and she was now awkwardly trying to embroider a thin spot on the top of the satin.

"Yes, you can. I allowed Madam Lou-rose to go out and now I see these threads are thin." Some of the color had returned to her face and she seemed to have forgiven Bill his tauntings.

"Well, I have chased ambulances and rescued kids from burning buildings, so this ought to be easy. What's it all about though? I think they're quite pretty as they are. Gee, but I'd hate to jam my toes into a thing like that," he groaned softly.

"This, my intelligent young friend, is for non-skid purposes. A slippery spot on the stage is one of the things that send a dancer mad. That's what makes us so serious before we go on. Why we rub our points in the rosin box."

"Points?" Bill's voice sounded as strange as he looked kneeling before

Marco, her foot on his knee as he clumsily jabbed entangled threads into the narrow tip.

"Yes, points, toes!" She sighed. "Oh, dear, you and I are worlds apart."

"You spoke just now, of being afraid of falls. You're afraid of something else. I can see it in your eyes.

Gee, I know this sounds awfully fresh, but I may never see you again, and I want you to know it. I love you, loved you the first moment I set eyes on you this morning, and I want you to trust me. Tell me what has frightened you, maybe I can help. I am an honest man, really!" Bill's face, good-looking, clear-eyed and young, looked earnestly into her own. Their eyes met and something, some message passed between them. Bill knew that after that he'd never be the same.

Suddenly, she gripped him by the shoulders. In a tight voice she cried:

"Oh, I am afraid, horribly afraid. I've promised to marry a man I don't love. I promised him months ago, but I can't marry him—I can't. He asked me and asked me and at last I said 'yes.' Now I'm afraid. He's a brute and I hate him, I hate him!" Marco was fast becoming hysterical.

"You haven't much use for your future husband, have you?" put in Bill calmly.

"No, I haven't. I saw him kick a dog to death in Paris one night, because the little thing insisted on following us. And I saw him knock





a man to the ground for daring to ask him for money. I don't know what power, what fascination, he has for me. But I'm so afraid of him. He has it all arranged for us to elope

after to-night's performance. He's even threatened to kill me if I evade him this time!"

"The boy's got it bad."

"Don't joke, Mr. Morley. You here in America don't realize the earnestness of an European lover."

Bill felt suddenly cold to the heart. He got to his feet slowly, his face tender and distressed. But his voice was light enough when he replied:

"Aw, heck, he's a push-over, along-side of our really tough guys. We'll put him away easy. You leave it to Uncle Bill." But he didn't feel anything but misery as he looked long into her misty, frightened eyes.

At the click of



When finally the curtain fell, Bill dashed out and carried Marco off stage.

"Darling, darling," he moaned, his face tight with fear, "tell me you're not hurt."



the lock in the door, they turned around. And suddenly, Marco seemed to lose all inclination to confide in any one.

Towering above the middle of the flimsy door stood a man, quietly waiting for them to notice him. He wore a beret, plaid trousers and a tan silk shirt that stretched tightly across his powerful chest. He looked to Bill, like a professional weight lifter in the circus. He must have been observing them for some moments, for he said:

"I see you are ready, Marco. You'd better leave your guest and come on stage. The bell is due to ring."

There was a long pause while Bill studied the dark face before him. He belonged in crowded smoky rooms, in dark swarms of angry peasants, not here in the clean excitement of the theater. His hands were familiar, hauntingly so. Hair-covered, stubby, dark, they certainly didn't look like the hands of a dancer.

"I'm ready, Nicky. Nicky, meet my new friend, Mr. Morley, of the Los Angeles *Messenger*. Mr. Morley, our art director, Nicholas Bojensky."

"A pleasure, monsieur." The upward inflection of his voice with its clipped consonants caused Bill to look at him more closely. He'd seen and heard that guy somewhere before, but where?

Bill had seen people badly frightened in his life. One or two in the morgue trying to identify smashed-up relatives, another on his way to the chair, and it was not pleasant to observe. But he had never seen any one as frightened as Marco. Her dark eyes were wide with terror and her small hands fluttered like imprisoned birds as she gathered up a few things from her dressing table.

"Marco, before you make any other engagements, remember you are to dine with me after the performance."

"No, no, Nicky, I'm sorry but I have already made other plans."

The Russian lighted a cigarette with deliberate movements and shrugged powerful shoulders.

"It does not matter."

But Bill who was watching his bright, dark eyes decided it did matter a very great deal that Marco had refused his invitation.

"The curtain must be up," Marco said breathlessly, as the violin's thinned and distant humming of the theme of the ballet reached them. A bell jangled. Marco walked out and down the iron staircase. Nicholas turned to Bill and said slowly:

"Monsieur, I do not think it advisable for you to stay any longer. You have your interview, yes?"

"Is that in your department, too?" asked Bill steadily.

"That is none of your concern." The man's hard eyes burned with anger as they bored into Bill's mocking ones. "I do not want you around Miss Muir, you will make her nervous."

"Let's leave that up to Miss Muir," said Bill, walking past the Russian and sauntering down into the wings.

He watched Marco and her partner, dancing, smiling across the footlights. Suddenly, it was the partner's moment. With a *tour en l'air* and a leap he caused Bill to stare at him in amazement. As a former Stanford jumper, Bill couldn't believe his eyes. And then, just as swiftly it was Marco's spot.

Before he realized what it was all about, the entire backstage population surrounded Bill in the wings. Marco was hurt! Her partner had



let her slip in one of their turns but so swiftly had she pulled herself together and danced on, without losing a beat of the throbbing melody that, Bill wagered to himself, not one in the audience guessed her pain.

For she was in pain. When she whirled past Bill, he heard her breath catch in a sob and saw the tears coursing down her cheeks, leaving silvery paths on her make-up. His heart ached for her and when finally the curtain fell, he dashed out, carried her off and lowered her gently into a chair.

"Darling, darling," he moaned, his face tight with fear.

"Here, let me rub her ankle, she's just wrenched it!" One of the other dancers pushed him aside.

He dashed to get her a glass of water.

"I told you to fix it so she'd get hurt, really hurt. What do you mean by double-crossing me?" reached his incredulous ears from the sheltered alcove that contained the water cooler.

"I did fix it, honest. I put wax flakes on her part of the floor. I almost broke my own neck, too. I didn't support her right, my *entrechat* was off timing. What more can you ask? I've thrown everything to the winds for you, now I want my money!"

"You'll get your money, don't worry about that. Marco will marry me now. She isn't helpless but she can't dance and she can't support herself. No, she won't get away this time! I've followed her for eight months and tried everything else. This has to work. When Nicholas Bojensky wants one certain woman, he gets her."

"Well, let's hope so, Nick."

Bill waited to hear no more. He ran back to Marco, spilling much of the water as he ran. He had the

owner of that harsh voice clearly placed in his mind now. It was Marco's unwanted suitor! Things didn't look so good for Marco, even Bill, with all his boyish optimism had to admit that fact.

"Oh, it's nice to play the invalid for a change." Marco, looking lovely in a deep-flame hostess gown, turned to Bill with a bright smile.

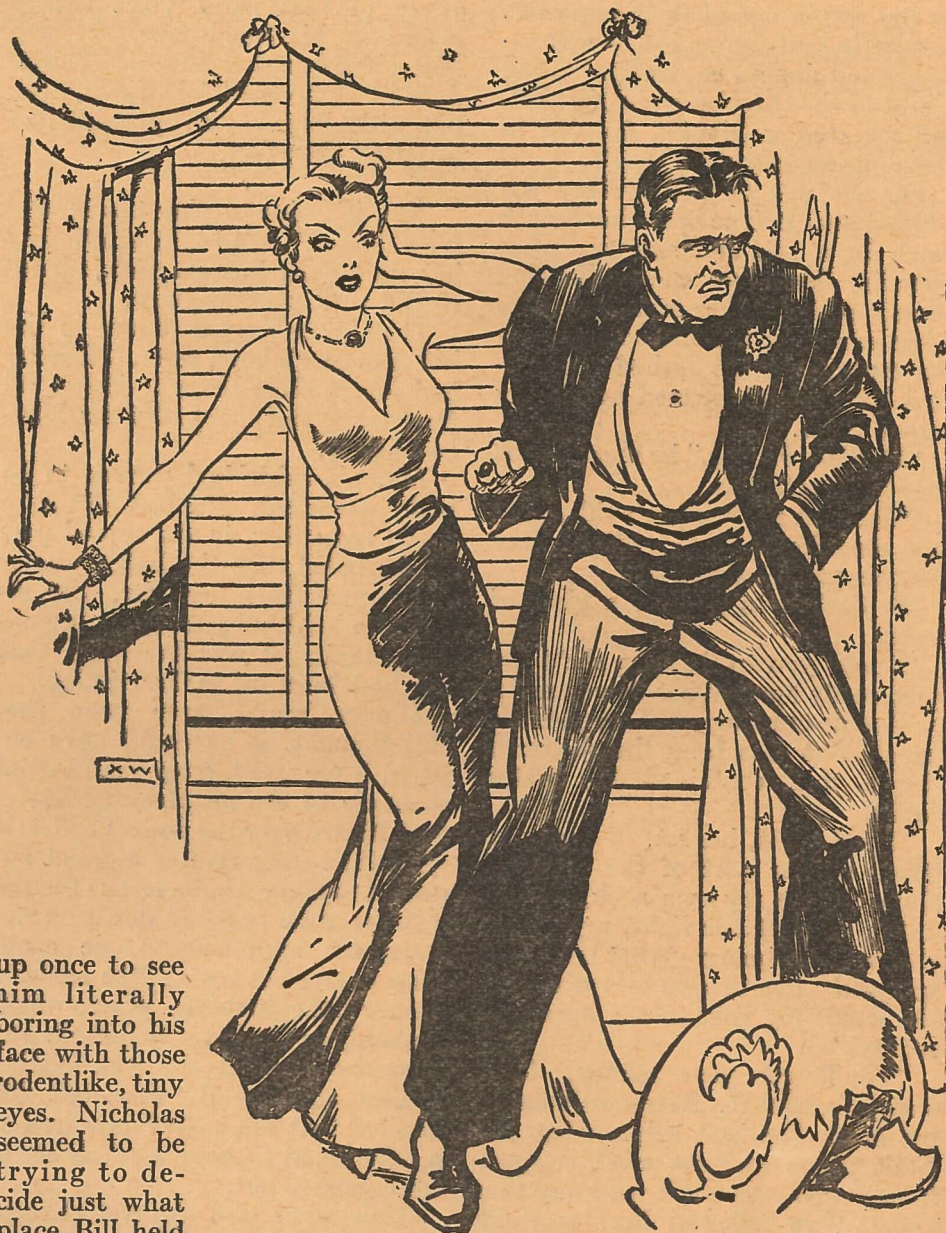
They were having dinner in the ballet master's hotel suite. Nicholas had joined them there at dinner, all tenderness and sympathy for Marco's injury.

Marco's ankle had proven to be badly wrenched. She had offered to go on regardless, in the second part of the ballet, but the ballet master had turned down her offer. She refused to hold her partner as responsible, saying it was her fault, that she had been off in her timing.

Dinner would have been fun, Bill thought, if he could have enjoyed it for itself, from the Martini cocktails to the last foolish chatter with Marco over the perfect coffee; if Nicholas's dark glances had not appeared to make Marco feel as though a finger were pressing down on her innermost apprehension, he could have enjoyed it with blithe inconsequence and casualness. Marco would probably not admit it to herself, perhaps she thought she was looking cynical and worldly wise, but Bill decided that she looked as scared as a man about to have a whole set of teeth yanked out.

They went into the restful room that was the library of the suite and before the huge fire talked of calm everyday happenings that served to emphasize the ugly feeling of fear that hung over them. The Russian seldom entered into the conversation and seemed to grow more tense with each passing half hour. Bill looked





up once to see him literally boring into his face with those rodentlike, tiny eyes. Nicholas seemed to be trying to decide just what place Bill held in his scheme of things. He stared, fascinated at the Russian's now chalk-white countenance, then he turned to Marco and said:

"Well, Miss Muir, if you'll excuse

*The men stood facing each other, Nicholas with head thrust forward, legs spread apart, his left hand slipping toward the inside of his coat pocket. "No, you don't," yelled Bill, and jumped upon him.*

me I think I'll run along. You can find me at the Hotel Statley, if you need me."





"Oh, must you go?" Marco looked worried but she leaned on his arm and walked with him to the door. Nicholas, his eyes

narrowing with surprise at her actions, followed close behind and watched her intently.

Bill put his finger on his lips and motioned to her that he intended to stand in the hallway. Marco left the door a tiny bit ajar and he could hear

their slow progress back into the living room.

"Marco, I have been patient with you for eight months, and I am through fooling around," Bill heard Nicholas say. "I hope you are packed, for I have a plane waiting at the airport. And you are going to marry me to-night. I want you for life or I wouldn't be so particular!"

"Nicky, you're becoming tiresome. I've told you 'No' in Germany, 'No' in New York and now I'm telling you 'No' for the last time. I was crazy to ever promise to marry you. You don't really love me, it's just that something you want has evaded you. Now please be sensible and go like a good fellow."

"You are going to marry me, Marco. Don't waste time on foolish words. Come, get your things."

Bill heard Marco's voice take on a tone of concern.

"Nicky, I'm not going to marry you, to-night or any night." She added slowly, "Is that clear?"

"You little fool!" spat Nicholas as though he had lost control of his perfect composure for a second. "I lose patience with you, I'm taking you with me. Married or not, I must have you, I must, do you understand? I can't go on without you!"

"Don't dare talk to me like that!" Marco answered furiously, her eyes blazing.

"Shut up! You'll be glad to go when I get through with you," Nicholas ground out in anger as he hit Marco a stinging blow across the face.

Marco screamed. "Nicky, stop—you're——"

"Ten thousand devils! Do you want to arouse the whole——" But Nicholas did not finish his sen-



tence for a body like a steel rod threw itself upon him. It was Bill and he was so angry fires blazed in his eyes as he jumped upon the Russian. Suddenly, the men parted. They stood silent for a second, Nicholas with head thrust slightly forward, legs spread apart, his left hand slipping toward the inside of his coat.

"No, you don't," yelled Bill, but he was too late. Nicholas as though moving on springs, shot out wickedly with a bright blade, but something in the ominous movement of those sliding fingers had caused Bill to slip aside and Nicholas missed him by the fraction of an inch. The blade scraped Bill's dinner jacket as he ducked and he knocked it down. Marco heard the sharp click of a fist upon bone. Bill was on his back on the thick carpet, but for an instant only. Another blow and Bill was staggering backward. Nicholas, head down and shoulders hunched, leaped for the younger man, his foot trying to maneuver the flashing knife closer to him. For an instant Bill stood panting, his face white, his lips bleeding. Nicholas, his eyes

like small chips of stone, was taking unfair advantage at every lunge. Then he had the knife again. Bill grasped with taut muscles the wrist that held it.

It seemed inevitable that the steel would soon be plunged into Bill but Marco who had been standing frozen with fear sprang to life and turned to seize a small marble bust from a stand beside the fireplace. She was stayed however by two men with hard-beaten faces who shouted at her:

"No need of that, lady. We'll take care of these birds!"

Bill, panting and white, said a few seconds later:

"And I used to think house dicks were like vaccinations—a necessary nuisance!"

The iridescent dawn had faded into a memory and morning had brightly blossomed when Marco limped out onto the patio. She looked stunning in a sports suit of lilac tweed with a huge fox fur collar. Bill's heart dropped to his shoes, she looked so much the famous dancer, the world celebrity, nothing



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like the white-faced girl who had clung to him sobbing the night before.

"Ah, there you are, sweetheart," he said.

Marco raised penciled eyebrows at the familiar tone of his greeting and she laughed in a friendly, happy voice.

"I guess there's no use beating about the bush, Mr. Reporter. I'm afraid I want to be your sweetheart. May I thank you, though, for what you did for me last night?" Then faintly: "How did you know Nicky was so awful?" Her voice was so soft as to be almost inaudible.

Bill had taken her into his arms and kissed her long and passionately before he replied:

"I didn't know just what he had in his mind but I did know it wasn't on the up and up 'cause I heard him plotting with that partner of yours on the stage last night."

"I can't understand that. Grigoraff has always been such a fine dancer and we've always been just like one large family. He did owe Nicky some money, I do know that."

"Well, Nicholas Bojensky or what-

ever his name is, won't bother us any longer, darling. I heard that the police feel he's overstayed his welcome in this country as it is, and as for that other guy, we'll just forget him. They can exit laughingly, we won't care, will we, dearest?" he asked softly.

"I'll certainly not care. Nicky knew I wouldn't marry him as long as I could dance, but what a close call it was!" She laughed ruefully. "Poor grandmother would be up against it if she had to take care of a crippled granddaughter instead of bragging to her bridge pals about the two hundred a month I make."

"You only make two hundred? Oh, baby, baby! Darling, do you think you could love a poor dumb reporter who dances like a walrus?"

His eyes were warm or hers.

Marco's only answer was to reach up and pull his firm mouth down to hers again.

"Why didn't some one tell me a ballerina could kiss like that?" demanded Bill when he raised his flaming boyish head a few moments later.

"Perhaps because you never asked any one!" was Marco's terse reply.

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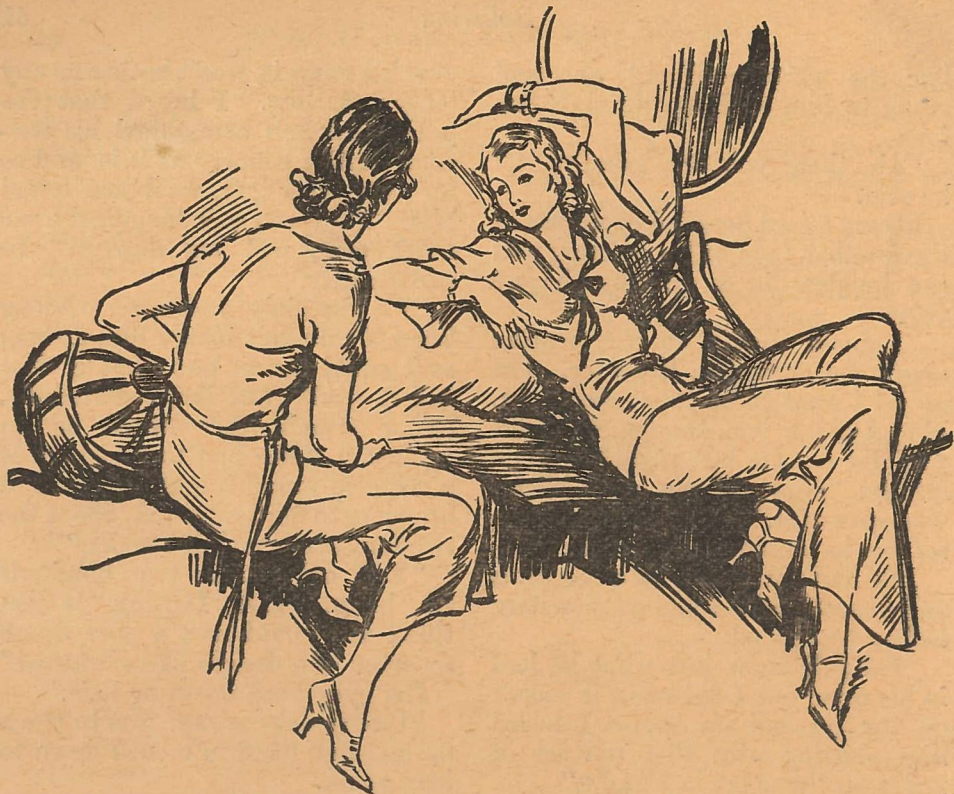
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# The Wrong Man

By Margaret Yates

**D**ARK, vivacious Joan Craig mingled with the crowd at the fashionable winter resort, feeling extremely carefree and happy. The sun was warm and she felt quite comfortable in the yellow knit dress which was just one of the expensive garments her cousin, Harriet Kimberley, had bought for her, besides giving her this vacation. Imagine going without a coat in midwinter, she thought jubilantly.

Joan studied the faces she passed. They were interesting faces, most of them happy and well-pleased with

life. Then she paused in front of a window display of crystals—dozens and dozens of them in necklaces, beads and earrings.

“Why, they look like diamonds!” she said softly, not realizing she spoke aloud.

“But they aren’t. They’re just crystal.”

Joan looked up, startled, straight into the eyes of the handsomest man she had ever seen. He was tall and slim, with penetrating black eyes and black hair under a gray hat. Even in that brief instant, she sensed



his dynamic personality. He was smiling at her in a captivating way that completely won her. But when he saw her surprise, he flushed a trifle.

"I beg your pardon. I couldn't help speaking to you. I watched you coming down the street and you seemed so interested in everything you saw—so alive!"

"Why, yes!" She smiled uncertainly. "You see, I've never been in Crystal Springs before. It's all so new to me, and the queer little curio shops are terribly fascinating."

He sighed with relief. "I was afraid you wouldn't be like that. Most girls are bored with everything—blasé and all that sort of thing."

"I couldn't be blasé if I tried," she laughed.

"No, you couldn't," he agreed, "and I'm glad of it."

"Why?" The question slipped out before she knew it was coming. She flushed and bit her lip. He would think she was bold!

"Because I like your looks," he answered simply, looking deep into her eyes.

Joan did not know why his words should send such a flood of happiness through her entire being. It had become, all at once, the most important thing in the world for him to like her.

"Have you been to the auction houses?" he was asking.

"No, I haven't. I just arrived today."

"There's one two doors down. Would you like to go?" he asked eagerly, glancing at his watch. "I have some spare time and I'll be glad to take you in."

Joan walked down the street beside him, feeling as natural about it as if she had known him all her life. He was a stranger, of course, and perhaps she ought to be afraid.

However, the word amused her. It seemed ludicrous to be afraid of this man.

They found seats in the already crowded auction house. Joan watched, her lips parted with intense interest as a Persian rug was thrown onto the platform.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she whispered to her companion, as much thrilled by his nearness as she was by the imported vases, statuary and Persian rugs.

"Not half as beautiful as you," he whispered back.

She flashed him a reproachful look, knowing as she did it that she would have hated him if he hadn't thought her beautiful.

Joan's attention was divided between the bidding and the handsome profile of the man beside her. Covertly, she was studying him, appraising the excellent cut and fit of his clothes, his slender hands that looked so capable. Who was he?—she wondered, and told herself at the same time that he was a man of importance. She liked his intelligent eyes and his quietly possessed manner that inspired confidence.

He was studying her, too. Their glances met, traveling upward from hands to face, and he smiled at her, revealing even white teeth. Joan flushed at the warm intimacy of his smile but, somehow, not resenting it. She wondered if he was as thrilled as she was over this chance encounter.

The blue rug had sold for two thousand dollars. The dark Arab boy was calling attention to another—a soft rose with a silken sheen that caught the light.

"And what am I bid for this one?" he asked eagerly.

"A thousand dollars," some one said.

"A thousand dollars!" His hands



were raised to heaven. "A thousand dollars for the most exquisite rug in the house—a rug that presidents have walked on! Did you hear him, ladies and gentlemen? He offers me a thousand dollars!"

Joan looked up as a man leaned over her new friend's shoulder, whispering something in his ear.

Then the man at her side turned. "You'll have to excuse me for a few minutes," he told Joan. "Wait for me here. I'll be right back."

The bidding went on and on, and Joan listened avidly. But she was thinking, too, about the likable stranger and wishing he would hurry back. It was thrilling to have him sitting in the chair beside her, explaining about the sale in his low, soothing voice.

Why didn't he hurry? Surely he had been gone all of thirty minutes. He couldn't expect her to sit there forever, waiting for him.

She waited impatiently for another ten minutes, and still he had not returned. A glance at her watch assured her it was time for her to leave. If she were late for dinner, Harriet would be furious.

With a regretful, wistful last look around, she went out into the street and toward the beautiful big hotel at the end of the avenue.

Joan was disappointed and hurt. She didn't know the man's name and she might never see him again. Already, she knew that she was in love with him. In one short hour, she had found and lost him. And how strangely he had acted! He hadn't even asked her her name but, perhaps, he really had intended to return. At any rate, she had two whole weeks here and she would find him again if she had to ask Harriet to help her.

Harriet's door was ajar when Joan walked into her own luxurious room.

"Is that you, Joan?" she called, and came immediately to the door. Green satin pajamas set off her slim blondness and she held a cigarette carelessly in her hand. "Guess what's happened? I do have the most outrageous luck!"

Joan's eyes widened at Harriet's evident distress. "What's wrong, Harriet?"

"Tommy Walters is here! Just popped in to say hello. I'm so furious I could scream. It doesn't make any difference if the ocean is between us—he somehow manages to locate me."

"Is that all?" Joan laughed with relief. "You frightened me. I thought something terrible had happened."

"How could it be worse?" Harriet demanded with an impatient stamp of her pretty foot. "You don't know Tommy as well as I do, my dear. You've never been seasick trying to get to Paris and out of his way, and then found him waiting at the pier for you. And do you think I'll be able to shake him one single minute while we're here? Oh, no! Tommy will go where we go and do what we do."

"Oh, Harriet——" Joan began. She intended to tell her about the fascinating stranger she had met, but Harriet cut her short.

"I'm so tired of seeing his smug, conceited, lazy face I could cry! I came down here to make John Ames Carlton fall in love with me. What chance will I have if Tommy sits in on every conversation? It's maddening, I tell you!"

"Oh, well, it won't be so bad," Joan tried to console her.

"Bad!" Harriet wailed. "It's awful! Suppose you were in love with Doctor Carlton and had to convince him he loved you?"

"I'll help take care of Tommy,"



Joan saw Harriet and John standing in the doorway, watching unbelievably as she let Tommy kiss her. She pretended not to see them, and went right on acting out the love scene. With a sigh of relief, she saw them turn and go inside.



Joan promised. "You know there isn't much I wouldn't do for you, Harriet," she said, looking at her fondly.

"You're a peach, Joan. But we'd better get dressed for dinner. Doctor Carlton will be here pretty soon, and won't he be delighted to meet Tommy Walters?"

Joan laughed as she closed the door. Then she went into the big tiled bathroom and turned on the

hot water in the tub. Two weeks here, she was thinking—luxury, comfort, service. Wherever they went, Harriet Kimberley would demand service for them. That was what money could do for one.

She examined her face critically in the mirror. She was not as dashingly beautiful as her cousin, but possessed a warmth that Harriet did not have. Harriet was like a cold statue done in stone, while Joan was a leaping flame. Her olive skin was flawless and her features regular in rather a distinctive way.

A few minutes later, Joan drew her hair into a low knot on her neck. Then she made her lips a perfect Cupid's bow, and went over and



over her nicely arched eyebrow line. She slipped into the pink net dress that fitted her so snugly to a point above the knees and then flared out in graceful fullness. When she had completely finished dressing, she surveyed herself in the long mirror. Yes, she was indeed beautiful, as the stranger had said. If only he could see her now! "Thanks to Harriet," she thought, "I look like an heiress."

Then she stood in Harriet's doorway, a pink dream out of fairyland.

"Joan, you look stunning!" Harriet exclaimed. She, herself, was wearing a close-fitting black velvet, and there was a strand of pearls about her white throat. "Doctor Carlton is waiting for us downstairs," she breathed excitedly.

Joan was anxious to meet Doctor Carlton, curious to see what type of man had stirred Harriet Kimberley out of her usual indifference. She didn't know what she had expected him to look like, but when she saw the man greeting Harriet so warmly, her heart stood still. He was the stranger who had taken her to the auction sale! Joan gasped, her knees feeling as if they were going to crumple under her. Coincidences like that just couldn't happen, she told herself. Yet there he was, tall and striking in his evening clothes, and smiling into Harriet's eyes.

He turned and looked straight at Joan, staring at her with equal astonishment.

Harriet watched them uncertainly. "You two act as if you've met before, but I know that's impossible," she laughed. "My cousin, Doctor Carlton—Miss Craig."

Joan bit her lip and struggled for control. She extended a tremulous hand and the doctor took it in his, smiling at her in his breath-taking way, "How do you do, Miss Craig?"

Tommy Walters appeared at Harriet's elbow then, saving the moment for Joan who gave him a grateful smile.

"Why don't you introduce me to your friend, Harriet?" he was asking.

Harriet's expression wavered between annoyance and politeness.

"I beg your pardon," she said frigidly. "Doctor Carlton—Mr. Walters. Mr. Walters is an old friend of mine, although I seldom see him," she added with pointed venom.

"Oh, you'll be seeing a lot of me," Tommy assured her. "I'm going to be around a while."

"We were just going in to dinner," Doctor Carlton said to Tommy. "Will you join us?"

Tommy, of course, was delighted, and Harriet obviously displeased. Joan sipped her cocktail, only half listening to the conversation about her. She dared not look at Doctor Carlton for fear her eyes would betray the secret she must guard at all costs. She smiled bitterly at the irony of the situation. She was thinking about all of the nice things Harriet had done for her, remembering that Harriet was her best friend. She must never know now that Joan was hopelessly, madly in love with John Carlton.

Dinner was a long nightmare to Joan. She couldn't enjoy the excellent food, the service, the soothing music. Doctor Carlton was the perfect host and an excellent conversationalist. Tommy was amusing, as always, but Harriet had eyes and ears only for the doctor.

Two weeks of it—Joan thought dully—sitting at dinner tables with him, listening to him, and afraid to look at him for more than a second at a time for fear of betraying herself and her friendship for Harriet.

"Joan, what's wrong with you?" Harriet broke in on her reverie sud-



denly. "Usually," she explained, "she is the gayest one in the party. But you aren't sparkling to-night," she laughed.

Joan came to herself with a start. "I hadn't realized it," she smiled.

Yes, she must sparkle even if her heart was breaking. She smiled bravely at Doctor Carlton. For a moment their eyes met, held, and then she looked away quickly.

Joan saw Tommy put out his cigarette restlessly, and she suspected that he wasn't enjoying himself, either.

"Let's go somewhere and dance," he suggested finally.

Joan heard him with a sigh of relief. Anything, she thought, to get away from the intimacy of this dinner table! It wouldn't be so bad in a dimly lighted night club.

But it wasn't much better, she discovered, when they were there. John Carlton was still sitting across from her, and Harriet was there like an insurmountable barrier to keep them apart forever.

Then she was watching them dance, and great waves of jealousy coursed through her veins like poison. Harriet was willowy and beautiful and he was so handsome. He was smiling at Harriet, and she was smiling back. Was he whispering endearing words in her ear? Perhaps he told every woman he met that she was beautiful.

She was a little fool for taking him so seriously, for falling in love with him on sight! She was no more than any other woman to him and, besides, there was Harriet.

John Carlton had come back with Harriet. He interrupted Joan's line of thought by asking her to dance. Joan walked to the dance floor, scarcely hearing the orchestra for the throbbing in her own ears. His arms were around her and she could

feel his hand tremble on her back. Smoothly and gracefully, they glided across the floor. Joan's heart beat furiously at the close contact, but she avoided his eyes.

"I thought I had lost you," he whispered. "Why did you run away this afternoon?"

"I decided you weren't coming back."

"I said I'd be back. I was there inside of forty-five minutes. I had to go to the hospital and I came back as soon as I could."

She shrugged. She wouldn't tell him she had waited approximately forty minutes. There was no use in encouraging him. "I had to leave," she told him, her tone indicating that it was a matter of no importance, anyway.

He was silent for a second or so. Suddenly, his arm tightened about her, and she could hear his quick breathing, feel his breath on her hair.

"It seems strange," he said, his voice husky with emotion, "almost incredible that I should care so much for you when only a few short hours ago I didn't know there was such a person as you. To be frank, I didn't dream a girl like you existed! I saw you coming down the street this afternoon and I thought I'd die if I didn't get to speak to you. And then you turn out to be Harriet's cousin!"

Joan laughed. "And imagine my surprise when I met the celebrated Doctor Carlton!"

He pulled her to him again. "Doctor Carlton is at your feet, young lady—quite madly in love with you, much to his surprise, on such short acquaintance. But you are so alive, so beautiful, that when I'm with you—well, everything else fades into nothingness. Do you suppose you could learn to care for me a little?"



Joan closed her eyes and all she could see was Harriet. This was worse, she thought, than having to choose between two men. She must not listen to him! Yet, desperately, she wanted him to go on and on making love to her. But it might be just his line. She grasped at the thought.

"You say it very nicely," she laughed metallically. "Personally, I'm not so practiced in the art of love-making."

He held her away from him. "That was pretty mean, Joan," he said, using her name for the first time. She thrilled to the sound of it on his lips.

She couldn't help saying contritely, "I'm sorry."

His eyes crinkled in a forgiving smile. "I don't want to quarrel with you. I like you much too much for that. But you haven't answered my question. Do you think you can learn to love me?"

Learn to love him? She bit her lip. Had she done anything else since the first minute she saw him? Fortunately, the music stopped and she didn't have to answer.

Then she was back to face Harriet guiltily. Joan felt sorry for her. She was in love with John, too. Harriet deserved a break, and she resolved to help her. She wouldn't dance with him again.

"This is my dance, Joan," Tommy was saying.

She went with Tommy, feeling John Carlton's eyes on her as she danced. She laughed and talked animatedly.

Joan drank more cocktails than she really wanted and steadfastly refused to dance another time. She was glad when the evening was over and she was in her room again.

She crawled into the soft bed at last and lay in the dark, thinking.

John Carlton's face was between her and sleep. And this time last night she hadn't even known him! She tossed restlessly. Why did she have to fall in love with him? Why couldn't he have been some one else? Even if he did love her, even if he meant every word he said, she couldn't have him while Harriet loved him. The sensible thing to do, she told herself, was to fall out of love with him right away, before she lost Harriet's friendship. But it wouldn't be easy.

Another day, another dinner, Joan thought, when she awoke the next morning. Tommy was taking them to some unique spot on the lake this evening and, of course, Doctor Carlton was invited. How could she go through with it, she wondered, seeing Harriet making a play for him, having to repulse him every time he said a flattering word and, at the same time, longing desperately for his kisses?

The day passed smoothly enough. Tommy took them to lunch and then sight-seeing. Joan went shopping with Harriet later, protesting helplessly when Harriet bought another evening gown for her.

But when she was dressing in the new gown, Joan was glad Harriet had insisted on buying it. It was a shimmering yellow satin that molded itself to her alluring curves. Her dark head and olive skin rose out of it like a flower. She was an exquisite vision.

Picking up her fur wrap, Joan knocked on Harriet's door.

"Come in." Harriet looked up from her dressing table where she was putting the finishing touches to her lips.

"Doctor Carlton just called," she said. "He has to make a call and will meet us later at the lake."



Joan could see that she was provoked. Harriet Kimberley was not used to having men late for engagements.

Why couldn't Harriet have fallen in love with Tommy?—she wondered as they rode to the lake in his expensive black limousine. He had money to burn, he was likable, and he adored Harriet. Certainly, Tommy wasn't romantic or exciting, but he was nice and dependable.

The club on the lake shore was a log building. Some of the tables were inside around the dance floor and some on the wide veranda. Tommy had reserved a table outside where they could see the moon on the lake. The music drifted out to them through the long windows.

"Perfect," Joan thought. "It will be perfect until he arrives, and after that I'll be miserable."

Doctor Carlton arrived sooner than she had expected. She saw him coming through the doorway, his eyes searching for them, and she caught her breath sharply. The color rose slowly in her face, and she clenched her hands under the table. It was terrible what the very sight of him did to her! Her eyes were fastened on his smiling, handsome face as he advanced eagerly, and her heart pounded faster and faster.

He nodded first at Joan and then at Harriet. "Sorry I'm late. Thank you for waiting!"

Their attention centered on food as the waiter came for their order. Then Doctor Carlton laid down his menu card and turned to Joan.

"Shall we dance this, Joan?"

She gasped. He should have asked Harriet first! She flushed with embarrassment, but then calculated quickly that it would be easier to dance than refuse him. She nodded and rose uncertainly, avoiding Harriet's eyes.

LS—4E

Then she was in his arms, drifting dreamily.

"The day has been so long," he said, his voice warm and intimate. "I've been thinking about you every moment. Have you thought about me at all?"

She smiled to herself. Yes, she had been thinking about him, but she answered, "You shouldn't have."

His face fell. "In other words, I haven't a chance. That's what you mean, isn't it?"

Her silence spoke louder than words. It hurt her to see the unhappiness mirrored in his dark eyes. "Do you mind if I go on loving you?" he asked. "I couldn't stop, anyway. This is one disease my medical career didn't prepare me for."

Joan was content for the moment. She thrilled to the touch of his hands, every atom of her vibrating with a racing, hot emotion. She felt his warm cheek against hers, and she longed shamelessly to feel his lips on hers.

But the dance was over and they were going back to the veranda. Joan glanced at Harriet as she sat down. Her heart froze within her as she saw the hurt look in her cousin's eyes. Harriet had never hurt her in her whole life. She had given her things ever since she could remember—clothes, trips, money, affection. Joan lowered her eyes and became intensely interested in her cocktail. "This can't go on," she thought fiercely. "I can't bear it another minute!"

Harriet responded coolly when John asked her to dance, but she accepted just the same.

"Ain't it awful?" Tommy grinned at Joan. "She's furious because he asked you to dance first."

"Could I help it?"

"I wonder how this is going to





end up," he said unhappily. "Guess I'll go home to-morrow, if she's gone for this medico in such a big way."

Joan was thinking rapidly. There must be some way to help Harriet, to straighten things out for her. And suddenly, the way was clear to her. The thought took her breath away with its daring. If John saw her in Tommy's arms, believed that they were in love with each other, it would leave the coast clear for Harriet, wouldn't it? But it meant losing John definitely. Never again would he tell her that he loved her. For a moment she wavered, but only for a moment. This was the least she could do for Harriet, regardless of her own heart-ache.

But her heart cried out in protest while her lips were forming the words, "Tommy, I wish you would make love to me."

He stared at her in open-mouthed astonishment. "Well, that wouldn't be hard to do."

"Then do it!" she said quickly as she heard the music stopping.

*"That's the way I imagined it would be—kissing you," she said breathlessly.*



"When?"

"Right now." They were alone on the veranda. Joan got up suddenly and stood with her back to the door, looking out at the lake. Tommy stood beside her, puzzled, his arm around her waist.

She forced a piquant smile. "Now," she whispered. "Kiss me." Her voice broke as she twined her arms around his neck, hating herself as she did it. She felt his kisses, hard and cool on her lips. And over his shoulder, she saw Harriet and John standing in the doorway, watching them unbelievably. She pretended not to see them but went right on acting out the love scene. With a sigh of relief, she saw them turn and go inside.

"That's enough," she told Tommy with a sob.

She ran to get her wrap, without glancing at him again. The thing uppermost in her mind was to get away. She simply could not face Harriet and John.

Outside, Joan found a cab and climbed in hurriedly, giving the hotel address. Then she gave way to the tears that had been welling up inside her. John would never understand, but that didn't matter. He would pay more attention to Harriet now, and he couldn't help but love her.

She spent a wretched night. When she awoke the next morning, the first thing she saw was the note under the door of Harriet's room. She slipped out of bed and opened it quickly.

Some bills fluttered to the floor and she picked them up, reading with increasing amazement:

DEAR JOAN: I didn't know until I saw you in Tommy's arms how much I really cared for him. He has always belonged to me, but I never needed to worry about him

until last night when I realized he might fall in love with some one else. So I'm leaving with him to-night—call it eloping, if you will. He has to go home on business and I'm going with him.

Your room rent is paid for two weeks. Also inclosing some money. Finish your vacation and have a good time.

HARRIET.

The letter dropped to the floor. Joan sank into a chair, staring hypnotically at the door leading into Harriet's room. She wasn't there. She had eloped with Tommy! Slowly, the news sank into her consciousness.

She was laughing hysterically, mirthlessly. What a joke on her! She had thrown John's love away to give Harriet a break and instead, Harriet had eloped with Tommy.

Joan paced the floor agitatedly, her slender hands pressed against her forehead. Two weeks' room rent paid, money to finish her vacation. With Harriet gone, she was free to encourage John Carlton all she pleased. But what would he think of her now? The last glimpse he had had of her, she was in Tommy Walter's arms.

Joan sat in the big reception room with the modernistic furniture. A trim girl in uniform had taken her name and told her that Doctor Carlton would see her presently.

The door opened, and her pulse quickened as Doctor Carlton followed his patient into the reception room. All at once, she wished the floor would open up and swallow her. It was so different from what she had expected it to be. He looked so aloof and forbidding in his white coat.

"I'll see you now, Miss Craig," he said, betraying no surprise at finding her there.

Then she was inside the office, scarcely noticing the room in her



confusion. She sat down on the divan while John took his place at the flat-topped mahogany desk. She flushed self-consciously when she saw that he was waiting for her to begin.

This was the doctor who sat before her, not the man. She did not know what to say to the doctor, but she had to say something.

"I just dropped in to say—to say good-by." Yes, she decided, she was leaving. There was no point in staying.

"Yes? So you're leaving!"

Joan swallowed. He didn't seem interested even in that! He was tapping on the desk nervously with his finger nail. Oh, why had she come?

He offered her a cigarette and she shook her head. Was this the end?—she kept wondering. Was there no way to bridge the gap between them?

It seemed no time at all before she was at the door and he was shaking her hand impersonally. There wasn't even a smile for her.

"Is Harriet going home, too?" he asked indifferently.

Joan gasped. He didn't know about Harriet and Tommy! She looked at him, puzzled.

"Harriet's gone already. She and Tommy eloped last night. I—I thought you knew."

Her words were sinking in. He looked at her in astonishment. "You mean Harriet is going to marry Tommy?"

"They're married by now," she laughed.

His expression wavered between amazement and comprehension. "But I thought you were in love with Tommy. I saw you and Tommy——"

"Tommy's always been in love with Harriet," she explained quickly. "And I've never loved any one but you," she added softly, lowering her eyes.

His lips tightened. "You aren't going home, Joan." With a glad cry, she was in his arms and he was kissing her eagerly, hungrily.

She looked deep into his eyes and said breathlessly, "That's the way I imagined it would be—kissing you."

He smiled at her tenderly. "There'll be a lifetime of it. And we are going to be married to-day, aren't we?"

"I have a confession to make first," she told him, eyes troubled. "I'm not rich, as you think. Harriet bought these clothes——"

"As if that mattered," he laughed. "I'll buy your clothes hereafter, and I promise you they will be as lovely as you are, my dearest." Then he gathered her close to his heart.



In next week's issue

## "TOO POSSESSIVE"

A Thrilling Short Story

By LINDA COLLINS





# Prize Of Hollywood

By Edna Robb Webster

A SERIAL—Part II.

## CHAPTER III.

**T**O the new movie queen!" Bill MacKay proposed, raising his glass of ginger ale and grape juice. "Bottoms up!"

Hollis was throwing a party for Carol on the eve of her departure. Always popular, Carol defeated her own record on that night for dances and masculine attention. "The last dance before Allen Dexter, for me," Bill had jested.

"After me, Roger Korbin," Dave Stoley prophesied.

Their jocund spirits flaunted a youthful indifference to the portent

of destiny. Though they termed this opportunity of Carol's a lucky break, and every one of them envied her in some degree, they accepted the news with the complacency of all modern youth.

"What night is the première at the Chinese theater?" Vera Roth inquired.

"On Saturday," Carol replied. "Will you all be listenin' in?"

"And how we will! Just imagine Carol talking to us from Hollywood!"

"Oh, I may not be asked to say anything, but you can hear the others, and know I'm there."



"Of course, they'll ask you to say something. That's why they want you to be there. Bigger and better advertising. Every appearance you make—little you, from Milton—is that much more publicity for Monica Brent. And she's lucky, at that," Dave declared. "Think what a daisy they might have drawn for a winner! How about it, Jerry?"

"Lucky devils," Jerry agreed soberly.

He managed to see Carol alone before the evening ended. With her departure so imminent, he felt almost panicky. The confusion of these last days had prohibited his having more than a glimpse of her as she dashed about. Jerry hadn't anticipated that when he had suggested her going. He had hoped to talk enough with Carol that she would take away with her a very impressive memory of him. Impressive enough that she would return home quite as eagerly as she departed. As it was, he almost feared that she would not remember him at all.

"Carol, I want to talk with you a minute," he told her when he managed to dance with her finally.

"Well," she laughed up at him innocently, "talk away. I'll be gone in another minute, almost."

"Don't I know it!" his words almost groaned. "But I can't tell you here—let's slip outside and walk around the block, or something."

Her consent was wordless, but animated, as she fluttered through the open doorway beside him, in sheer white organdie. Carol had forgone the feminine temptation to display one of the new gowns that night. A more important audience awaited the début, and their impression on this crowd could await her return, she had decided. The narrow ruffles of the organdie frock

just cleared the sidewalk as she matched her slow steps with Jerry's. With the impulse of her gratitude for his influence in her behalf, and the sudden realization that she scarcely had spoken to him in these last hectic days, she slipped her hand into his arm with a gesture of affection.

Its touch, even through the thickness of his coat sleeve, sent a tremor through Jerry. It was a moment before he could conquer the impulse to turn blindly and crush her soft body with the frenzied strength of his arms. But she did not guess the reason for his prolonged silence, and prompted, half-humorously, "Well, what was it you wanted to say to me, Jerry? Give me one guess. You want to hurl me a final lecture on what to do and what not to do in Hollywood. Am I right?"

"Partly." His tone was grim with repression, and apprehension for her. Then suddenly, "Gee, I wish you weren't going!"

"Why, Jerry Abbott, don't be silly! It was you who first said that I should go."

"I know. But that was because I knew you wanted so much to go. And I'll probably be sorry as long as I live"—morosely.

Carol grew impatient, and her hand tugged at his arm with a motion of disapproval. "Oh, don't be like that! Do you think it's going to be my funeral? What makes every one act as if a girl's going to Hollywood alone is equivalent to walking into a lion's den? It gives me the jitters, such hooley!"

"Oh, it isn't that!" Jerry denied. "And I do want you to go and have a swell time, and all that. But, Carol, I hadn't meant to tell you like this—it isn't the time or place for it, but"—his words tumbled over each other helplessly, as they two



had tumbled down snow banks together as youngsters—"well, you know I'm so crazy about you I can't see or think of anything else half the time. Carol, I just want you to promise me that you will come back next week, no matter what happens out there." They had halted in the shadow of a tree whose swaying branches swept inky blots over them, and Jerry was holding her cool hands in his big, hot, trembling ones. He didn't dare to put his arms around her then. Part of his agitation was born of the despairing fear that he never would see her again. He realized his absurdity, but—anything might happen. She would meet other men, directors were searching for talent and beauty, the new experience might immunize her from them all—Oh, any number of things could separate them, forever. The thought chilled him like an icy blast and burned him like a fever.

Her lilting voice laughed softly and somewhat alleviated his despair. "Jerry, are you crazy?"

"Sure, that's what I said—crazy about you. That's the reason I want you to go and the reason I don't want you to go."

"You're too ridiculous," she told him with gentle impatience. "Of course, I'll come home next week. I'll be back so soon you won't know I've been gone."

"You bet I'll know it. I wish it were over, now. But you will come back?" he insisted.

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Oh, lots of reasons. Suppose

they want you to sing or act, for some studio?"

"A chance in a million," she scoffed, "with thousands of beautiful girls waiting for it. But what if I should try? Haven't I a right to a career if I want it? You wouldn't refuse me that chance, would you? Not if you really care about me, Jerry?"

"Oh, I don't know!" He dropped her hands and walked on slowly. "It's only that I'm afraid something

might take you away from me before I get settled and have a chance to give you what you deserve."

"But you couldn't keep me by being selfish, Jerry. I like you a lot, but don't let us talk about that, now. I'm so excited about leaving here now—and—everything."

His hand reached down to find hers and draw it up again in the curve of his arm, protectively; his other hand holding it there, steadily. "I know, honey. I'm sorry if I bothered you. I guess you know how much I love you, anyway. You go along and have a swell time, and—well, I guess everything'll be O. K.!" he assured her.

"Thanks, Jerry." Her fingers pressed his arm fondly, and they walked on in silence until they reached the house where the party was approaching its climax. So confused were Carol's thoughts that she couldn't have told herself whether she approved Jerry's sudden proposal just at this time, or resented it. She had no wish even to debate it in her mind, with her train leaving at midnight.

THE STORY SO FAR: Howard Nevins, son of a middle-class American family, spends his spare time entering contests. He signs the name of his cousin, Anne Sheldon, to one of his answers, and when he wins the prize, which is a trip to Hollywood, Anne refuses to go. However, his sister, Carol, jumps at the chance, and it is arranged that she is to go under Anne's name.



The entire party went with her to the station; their assorted dozen of roadsters and coupés forming a vociferous parade with a trailing echo of blaring horns, laughter and screeching brakes. Sally and Howard stopped at home for Carol's baggage while she and Jerry stopped in also for her final farewell to mom and dad. Their tearful smiles and clinging hands were eloquent with vague fears for their fledgling whom they knew must try her wings sometime, so they pushed her from the nest with a flutter of misgivings and the innate hope of all parents for their progeny.

And the next thing Carol knew, they were chattering and laughing on the station platform like a flock of parrots in a jungle glade. The customary atmosphere of acrid smoke, waiting silence and forlorn desertion which pervades all small railroad stations was transformed to color and sound and animation. Facetious quips reverberated from hollow walls and scarred empty benches, and the bald station master peered over his spectacles through the window wicket with a dour expression. Only thundering and screeching locomotives were supposed to make that much disturbance in this place which had been his realm for a quarter century.

Finally, a whistle in the distance dominated the hectic clamor on the platform and the attendant bustled about to collect baggage records, uniform cap and lantern, with a jubilant glance for the momentary quiet which the train's approach had effected on the party. But after the first moment of expectation, remarks and retorts again perforated the interval while the snorting, fire-breathing monster bore down the tracks toward them with its tail lashing around the final curve be-

fore it stopped with a hissing reluctance.

A porter stood on the open platform of one Pullman car, with his yellow footstool in readiness, and descended the steps to place it in position for the prospective passenger almost before the train had halted. Such a confusion of farewells and admonitions swirled around Carol that she had no memory of their particular origin, but they were soon terminated by the porter's echo of the brakeman's call, "All aboard!" and the strain of slowly turning wheels.

Faster and faster the revolutions—and the train was in motion, with Carol waving frantically to the cheering group; and then there was only the clicking of wheels over rail switches and the intermittent flashing of signal lights.

Carol had been in Chicago on two previous occasions, with her parents, and she had only a couple of hours between trains, anyway; so she passed the interval at the station. The thought that she was in the heart of a great city was somewhat exciting, but its effect was so mild as compared with the experiences which beckoned her to the coast that she was content to wait for her train and let the rest of the city pass by.

The first day out was not as interesting as she had anticipated. The scenery was a monotonous panorama of gentle hills, familiar trees, geometric fields, the flash of placid rivers, and small cities which were replicas of Milton. There were not many passengers in her car—it being too early for the exodus of Eastern vacationists for Western points of interest. Some of the few were transients as the train crossed the mid-Western plains and stopped





Once she went away, any number of things could separate them forever.  
The thought chilled him like an icy blast and burned him like a fever.



infrequently to collect some and deposit others.

There was one elderly couple who were quite as ebullient over this adventure into the land of eternal sunshine as was Carol. Mrs. Matson confided to her in the privacy of the dressing room that they had planned and saved for it ever since their marriage, thirty-five years before. Each year they had promised one another that it would be "next year," until it was now a reality.

"And maybe it's just as well we didn't go before. We can enjoy everything more now. The children are grown and away from home, so we don't have to worry about leaving them, and we don't have to hurry back for anything or anybody," she finished complacently, patting her thin white hair into neat waves.

There might be some comfort in her philosophy, Carol admitted, but she was grateful that her own adventure into a new country had not been postponed until sight was dimmed and alacrity halted. She noticed that the man dozed more than he watched the flying landscape, and that the woman read magazines avidly, frequently reading excerpts aloud to her mate in a high falsetto voice raised above the roar of the train. It seemed to Carol that they might have pursued the same pleasures at home with less discomfort and less expense. But it was high adventure, in their minds, to be on this belated trip to California. Achievement. Victory in the face of defeat. Pleasure must be relative, after all.

The train went flying through scores of small villages with only a hoot and a disdainful acceleration of speed for the children who stood at a distance and waved frantically at its passing. So futile was their ef-

fort to attract its attention to their obscurity, like ambitious elders striving to command the attention of the great world to their little selves.

Traveling through the back doors of cities and villages, it also was evident that not all the world was modernized and sanitized, even in this twentieth century. Galvanized metal washtubs hung on rows of veritable frame shacks along the railroad tracks, which served as homes. Sagging flights of steps and unscreened open windows testified to slovenly habits of living; and women in soiled dresses stood with their hands shielding their eyes to watch the daily passing of that marvel of speed and luxury which carried other women on their pleasure-bound way.

The route of the second day passed through arid, rocky wastes and desolate ranches where any kind of life was scarce and where there were even few villages to pass with scorn. The scattered habitations were shabby and forlorn for the most part, and Carol wondered that there were men and women with the courage to attempt to conquer this wilderness in the face of such hardship.

But the third day more than fulfilled her expectations as they climbed into the rugged beauty of the Sierras; skirted the rims of caverns and hugged the narrow roadbed beside towering cliffs, or roared through clearings of pines and ventured over slender trestles whose steel girders looked much too frail for the train's thundering passage. Tunnels and snowsheds darkened the brilliant spring day to night, at intervals, and added to Carol's breathless excitement in every new experience.

By then, she had several ac-



quaintances in that miniature world which was hurtling through space as its own complete entity. A girl in the next car who had sat opposite her at breakfast on the second morning, was shy and friendly, and Carol learned that Doreen Nichols was on her way to San Diego to visit a grandmother whom she never had seen. They exchanged visits to pass away the hours and discovered many common interests, as young girls do, usually.

There was also an older woman in Carol's own car who persisted in being very friendly, but from whom she recoiled for no obvious reason. For one thing, she was so frankly curious that Carol ceased to be even normally informative, and her manner encouraged an affection to which Carol could not even respond with friendliness. Somehow, at her very approach, the girl felt as if an invisible sign of warning flashed within her. But she evaded the intruder without blunt offense and was glad when she discovered how pleasant it was to chat with Doreen Nichols.

One man who was traveling alone glanced at her frequently and speculatively, but Carol did not encourage acquaintance, so he resigned himself for most of the time to dozing in the corner of his seat. He certainly did not look like the kind of man whom Carol wished to know as a travel companion, or elsewhere. It wasn't that she feared being friendly with him; there just was nothing about him to foster sociability, even as a means of passing tedious hours.

On the third day, she joined Doreen for all their meals in the diner, which proved to be vastly more pleasant and adventurous with an amiable companion. The change of scenery with its continual inter-

ests and surprises also shortened the hours, and almost before it seemed possible that another day could be gone, it was night, and the monster dragon of steel was clattering through the silent and illimitable expanse of the desert, toward its final descent into fertile valleys where Utopia had blossomed from desolation and death.

Carol crept into her berth on that third night with a quickening of her heartbeats at the thought of what the morning would bring. She anticipated its revelations with a mixture of dread and joy, and did not believe it would be possible for her to sleep at all. But the swaying motion of the train and the roaring monotony to which she had grown accustomed, conspired with the soft coolness of the desert air to lull her to sleep very quickly.

Once, before dawn, she awoke with a strange feeling of fear, and it was several moments before she could adjust herself to her surroundings. Oh, yes, she was high in the mountains somewhere, crashing through space at unbelievable speed, toward her great adventure. She raised the window shade and peered out to discover a full moon shining high in the west toward which she was speeding. The sky was bright as silver, against which the crags of mountaintops etched ragged silhouettes. The valleys were black abysses which might at any moment become unfathomable horrors. But the night was calm and soothing, and the train rushed on with amazing confidence to select its path through bewildering labyrinths of passes and tunnels.

Carol lay back against the smooth pillows and mused upon the strange quirks of fate which placed people in such unexpected circumstances. Her brother's queer penchant for



entering contests, a decision which might have gone a thousand different ways, and the reticent nature of the girl who should be in her place at that moment—what a chain of coincidences had culminated in this moment of triumph for her.

And the next thing she knew, the sunshine was creeping under the raised window shade and the train was rushing down, down by

swift spirals, into the valley of its destination. She could feel the halting motion of cautious brakes against the clicking wheels. She sat up with a panicky fear that she had overslept and would not be ready to



*Carol crept into her berth with a quickening of her heartbeats at the thought that the morrow would find her in Hollywood!*



leave the train when it arrived at the station.

Just as she turned her wrist to look at her watch, she felt a tugging at her mattress from outside and a jubilant voice urged, "Time foh you-all t' git up, miss. Nex' station is San Buhnahdeeno, an' we'll be in Los Angeles in 'bout a half houah."

"Thank you," Carol replied, squirming into her dressing gown with nervous haste.

The confusion which attends the arrival of any limited train at its final destination is bewildering enough to the experienced traveler, but when Carol stepped off the *Sunset Special* that morning, literally into the waiting arms of a dozen strangers, she never was able to remember afterward just what she said or how she acted. First, a dapper little man in flamboyant checks stepped forth from a group on the platform and approached her. Carol's vague hesitancy, no doubt, had marked her for his objective.

"I beg your pardon," he bowed suavely, "are you Miss Anne Sheldon?"

Carol's relief at being discovered was reflected in her face, but the sound of the name sent a tremor of premonition through her. During the past three days, she almost had forgotten that she was traveling incognito. And realized that she would need to be on her guard, henceforth.

A tall woman stepped forward and extended a slender gloved hand. Her glance appraised Carol in the first instant from head to heel, so that Carol felt as if she discerned in that glance exactly how much—or rather, how little—her traveling suit had cost. But the lady's smile was kind and her greeting cordial.

"How do you do, Miss Sheldon?"

I want to thank you, first, for entering the contest and giving us that perfectly marvelous title. I am Miss Brent and these are Miss Delaney, my secretary, Mr. Kalish, my director, Mr. Hogan, publicity manager."

Mr. Hogan was the suave little man who had approached her first. The promoter of the contest, no doubt. Carol wondered if he had selected the title which had dropped this golden opportunity into her lap. Her smile for him was slightly warmer. There were others in the group awaiting her, a half dozen news photographers and greedy reporters. They directed Carol to mount the steps again, after all the passengers had alighted, with Monica Brent on the platform extending a hand of greeting to her guest of honor. There were several clicks of as many cameras. Then they trailed the party, tripods folded hastily and black cloths dangling like mourning banners, to a long, glittering limousine parked beside the station, where they posed their subjects in the act of departure to strange realms for Carol.

Monica smiled generously upon her guest and Carol supposed that she must have smiled, also. The thought that those pictures would be flashed over the entire world and be looked upon by millions of curious people, appalled and stunned her to oblivion of later memory. And presently, she was alone with the famous star in her luxurious car and they were gliding through the sun-flooded streets. No magic-carpet journey could have been more thrilling to Carol than that short drive to a prominent Hollywood hotel, where the chauffeur's stop was a signal for the doorman to leap forward and signal a bell boy who came running down the steps with alacrity for her baggage. Carol was in-



formed that reservations had been made which, it was hoped, she would find pleasant and comfortable; and that Miss Delaney would consult with her later concerning their plans for the week.

"We are having dinner at my home this evening, very informal," Monica reassured her, and Carol murmured her appreciation. The limousine droned away like a sun-drowsed bee as Carol turned to mount the marble steps.

The desk clerk was unctuous. "Yes, indeed, Miss Sheldon, we were expecting you. Suite 309 for Miss Sheldon," he directed the uniformed boy, "and I hope you will find everything satisfactory. Let us know if there is anything more you need, won't you, Miss Sheldon?"

Carol wondered in a stupor of bewilderment, what the mythical unknown necessity might be, when she had been left alone in a magnificent suite of rooms that was almost as large as the entire house at home and the appointments of which must have cost ten times as much. She gazed about her for a long moment, then wandered from one room to another, without removing her hat even. Touching objects timidly—the crystal toilet articles in the dressing room, the satin coverlets of the twin beds, the novel lamps in the sitting room, the glittering fixtures of the bath. It was like a fairy palace. She felt exactly like *Alice* in Wonderland, amazed and delighted and bewildered.

Carol sank into the soft depths of a turquoise moiré chair and held her head in her hands as if to steady her reeling senses or to arouse her from a dream. She had no idea what might happen. She only hoped, if this were a dream, that dad's alarm clock might clatter its

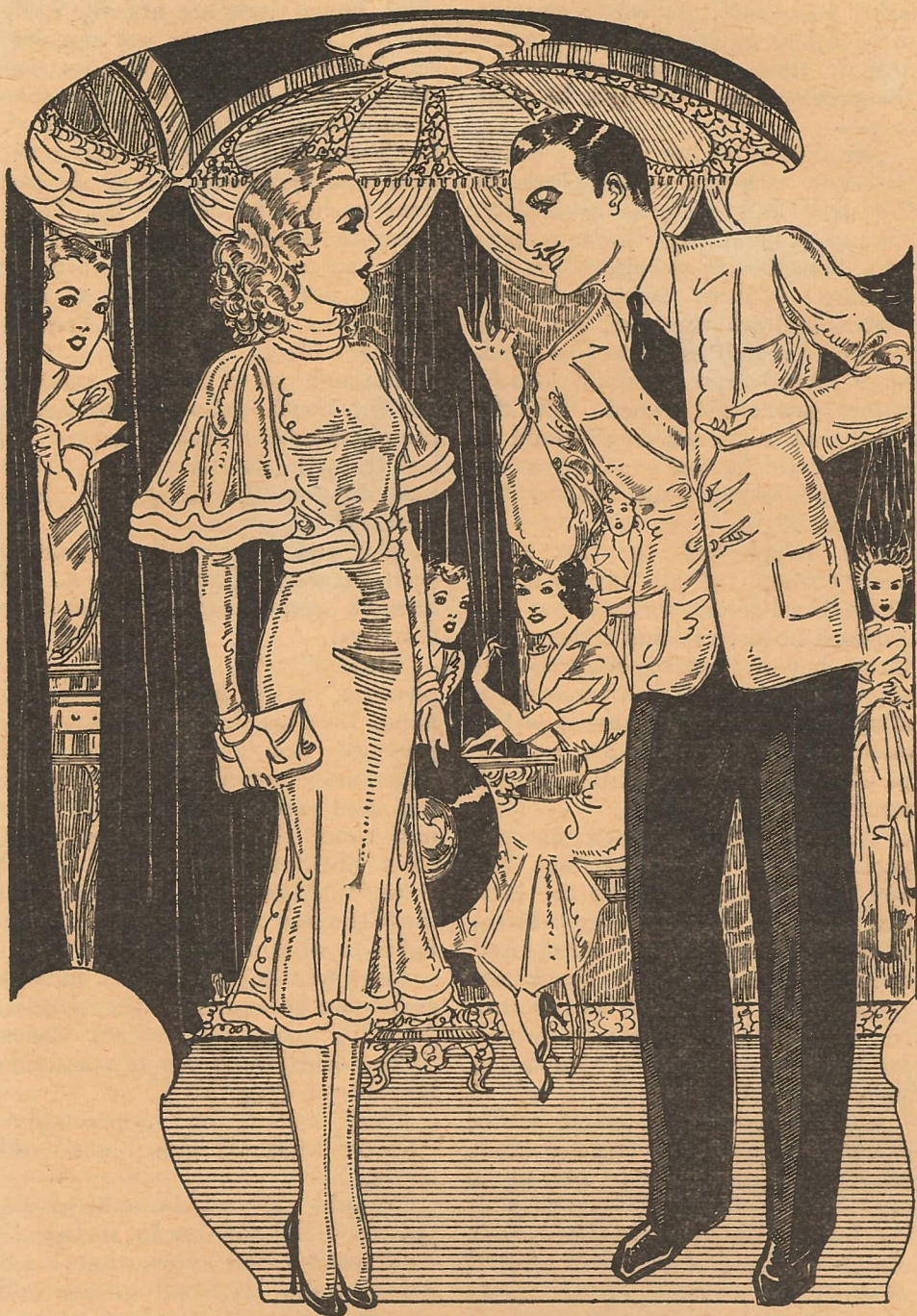
falsehood that it was six o'clock, and awaken her before she did something foolish.

But after several moments, she raised her head, and the view which her eyes beheld from the window reassured her. Palm fronds dangled limp fingers in the golden rays of the sun, and distant purple hills loomed against the blue of a sky so close that Carol felt as if she could walk right into it with very little effort. But she knew that the hills were miles away, and the sky was illimitable space, because they formed a background for innumerable gay houses tucked into folds of velvet green and brilliant floral patterns. Gleaming white houses with red roofs and salmon-pink houses with variegated roofs and such other audacious combinations of architecture as never was seen in Milton.

Oh, it was Hollywood, all right. Hollywood might be exotic and bizarre and stagy, but it was real, too. As real as the greens and reds and yellows of the landscape which were more brilliant than any color which Carol ever had seen in her life. She never really had seen true color before.

She reached up and lifted the pert sailor from her head, ruffled her hair with her fingers and sighed in prolonged, luxurious content. It was going to be a very busy and exciting and exacting week, but she would take just a few minutes to sit there and absorb all that delicious reality, first. Like a delightful prelude that promised infinite pleasure in the story which followed. It was a story. She was living a fairy tale which was ever so much more wonderful than *Cinderella* and her pumpkin coach and the prince's ball. That is, she had everything except the prince. Carol laughed





"You look as if you belonged to the movies yourself," the manager of the beauty salon told Carol. "I've seen plenty of stars who aren't half as lovely."



softly to herself. It was a chuckle of confident anticipation. Give her a little time, and she would find the prince, also. Perhaps, to-night or——

She glanced at her watch, verified the time with the quaint clock on the desk and jumped up hastily. Enough of dreaming. She must prepare herself very carefully for the evening. "Very informal," her hostess had informed her, but Carol wondered if that might not be much more formal than either of the two dinner gowns she owned. She decided that the peach crêpe would be more correct for this evening, saving the more formal gold lace for the première night.

She telephoned to the hotel beauty shop for an appointment. The natural golden waves of her hair required no professional setting, but Carol hoped that experienced fingers might effect a smarter coiffure after a shampoo to cleanse it of the cinders and sand from her journey which made it feel gritty to her touch.

With swift movements, she unpacked her dressing case, hat box and larger bag, arranging the articles neatly in the numerous drawers of the dressing table. When she had finished with that, her trunk arrived, so she transferred its contents to the spacious wardrobe which would have accommodated a dozen such equipments.

Carol experienced the first results of far-flung publicity when she entered the beauty salon. The manager and operators had been reading the latest newspaper editions, had matched her name with the printed news of her arrival and now compared her appearance with the girl who smiled from the photograph which had been made at the station with Monica Brent. In the two

short hours since her arrival, while she adjusted herself to the new surroundings, men and machines had toiled with mad haste to announce her presence in the film capital. A few hours had made her important to this curious public. And she had done nothing to deserve it. There were others who might struggle for attention all their lives and never gain so much as a fraction of that which was hers already. The ignominy of fate.

The manager of the shop assigned her to a booth and an operator with the air of having anticipated serving her through all his career. "And how do you like Hollywood, Miss Sheldon?"

"I'm not very well acquainted with it, yet," Carol laughed. "I haven't been outside the hotel since I arrived."

"Indeed!" he exclaimed with pleasure, as if he deemed it an honor that his shop had known her presence first. "Then we shall make mademoiselle very lovely for her first appearance. You have marvelous hair—truly gorgeous, Miss Sheldon. René, the special rinse for Miss Sheldon and I shall dress the hair myself. An artist delights to work with such hair."

René was impressed. "You look as if you belonged in the movies, yourself," she ventured to Carol. "I've worked on plenty of stars who had less of everything."

Carol smiled her appreciation. "That's kind of you," she said shyly.

"Maybe this will be a break for you, too. Will you try for pictures?"

"I don't quite know what I am going to do. It is all so new and strange yet."

René talked incessantly while she massaged and rinsed and dried. Then she relinquished the fragrant



glory of hair to Henri's art. He justified his conceit. A jewel-studded coronet of finest filigree could not have enhanced its beauty when he had finished. Rather, it would have detracted from the shimmering undulations and swirls of soft finger curls.

Later, when Carol had completed her dressing for the evening, she was a stunning picture. The peach crêpe molded to her slender grace like a sheath and trained slightly on the floor over the heels of her golden sandals. A little elbow-length cape suggested delightful subtleties, its soft ruff clasping her neck and fastening in the back with real gardenias which Carol had purchased from the hotel florist. Her heart was beating high when she went downstairs to Monica Brent's waiting car.

#### CHAPTER IV.

"Lucky lady, you are," declared Allen Dexter. "Is your whole life a happy sequence of these surprising events?" The lucent glow of candlelight shimmered over the long table and further enhanced the attractive faces of the diners whose modulated voices flowed smoothly around them. Crystal and silver scintillated in the gently wavering light. There was not a piece of chinaware in the entire dinner service.

Cut crystal prisms of varying shapes and sizes formed a fantastic border around a vast central mirror, like modernistic towers surrounding a crystal lake, where pallid water lilies floated in hollowed prisms. Thin-blown crystal bubbles of iridescent hues also floated on the reflecting surface and contributed their own illusion. Silver swans arched graceful necks to their vain

images and shell-pink flamingos balanced upon long crimson legs. Silver and crystal, nothing more, except the Venetian lace banquet cloth.

This was the dinner which Monica had assured Carol would be very informal. Her memory groped back for a comparison. But there was no comparing this magnificence with the dinner table at home—there only was contrast. Perhaps the family was more correct, after all, in persisting with the word "supper." It seemed a very long time since she had sat at that family table; and worlds away.

The other eight guests seemed to be very intimate with each other. Carol was the only stranger, but they appeared to be treating her as one of themselves. The man on each side of her was being gallantly attentive, and the others addressed her from across the table, from time to time. Carol's eyes sparkled with the dinner service, caught and reflected the scintillating facets of light. The palms of her hands were moist with excitement and trepidation. And something else.

Down at the far end of the table, on Monica's right, sat Roger Korbin—in the flesh. It was no flickering image on a silver screen. Very real, he was. In fact, so much more real than Carol had anticipated he would be. The charm and magnetism of the actor were evident, also; but his humanness dominated even these. Several times during the dinner, he glanced at Carol and that inimitable smile which had so many times thrilled her from the screen, flashed directly for her, filling her with a warm intoxication. If she had doubted the reality of this day, this night must be an hallucination. But she hoped that she might never awaken now.



It was something of a problem to entertain the men at either side of her, give the proper attention to the delicacies set before her and to absorb every glance of Roger Korbin's for her future delight, in memory. There were several million women in the world who adored Roger's handsome image, but Carol now was one of the favored few who had sat at the same dinner table with him. It was a memorable event in her life. She had to make the most of it.

There were other important luminaries present. In fact, if some one had selected the nine most eminent and popular personalities of Hollywood, the group might well have been that very party. Allen Dexter was Monica's leading man in the prize-titled picture, Viva Stuart was a favorite ingénue of the public's, Noel Wright had brought his charming wife who was Marcella King, Gay Ferris was accompanied by Dennis Pelton and the fifth man was Dan Kalish whom Carol had met that morning at the station. She felt as if she were gyrating rapidly in a kaleidoscope of color and beauty and luxury. It made her slightly giddy. Or was it Roger Korbin's frequent glances which so affected her? She did not know—and cared less. She was very happy.

Meanwhile, she had replied to Allen Dexter's remark anent her colorful existence. "Oh, no, indeed! This is the first really exciting thing that ever happened to me."

"I predict"—his eyes twinkled into hers—"that you are due for plenty more of them."

"I hope so, if they're all as nice as this one."

"Oh, this is just an appetizer," he depreciated.

"I hope I survive until dessert!" Carol laughed.

"Ah! but the demi-tasse and the sweets!" he sighed, with mock gayety.

They laughed together.

"Who," Carol inquired, "belongs to whom, at this table?"

"Oh, don't you know them all?"

"Of course, I know who they are, but I'm not sure about their relations."

"Neither am I—nor they themselves, for very long. What is true to-day, may be all wrong by to-morrow. At this very party, something may happen—*psst!* just like that—and whole destinies are changed."

Carol smiled. "I know. But every one appears to be very happy."

His dark eyebrows lifted. "Appears to be? But we are actors, you know."

"Aren't you happy?" Carol challenged, in a spirit of humor.

He shrugged. "What is happiness? If you can tell me that, perhaps I can answer your question."

"Why," Carol floundered, "being busy at something you like very much to do, and living with those whom you like very much to be with."

"Is that all? Then I am three-fourths happy, by that scale. I am busy with that which I like very much to do, and living with those I merely tolerate."

"Are you married?"

"Do I look that stupid?" he grinned.

At the time, Carol thought he was joking, but she learned before the week was over that such reasoning was a serious condiment of his philosophy.

"Is marriage stupid?"

"Can you doubt it? Half of its addicts are discontented, and the



other half are contented because they are stupid. So, there you are!"

His verdict was so final that Carol turned to Dan Kalish, who addressed her from the other side.

"We appreciate your effort to arrive in time for the première, tomorrow evening, Miss Sheldon. It provides us further opportunity for advertising you as well as Miss Brent's new production."

"But I have nothing to advertise," Carol objected pleasantly.

"I don't agree with you. There are many girls in this city to-night who would value the opportunity very highly, girls who have less to offer the industry than you have. But you are not ambitious, perhaps?"

"Indeed, I am. But I understand that it is very difficult to get into pictures."

"That depends," Kalish replied speculatively, and glanced toward his hostess. "We shall see what might be done about a screen test for you, if you wish. You have a marvelous voice, which should be a great advantage."

"You are very kind," Carol said in a low voice, but her heart was trembling with the import of his words.

Finally, the dinner was ended in the silver-and-crystal dining room, but continued in the patio with coffee and liquors, smokes and sweets. Artificial moonlight illumined the garden and the surrounding terrace which the house embraced with rambling protectiveness. The upper rooms opened onto a balcony that hung over the garden and rambled down into it by means of a curving grilled stairway.

They danced and jested and sipped hot coffee and iced concoctions which a butler passed frequently. It was very soon after

they had adjourned to the patio that Roger came to speak with Carol. Feeling his approach, she trembled, and her heart leaped into her throat with such violence that she almost choked. She was obliged to set down her demi-tasse on a tile table to prevent the fragile Sevres crashing on the stone floor.

"I want to congratulate you, Miss Sheldon, on your successful title. Was the prize worth the effort?"

It was difficult not to say, "Oh, just being here with you to-night is worth any effort in the world!" but she managed blithely, "Oh, that was no effort at all. I don't know yet how the title could have won! Isn't Miss Brent a darling to do all this for me?"

He glanced at his hostess and a slight frown lined his broad forehead, briefly. "I believe it was all in the contract, wasn't it? I rather think she got the breaks this time."

"How do you mean?"

"Picking a winner like you," he smiled. "Think what she might have drawn for a guest. You aren't the kind that enters contests—you should be sponsoring them."

Carol's face burned miserably and she could think of nothing to reply. She only laughed nervously, thinking of Howard's title and Anne's name under which she was posing.

"Not that there is any reason why you shouldn't enter a contest, too," he added hastily, "if you wish. It was most fortunate that you did, I should say, for a number of people."

Carol was dancing with Roger Korbin. Never in her wildest flights of fancy had she imagined such a possibility. She floated in his arms, scarcely aware that her feet touched the floor. Now, there would be more of her memories, more than





the flash of his luminous smile. There would be the closeness of his arms and the gentle pressure of his

cheek lowered to hers, the muted resonance of his voice close to her ear.





*Never in her wildest flights of fancy had Carol imagined the possibility of singing with Roger Korbin. Heart beating fast, she sang as she had never sung before.*



"Is dancing your profession?" he asked when they had drifted the length of the terrace.

"Oh, no," she laughed.

"It should have been! What, then?"

"I hope that singing may be."

"If you sing half so well as you dance, there is no doubt of it."

"Part of his profession," she reminded herself severely, "is flattery. But it's sweet, all the same." She sipped its nectar, delightedly, and darted back for more like a swift humming bird. "The reason is you. But I can't sing with you."

"Why not? We might try."

The suggestion frightened her, remembering how he had sung, "A World Without You," in his latest picture. She had seen it three times, particularly to hear that song; thrilled to her very finger tips with the fascination of his voice. Carol laughed softly. "I'd much rather hear you sing alone. You were marvelous in 'Daybreak'!"

"You liked it?"

"I loved it! Will you sing the theme song, to-night?"

"If you will help me."

"I should ruin it."

"I disagree. Please try."

Carol consented, with her heart fluttering. When the dance ended, Roger announced to the party, "I've made another discovery about our charming guest. She sings like a lark. And we shall be pleased to entertain if you wish."

Every one applauded with enthusiasm. They drifted through the open doors into the music room where Roger slipped to the piano bench and ran his fingers over the keys, tentatively, then swung into the melodious accompaniment of the popular theme song.

Carol knew the words as well as she knew that her own name was

not Anne Sheldon, but she felt as if she had lost her memory in a moment of sudden panic. The faces of her audience and the entire room receded swiftly into a blurred vision. Then Roger's deep voice struck the first note and the reality of it revived her instantly. Her own clear voice joined his without hesitation. Scores of times she had sung that chorus alone, but never had she expected to sing it with Roger Korbin, for whom it had been written. Her voice rallied to the momentousness of the occasion and justified its opportunity. Carol sang as she probably never had sung before. Roger's applause joined that of their audience when they had finished, and they were obliged to repeat the chorus.

"Give us another one," Allen insisted. "Say, you two should broadcast together. Never heard anything better than that."

"Yes, do sing something else," Monica urged. So they sang two other popular numbers and then were urged to repeat again, "A World Without You."

Roger bowed his appreciation when they had finished. "You are marvelous, truly. You will travel far with that voice. It will take you anywhere you wish to go, Miss Sheldon."

Carol thanked him in a giddy confusion and the light in her eyes said, "I am glad it has taken me so far with you."

After which, Gay and Dennis delighted with a comedy skit; then they returned to the patio for another round of drinks. Roger danced again with Monica, but he did not ask Carol for another, who observed that her hostess pretty well monopolized his attentions for the remainder of the evening.

And at eleven o'clock, Monica



said what seemed to Carol a queer thing, until she remembered that she was in a totally different world where everything was queer, if delightfully so.

Said Monica, "I'm sending you all away early, to-night. To-morrow is a big day at the studio and I must get my forty winks before midnight."

"That goes for me, too," Roger agreed. "Close-up shots all day to-morrow." He turned to Carol. "What is your program for the day?"

Carol glanced at Monica before replying, who said quickly, "Oh, Miss Sheldon will be quite as busy as any one to-morrow. She is going to spend the day at the studio, learning all the tricks of the profession. Shall you like that?"

"I can think of nothing more enjoyable, unless it was this party to-night," Carol declared. "It was marvelous."

"I'm glad you enjoyed it." Monica was gracious. "To have you with us was as great a pleasure. Miss Delaney will call for you in the morning, at ten, and I shall see you in my dressing room. Miss Delaney also will inform you of our plans for the week, and if there is anything which you would like especially to do, please let her know about it and she will make all arrangements for you."

"You are very kind, thank you."

"Is any one taking Miss Sheldon to the hotel?" Roger inquired.

"Jules will drive her over. And Roger, will you stay for a moment? I have something very special to consult with you about." She smiled intimately. "I shan't let you stay for long—only the tiniest minute."

In spite of her gratitude to Monica for her consideration and

pleasure, Carol wondered fleetingly if that tiniest minute were not to prevent Roger from driving her to the hotel. She had noted that Monica guarded his companionship very jealously throughout the evening, and wondered if they might be engaged. If they were, film gossip had not broadcast it, as yet. They were a stunning couple, certainly. No one could deny that.

It developed that Jules did not drive Carol home, after all; for Allen Dexter elected himself to the service, which was agreed upon finally by Monica.

"But remember, Allen," she warned him with mock seriousness, "I am responsible for Miss Sheldon during her visit in Hollywood, so watch your step with my very special guest."

"Oh, I won't do anything you wouldn't," he assured her solemnly, and took Carol's arm with a gay possession to assist her into a gigantic topless roadster of robin's-egg blue and glittering chromium.

"Now, straight to the hotel," his hostess admonished him.

"You know very well if I drive straight on a curving boulevard, I shall land in jail, and Miss Sheldon with me," he taunted. "In which case, she could not appear at the studio in the morning." With that, he released the emergency brake and they glided off down the curving drive to the highway and into the stream of swift evening traffic.

"You would think, from Monica's instructions, that I am a desperate character," he flung at Carol through the rush of wind. "Aren't you afraid of me?"

"Not even if you are the big, bad wolf, should I be afraid of you," she laughed.

"Aha! She's handled wolves be-



fore, has little *Red Riding Hood*. She knows all about what sharp teeth they have, even if they do look kindly."

"Yes, my mother warned me all about wolves before she sent me into the woods."

"Wise mother! I congratulate you on your choice of a mother, also," he bantered.

"As it happens, I had nothing to do with that, either," she retorted, laughing. "Besides, I'm not afraid of wolves with a sense of humor."

"Then you do credit me with some virtue. Which is not so bad, for a beginning. What's the next thing?" he challenged. "Say, how's this for an idea, little one? The night is young, yet. Why don't we go somewhere and get acquainted?"

"We promised Miss Brent that you would take me straight to the hotel," Carol reminded him severely.

"And so I shall—take you back to the hotel—straight. What's she got to say about it, anyway? You notice she kept Korbin there with her, didn't you? Don't kid yourself that she's snatching her beauty sleep!"

Which reminder gave Carol a momentary feeling of suffocation. With the force of a long breath which simulated a sigh, she said finally, "Some other night, perhaps, Mr.

Dexter. Besides, if you're going to the première to-morrow evening, we may get acquainted then."

"Yeah, with a crowd around us. I'm sure we'll know all about each other, if we get in speaking distance at all! I thought you'd be a better pal."

"Perhaps I shall, after I have had one night to sleep over it. You see, I really haven't rested since I heard about winning the contest. I've had more excitement in the last ten days than the rest of my whole life. I think another party to-night would be just one too many."

"O. K., darling. Sleep it off to-night and get ready for a big week. I'm going to see to it that you keep some late hours for the rest of your visit. Close-up shots can go bang and Monica Brent can hang. I support her and her whims before the camera, but not elsewhere. Well, here we are, sleepyhead. Go pull a blanket over your head and forget you're in Hollywood for the next ten hours. After that, you won't be able to forget it."

"Thanks for being a good sport, Mr. Dexter, and bringing me straight home."

"Oh, I always bring 'em back alive, if sometimes unconscious," he assured her magnanimously. "But remember, to-morrow's the night!"

TO BE CONTINUED.



#### NEW NOTE

I AM a harp that passing winds can play  
Touching my strings to music sad or gay,  
While I can only pray the gods above  
That some day there will throb a note of love.

DOROTHY QUICK.





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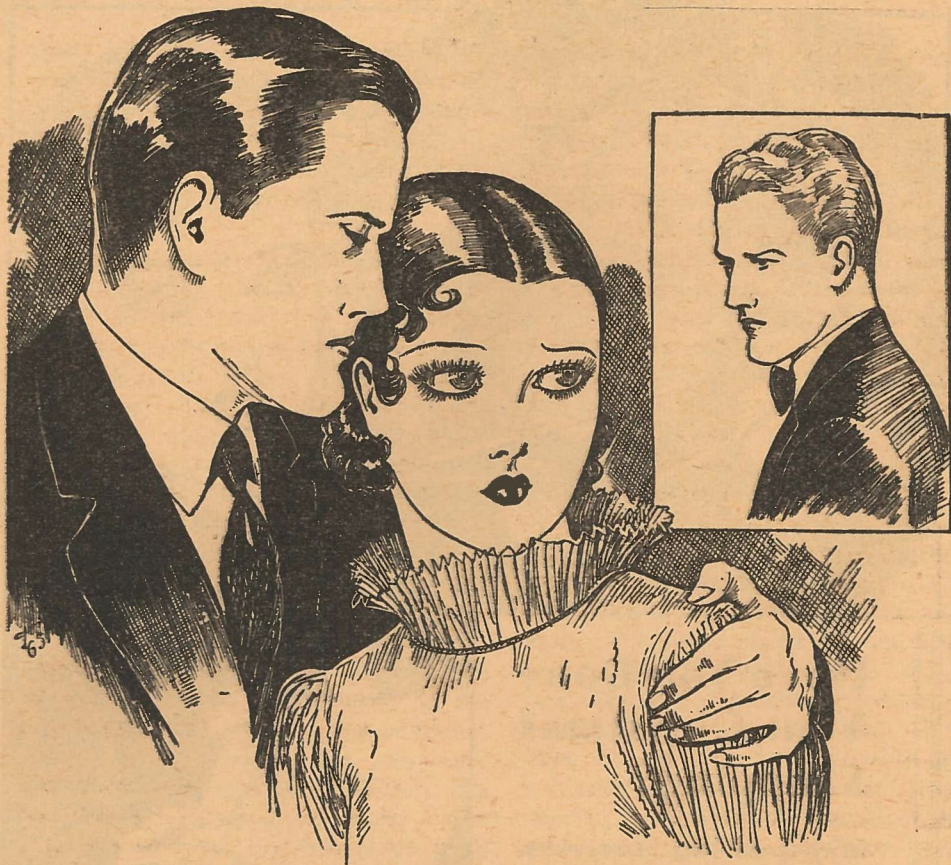
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# Marriage Bargain

By Dorothy Spicer

**H**ESTER stared at the shut door. The name, Jake Cornish, in gold letters, danced before her eyes. She was going to open that door and go in, and nothing would ever be the same again.

She turned the knob and entered the room. A girl, busy at the desk, looked up.

"I want to see Mr. Cornish."

The girl started to speak, hesi-

tated and said, "Just a minute, please," and vanished into the inner room.

Hester went to the window and stood quietly staring out. No one seeing her there would have dreamed of the turmoil within her. The soft green sports suit had the unmistakable stamp of an exclusive shop; the green felt hat, with its single tiny gold feather, sat at just the right



angle on the smooth, blue-black hair that emphasized the dazzling whiteness of her skin. Every lovely line of her slender figure, the imperious tilt of her head, the proud carriage of the shoulders—all bespoke one supremely sure of her place in the world. Yet, the black-lashed gray eyes were tragic and terror lurked in their depths.

Hester knew well the caliber of the man she had come to see. He was a gambler, ruthless and brutal. He might turn out to be a blackmailer as well. Yet, she was determined.

"Will you go in please?" The girl opened the door and closed it gently behind Hester.

The man, seated behind the desk, rose as she entered, and waved her to a seat.

"Sit down, won't you? I'll be through in a minute."

He was a big man, a fighter. There was the square chin, the wide sweep of cheek, nostril and forehead. Suddenly, he looked up. His eyes crashed into Hester's. They were deep, glacier-blue and they seemed to read her innermost secrets—the newspaper covering the holes in the soles of her swanky oxfords, the threadbare silk waist, the darned stockings, the gloves so worn that she had to carry them. Her already raw nerves flared into fiery anger.

"What can I do for you?"

The words were sharp, but there was a curious soft drawl in his voice that gave them an odd twist.

"I want to borrow money, quite a bit."

"You have security?"

"I shouldn't have come to you if I had." Already, she hated this man.

"I see you have read all about me in the papers." His voice was dry. "How much do you want?"

"A thousand dollars."

"On your signature alone?" There was a mild contempt in his tones that infuriated her.

"I understood you were a gambler." Her gray eyes were blazing. "I thought you might be willing to gamble on me."

"Now you interest me. Just what is your proposition?"

It had come—the time when she must put into words this thing she had planned. It was cruelly hard.

"Well? Have you forgotten it already?"

Somehow, the words goaded her to desperation. She said stonily, "You stake me to a thousand dollars. Within three months, if I am successful, I'll pay you back five thousand dollars. If I fail you lose your money."

"Certainly a gamble worth taking with good cards, but I'd have to know more about the cards I'd hold."

"I realize that." She made her eyes meet his, but she could not prevent the wave of crimson that washed her face from throat to brow. "I expect to marry a millionaire within that time."

"You're engaged?" He asked it without looking at her, playing with a pencil on his desk.

"No, but I—I expect to be, soon."

"Would my thousand finance the matrimonial campaign?" He was looking at her now, a cynical smile on his lips.

The man was uncanny! "How clever of you to guess!" Hester said sardonically, and prayed fiercely that he would not see the tears burning her eyes. "Soon I'll begin to believe you're as smart as the papers say you are."

He laughed grimly. "And what means have I of knowing that having loaned you the money, you'll keep to your bargain?"



She felt bruised, beaten. She returned apathetically, "None except my word which, naturally, means nothing to you."

He studied her deliberately. She thought, "This man is cheap, probably a criminal, yet he makes me feel small, despicable."

With a suddenness that made her jump, he said, "Very well. I'll lend you the thousand, but under one condition. I want to share in the campaign."

"You want——" Hester's breath came in a sharp gasp.

"Come now, you must have some plan. A week-end visit perhaps?" He laughed at her start of surprise. "You see, we have to be good guessers in our profession. Include me in whatever affair it is, and I'll lend you the money."

Hester sprang to her feet. Her eyes blazed into his. "Invite you to the home of my friend?"

"Is it the pot calling the kettle black?" He was smiling blandly. "Well, take it or leave it. I never bet on a game I don't sit in."

Hester sank back into her chair. She was trembling, heartsick.

"Very well," she said listlessly, "I'll—I'll get you an invitation. It's a house party at the Frank Ducan country home at——"

"I know the place."

"You'll want to know my name. It's——"

"I know that, too, Miss Storm. I've seen your name in the papers."

Hester tightened her lips fiercely. The whole world had read of her beloved father's death and dishonor, but if this man dared speak of it, or even look as if he thought of it, she could not stand it.

"I knew your father slightly, Miss Storm. He was a great and good man," he said with surprising gentleness.

For a moment Hester couldn't speak. It was so unexpected, so poignantly sweet. This man, be what he may, had understood about daddy. She said at last, "I'll have Martha Ducan write you at your home if you will give me your address."

He wrote rapidly on a piece of paper. "Here you are." Hester took the paper and noted with surprise that it was the address of an exclusive club. There was a gleam of amusement in the man's eyes as he noted her expression, but his friendliness had vanished. "You like my club? Good. Perhaps my name might embarrass you. Suppose we change it. I'm quite sure none of your friends know me. Let's see! How would 'Tom Lake' do? That name has a good, honest sound. Under it, who knows but that I might be able to give your boy friend a little competition? I've always heard that's an excellent device to employ."

It was as if he had slapped her. Hatred of him rushed back over her like a flame, but she held herself under control.

"Very well," she said curtly, "it's a bargain then."

She went out of his office into a world that seemed strangely different. There was the thousand in bills rolled up in her pocketbook. Five hundred she would give to her stepmother. Then, sink or swim, she would be clear of her forever. Never again would she have to listen to her stepmother's shrill, accusing voice, flinging the words "charity boarder" at her, nor the cruel, bitter railing against her father. These last few days had been almost more than Hester could bear. She had found herself this morning, nursing an insane desire to strike her stepmother's full red mouth. She choked back a





*"I'll lend you a thousand dollars," he said. "But under condition that I share in your matrimonial campaign. Who knows but that I might be able to give your boy friend a little competition? I've heard that's an excellent device to employ."*

sob. "Oh, daddy darling, how could you ever have married her?"

Resolutely, she put those thoughts from her. The other five hundred must go for clothes. She had noth-

ing left but what she was wearing. Everything she could sell or pawn had been disposed of. And Arthur Clarke was not the man to ask a dowdily dressed girl to marry him!



He was crazy about her, yes, but could she bring him to propose? She shivered in distaste. That she should try to make any man! Her father's disgrace, her stepmother—they all counted against her. Besides, Arthur with his dark, good looks, his suave, charming manner, had been the goal of many a girl before her.

If only she could have found work! She thought of the endless, fruitless days spent in going from one place to another. It was no use. She must go on with her plan. Jake Cornish would be at Martha's. A queer, warm glow enveloped her and left her bewildered. Surely it was not possible that she was glad he was to be there!

Hester stood beside Martha Duncan, watching the train that was bringing Arthur and "Tom Lake" into the station. She knew that she looked lovely in the yellow dress with its smart black jacket. It helped, but it could not still the trembling within.

Almost as soon as the train stopped, Hester saw Tom. A minute later, she realized that Arthur was walking beside him.

"Whee," commented Martha as she watched the two coming toward them, "your new boy friend looks as if he might pack dynamite along with him. Where on earth did you meet him? You were awfully mysterious when you telephoned me."

Before Hester could answer, Cornish was shaking her hand and meeting Martha with an ease that surprised her.

"Clarke and I introduced ourselves when we realized we were bound for the same destination. It's pleasant to meet some one you have an interest in." Cornish's blue eyes lingered for a brief, amused moment on Hester's cheeks which had

changed from their usually creamy whiteness to a wild flush.

Arthur was smiling. Hester thought with distaste, "He looks like the cat that swallowed the canary."

"And I on my part," Arthur was saying, "found Mr. Lake a most interesting train companion. You seldom find any one who knows so many different kinds of people. I declare, he knows the most intimate things about them, too. Quite remarkable." Cornish smiled briefly. "I'd like to know in what connection you'd heard of me, Mr. Lake," he went on, as he got into the automobile.

"Oh, I think every one has heard of your family, Mr. Clarke. It's one of the oldest and most distinguished in the country. And you as the only son——"

During the rest of the journey Jake Cornish, with a dexterity that was fiendish, turned Arthur Clarke's vain little soul inside out. Arthur's sultry good looks, his vast popularity, his surface manner had fooled Hester. She had liked him. There had been times when she had thought she could even learn to love him. Now she knew she never could. Inside, she felt herself go cold and sick. But she had made her bargain.

Hester slipped the lavender dress over her head, smoothing its folds against the graceful curves of her slim figure. The dress, contriving to be both quaint and sophisticated at the same time, brought out Hester's dark loveliness. The pleated purple organdie collar that rounded her neck called attention to the exquisite contour of her throat, and wide, pleated cuffs of the same color turned back just above her elbow. The belt was a smart purple suede, fastened together by a huge butterfly in shades of lavender, purple and



yellow. The dress was made for her—for her black hair with its purple shadows, for the black-lashed gray eyes that now seemed violet. Hester knew that her beauty was breath-taking and found no pleasure in the knowledge. All she could see was eyes—Arthur Clarke's dark ones surveying her hungrily, possessively, and Jake Cornish's unfathomable blue ones mocking her.

With grim determination, Hester shrugged off her depression and went downstairs.

The library, with its immense cathedral window framing the blue hills, seemed deserted. It was not until Hester was too far in to retreat that she saw Jake Cornish. His eyes were fastened on her as if he could not tear them away. Slowly, he rose.

"You're lovely," he said, as if the words were forced from his lips.

Living fire coursed through Hester's being. Unable to meet his eyes she stepped to the long window, her eyes on the blue hills, but she knew with every tingling nerve within her that he had joined her there.

"They're beautiful, aren't they?" Hester faltered.

"The hills? Yes, very beautiful. I remember"—a reminiscent smile touched his lips—"one summer when I was a small boy. We were camping. In the distance there was the most gorgeous blue mountain. All summer long I begged and pleaded to go there."

"And did you?" Hester was smiling, too, her shyness forgotten. The little boy with the determined chin and blue eyes seemed very real.

"At last I ran away. I walked and walked. It took me all day and I was very hot, tired and hungry. And then"—he paused for a moment—"and then the mountain wasn't blue at all. It was just another mountain."

Impulsively, Hester laid her hand over his. "Poor little boy," she said softly. "He was young to learn how often blue mountains turn out to be just mountains."

He caught her hand and swung her to face him. "But I still believe, Hester——"

"Well, here you are, darling." Arthur, followed by a blond girl, entered the room. "I waited around for you all afternoon. What on earth were you doing?" His voice was petulant.

Jake had dropped Hester's hand at the sound of Arthur's voice and had moved stiffly to one side.

With rude effrontery Arthur went on, "Say, Lake, will you and Fluff scram? I've an important matter to take up with Hester."

The little blonde pouted. "Bad boy, you're so cruel to your Fluff," she complained. But at his frown, she made for the door. Jake, without a word or a backward glance, followed.

Arthur came toward Hester, his eyes devouring her. "My darling girl, you're so beautiful!" Before Hester could prevent it, he had her in his arms and was kissing her madly. "I've got to have you, do you understand?" Hester tried in vain to jerk herself free. "I'll marry you, darling, and the day you become my wife I'll settle a cool million on you."

He was offering to buy her just as he might any other desirable piece of merchandise. It hadn't even entered his head that she might refuse, and with a despairing shudder, Hester realized that her obligation to Jake Cornish bound her to accept his proposal.

She managed to slip from his arms, and ran to the door. Arthur followed, smiling fatuously. "Later,





*Living fire coursed through Hester's being as Jake caught her to him. Then the door opened, and Arthur, followed by a girl, entered the room. Jake released Hester and moved stiffly to one side.*

Arthur," she whispered breathlessly, and escaped.

Inside her own room, she paced up and down the floor. She despised Arthur Clarke; his very touch made her shudder. But that was dwarfed into insignificance by what she had learned this afternoon. She loved

Jake Cornish! He was a criminal, a gambler, but it didn't matter. She loved him! What had he been going to say when Arthur interrupted? Was it possible that he loved her, too? If he did—Hester's lips quivered into a smile of infinite sweetness—then, somehow, they'd work





out a worth-while life together. Somehow, she was sure of that.

Without looking, Hester knew that it was Cornish who had followed her out onto the veranda. He seated himself beside her on the porch swing. All around tall, dark pines surrounded them, and a wisp of a silver moon only made the darkness more intense. His shoulder, touching hers, his powerful hand lying quietly on his knee filled her

with a wild throbbing. With a strong effort, she kept her eyes from seeking his mouth so brutal, so strangely tender.

Jake's drawl broke the silence. "Well, your scheme seems to be progressing nicely, whether it's due to clothes or competition. By the way, that yellow thing you've got on"—the yellow thing was a cloth-of-gold gown that followed every line of her sinuous figure—"ought to be a first-rate aid to Cupid. Even I shouldn't



find it hard to lose my head over you to-night."

Hester wondered if he could see the tumultuous beating of her heart beneath its golden cage. "In fact, on second thought," he continued, "I believe I should find it quite easy." With deliberate calm, he crushed out his cigarette. Then, before Hester even guessed his purpose, he had caught her in his arms. Holding her easily against him with one powerful arm, he tilted her face up to his, until her eyes were looking straight into his blazing blue ones. She didn't struggle for the riotous beating of her heart, and she knew that she hungered for his kiss. "On third thought," he drawled, "I don't believe I care to kiss the future Mrs. Clarke. Arthur might not like it." Casually, he released her.

The ecstasy which had run through her, turned to ice. Some day she would pay him back for this! Her tongue seemed paralyzed. The light, flippant words she sought would not come. She had been in his arms, willing, quiescent, and he had scorned her. If he had struck her, he could not more clearly have shown his contempt for her.

She got to her feet and stumbled toward the door. It was thrown open before she reached it, and Arthur came out.

"Hester"—Arthur's petulant voice rasped her raw nerves—"I've been looking everywhere for you."

"In that case"—Jake lazily emerged from the darkness—"I'll leave you two alone. Make good use of the moon, Hester darling. It's much more effective than blue mountains."

Hardly waiting for the door to shut, Arthur grasped Hester's arm. "What's that fellow to you? I don't like him and I'm tired of his hanging around you, do you hear?"

Hester was tired—so tired that his insufferable words and manner left her apathetic. She said tiredly, "Surely, that isn't your affair."

"Not my affair! Didn't you promise to marry me this afternoon?"

Hester could not check the shrill laugh that escaped her lips. His colossal conceit had taken her "later" as "yes." She stilled her laughter. Well, she was going to marry him, wasn't she? Jake had said he didn't wish to kiss the future Mrs. Clarke. Perhaps he was afraid it would endanger the payment of his money. She turned to Arthur and said softly, "Did I really?"

"You certainly did, you little icicle." He pulled her into his arms. "This is for you, and this and this." He kissed her again and again, lips, throat and eyes.

Everything went blank except the horror of his lips. Violently, she tore herself away. "Don't!" One glance at his enraged face and she battled for self-control. "Arthur, please, no more. You—you're such a cave man." She maneuvered him toward the door.

The fatuous smile that she had learned to expect was creeping back across Arthur's angry face. He liked the idea of being a cave man.

"Well, all right, darling. Perhaps I was a bit rough, but you go to my head like champagne. Let's go in and tell the bunch." He caught her hand and pulled her toward the door.

Of all that happened after that, Hester had only a confused impression. One person alone stood out, with the startling clearness of white on black—Jake Cornish, smiling with his lips, his eyes grim, saying, "I believe it's customary to congratulate the prospective groom, but in this case I congratulate the prospective bride, too."



At last she got to her room and to bed. Sleepless, she lay staring hour after hour at the ceiling. She would marry Arthur Clarke and as soon as she could, she would pay Jake Cornish his money. Beyond that she would not, must not think.

Morning came at last. Hester got up. Slowly, she put on one of her new dresses. It, too, had been bought with Jake Cornish's money. Her dark beauty, enhanced by the soft, green jumper, enraged her. What did men care about save superficial beauty—beauty that was largely made up of dollars and cents?

Some of the men were already breakfasting when she entered the dining room. Neither Arthur nor Jake was there. She was thankful for that. She waved the men back to their chairs and their discussion. It was a full minute before her straying thoughts picked up the thread of their conversation. They were talking about Jake Cornish. At last the law had uncovered something it could really convict him on—a fraudulent merger. But Jake Cornish had disappeared.

"That's always the way," commented Frank Ducan disgustedly. "The law waits and stumbles along and, finally, when it does get ready to act, the slick criminal is miles away."

"Maybe they'll get him yet. That man Penfield is doing remarkable things. He's rounded up more crooks than all the other district attorneys put together," one of the other men contributed.

Frank shook his head. "Jake Cornish is the slickest criminal in the city. They'll never see him again."

In the resulting argument, Hester slipped unnoticed from the room. She was remembering a kiss she had not received. She went into the li-

brary and, taking off the receiver of the telephone, spoke softly into the transmitter.

Most of the morning Hester managed to avoid meeting Arthur, but at lunch time he cornered her.

"Hester," he protested sullenly, "what's the big idea? Are you trying to avoid me? Because if you are I'll——"

"I"—Hester looked down coyly—"I guess I was feeling a little shy."

"Darling," he whispered, his good nature restored, "there's no one like you. Give me a kiss."

"Please, there's the luncheon gong now." She slipped from his arms and hastened toward the dining room.

He caught up with her just before she entered the door. "Listen, I telephoned my mother this morning about our engagement, and she and grandma are coming down this afternoon. I'll expect you to hold this afternoon free."

Hester nodded, but her heart was like a stone. One more ordeal to go through!

Under cover of the general conversation at the luncheon table, Martha observed softly to Hester, "I don't think your big boy friend is any too pleased with your engagement. He went off early to the falls to fish this morning and hasn't returned yet. I know it isn't any of my business, but how you could choose Arthur when Tom is available is just one of those things."

Hester laughed shortly. "Perhaps you're wrong as to Tom's availability."

"Not a chance, honey. The man's so many fathoms deep in love with you that I shouldn't be surprised if he knocked you over the head and dragged you to his lair. He looks capable of it."

Hester tried to eat her lunch and



found she could scarcely swallow. Arthur, on the other side of her, kept up a steady monologue. But she didn't hear it. Jake wasn't in love with her, she told herself. She had found that out last night. Her cheeks stung at the thought. But what had she done? Every time a step sounded, she turned alternately hot and cold. At last she could stand it no longer. With a muttered apology, she slipped away from the table and out of the room.

She knew then what she had to do. Some way, she had to get to Jake Cornish.

Martha's roadster was parked in the driveway. She got into it and sent it flying down the road. She thought she heard Arthur's voice yelling after her. She didn't look back. If she could only find Tom and get him to the station for the three o'clock train! He had become "Tom" now in her thoughts. Jake Cornish had disappeared.

As she sent the roadster flying along the rocky road, it came to her with sudden dismay that Arthur's mother and grandmother were driving out to look her over this afternoon. They would never forgive her if she weren't there to greet them. And Arthur would consider it a deadly insult.

And then she knew that it didn't matter. She wasn't going to marry Arthur Clarke, now or ever. Better a million times to swallow her pride and ask Tom to release her from her bargain! Somehow, she would get work and pay Tom back his thousand dollars.

Hester interrupted her thoughts to bring the car to a quick stop. She would have to climb the rest of the way. It was a difficult climb. Her high heels made her fall again and again. Her knees were bleeding, her arms scratched and torn, but she

scarcely felt it. If only she found Tom!

Then, with a wild lurch of her heart, she saw him sitting on a huge boulder. Hester made her way toward him. She could not make herself heard above the roar of the falls. She put her hand on his shoulder. With a jerk, he wheeled around.

"Tom, come away," she shouted, and pointed down the trail.

Without a word, he lifted her up and carried her over the rocky ground till they came to where they had to go down. There he put her on her feet, then drawing her tightly to his side, began the descent. She felt as if they were flying and, despite her panic and shame, it was sweet beyond words to feel his rough coat beneath her cheek, to catch a glimpse of his set jaw and the blue eyes that did not once look at her.

At the bottom, he took his arm away. "Now, what's the matter?"

"Tom, they've discovered something in your office that they can put you in prison for. The police are looking for you. I"—she swallowed a lump in her throat—"I phoned the police this morning that they could find you here under the name of Tom Lake. I've got a car here and I'll take you wherever you want to go."

"You telephoned the police?"

"Oh, don't stand there talking. The police may arrive at any moment. Yes, I phoned them. It was a contemptible trick, I know."

He got into the car with a slowness that made Hester want to scream.

"Why did you do that?" His eyes were boring deeper and deeper.

"Because—because you didn't kiss me last night," she whispered.

"What?" he almost shouted.

"Because you didn't kiss me last night, and I wanted you to."





*"I phoned the police that they could find you here," Hester said, low.  
"It was a contemptible trick, I know. But I was angry because you  
didn't kiss me last night."*

The last was said so low that he had to bend over to hear. Calmly, he reached out and shut off the motor.

"Say that again."

Hester tried to put the clutch in. "Are you crazy? We've got to hurry. Don't you realize that the police——"

"The devil with the police! Say that again."

His eyes bored into hers.

"Oh, please." But he was obdurate, and with the color flaming in her cheeks, she once again repeated what she had said.

He caught her against him. Now he was bending down. In a moment



those lips, so brutal and tender, would be on hers.

"I love you," she whispered.

He laughed exultantly. "And I, my sweet, am mad about you."

A long minute later, Hester drew away. She fought against the desire to go back into the strength of his arms, the intoxicating sweetness of his lips.

"Tom, please! Take the car and drive. I wouldn't want to live if they send you to prison."

"Listen, my darling, they can't send me to prison."

"But they can. The papers said that at last the law had Jake Cornish."

"Cornish, yes, but I'm not Cornish."

"Not Jake Cornish?"

"Come back where you belong, my sweet, and I'll tell you who I really am. There, that's right. I'm Tom Lake Penfield."

"Not Tom Penfield, the district attorney?"

"Guilty. You see, honey, I was in Cornish's office, checking over his accounts and records that day when you came in. I thought you might be able to give me some information about him, so I told the girl to show you in and then—well, I fell madly in love with you, only to find out that you had come to borrow money to finance a marriage campaign. It didn't seem possible that I had waited thirty-five years to fall in love with that kind of girl."

"But I am that kind," she barely whispered.

Tom stopped her lips with a kiss that left them both breathless.

"And when," he went on at last, "Arthur told me yesterday afternoon that you had promised to marry him and——"

"But I hadn't—not then. He only——"

"Enough said, sweet." He tilted up her lovely, flushed face gently. "I ought to have known. But I didn't, and it almost turned me into a madman. I loved you so, and to think that you could be bought by that—that swine! That's why I was so brutal last night. I wanted to hurt you. Dearest, can you forgive me?"

The smile, which lit up Hester's face with dazzling radiance, made him draw a quick breath.

"Tom," she whispered, burying her head against his shoulder, "I love you." That answer was sufficient.

For a long moment of exquisite rapture, he held her cradled in his arms. Then he said with a little laugh, "I'm going to drive to Niles. I think that's a swell place to be married, don't you?"

"Tom, we can't. The police—Arthur——"

"We'll wire Arthur that he'll have to pick another candidate for the honor. As for the police—well, we'll wire them, too. They're just waiting my word to nab Cornish. You see, I wasn't quite ready for that break, but now——"

He took her in his arms, and the kiss that passed between them was a seal and a promise.







# One-man Girl

By Barbara Leigh

**W**ITH a last touch to the bowl of sweet peas on the table set for two, Allison sat at the piano to fill in the time until Humphrey's coming. Everything was perfect, she thought with satisfaction, from the date muffins and sugar cookies she'd baked herself to the gay ruffle that flared under her piquant chin.

Of course, Humphrey was accustomed to silver service on fine damask and hostesses in gowns that cost more than Allison's complete wardrobe, but it was she, Allison

Carter, whom he had chosen in preference to all the wealthy girls he knew. Allison still found herself gasping at the wonder of it.

She had played only a few bars when the ring of her apartment bell interrupted her. Humphrey was early! She ran to open the door, but her welcoming smile

gave place to a frown of annoyance as she saw her neighbor standing on the threshold.

"What do you want?" she asked, glaring up at him.

"What a warm welcome!" Pierce Langdon grinned down at her, stepped into the room and folded his six foot one into the most comfortable chair. "I heard you playing the 'Maiden's Prayer,'" he said, adding with exaggerated modesty, "so I came to answer it."

"It wasn't the 'Maiden's Prayer' and you're not the answer," she re-



torted. "I wish you'd go, Pierce. I'm expecting Humphrey."

Stretching his long legs halfway across the room, he sighed in great content. "How do you do it?" he asked. "My apartment is identically the same as yours, but it's only three furnished rooms while this—this is heaven. Or would be," he amended, sitting erect and glowering at Humphrey's picture, "if that wasn't here."

Allison bit her lip in exasperation. "Are you going to start that again?" she asked, blue eyes gleaming dangerously.

"No." Pierce reached for a muffin and between bites said, "I could tell you that Humphrey Burgess is a smug, self-satisfied prig who'd break your heart and kill your soul without once losing his superior smile——"

"Pierce," she began angrily but he interrupted her, his brows cocked above his keen gray eyes.

"I could tell you but I won't. These cakes are swell."

"I didn't make them for you," she pointed out. "Will you please go?" Pierce was a grand pal but there was no use in rousing Humphrey's antagonism by letting him find him here. He'd hinted more than once that he didn't consider Pierce a proper friend for the future Mrs. Burgess.

Pocketing three cookies and choosing a blossom for his lapel, Pierce rose resignedly. "Something tells me I'm not wanted. I thought we could have a Saturday musicale again. It's been a long time since the last one and my sax is r'arin' to go."

"I'm sorry, but not this afternoon." It had been a long time, she thought, repairing the damage he'd done to the table—three months, since she'd become engaged

to Humphrey. The bell interrupted her musings and she exclaimed in dismay, "There's Humphrey now. Oh, dear, why did you have to come, Pierce?"

Her heart sank when she saw Humphrey's quick frown. If he were really annoyed it would take hours to win back his good humor.

"Good afternoon, Allison," he said, and gave Pierce a frigid nod.

"Hi, Humph." Pierce pumped his hand. "Please don't coax me to stay. I can't possibly make it." Grinning into Allison's furious face, he left.

"Don't mind him, Humphrey," she pleaded, a placating hand on her fiancé's perfectly tailored shoulder. "Please sit down. I've coffee all ready."

"You see a great deal of him, don't you?" Humphrey observed stiffly, while Allison wondered how long it would take her to raise the downturned corners of his mouth.

"Well," she replied apologetically, "he lives right next door and we're both interested in music."

"You could move," he pointed out, accepting the cup she handed him.

"Oh, no," she protested quickly. "The landlord was so nice about the rent when I was out of work. He let me skip two months, and now that I'm working and can pay regularly I couldn't leave."

Those terrible months between jobs! She shuddered, remembering the day she'd drawn the last of her small savings. Pierce had been a grand friend during that dark time. His gayety, his encouragement—the days would have been unbearable without him. Embarrassed, he'd offered to loan her money. She hadn't accepted, of course, and she'd prepared to move into cheaper quarters, but the landlord told her to



keep her rooms and pay the rent when she could. And then, when she'd been haggard with desperation, she'd found a position with Humphrey's firm.

"Wasn't it wonderful," she said now, leaning forward eagerly, "that the employment agency sent me to you? Just think, we might never have met!"

She chattered on about the office, subtly flattering his business ability, and gradually the sternness left Humphrey's handsome face and he started to speak. Almost exhausted from the effort to break down the wall of his disapproval, she sank back in her chair. But it was worth the trouble and she need not worry now. Once Humphrey started talking he went on beautifully, his voice well modulated, his sentences rolling.

"He loves to hear himself talk," Pierce had once remarked.

Allison smothered the unworthy thought but she couldn't keep her mind from drifting. She'd heard Humphrey's views on business before. He was a dear, though, and she was a tremendously lucky girl. Imagine Humphrey Burgess, social registerite and president of the firm, falling in love with a stenographer!

Her attention was distracted as she became aware of the soft notes of Pierce's saxophone penetrating the wall. He played well and she smiled as she listened. But suddenly she tensed and ground her teeth soundlessly. For, though the song he played was an old one, she recognized it. "Somebody Stole My Gal" he was tooting in an exaggeratedly broken-hearted fashion.

Frantically, she tried to focus her mind on what Humphrey was saying but found herself waiting nervously for Pierce's song to end. She breathed a sigh of relief when the

last notes died, but almost immediately he slipped into "Forsaken." It wailed through the air, forlorn and melancholy.

Humphrey cast an irritated look toward the wall; but, feverishly, Allison started him talking again. Seething with anger, she scarcely heard what he said. Pierce was doing this on purpose! He wanted to distract her attention from Humphrey! Oh, wait till she saw him again! She'd tell him what she thought about his cute little jokes.

"Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" blared the saxophone.

It was so apt that for a moment laughter gripped Allison. She covered it, not too well, with a spasm of coughing.

Humphrey pushed back his chair. "Let's get out of here. We can't talk with that noise going on," he said irritably.

While Allison tilted a perky hat over her eye, her wrath returned, and as she locked the door of her apartment she kicked Pierce's door viciously.

"Why did you do that?" Humphrey asked suspiciously.

"I—I stumbled," she replied. "Where are we going, dear?"

"There's a very decent new supper club just opened. I thought we might try it."

Deliberately, she set out to be the winsome, demure girl Humphrey liked her to be, and when they danced she reminded herself again that she was a lucky girl to have the love of a fine man like Humphrey.

"Have you spoken to your mother about our marriage?" she asked when they were back at their table.

His lips became a thin line. "You must let me handle it in my own way," he reproved her. "Mother has always wanted me to marry a



girl whose family she might know. I'll have to go carefully so that she'll accept you."

"Accept me? Really, Humphrey! Am I so low in the social scale?"

His blue eyes widened in surprise and she knew why. It was the first time she'd ever been anything but docilely happy that he'd asked her to be his wife. She was astonished at her own outburst.

"Sorry," she murmured. "I realize it will be a trial to your family to have a little nobody enter it."

He patted her hand, not even aware of her sarcasm. "I'm sure you'll fit in quite well," he consoled her.

Allison's hand gripped the table as she choked back the hot words on her tongue. She must remember he'd fallen in love with her against his will. No Burgess had ever married anything less than the cream of society. But gradually he would lose his stiffness. Her warmth and eagerness would thaw the wall of conventional reserve that barricaded his heart. In spite of her brave reasoning, doubt gnawed at her, and for the first time since her engagement she was uncertain and a little afraid.

And then, for no reason at all, she thought of the gay, silly things she and Pierce had done together—motoring into the country in his dilapidated car; lunching on hamburgers and soda pop; chuting the chutes at Coney Island; exploring the winding streets of Chinatown.

She remembered the day she'd told Pierce of her engagement. In

her mind's eye she could see him yet, standing quite still with queer white lines around his mouth.

"You love Humphrey?" he'd asked in a strangled voice.

"Of course. What's wrong, Pierce? Won't you wish me happiness?"

He'd gripped her arms fiercely. "You can't marry him!" he'd shouted like a madman. "He's just a heartless automaton. He'll kill you by inches."

They'd had their first quarrel then and, though they'd made it up, there was always a strained undercurrent between them since.

"You're not listening," Humphrey broke in on her reverie.

"I—I'm sorry." She tried to smile his crossness away, but he said severely:

"You daydream too much, Allison. I was saying that I don't care to have you remain at your present apartment. Frankly, I don't trust Pierce Langdon."

"But, Humphrey," she exclaimed, wide-eyed with wonder, "he's my friend!"

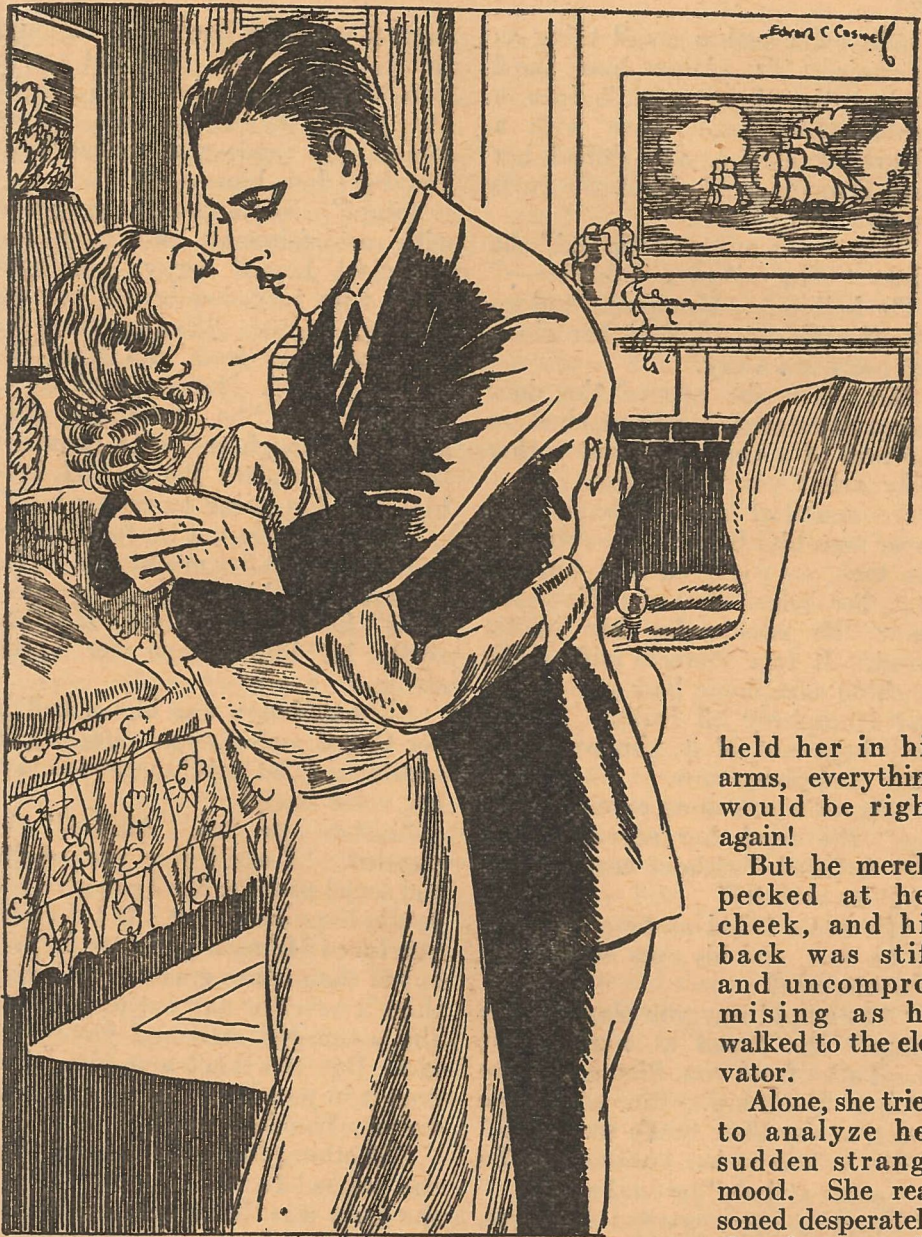
"Nevertheless," he insisted, "if you wish to please me, you'll leave at once."

She had always yielded to him, immediately and without question, but now she rebelled. "I'll think it over, Humphrey," she said. "Will you take me home now? I've a headache."

His disapproval was like a wall between them all the way home; but, amazingly, it left her unmoved. An odd numbness held her, frightened her. For the first time she noticed that Humphrey's patrician mouth







*"So you hate me!" he said grimly. He swept her into his arms, and his lips claimed hers in a kiss that sent her senses reeling. Against her will, her lips flamed in wild response to his.*

held a hint of cruelty, that his eyes were palely criticizing.

At her door she lifted her lips for his good-by kiss. Surely when he

held her in his arms, everything would be right again!

But he merely pecked at her cheek, and his back was stiff and uncompromising as he walked to the elevator.

Alone, she tried to analyze her sudden strange mood. She reasoned desperately that it was only the secrecy that frightened her. When Humphrey would acknowl-

edge her before his family and friends her sun would shine again. But, bleakly, she thought of his increasing criticism of her actions, her



friends, even such a small thing as her hair. To please him she'd brushed the dancing curls into a sedate golden cap. Now with a gesture of escape, she ruffled her hand through her hair till the curls rioted.

"What's the matter with me?" she cried. "Why, all of a sudden——"

The bell rang. Humphrey had returned! He would hold her close, kiss her fears away.

But when she opened the door Pierce sauntered in and perched on the arm of a chair. "Home rather early, aren't you?" he asked.

She stared at him as though she'd never seen him before. He returned her look, so gayly sure of himself, that her anger flamed. Now she knew the reason for her idiotic mood. It was Pierce's fault. His mocking saxophone had started her and Humphrey off badly. If he'd only kept out of it, she would be with Humphrey now.

"Haven't you done enough damage," she cried, her nerves ragged and tortured, "without coming here to gloat over it?"

His smile faded as he got slowly to his feet, and his eyes widened in bewilderment.

"The stupid way you played those songs!" she flared at him. "I've stood a lot from you, Pierce, because of our friendship. But when you mock at my love, that's too much."

He looked at her curiously. "So it's come at last," he said softly.

Puzzled, she regarded his eyes, suddenly gentle, his lips that held an unaccountable tenderness. "What's come?" she asked.

"Don't you understand, Allison?" He caught her hands. "It's the breaking point. You've been going with Humphrey for three months now. At first you were infatuated, grateful that such an important man

singled you out for his attentions. But he stifled you. I could see it from the first. You're like a scared little rabbit in his presence. Now something's made you realize that you don't love him——"

"Stop!" She'd been tongue-tied with astonishment, but now she wrenched herself away, her eyes black with fury, her breath coming in short gasps. "You've tried to turn me away from him from the very beginning. But you can't do it. I love him." She repeated it defiantly, as though trying to convince some one besides Pierce. "I love him and I'm going to marry him!"

The gentleness left his face and he smiled down at her mockingly. "Has he received his mother's permission?" he asked softly. "Has she really let him escape her apron strings?"

Allison's heart was like a ball in her throat and she had difficulty in speaking. "Get out!" she said at last, her voice stony.

"Listen to me, Allison," he pleaded. "I can't give you wealth and social prestige but I can give you youth, happiness, love. If I thought you loved Humphrey I'd try to fade out of the picture gracefully, though there'll never be any one else for me. I'm a one-girl man and you're the girl. But you don't love him. I've seen it in your eyes, heard it in your voice. You love me!"

Something inside her stirred, but she refused to acknowledge it. All she knew was that Pierce was trying to break her engagement to Humphrey and she wouldn't let him do it.

"Love you!" she laughed harshly. "You were my best friend once. But now—now I hate you!"

She caught her breath, amazed at her own words. Pierce looked as though he'd been stabbed. His eyes



were like holes, his face haggard. Then he laughed—a sound that brought fright like an icy hand around Allison's heart.

"So you hate me," he repeated grimly. Before she could guess his intention, he swept her into his arms. His eyes probed deep into hers. Then his lips claimed hers in a kiss that sent her senses reeling.

For a moment she lay stunned in his embrace. Then, against her will, her lips flamed in wild response to his demand.

"There," he said unsteadily when he released her. "Can you say now that you don't love me?"

She passed a dazed hand over her forehead and as though the gesture dissipated the rainbow mists enveloping her, she saw with horror what she had done. She had betrayed Humphrey! And it was Pierce who had tricked her into it.

"I loathe you," she cried passionately. She heard Pierce gasp as though the words had been three stones flung at him, saw the radiance fade from his eyes and a bitter, searing mockery take its place.

Very quietly he said, "When you kiss Humphrey, remember how you kissed me just now." And then he was gone.

Snatching up Humphrey's picture, Allison addressed it fiercely. "I hate him, darling, I hate him," she sobbed, and covered Humphrey's smile with kisses.

But the cold touch of the glass could not melt away the warmth of Pierce's kiss on her lips. She slept with the picture under her pillow, but she left Humphrey on the borderland of consciousness, and it was Pierce who filled her dreams.

But when she woke next morning, Allison's first thought was of Humphrey. She must make up to

him for the strange dark mood that had possessed her yesterday and for that mad kiss she'd given Pierce.

Her eyes were enormous in her pale face as she telephoned him, her voice quivering as she said, "I'm sorry I was temperamental yesterday, Humphrey."

"That's all right," he replied, and she was relieved and grateful at his warm tone. Usually, when she'd offended him it was difficult to win his forgiveness. "I've something to tell you, Allison. Can you meet me at the usual place for dinner?"

"Yes, Humphrey." The usual place was a small restaurant on a side street where they could be sure none of his friends would see them. She shrugged her depression off. She'd have to be doubly cheerful and attentive to make up for yesterday.

Her mouth was brave with lipstick, a jaunty hat tilted saucily over one eye when she left the apartment. She listened at Pierce's door but no sound came from his room, and she went slowly to meet Humphrey.

He was more jubilant than she'd ever seen him. "I told mother yesterday, after I left you," he announced.

"What did she say?" Allison asked faintly, feeling as though a door were closing on her. "Is it all right?"

"She took it like a sport. Of course, she won't give her final consent till she's met you, but—Why, Allison, don't you feel well? Aren't you happy?"

"Of course, Humphrey." Determinedly, she lifted her mouth in a smile. This was what she'd been hoping for for three months, wasn't it? Then why should her heart feel weighted with lead?

"When we get into the car I must kiss you," he said in the tone of one promising a child candy.

"Oh, Humphrey," she murmured



gratefully because one part of her mind knew he expected it. But the other part was a panicky, weeping thing.

In the privacy of his car, he kissed her—a hungry kiss that was, for Humphrey, fiercely possessive. But it left her absolutely cold.

"Take me home, Humphrey!"

With a great effort she mastered her hysteria. She had to be alone, to straighten out the chaos in her mind and heart.

"I understand," he said smugly. "I know how a girl must feel when she——" He left it unfinished, but he might as well have said it, "when she's been accepted by the Burgesses."

It seemed æons before she was alone in her room. Humphrey's good-by kiss had left her strangling with a suppressed scream, but he had finally gone with the promise to return that evening.

Hands gripped tightly together, she stood as if made of stone.

It was all so heartbreakingly simple. She sank into a chair and felt as though her heart was being torn to shreds. For she knew now that she'd always loved Pierce. She'd been dazzled by Humphrey's grandeur but she'd never loved him. It had been Pierce from the beginning and it would be Pierce to the end. But she'd lost his love forever.

The hours dragged by. Finally, she pulled out pen and paper and wrote to Humphrey. She could never marry him when her heart belonged utterly to another man, and it would be best not to face him while she, a nobody, jilted him.

She had just finished the brief note when a knock sounded at the door. Wearily, she rose and answered it.

Pierce entered, his white face etched with lines she'd never seen before. He carried a traveling bag. "I've come to say good-by," he said emotionlessly.

"Good-by?" Her hand went to her throat.

"I want to apologize, Allison, and to wish you happiness." He could not quite hide the ragged agony in his voice. "Will you part friends?" He extended his hand.

"Friends." The smile almost killed her but she managed it gallantly. "Always, Pierce."

At the touch of her hand an inarticulate cry escaped him, as though it were more than he could bear. "Allison!" he muttered, all the heart-break of the world in the word, and caught her hungrily into his arms.

Her lips yearned to him and he claimed them with a fervor that told her he still loved her. She clung to him in ecstasy, feeling as if the world were fading and heaven were very near.

A cold, vicious voice tumbled them back to earth. "You see, Humphrey?"

They whirled to find Humphrey in the doorway, an elderly woman with a disdainful lorgnette beside him.

"Humphrey!" Allison gasped.

"Mother was right," he sneered, his thin lips curling as his pale eyes traveled with obvious meaning from her to Pierce. "I couldn't believe it, but——" He gestured significantly.







*"You see, I was right!" said Mrs. Burgess as she and Humphrey burst in on Allison. "When my son told me of his infatuation for this woman I put detectives on her trail, and I found she was just what I thought. This touching scene we've just witnessed proves everything."*

"What are you talking about?" Pierce demanded.

"When my son told me of his infatuation for this woman"—Mrs. Burgess's tone was an insult—"I put detectives on her trail and I found she was just what I thought."

"Explain, please," Pierce commanded through set lips.

"You are Pierce Langdon, I presume?" When he nodded, Mrs. Burgess continued, "I discovered that you were paying her rent. And this touching scene we've just wit-



nessed proves everything." She glanced at the bag at Pierce's feet. "You are evidently moving out, a trifle late."

Allison felt as though grenades were bursting in her head. She couldn't have spoken to save her life but Pierce faced the woman earnestly. "It's not what you think. You must believe me. I only paid the rent for two months when Miss Carter was out of work. But she never knew it. And as for the rest of——"

"Don't bother, Langdon," Humphrey interrupted. "You're only making things worse. I see everything now. You almost had me fooled with your quiet ways, my dear," he told Allison. "But everything is clear now. Our engagement is, of course, broken."

"Humphrey," Pierce began desperately, but Allison touched his arm, her eyes shining like dewy bluebells in the morning sun.

"Never mind, Pierce. I think everything has been said. Good-by, Humphrey. Here's your ring. Good-by, Mrs. Burgess, and thank you."

Mrs. Burgess stared in amazement through her lorgnette, then swept from the room, Humphrey in her wake.

"Oh, Allison!" Pierce turned to her in anguish. "What have I done to you?"

"You've saved me," she answered very softly, "the price of a postage stamp."

His puzzled gaze brought the laughter bubbling to her lips. "Read this before I tear it up." She gave him the letter she'd written Humphrey.

He read it quickly, then turned to her, wonder and awe struggling with incredulity in his eyes. "You don't love him?" He read a sentence of the letter aloud, as though voicing it would make it possible to understand. "'Forgive me, Humphrey, but I love some one else.' Oh, Allison, you don't mean——"

"I mean," she replied happily, "that I'm a one-man girl, and though it took me long enough to discover who he is, I did at last. You're the man, Pierce."

Her eyes were radiant.

"My darling!" He held her so tight that she could scarcely breathe, so close that she could feel his heart pounding above hers. Then his lips found hers. The earth seemed to fade away and heaven seemed very near. They entered together—the one-girl man and the one-man girl.



### THE SHINING MOMENT

[T came upon us suddenly  
As we raced up the seaward hill,  
And watched the clouds that hung like flowers  
Festooned on heaven's window sill.  
Transfigured by the flaming light,  
We clung ecstatically wind-blown,  
Our hearts uplifted as we shared.  
This shining moment all our own.

FRANCES ELLIOTT.





# The World Of Dreams

By Marie Calvane

## VI.

**A**LL great men and women are superstitious. Or, perhaps, that is not quite the right word. What I mean is that you will find that practically all men and women who have achieved a place in the world have a keen sense of intuition. They realize that there are things beyond the power of our five senses to grasp.

This is especially true of self-made people. People who have a long way

to go in order to achieve their ambition. They cannot risk making a mistake. The sure, plodding ways of the man who has no high destiny to fulfill are too slow for them. They must make use of all the short cuts.

Dreams are one of the most common and reliable signposts which are at their disposal. But one must be sure to read their message aright.

To see a fence in your dreams indicates that you will encounter obstacles in your path. If you climb



over it, you will attain success in spite of them. If you creep under it, you will meet with humiliating rebuffs. To dream that you squeeze through a small aperture in a fence indicates that you will not hesitate to use questionable means to gain your ends.

A gentle fire, bringing warmth and comfort, is a symbol of happiness. If it springs up suddenly, unexpected good news. But a raging conflagration is a destructive force and symbolizes severe losses and unhappiness. If you get burned by it, you will suffer loss and regret.

A dream of fish is a forecast of happiness and good fortune. If you dream that you catch a fish and it gets away from you, you will find disappointment where you had been sure of success. To see many fish swimming around is a sign of money; a dream of dead fish is a warning of losses.

Bright, fresh flowers are a symbol of happiness; white flowers, sad news; wilted flowers, sorrows.

If you dream of fleas you will be annoyed by petty and malicious tale-bearers. Should they bite you, you will suffer from the sharp tongue of gossips. To dream that you take measures to exterminate them is good. You will effectively stop the wagging of tongues.

If you see a funeral, attended with much mourning, you will experience illness and grave trouble arising from it. If there is little or no mourning, you will hear sad news which, however, will not affect you.

Carl's dream was sadly prophetic. He dreamed that he was walking in

a garden or some park where many beautiful flowers grew. He remembered how much his fiancée loved flowers and he decided to pick a bunch for her. However, he noticed that each flower, as he picked it, lost its beautiful, vivid color and slowly turned to a soft gardenia-white. He couldn't understand what caused it, but he decided to take them to Bess anyway. Maybe she'd know.

As he left the garden he saw a cortege coming down the road. He waited for it to pass, and meanwhile,



asked a man, who happened to be standing near him, who had died. The man said he didn't know. The cortege slowly wound its way past them and turned into the gate through which Carl had just passed. He saw the faces of the mourners, weeping and covered with sor-

row. There was quite a gathering of people watching now, and Carl asked some one standing beside him why they were going in there. The man answered, "Why, don't you know? That's the cemetery." And then Carl thought he knew why the flowers had turned white.

Carl's fiancée became ill shortly before the date set for their marriage. In spite of the most loving care and the best of medical attention, she passed on.

Can you trace the forecast in his dream? The beautiful, bright flowers, signifying happiness, turning white—a symbol of sadness—as he picked them. Then the funeral cortege and the mourners, harbingers of illness and loss.

A mother wrote to me: "I've had a most peculiar dream. I feel that



it concerns my daughter. There are certain things which have caused her and me a great deal of unhappiness lately and I feel that this dream, somehow, reflects on them. Will you please help me? The dream was as follows:

"It was a warm day.

"I dreamed that my daughter was sitting on the front porch and as I came out of the house I saw a lot of fleas crawling over her. I said to her, 'Ethel, don't you know you're just covered with fleas? Don't they bother you?'"

"She said, 'Yes, they do. I've been trying to brush them off, but they jump on again as soon as I get them off.'

"I said, 'All right, sit still and I'll get them off.' I took a brush and started brushing them off, but no matter how many I brushed off there

never seemed to be any less. At last I said, 'There's only one thing to do. I'm going to pour a can of gasoline over you. That'll kill them.'

"Ethel said, 'No, you better not do that. I might catch on fire and get burned.'

"But I answered, 'Not if you stay out here. Besides, you've got to get rid of them and that's the only sure way I know.'

"So I got a can of gasoline and poured it over her. In a little while the fleas dropped off her, dead, and then I said, 'Now you can go in the house and take a bath and they won't bother you any more.'

"That is all. Will you please decipher it for me?"

Not knowing the circumstances in the woman's life which had prompted this dream, I could give

her no advice, but I deciphered the dream according to the symbols.

I wrote: "Your daughter will suffer from the malicious tongue of gossips. You will try to ignore it and pass it off lightly, but eventually will realize that heroic measures are necessary if you are to be rid of this annoyance."

She wrote to me some time later: "Your diagnosis of the dream was so close that I'm sure you will like to know how we made out. At the time I wrote to you my daughter

was separated from her husband. He was extremely jealous and she had been very unhappy. People were constantly carrying back to us stories which were supposed to come from him, throwing slurs on her character and hinting that she had had affairs with other men.

We both had been made miserable by this, but there just didn't seem to be anything we could do. However, after receiving your diagnosis of my dream, I told her we weren't going to stand for it any longer. I told her she'd have to sue for divorce and let him prove his charges. She didn't want to, but I insisted, and finally she gave in.

"When the case was brought into court the whole truth came to light. He hadn't said any of these things. They had been fabrications of the gossips. They couldn't understand why any man should part from a young and good-looking wife whom he admitted he loved, unless there was another man. They rotated these stories around so that they had reached him, too, and he had been led to believe that there actually was another man.





"I'm glad to say that everything was finally straightened out and they are living together again and very happy. And somehow, I feel that it is all due to you, for if you hadn't diagnosed that dream, I doubt if I would have ever had the courage to bring things to a head in that manner. We all want to thank you."

In another case I knew the man intimately, but there was nothing in his life which could give me a clew to the unraveling of the dream. It was long after it all happened and we had practically forgotten the dream, that Jim remembered and reminded me of it.

He dreamed one night that he was fishing. He tossed his line in idly, without any set purpose of catching any fish. After a time he felt a bite and pulled up the line. He had caught a nice fish of just the average size. But when he took it off the hook and held it in his hands, looking at it, it began to grow. Bigger and bigger it grew, much to Jim's pleasure and surprise. And then,

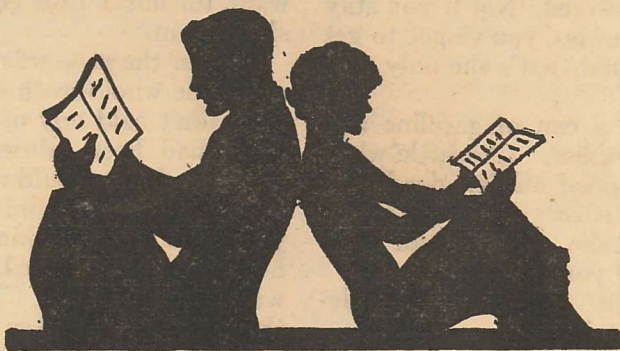
even while he was looking at it, it disappeared. Just vanished. Jim awoke with a feeling of sadness, he told me. It had been such a nice-looking fish and he had been so proud of it.

I deciphered the dream, but it could not be tied up with any of the known circumstances in his life. Time passed; we forgot about it.

Jim was a writer, and in his line of work, through a trifling incident, he met a girl who was also a writer. Drawn by a common interest, their acquaintance developed into a friendship which soon grew into something deeper and more precious. There was no reason why their love should not have culminated in marriage; and yet one day it vanished, as though it had never been. The course of their lives drifted apart with the years, leaving only memories to remind them that they had once known and loved each other.

It was then Jim remembered his dream. The insignificant little fish which had grown into gigantic proportions and then suddenly dissolved into thin air.

*Next week Marie Calvane continues her interpretation of dreams.*





# For Love

By Edythe Seims Fisher



**S**HE had intended to wear the new jade taffeta with the peaked crown and the pert dip over one eyebrow. It gave her dash, and Aunt Grace, Jim said, liked vivacious girls. Also, it lent her eyes depth so that they reminded one of cool, green water flowing over deep rocks. Wide green eyes, scarlet lips, a dash of color on smooth white cheeks—yes, Grace Hunter ought to approve.

But, at the last minute, she decided to wear the turn-back felt that really went with the dress. It was less colorful but smarter. She frowned and turned away from the mirror. Darn Aunt Grace, anyway! It was years since she had fussed so much about clothes.

Why, the first time she met Jim,

she looked a sight. She had been at the theater since noon and dropped in at David Reid's party around nine o'clock for a cup of coffee or a cocktail. Her face was unpowdered—not even washed. She was horribly tired and wearing her old shoes because she didn't like to put on rubbers over her good suede ones.

"Good gosh, Shirley!" David had exclaimed when he opened the door. "You forgot to take off your chimney-sweep make-up."

"Maybe I had better go to the back entrance," she had answered solemnly. She remembered everything about the evening vividly, how David's silly banter and his grinning,



homely face had cheered her immeasurably. She remembered that she said:

"I like you, David, because you can give a cocktail party and not get tight. When you grow up and get to be a doctor, perhaps I shall let you take care of my children."

"But I am a doctor," he had told her, as if she didn't know. "Specialty—nervous cases. For instance, if madam happens to have an unreasoning fear of cats——"

She shook her head. "An army of cats couldn't make me yell tonight. I'm too tired."

"Then how about a nice man?" he had asked. "Tall, handsome and rich—that is, his aunt is rich. I've been saving him for you."

"Well, I don't want him!" And David had taken her at her word. He had poured her a cocktail, then left her in a shadowy corner to repent her hastiness. For the young man looked very nice! She picked him out easily, since he was the only stranger present. He was tall, with curly blond hair and a well-groomed look that seemed a bit out of place in the shabby, haphazard comfort of David's apartment.

After a while she realized that he was watching her, and then it wasn't long before he came over. He drove her home and, the next evening, took her out to dinner. His name was James Kensington Hunter, and he was an architect working for Grace Hunter, Inc., Interior Decorators.

Also, he liked slim girls with burnished black hair. As a matter of fact—this all developed in proper time, of course—he was simply mad about a certain girl with black hair. Now they were engaged and this afternoon he was taking her to Aunt Grace's for tea.

It was a very important meeting. If Aunt Grace liked her, they could

go to Europe on their honeymoon and have an apartment on the East River with a terrace and two maids' rooms. If Grace did not like her——

Shirley turned back to the mirror. Yes, she ought to pass. Her fingers felt cold as she lighted a cigarette. Where was Jim? It must be hours after four thirty. She glanced impatiently at her small, jeweled wrist watch and saw to her amazement that it was exactly four twenty-nine. The next moment the doorbell rang. Of course! She might have known Jim wouldn't be late. He never was.

She flung open the door, and her heart fluttered with pride at the sight of him—tall, fair-haired, his broad-shouldered figure faultlessly attired in a dark-gray suit.

"Darling!"

"Hello, green eyes." He was careful to step inside before he kissed her, and then he was careful not to muss her hat. She surrendered her lips contentedly.

"Think I'll do?" she asked a moment later.

He examined her approvingly. "Never ask useless questions. Ready? Aunt Grace is a terror for appointments."

She gathered her gloves, bag and handkerchief in a whirlwind motion. "You mean that if we're two minutes late, we might be executed?"

"Just about." He was piloting her into the hall and toward a waiting elevator. She followed without question.

It was rather fun to be bossed around so pleasantly. Jim had a way of making people do what he wanted because he planned everything in advance and, somehow, it was always easier to follow his suggestions than to convince him that yours were better.

They walked over to Seventy-third Street through the park be-



cause it was such a beautiful day—all soft gold, browns and greens, like a Chinese painting, Shirley thought. She looked at the shabby houses, the cracked sidewalk, the dirty children playing in the street, and she smiled because they seemed beautiful. Then a thin gray cat stalked out toward her from behind a garbage pail, and she stiffened.

"What's the matter?" Jim asked. "You aren't scared of cats, are you?" He spoke lightly, as if the question were silly.

She nodded soberly. "Cats always frighten me," she confessed. "They have, ever since I was a little girl. There's something about the way they slink along—I can't bear them!"

"But—but that's preposterous." He was staring at her now, laughing a little, but there was an incredulous look in his eyes.

"It's not preposterous to me," she declared firmly. "I never mentioned it to you because it sounds silly. But when I see a cat coming toward me, I want to turn around and run. I told David—Doctor Reid—and he wanted to cure me."

"Why didn't you let him?"

"He wasn't sure he could, you see. He just wanted to try and it made me feel like a guinea pig. He rushed me for several weeks after that, but I always felt it was because I was a prospective experiment. He—he doesn't bother with girls, usually."

Jim nodded absently. "Aunt Grace has a pet Angora," he said. "Oh!"

"She's rather daffy over the creature. What happens when you stay in the same room with a cat? Do you scream or tear your hair?" He sounded anxious.

"Neither one, I hope," Shirley answered lightly. "I'll try not to disgrace you."

But the terror refused to leave her heart. It grew heavier and colder the closer they got to their destination, until by the time they turned in at the regal apartment building just off Park Avenue, her heart felt like a lump of dry ice.

She scarcely noticed the six-foot doorman, or the walnut-paneled elevator, or the small, pale-green foyer at which the elevator finally deposited them. There was one apartment on each floor. Jim pressed the bell in a bronze-trimmed door and a butler answered. He ushered them down a wide hall which also served as an art gallery, toward a huge living room.

"Bear up," Jim whispered.

Shirley nodded. Aunt Grace had to like her—had to think she was the only girl in the world for Jim. She wet her lips so that they would glisten, and raised her head a bit higher. She felt very much as if she were walking onto a stage. She could even see the directions in her mind: "Enter through door center. Walk downstage right toward Grace, who is sitting at tea table. Smile."

Then she heard Jim's voice: "This is Shirley, Aunt Grace."

"I am so glad to know you, my dear," Aunt Grace was saying. "Please sit down."

She had thick gray hair, and eyes that were just as keen as Shirley had expected. There was something a little too sharp about her face, but her smile was pleasant and she was dressed in a black velvet gown that was amazingly becoming. All of this was more or less as Shirley had imagined it would be, and she knew very well what she should reply, but she couldn't speak.

For in the old woman's lap was a pure-white, purring Angora. The cat looked up at Shirley with unblinking blue eyes and she couldn't



turn her own gaze away. A cold, miserable terror swept over her.

Aunt Grace, apparently startled at her guest's silence, rose to the occasion with ease.

"I see you are admiring Toto. He is beautiful, isn't he? I have entered him in the cat show. Amazing how he stares at you! He is usually indifferent to strangers."

"Is he?" Shirley realized that Jim was looking at her frantically. Quelling her fear, she managed a calmer smile and was about to say something a bit more brilliant than her initial remarks, when Toto flicked out one elegant paw. She jumped back as if on springs. Toto yawned, then bared his teeth. She had a mad idea that he was laughing at her.

"Is there something wrong, my dear? Are you ill?" That was Aunt Grace's smooth voice.

"I am quite all right," Shirley gulped. "It's just that—well, I'm afraid of cats. I'm terribly sorry."

Aunt Grace nodded sympathetically, and placing Toto on the floor, rang for a servant to take him out of the room.

"Do sit down," she continued pleasantly. "You'll find that chair comfortable. Cream or lemon? Those little brown sandwiches are delicious. Jim tells me you are on the stage."

Shirley sipped the tea and nodded. The cross-examination had started a bit earlier than she had anticipated, but she could handle it all right with Toto gone.

"I played in stock for two summers," she said, "and in three Broadway plays. None of them lasted more than two weeks. The last show won a record—it closed after the first night."

"How heartbreaking! But I approve of careers for women."

Jim chuckled. "Shirley has promised to give up her career, haven't you, darling?"

She flushed. "What there is of it."

Aunt Grace smiled, but said nothing. The hour passed—a pleasant, rather cozily intimate hour. But when Shirley picked up her gloves and bag again, and said her final "thank you," she felt oddly defeated.

"She doesn't like me," she decided, when they had reached the street.

Jim grinned. "Nonsense. Aunt Grace is very careful in her judgment, that's all."

But the next day at lunch, his blue eyes were worried. "You were right," he agreed glumly. "Aunt Grace doesn't approve. She insists there is something radically wrong with a person who doesn't like cats."

She blinked back the tears. She mustn't cry in a public restaurant. Jim wouldn't like that. She fumbled for a cigarette and lighted it with fingers that felt like icicles. "I wasn't counting too much on that honeymoon to Europe, anyway," she said.

He nodded and gulped down half his cocktail. "We'll go to Europe all right. Don't you worry. I'll win Aunt Grace around."

"But I really don't care. My mother and dad went to Chicago, after being married in Milwaukee. What I mean is, expensive honeymoons aren't family tradition."

Laughter was creeping back into her voice. After the first blunt shock the situation didn't seem so horrible.

He fidgeted. "You don't understand, sweetheart. I haven't any income. And jobs aren't easy to find. After all, I've never worked for any one but Hunter, Inc."

She munched on a breadstick slowly. "We could manage for a few



months, couldn't we—without her, I mean?"

He shrugged. "But it's all so needless. If only it were something more important than cats. You do understand that I love you, sweetheart?"

"Yes—yes, of course."

She understood perfectly. If her father had killed a man or if she were mixed up innocently in a scandal, Jim would be willing to defy the world to stay with her. But it

seemed rather pointless over what appeared to him to be such a little thing. Yes, she understood and sympathized. With a start, she realized that she hadn't been paying attention to his words.

"—handle her. I know just the right approach."

He stopped, waited for an answer. She nodded. "Of course you do," she agreed, vaguely.

That seemed to be the right answer, because he grinned. "I knew you'd see it," he said, swallowing a spoonful of soup. "And maybe you can even learn to like cats." He laughed.

She laughed, too. "Maybe."

"Look here, how about David Reid? He's associated with one of the best psychologists in the city." His tone was casual, but, somehow, she knew the suggestion was premeditated, that he had figured out this solution long before.

"It's wonderful to be in love and engaged to be married," she told him. "Why don't you try it?" His brown eyes flashed amusement.





She squirmed uncomfortably. "David? I'd much rather not."

His eyes flickered curiously. "Well, if you refuse to be helped by——"

"Oh, all right," she yielded. After all, there wasn't much use protesting if Jim had made up his mind.

She felt rather silly about going to David, but he took it well enough. He sat behind his desk and listened gravely, as if the symptoms hinted of a rare disease. She had never been in his office before. It was a large, cheery room with casement windows and glazed white walls. The reception foyer was luxuriously furnished and the nurse in attendance had repeated his name in reverence, as if he were very important.

For a moment, as she came in, David did look terribly important. He was wearing a doctor's white coat and shell-rimmed glasses, and his face had a strained, thoughtful expression. But he took off the glasses and suddenly grinned.

"Now that I've impressed you in my best professional manner," he said, "let's relax. It's after lunch time and much too early for cocktails, so I assume you have called on me professionally. Let me guess. It would be about——"

She nodded. "It's my cat complex. You used to joke about it, remember? And now it's become very important that I get over it."

"Jim?"

"Oh, he doesn't care. It's his aunt. She has a pet Angora."

"I see." He nodded gravely, as if it were a matter of tremendous importance. Then he settled back in his great leather chair and began asking her questions about her childhood. At his insistence, she probed far into distant memories, recalling

odd bits about dogs, trips to the zoo and a gray cat that her grandmother owned.

"I used to tease it without meaning to," she said. "I remember how my mother squealed when I returned home from a visit to grandma, my arms a mass of scratches. But I wasn't afraid of the cat, you see. It must have been something after that."

She realized suddenly that twilight was seeping into the room. David looked at his watch.

"Ye gods, it's nearly five. How about a cup of tea? I can't help you until we get to the cause of your fear."

They had tea in a hotel. They danced for a while, and David admired her ring.

"It's wonderful to be in love and engaged to be married," she told him. "Why don't you try it?"

His brown eyes flashed amusement. "In the first place, no beautiful woman would fall in love with me. I'm too homely. In the second place, I think that love is a matter of the senses and that most people wish themselves into it. I prefer to wish myself success in my career."

She looked at him for a long moment. "I had no idea you were so conceited," she said at last.

His mouth jerked. "That's hardly fair. But had I been an ordinary man, don't you suppose I would have fallen in love with you a long time ago?"

"I almost thought you had once."

"I almost did once."

They danced in silence for a moment. "I wasn't sure," she said in a voice that was almost too small to be heard above the music, "whether you were interested in me personally or as a medical case."

"Nearly fooled myself. But there's no chance of misunderstanding-



ing now. You will place yourself in my hands for treatment, won't you? And I shall remember you belong to some one else."

She laughed. "Doesn't that make me more desirable?"

He shook his head. "I never waste time wanting things I can't have. Have you been to the zoo lately?"

"Good heavens, no!"

"Run up there to-morrow. Go into the lion house. Will you be afraid?"

"I—I don't think so. It's cats—the little ones—that frighten me."

"Well, lions are big cats and much more dangerous. Remember that."

She glanced up at his face quickly to see if he were smiling, but his lips were straight, his brown eyes solemn.

It was a warm day and the lion house had a strong, stifling odor. She gasped on the threshold, then resolutely went inside. There weren't many visitors, and the feline inhabitants were vaguely restless. The fiercest-looking lion of them all yawned in her face, and none of the others paid much attention. Occasionally, one of them snarled deep in his throat. She felt sorry for them all of a sudden. It must feel miserable to be held prisoner on a spring day.

"Lions are only big cats," she repeated firmly, "and much more dangerous. You aren't afraid of lions—you aren't afraid!"

But when she left, walking down the willow-lined path that skirted the small lagoon, a cat ran in front of her, and she jumped in horror.

David listened gravely. "So it didn't work," he said, rubbing his chin slowly. "Hm-m-m. There was a possibility that a lion or tiger frightened you as a child, in a circus

or a zoo. But it was probably a house cat, after all."

"I'm afraid so," she agreed meekly. "Is there nothing else we can do?"

He jerked erect. "We've just started!"

He gave her literature to read—thick, heavy books, scientific pamphlets, illustrated articles. He walked her all over town, hunting pet stores that featured cats, and made her stand in front of the window to watch them. One Tuesday morning he phoned, and in a very excited voice ordered her to meet him at once at a certain address in Eighteenth Street.

The house proved to be a dingy, red brick tenement near a gas plant. Their destination was the basement. A wide-smiling Italian woman led them inside, down a dark hall to a crowded, odorous kitchen. And there, in a grocery basket underneath the stove, was a litter of young kittens. Soft, gray and tiny, they cuddled against each other and examined Shirley with wide green eyes.

"Oh, David," she said at last, "they are adorable!"

He beamed. "Touch 'em. Pick one up."

She tensed, then reached down and picked up one of the warm, squirming balls of fur quickly. It stopped squirming after a second and lay placidly in her hand, trembling slightly.

"You see, it couldn't possibly harm you," David pointed out. "You know that, don't you?"

"Yes, it is——"

The Italian woman broke out into a torrent of words. Turning her head, Shirley saw a large black-and-white cat stalking into the room. The cat stopped, her tail swished ominously, then she crept forward.



Shirley's confidence fled, and so did she.

Safely on the street, she confronted David somewhat shamefacedly. "Sorry, but that's the way it is."

He scarcely seemed to hear her apology. "The kittens were helpless," he murmured. "Yes, that is it. And the other——" He brightened, pushed her toward a small black coupé which waited at the curb. "Things are progressing fine. You'll go to Europe on your honeymoon yet."

"Glad to get rid of me?"

"As a matter of fact, I shall probably miss you."

When they were driving down Second Avenue, he said: "You and Jim can celebrate to-night."

She shook her head. "I'm afraid not. The cat show is opening and Jim will have to be there. Toto has been entered. It's too bad, isn't it?"

He scowled. "You wouldn't dare chance going in?"

"With thousands of them? Oh, David, I'd—faint or fall into a fit or something." She laughed as she spoke.

But when she repeated the same statement to Jim several hours later over a dinner table, her voice was serious.

"Well, I guess the penthouse is out," he remarked, and though his lips smiled, his eyes were wistful. "I won't be able to see much of you for the next few days, probably. Aunt Grace isn't well, and she expects me to run into the show every now and then to help out."

"That's all right," Shirley assured him.

But it wasn't all right, exactly. It seemed that Aunt Grace expected Jim at the oddest hours—dinners and lunches mostly, and always in

the evening. Shirley didn't see him for three days.

Friday she dined with David; but, by the time they reached the salad course, she was sorry, for he was unusually morose. It was a relief to say good-by to him at the restaurant entrance and walk home alone.

She slipped into lounging pajamas and had just settled down, when the phone rang. It was Jim.

"Do you love me?" he asked.

She was puzzled. "Of course."

"More than anything else in the world?"

"Don't be silly."

"Would you face any danger if it meant my life and honor?"

"What has happened? Tell me at once!"

"Would you?"

"Yes—yes, of course. But what is the trouble——"

She heard him take a deep breath. "I will hold you to your vow, my pretty lady. The worst has happened. Aunt Grace fell and broke her leg or ankle or something. Anyway, she is laid up in bed. I have been commissioned to exhibit Toto in the prize-judging parade to-morrow, but if I do that I will miss an appointment with John Lowden, the architect who's thinking of giving me a job. If he gives me a job I will marry you next week. Well, in a nutshell, the thing is this—somebody has to exhibit the darn cat and it will have to be you. Aunt Grace would never forgive me if I turned the affair over to a stranger. How about it, honey?"

Shirley closed her eyes, gripped the receiver tightly. "All right," she said.

She tried to reach David on the phone, but no one answered. Finally, she went to bed. Cats—cats—she dreamed about them all night



through. Big ones, little ones, skinny and fat, all colors—they pounced at her from all sides, screaming, snarling, trying to tear her with their claws.

The morning sunlight revived her somewhat. She phoned David's office again, but the nurse said he was out of town. So she left a message for him and slowly began to dress.

The tall, slim, dark girl in green was by far the prettiest piece of femininity in the show. People turned their heads to look at her as she stood, smiling, beside a gorgeous white cat. But Shirley didn't care. She was concentrating on the theory that if she refused to notice the cats on all sides, she could pretend there weren't any there at all.

Since Jim brought her there two hours before, she had been doing this. Toto had acknowledged her arrival coldly. She fancied he carried himself with haughty distinction, as if in his own mind he were already adjudged champion of the feline aristocrats. "He is beautiful," Shirley admitted to herself. "Yes, you are very beautiful, aren't you, Toto?"

Toto blinked and turned his head. Shirley stared at him helplessly. When it came time to parade him before the judges—oh, she couldn't do it! She gasped. For the moment had come! She bent toward him, a wooden smile painted on her lips.

"Shirley!"

She looked up. Relief rushed over her, bathed her warmly in its glow. "David!"

It was funny how glad she was to see him. He stood there grinning, a battered hat in his hand and wearing a gray tweed coat that looked a bit more disreputable than usual, somehow. One of the pockets bulged

badly, as if it concealed an unwieldy package. "I received your message," he said. "How are you making out?"

"Terrible. I'm scared to death."

He glanced at Toto. "Nice cat. Rumor is flying around that the judges have been watching him."

"I know. But I have a mad idea that he's going to start pulling tricks any minute. That will kill his chance of winning an award, won't it?"

David nodded. "Don't you worry. Hey, wait a second!"

For at that moment, Toto, for no apparent reason except sheer perversity, began to whimper. He beat his tail and started pacing back and forth like a caged tiger. Shirley saw the committee of judges look over. There was disapproval in the glances that accompanied their whispered comments. And Aunt Grace would blame her. She would say the cat had hated her and so lost the championship, and any girl that hated cats—

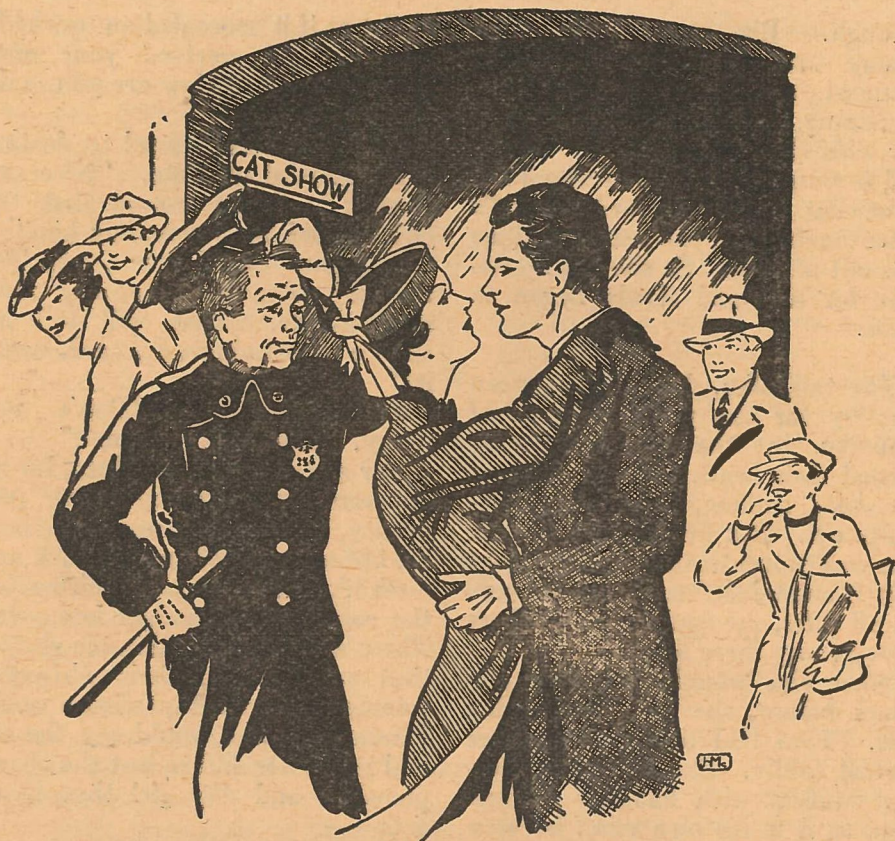
She turned to David for comfort, but the distress faded from her eyes. For David was walking away very rapidly. Her lips curled. A lot of help he had been! Then she stared!

Toto had stopped his flauntings and was huddled in a terrified, trembling arch. His wide eyes were fixed as if enchantment drew them to something on the floor. At the same moment, a concentrated chorus of hisses seemed to rise on all sides, as if every cat in the vicinity were in mortal terror.

Shirley glanced down. There, before her, was a small brown dog. As she looked, the dog yelped and leaped toward Toto with a show of friendly interest. Toto snarled and did some leaping of his own, straight into Shirley's arms!

She was too scared to scream. She





*"Shirley!" he said huskily. "You don't—you can't care for me?" She nodded, her eyes radiant, and, oblivious to the watching policeman, he bent and kissed her lips.*

stood there, like a wax figure. Toto burrowed his head down and pressed closer against her, his warm, silky body trembling violently. And suddenly she was no longer frightened. She stroked the cat's fur and murmured soft names of endearment.

Some one came and scooped the little brown dog up. She was vaguely aware of excited voices, of an agitated mob milling near the door. Once she thought she saw David's gray hat in the midst of the mob, but she wasn't sure. And there was no time to find out, for suddenly Jim was standing in front of her. He was smiling proudly.

"Well, I landed the job," he said. "Good salary, too."

"Did you?" She craned her head, stood on tiptoe. "What's going on at the door?"

He frowned slightly. "Arresting some one, I think. A man brought in a dog. Stupid trick, isn't it? Say, you're holding Toto. Why, darling, you're holding——"

Brought in a dog? Arresting him? Why, it was David! The judges were beaming upon her now, but Shirley paid no heed. Lifting Toto with both hands, she thrust him at Jim.

"Here! He'll be all right in another minute. Tell Aunt Grace I did my best." Then she was hurrying toward the door.

She reached it just in time to see



a policeman swinging out the lobby entrance into the street, with a tall, tweed-coated man at his side. She ran after them.

"David! David!"

He turned. "Why, Shirley. What's the matter?"

"David!" She had reached him by this time. She faced them, gasping. "You did it for me, didn't you? You knew the dog would scare Toto and that I wouldn't be afraid if he were helpless. Oh, please, officer, you can't arrest him!"

The policeman scratched his head and twirled his club.

David was looking at her strangely. "What difference does it make to you if they put me in jail?" he asked.

The answer died on her lips. Yes, what difference did it make? What was the matter with her? Then suddenly a flush crept into her cheeks, sent a soft light into her eyes, making them glow like green stars. She opened her mouth to speak, but no words came.

David took a step toward her. "Shirley!" he said huskily. "You—you don't—you can't care for me?"

As she nodded her head slowly, then vigorously, her eyes radiant, he cried in a choked voice:

"Oh, my darling, I love you more than anything on earth—have loved you for weeks. Do you—can you possibly——"

"I love you, too," she interrupted softly. "Terribly! Jim has a new job, and Aunt Grace would accept me now because I'm not afraid of cats any longer, but—but it doesn't matter any more. I don't want Jim. It's—it's you!" she cried, her eyes radiant.

Then her head was resting against the tweed overcoat, and David was murmuring tenderly, "Sweetest, my dearest!" His head bent close, and his lips met hers in a kiss that turned the whole world upside down. The policeman coughed, twirled his club in his blunt, red fingers, then turned away and ambled slowly down the street.



### CONSTANT

I WOULD love was as constant  
 As the tender blossoms that fill  
 The stems of the begonia  
 Here upon the window sill;  
 Each morn a sip of water,  
 A kiss of sunshine's violet ray  
 And pink blushes the begonia  
 As the dawn of a springtime day!

But oft, love fondly coddled,  
 Pales, falls, lies forever still,  
 Oh, that it was as constant,  
 As the begonia on the window sill!

MILDRED D. SHACKLETT.





# Leap Year Lady

By Vivian Grey

A SERIAL—Part IV.

## CHAPTER VII.

IT seemed to Corliss that Tony waited eons to reply, while in reality it was only an instant during which he stared at her in frank impatience and anger. But her heart seemed to stand still and all her emotions to die within her before his words came:

"I can't marry you, Corliss. I just don't want marriage. That is," he added after a moment, "unless it could be Magda. She's the only

woman who could lead me to the altar."

"You're wrong, Tony." Corliss spoke quietly and with a trace of something hard and firm in her voice. "I'm going to, Tony. You've let yourself in for it. You have"—smiling oddly—"only yourself to blame, my dear."

"Why, Corliss, you don't want to marry a man who doesn't want you! Think of all you'll be missing. Being courted and wanted, a honeymoon in a real sense, all the sweet-



ness. You're too nice a girl to do what you're trying to do. You have everything in the world to make a man crazy about you—looks, charm, personality, everything! It's only girls who haven't things who stoop to trapping men, girls who haven't any attractive charms or else frankly not nice ones."

"I don't much care which class you put me in, Tony." Corliss was smiling that sort of smile that with her meant an unswerving determination. Where other women furrowed their brows and became fierce with purpose, Corliss became even silkier, smoother than usual if possible.

"Certainly you don't belong in the latter class, Corliss." The impatience in his voice was increasing. "You have too much charm to do what you're trying to do!"

"But not enough for you, Tony? I aren't enough for you?" she asked, still in that smooth, silky voice into which a wistful note had crept.

"No, Corliss, I hate to be brutal but you force it. I don't love you. I never could. I can't even pretend to. I won't do that. If I was poor perhaps, because I'd rather be dead than be poor! I couldn't stand poverty, wouldn't even try to. But as long as I can choose I'm going to and it isn't you. It could never be any one but Magda. Money is the only thing I'd ever marry you for. There, at least give me credit for that much honesty."

"But it'll never be Magda, Tony,"

Corliss said almost sadly. "If I thought it ever could be and that she ever could love any one but herself I might—only might, I say—step out of the picture, since you want her so. But she'd break your heart. She's ice and steel and granite. She'd break the heart of any man except the one she's got, a man who simply bought her as an ornament, because he knew almost every other man in the world wanted her and he's too busy with his profession to

ever really consider her as his wife or part of his life. She is just something he possesses and looks at with gluttonous admiration during his rare leisure hours."

"You are probably right about Magda," Cartwright said, "but I'd rather have her in her way and on her terms, than any other woman in any other way." It came almost resent-

fully from the man.

"Perhaps, Tony darling"—smiling at him still with that almost sad look—"but she isn't for you. I'm what the doctor ordered for you. Some one who sort of stops your gallivanting, not too suddenly and not too definitely, but a little. You won't always want to go this pace. Then you'll want some one who'll understand you."

"And you're the girl who can?"

"I know I am, Tony."

"Well, be that as it may, there's no engagement between us and I have a date for to-night. Have a drink before you leave?"

"No, thanks, Tony," she replied.

**THE STORY SO FAR:** Corliss Landry, in love with Tony Cartwright, intends to marry him though she knows he does not care for her. Tony, a rounder, has also attracted Vida, Corliss's brother's wife, and when Tony stands her up on a luncheon date, Vida blames Corliss. Later, Vida, for spite, has the engagement of Corliss and Tony announced and Corliss decides that she will make Tony go through with it. He tells her, however, that he cannot marry her. Alarmed, she asks him if he is already married.



The man's attention was held for a moment by something about the girl—a self-possessed, poised dignity. He stared at her a moment. Then:

"I'm sorry if I've hurt you, Corliss. You made me do it."

"Oh, don't mind me, Tony," she said with a gayety that was gallant. "I have a date myself for to-night. Mind if I use your phone?"

"Do, by all means."

"Thanks." She dialed a number and then asked for Bob Baird and told him where he might call for her. She turned from the instrument, smiling sweetly at Cartwright.

"Baird!" Tony snorted scornfully. "You might at least get some one who would do me credit as a substitute! He's a social snail. He doesn't even know that a flock of new girls comes along every season."

"Perhaps that's his charm."

"Could it be?"

"I think Bob's all right," she said.

"Well"—shrugging—"some people are not particular."

Corliss grinned at him.

"Tony, why are you being nasty about Bob?" she asked. "I wasn't about Magda. I admit all her qualities."

"Who could be about Magda?" he asked indignantly.

"Well, I could say that she's selfish and hard and cruel and purchasable and things like that."

"A beautiful woman has a right to be anything she wishes."

"But a nice woman doesn't wish to be any of those things."

Cartwright looked at her impatiently.

"Nice women bore me," he said unpleasantly. "Besides I couldn't expect any other woman to understand Magda or judge her fairly. She's much too beautiful."

"Tony, that isn't being fair. You've never heard me say any-

thing unkind about any beautiful woman just because she was beautiful. And more, if Magda wasn't so adorned by all that money can do for——"

But Tony interrupted angrily. "A woman with Magda's looks has a right to adornment for her beauty!"

"I know you must feel that way since a great deal of your money goes for her adornment."

"Corliss!" The sharp reproof of his tone brought swift color to her cheeks. Cartwright had somehow made her feel with just the speaking of her name that she was showing a superlative selfishness. How he must adore Magda. It wasn't often that anything brought more than laughter and easy cynicism and suave banter to Tony's voice.

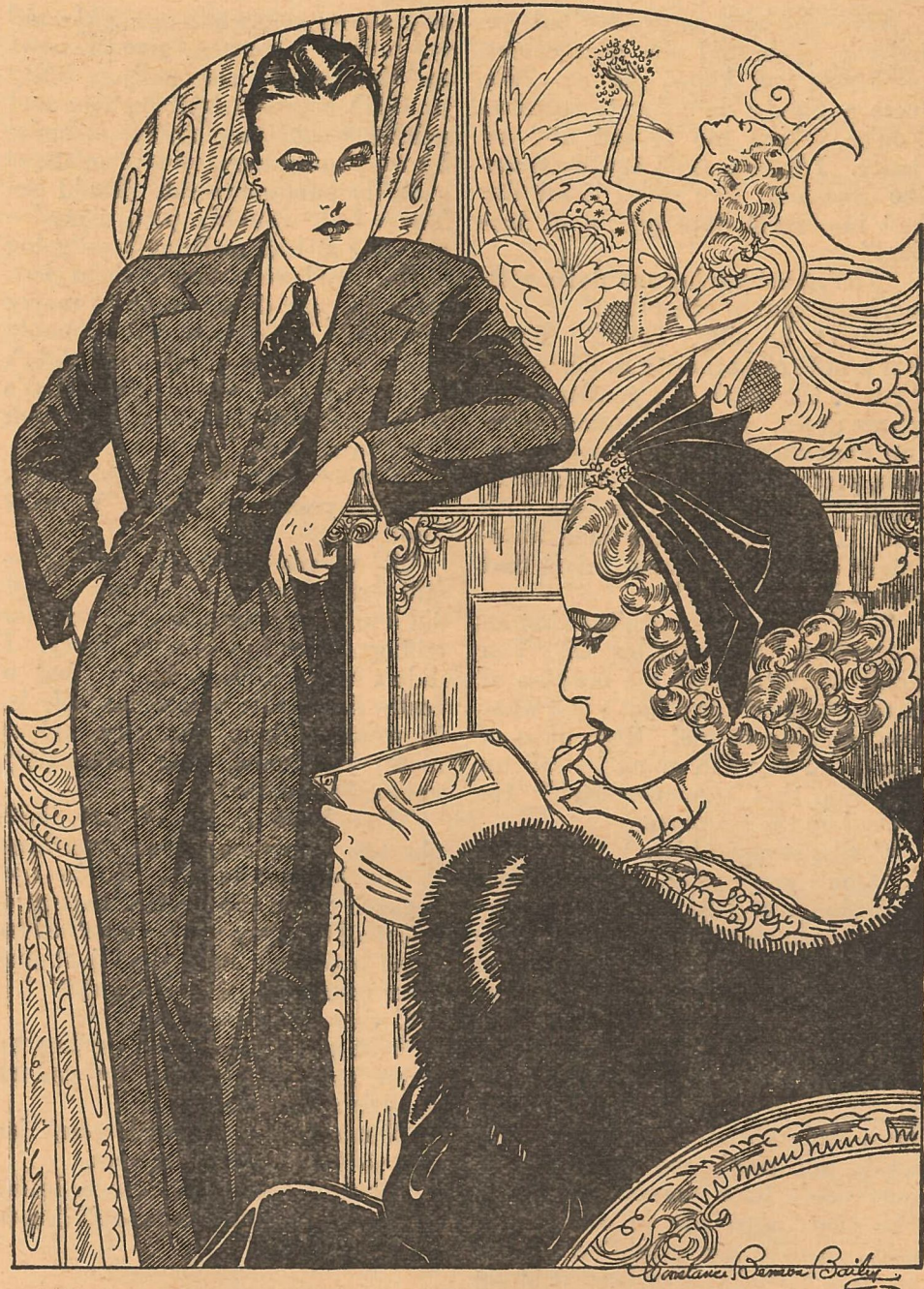
"Sorry, Tony," she said with sudden brightness that she was far from feeling. "I won't mention Magda again. They say it isn't good psychology, anyhow, for a gal to speak of her rivals!"

"Magda hasn't any rivals," Tony said so earnestly that it seemed he was thinking aloud. "She's in a class by herself."

Corliss glanced at the small clock on the mantel. She had just time to get home to dress to make Francis Payson's cocktail party. That was where she had told Bob to call for her. Bob. She looked forward to him suddenly, his sane, unconceited manliness, his frank, honest admiration and adoration. It was a sturdy, outdoor garden variety sort of thing that would be a pleasant relief after the hothouse atmosphere of Tony. And yet the suave, sophisticated, subtle charm of Tony clung to her as soft fingers of fog cling to a fall morning.

Tony was the man the thought of whom quickened her heartbeat. Tony's was the voice that set her





"I'm sorry to be brutal, Corliss, but you force it," Tony said impatiently.  
 "I don't love you. I never could. I won't even pretend to."

whole being thrilling. And yet she turned to him coolly after adjusting her hat and retouching her make-up.

"'By, Tony," she said. "See you to-morrow."  
 "No, you're not."



"Oh"—in faint surprise—"but we haven't celebrated our engagement ourselves, you know, darling. We have a dinner date for to-morrow. You're taking me to eat and to dance. I have a swell new dress for the occasion. I've saved it for the first important date with you, darling!"

"You're not having any dates with me, important or otherwise."

"Don't be silly, Tony!" There was a note of authority in her voice. "You're too much of a gentleman to let me down. Our engagement is being announced in the morning papers, probably in the late editions to-night. You've got to be seen with me. You can't do anything absolutely cruel to a woman. And that certainly would be."

"Corliss, don't you realize what an outlandish situation this is? You don't want to be in the position of chasing a man! And that's just what you're doing to me! Regardless of what you say I'm going to call up and stop that announcement." He picked up the telephone.

Corliss stopped him.

"Don't you realize, Tony darling, that things as important as engagement announcements are not done over the telephone? Papers want some verification of things like that before they use them. There are too many nitwits in the world who think it's a good joke to announce an engagement that doesn't exist. People have such odd ideas of humor, you know, and that's one of them. Papers don't take chances on things like that, especially in a case like ours. You're the section's most important bachelor; I've been debbing it all over the place and my mother's rather spectacular way of arranging her family life has made us outstanding for some years. No paper would accept what a voice over the wire

said about people like us. Vida and my brother stopped to give the news to the paper personally. They wouldn't accept it by telephone and neither would they accept a denial by telephone since my own relatives gave the announcement. You'd feel like a fool, wouldn't you, Tony"—grinning at him maliciously—"going in there and confessing to them that, after all, you didn't want to marry the girl? Besides, they'd probably think you were drunk and didn't know what you were doing. That's the trouble with having a reputation like yours, Tony."

"You've arranged things nicely, haven't you?" he asked, sneering faintly.

"It wasn't arranged, darling"—still smiling at him slightly. "You did it all with your own little bent for trifling. I had to protect Norry. I didn't want him to know what a really despicable person his wife is. It wouldn't help him any. Once more, handsome, you have only yourself to blame."

"You have a lot of pat little phrases. They may mean something to you but not to me. You're not engaged to me and I refuse to regard this mad travesty you've involved us in as anything more than just another expression of your idiocy!"

Corliss smiled serenely.

"Not a very good way, darling, to begin your engagement by calling your fiancé an idiot!"

"I must be frank with you," he said stiffly, avoiding her eyes.

"That at least establishes a basis. From that any woman should know how to proceed!"

But Corliss wasn't very happy about the thing as she went to keep her appointment with Bob Baird.

And a certain peculiarly wistful quality about Baird made her even



less happy. The peak of their misery—a thing of which neither of them had spoken but of which each was acutely conscious—came when two friends stopped at their table and one of them said:

"Congratulations, Corliss dear! I really didn't dream it could be done! I mean Tony. Who ever thought he could be made into a one-woman man!"

"Not so fast, Patty." Corliss was conscious of Baird's eyes on her in miserable question. "I'm not at all sure I've performed any sort of miracle! Tony still doesn't show any symptoms of being one-woman in the least!"

"Well, anyhow, congratulations and every little thing like that and no one knows better than I that it isn't really good form to congratulate the bride-to-be but in this case——" She paused as if the case of Tony Cartwright was something very special indeed and then finished: "I think any woman who can persuade Tony that she's good medicine for him for more than one date in a line deserves a medal."

"Thanks, Patty"—rather dryly. "But medals have long been out of date and I'm sure I wouldn't want one, anyhow." She was glad to end the conversation. Something about it made it very painful.

"So that's it," she heard Baird saying as the others left. "That's what's been hanging over the evening like a threatening sword. I couldn't figure it out. With you and all it seemed as if everything had ought to be pretty much all right but it wasn't. And that was it—Cartwright."

Corliss wondered if the stifling pain that she felt at hurting him showed in her face.

"There's only one redeeming feature about the whole thing," he was going on almost as if talking to him-

self," and that is that he's out of the minds of other women now, or should be. How did those people know? You haven't announced it?"

Corliss nodded. She knew that it must have been in the papers, the early-morning edition, so called, that comes on the street at night. Vida then had done her work.

"In the papers," Corliss said shortly. She might have gone on and explained how it happened but something in her prevented it. She didn't quite want Bob to know.

"You must have wanted to make sure of him all right," came almost bitterly from the youth.

"You could have left that unsaid, Bob," she said, conscious of the fact as she spoke that with almost all the people she had talked to that day there had been at least the trace of unpleasantness.

"I could say I'm sorry but I wouldn't mean it so what's the use?"

"All right, be nasty if it helps."

At that moment Corliss lifted her eyes with the feeling that some one was staring at her and looked straight at Magda Luray on whose cold and lovely face there was an unfathomable expression. Not quite a sneer perhaps. Not quite anger. Perhaps a sort of veiled and chilled laughter, laughter that had in it not one atom of mirth. Corliss shivered slightly. Not quite the way to feel on one's engagement night. She looked at Bob Baird. That Bob should be with her on the moment of her engagement to Tony, that is if such a thing could be called an engagement.

It was dawn when Corliss and Baird finally made a move to go home.

Corliss was not anxious to return to her apartment and she had been drinking more than usual. She was seeking unreality. She wasn't ready



to face things as they actually were. She wondered if she ever would be again. Not that it made any difference, her attitudes. Not that anything made any difference. She had plumbed the depth of life that day and found not one ounce of sweetness. But she would not have gone back to change one move of her own. Tony she could not change, she knew that. It was only her own conduct over which she would have had control. And that she would not have changed. She would have Tony. He could think he loved whom he pleased but he would belong to her. And it seemed to her even the thought became steely. Her very heart seemed to harden consciously. She smiled with a grim, inward gesture. Strange that she should want a man on those terms. No other woman would. Tony's cruel realism would have driven the average girl from him in tears. But she could be as hard as he. Perhaps even more so.

"I'm coming in for a moment," Bob Baird said as Corliss turned at her door to wish him good night.

"But it's atrociously late, Bob," she said, surprise in her eyes and manner for Bob had always been excessively considerate about hours and conduct in relation to her.

"I know, but not too late, Corliss." She wondered if she caught a warm, flaming note in his voice that she had never heard there before. Something, it was, she felt a nice girl should shrink from, a trace searing, but she felt that after that day there could be nothing in human relations from which she would shrink. She laughed.

"You surprise me, Bob. You're getting so you have answers for a gal!"

"And how I'm going to have answers for you!" They had reached

the door of her apartment and passed into the living room as Baird spoke. He swept her into his arms then with a swiftly passionate gesture. There was revelation in the movement of a mood of Baird's that was quite new to Corliss. "It's going to be this way now, Corliss," he continued, still holding her close, so close that she could feel the beating of his pulse. "I've been a gentleman, at least a seeming one long enough and its gotten me nowhere. Now it's going to be different. I'm going to be a man, a real male instead of a gentleman, and that sort of person generally gives a woman something to remember him by! You can never belong completely to Cartwright, Corliss"—his eyes were on her with a peculiar intentness, a warm, enveloping intentness. "You can't, not with me caring so much. When the time comes, as it will, that he'll want you wholly and completely, there'll be the mark of me between you to madden him. And to madden you. There'll be moments when you'll have to think of me, moments when he'll try to claim you entirely but he'll know that in your consciousness is a little realization of me still. Women are made that way. They never quite forget a man. Call that revenge if you wish—it doesn't much matter. It just is and will always be."

His lips had been brushing the smooth skin of her forehead and then sought her mouth with a gesture in which there was something uncontrolled. It was as if Baird who had so long been smooth and controlled, perfectly veneered with all the qualities society demands of the nice man, suddenly broke through the shell and stepped out in the rough.

"I suppose"—a faint note of bravado in her voice—"if I had not been drinking more than I should I wouldn't stand for this."



"I wonder," Baird murmured, as if thinking aloud. "Perhaps that's been my error all along. I've been too much of a gentleman for you, Corliss; too considerate about appealing to the wanton in you, the wanton in every woman."

"I suppose that should be my cue to slap you, Bob." She was surprising herself by laughing just a little at a thing that she knew would have made almost any other girl wildly angry. "But in the first place I'm much too much of a lady to raise my hands in violence. And in the second I'm one of those rare females who admits being just another lump of human clay at certain times! Say anything you want, ole sweet"—a slightly hard note in her young voice—"I seem not to have any refined feelings to be hurt!"

"Good! I won't make so many mistakes with you in the future then!" He had drawn her down on the chaise longue with an air of complete possession and Corliss felt his hands caressing her and prided herself on her poised immunity. Tony, she insisted to herself, was the only flame whose warmth she always responded to.

But after Baird had gone and she turned her flushed face with its disordered halo toward the mirror in her own bedroom she realized that she was shaken. Her hands shook as she brushed her hair. There had been something prophetic about Baird's attitude. Something that stirred her deeply and not quite comfortably. Certainly and almost unbelievably Baird with the ruthlessness of his kiss had touched depths within her that she had believed he never could reach. She wondered vaguely, and characteristically without any sense of shame, if she was that kind. Physical. She wondered if that was why Tony had such a

hold on her. His appeal was immediately physical.

Tony was that way with women, intensely physical. His hands touching you. His eyes on yours, on your figure with a warmth and interest you could actually feel. Were women like that? Was sex appeal in a man merely playing up to the physical of a woman? Was that the secret of Tony's lure for women?

Corliss had a feeling, as she drew the covers over her slim body and tried to compose herself to sleep, of discovery that was a trace startling. Discovery about herself and about Tony, about people in general. If Tony's lure for her was just all physical— She stopped there. She had never wanted to be quite that sort, or thought she wanted a man to be. Strange how you could love a person so madly, as she loved Tony and yet loathe everything he did and stood for.

Corliss awakened at noon with the firm idea that evening would find her somewhere being seen with Tony. Their engagement had been announced. She wasn't going about explaining why they weren't together. Tony was going to find life extracting some small payment from him for the first time.

She had coffee sent to her room. She had no desire to face her family that morning. It would be difficult, so why bother? Anyhow, she just didn't want to and so she wouldn't. Her philosophy had become more and more that with the passing months. She would do as she pleased, let people think, say or do what they wished.

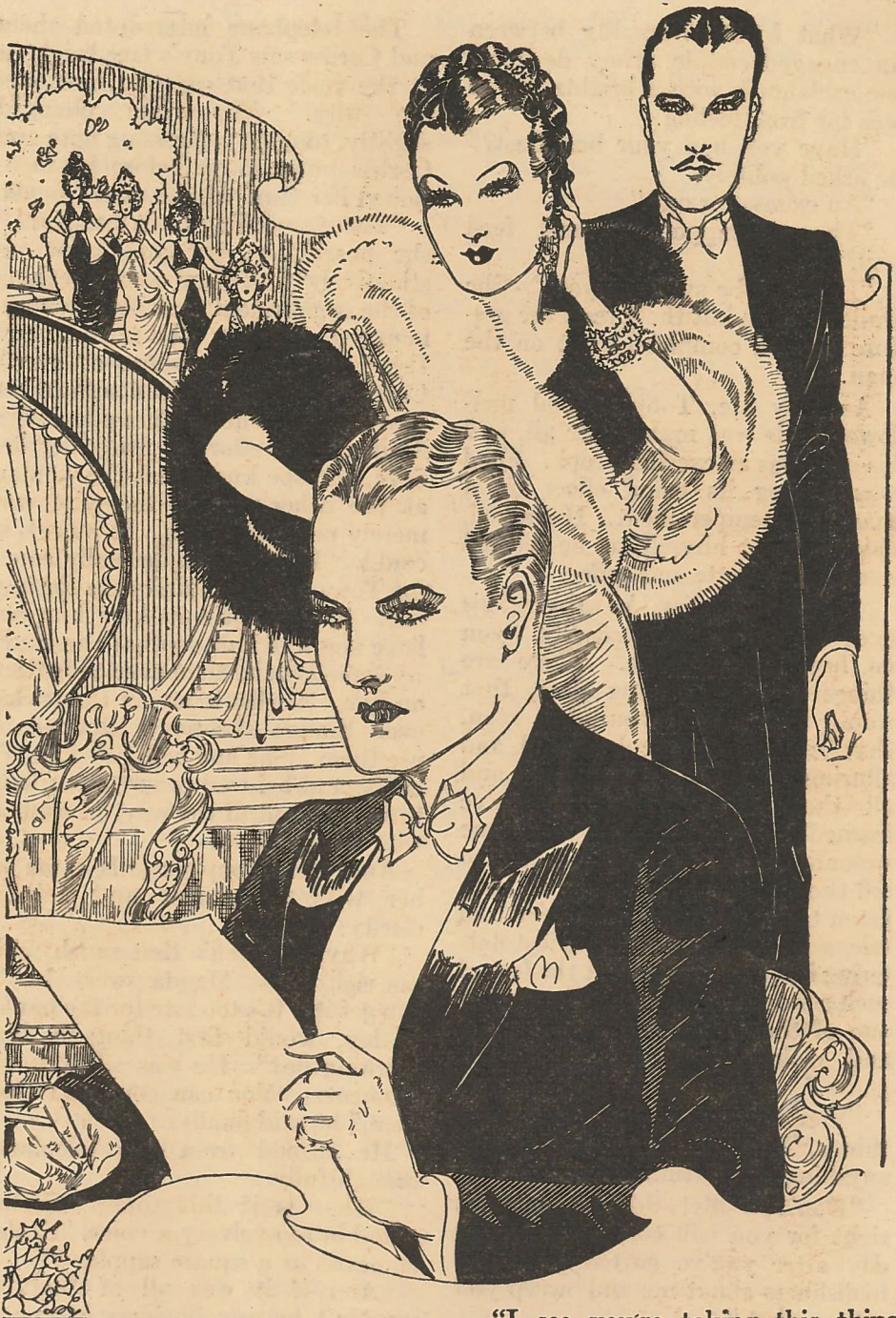
She dressed carefully in a suit that was simple but the jacket of which could be removed to reveal quite a lovely dress. She pulled her furs tightly around her as she stepped out. The day was more than brisk.





Corliss lifted her eyes with the feeling that some one was staring at her and looked straight at Magda Luray, the woman Tony loved. Corliss shivered slightly.





Tony was visibly startled to see her when she finally arrived at his apartment.

"I see you're taking this thing seriously," he said. "You might have at least telephoned me that you were coming."



"What foolish formality between an engaged couple, Tony darling!" she exclaimed, with a brightness she was far from feeling.

"Have you had your breakfast?" he asked politely.

"An excuse for one."

"Then I suppose I must feed you?"

"It would be sweet of you." She smiled at him but the lure of the gesture seemed completely lost on the man.

As they ate, Tony's mood mellowed. He was male, after all, and his man was an excellent cook. Food was having its usual effect on a masculine temperament. He talked, chiefly about himself, as he relaxed over his cigarette and coffee.

"After all, Corliss," he said and his eyes were on her quizzically, "you do have your points. There are things about you, my dear, that would recommend you to a man, that is besides your beautiful and alluring body and temperament and all that sort of thing. You've learned things. You're the one woman I know who never wants to tell the story of her life but who can listen to the other fellow's twice told tales with the sweetest and most flattering interest. Men fall at the feet of such a woman adoring and some day one of those men is going to tame and claim that errant heart of yours."

"You're good at a great many things, Tony, but I can't give you anything as a fortune teller."

"Don't be silly! Some man who is right for you will come along some day after you've gotten over this foolishness about me and sweep you off your feet."

"No man, Tony, will ever be anything more to me than a poor substitute for yourself."

The telephone interrupted them and Corliss saw Tony's face brighten at the voice that came to him over the wire. His voice changed slightly, took on a caressing note and Corliss knew, even before he mentioned her name that it was Magda.

"There's nothing to it, beautiful," she heard him say and knew instinctively that they were speaking of the engagement that had been announced. "It was all a mistake and I'm just as much yours as ever." Corliss felt the hot blood suffuse her face as she listened to him plead with Magda in an effort to make her believe, and she knew that the woman at the other end of the wire was merely penalizing him. It wasn't, it couldn't be that Magda really cared for Tony. She couldn't care for any one. She was just making him believe she was hurt so that she could lay some heavier than ever obligation on him. Corliss knew all the tricks, even though she never stooped to use them. She had watched Flame's hectic and beloved progress too long to be ignorant of the ways of women who wanted men.

And then Tony's words came to her with a peculiar and painful clarity:

"Why, I haven't that much with me right now, Magda sweet, but I can get it. It's too late for the banks to-day, would first thing in the morning do?" He was silent for a moment. "You can count on that then," he said finally.

He turned from the telephone thoughtfully.

"What is it this time?" Corliss asked in too velvety a voice. "Sables or pearls or a square sapphire?"

"And if it was all of that, it wouldn't be any business of yours! You have no right to be here in the first place. And since you insist upon thrusting yourself into my life,



you'll have to take things as they come."

"Perhaps you're forgetting that you're engaged to me"—her voice taking on a steely quality—"and your spending money in huge sums on other women should cease! I have some claims and intend to make them plenty evident!"

"You devil! You have no rights with me of any sort and never will have! You've fastened yourself on me. I've heard of such things but never knew there were women who'd stoop to them!"

"I'll stoop to anything to get what I want!"

"You're turning out just like your mother!"

"At least she's lived!" she exclaimed, covering the start that shook her at his words for that was something she had not expected from Tony. "She's got something for the time she's put in here and that's more than most women can say! She and Magda!"

"If you dare mention Magda in the same——" he started furiously and then stopped, seeming to realize that he was about to say a thing that even he was not heartless enough to put into words to the daughter of the woman he was speaking of.

"I dare!" came just as madly from the girl. "I know exactly what you were going to say and I dare do it! Magda Luray isn't even human and you know it. She's taking you over if ever a man was taken by a woman! At least Flame gave something! She loved. With Magda you're getting nothing! She's as emotionless about you, about any man, as a marble statue!"

"I don't expect the woman I love to get emotional about me."

A hard laugh came from Corliss. "You're being archaic now. And besides, you're lying. Only men of

the 1860s felt that way about women. Women are people now, you know. You'd die of slow freezing if you ever really tried to possess Magda Luray!"

"You vicious little wench! I had no idea you had all this nastiness in you!"

"There are a great many other things you're going to find out about me, Tony!"

And then, suddenly as it flared, their anger cooled and they were laughing at themselves and at each other.

"You're magnificent in your tantrums, young lady," Tony said, smiling with all his fascination. "I'm sure no other woman would dare talk to me as you do."

"That's because no other woman loves you as I do!"—audaciously. "You have to really love a man to be interested enough in him to tell him real things about himself and his life."

"Perhaps you're right but you're not making me any more comfortable by saying that."

"You have a whole long evening ahead of you to get comfortable in, my dear and my darling!" she exclaimed, still with the gay note of audacity in her voice. "You have a dinner date with me to-night. We've got to be seen together, you know, and it might as well be to-night."

Cartwright was reluctant at first and then agreed:

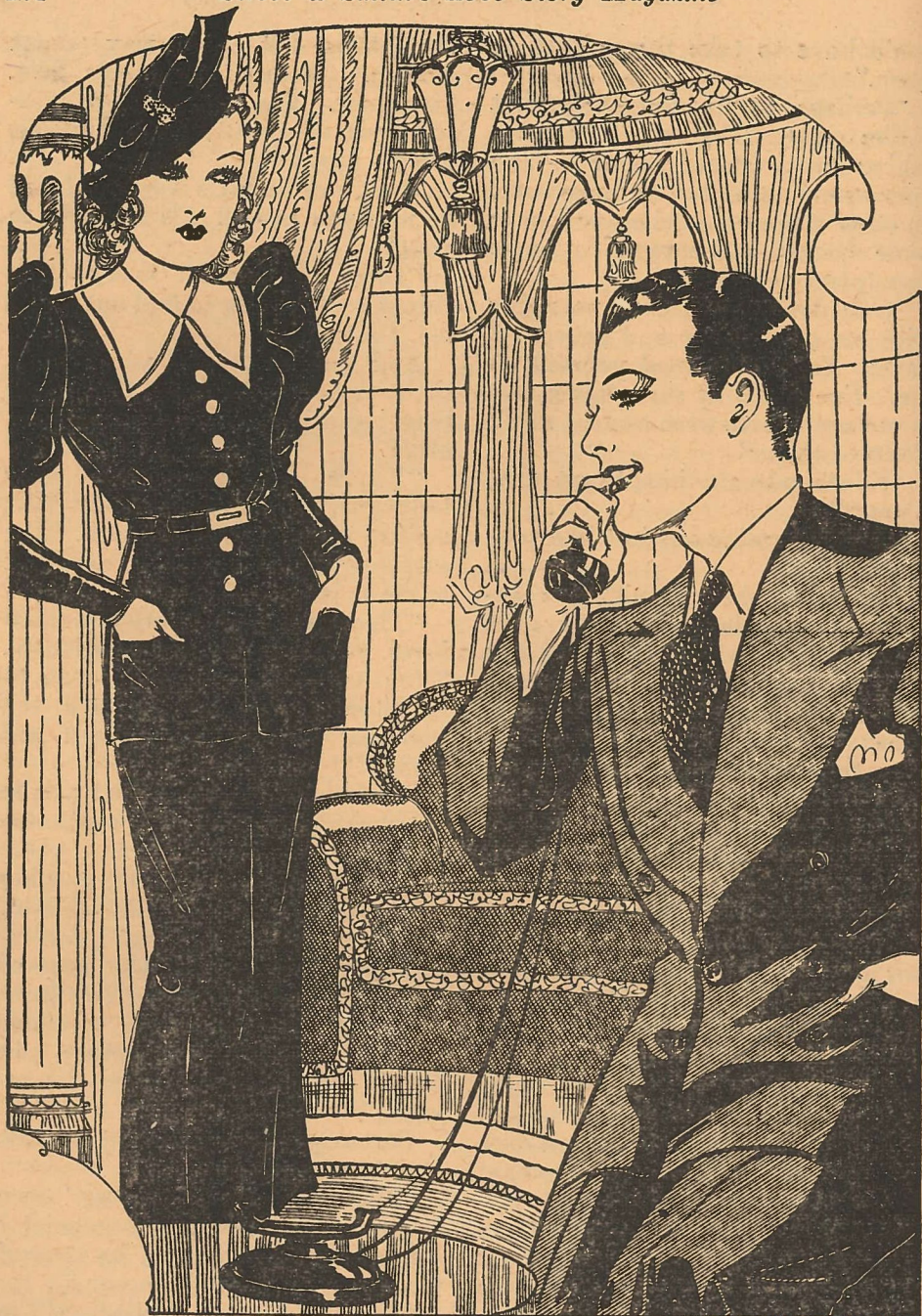
"Well," he said, shrugging, "since I have no one else at the moment I suppose it might as well be you—if that's any satisfaction to you."

"Some," Corliss replied. "I'm pretty good at wanting what I can have until I can have what I want."

"You certainly can take a lot of punishment."

"You haven't an inkling of the





*Tony's face brightened at the voice that came to him over the wire. His voice changed slightly, took on a caressing note, and Corliss knew, even before he mentioned her name, that it was Magda.*

truth, my dear," she said, a wistful note in her voice. Corliss was standing in front of him then, her face uplifted so that her lips invited. Few



other men she knew would even have waited for the invitation of her attitude but Cartwright seemed quite unmoved.

"I'm alone with you in your apartment, Tony," she said finally in a small, soft voice, "and you haven't made a single pass at me."

Tony grinned.

"Which isn't any commentary on my self-control!"

"You could have left that unsaid, anyhow! It isn't flattering to a woman to know that she's not the least temptation."

"That's one of the strange things about our case, Corliss." The man was suddenly earnest. "I want to be honest with you. They say when a man finds a woman who makes him want to be honest and have done with pretense and subterfuge, she's the woman for him and he's in love. It doesn't work out at all with us. I feel that way toward you but I'm quite madly in love with another girl."

Every time that he referred to that Corliss felt as if a knife was being twisted in her heart and he seemed to seize every opportunity to refer to it. She wondered if he was doing it purposely, knowing well what he was doing to her. It would not be unlike him.

## CHAPTER VIII.

They were lingering over their coffee and cigarettes, small glasses of amber brandy still untouched before them when a waiter handed Tony a note. Corliss watched the man's face. It lighted and seemed somehow to warm. Corliss knew instinctively from whom the note had come.

"Do you always keep her so well informed," she asked, too smoothly. "Or was this a special occasion?"

"Magda always knows how she can get me at any minute of the day or night."

"What sweet devotion!" But her sarcasm paled before the actual fact of what she said.

"Magda knows that at any hour that I may not be at home she can find out where I am from my man." Tony seemed to wish to drive home the implication of the thing. "I told him we were coming to this place to dine and if we had made any change and gone elsewhere I should have telephoned him."

"I see." Corliss looked away. She didn't want the man to see just what was in her eyes then.

"I'm sorry to ask this, Corliss," Cartwright was going on, "but will you excuse me? Magda has time for me. Her husband has been called to the hospital, his hospital, by something that's happened to another physician—he's apt to be there all night. That means she has time for me. I'm sorry to have to do this but you've brought it all on yourself. I'll take care of the check"—motioning the waiter. "If you'd like another drink?" he questioned as he counted out some money.

"Who did you say the physician is? The one in the hospital?" Corliss ignored his question. Something had suddenly chilled her with a cold sense of foreboding.

"I don't know," the man answered as he glanced over the bill the waiter presented. "Naturally Magda knew that wouldn't interest me." Then after a moment's silence he looked up at her: "But why did you ask?"

"I don't know," she replied, and still that sense of chill hung over her, struck verily to her bones. "It's silly, I suppose, but I just feel something. I don't know what or why. After all, there are so many doctors



in New York. I shouldn't——" She stopped as if not wanting to put the thing that she thought into words and so make it a little more real to herself.

"You're being just a woman now, like every other woman. Intuition and all that sort of bunk!" Tony was rising and there was a hint of raillery in his tone. "Forgive me if I seem to hurry you."

"Oh, that's quite all right, I'm sure!"—with an air of gallantry. "When romance calls, you know!"

Corliss allowed him to put her in a cab and pay the driver. It wasn't a particularly pleasant thing, this being hurried out of the way, rushed off alone because of another woman. And then besides the wound to something much deeper and more vital than her vanity there was that heavy, relentless sense of foreboding. It seemed to envelope her more completely as she rode downtown.

She rushed from the taxi and in through the door of the fine old house on Washington Square. She knew the moment she was within its walls. There the sense of foreboding became a definite knowledge that something had happened; that tragedy had touched them with its alarming fingers.

"What is it?" she asked of a frightened maid who stood in the hall apparently petrified by terror. "What has happened? Can't you tell me?"

"It's the doctor," the girl said finally in a small, unsteady voice. "Doctor Norry, miss. He's been hurt—bad. They've just taken him this minute."

"Taken him where?" Corliss asked.

"To the hospital. He's been slashed most to ribbons—— Oh, it was terrible to see!"—on a note of hysteria. "The blood! His face so white and deathlike!"

"What hospital?" she asked, con-

sciously holding her voice firm against the wave of terror-stricken emotion that would have engulfed her. And as the girl failed to reply immediately and Corliss could endure no waiting: "Is there any one at home?"

"Mrs. Farson."

Mrs. Farson! Vida! Corliss felt herself turning to steel. Vida! She'd always been afraid—— She dared not complete the thought but turned and rushed toward Vida's room. At the door which was open she stopped suddenly. Vida, her hat still on, was slumped in a chair, white-faced and wretched. There was blood on her hands. And a long stain showed on her skirt.

Corliss stood staring at her sister-in-law as if turned to stone. She couldn't find the words that she wanted to say. Too many wild and angry emotions were rioting in her. Her voice seemed incapable of surging up through them. It was Vida who finally spoke:

"Well"—a trace defiantly—"what are you looking at me for?"

"I wish I'd never had to in all my life!" exclaimed the younger girl bitterly.

"I wish the same thing about you! I'd be a thousand times better off if I'd never seen any of you! Any of your tribe!" The bitterness of her voice matched Corliss's.

Even then, in that tensely emotional moment, Corliss was acutely aware of the commonness of the girl.

Strange how those things, almost entirely irrelevant, came to one with such clarity in such tense moments.

"If Heaven had only seen fit to grant you that wish before you uttered it!" Corliss's voice was earnest. Then, after a little silence: "What happened? I suppose you were quarreling over some other man? Tony





At the hospital Corliss was allowed only a glimpse of Norry. She stood trancelike looking at him and then turned to the doctor and whispered: "He'll live?" The doctor answered noncommittally.

perhaps?" And as the older girl did not reply, Corliss's voice became a thing lighted and vitalized by fury. "Well, tell me! What happened? How badly is he hurt? And where

was he taken? What hospital? After all the damage you've done, at least have the decency to answer me!"

"Do you think I did that?" Vida asked in a haunted voice. "You



think I did it?" She was on her feet and had moved slightly toward Corliss, something almost threatening in her gesture. "If you think I did, you're crazy! I wouldn't soil my hands on one of you!"

"Then who did if you didn't?" came tensely from the younger girl. "Who did?"

"I'll tell you who—the father of one of his patients who died! A charity patient at the hospital! Some of the poor white trash he's always insisting upon doing things for without charging any fee. I told him long ago to stop it, that it was a thankless task. If he'd listened to me he'd not be in this mess. Always doing things for people who can't pay when he could in that same time and with that same effort be dragging in a nice fat fee! Serves him right!"

Corliss started. She hadn't expected that even from Vida. It was true that Norry liked his charity patients as well and gave them quite as careful and interested attention as he did his pay cases. But that was like Norry. After all, he had money enough to live on and keep Vida comfortably and so why shouldn't a man spend his life doing what he wished? Ambition wasn't everything.

But now one of those patients had turned on him. It wasn't really quite clear but that was the impression Vida had given her.

"You didn't go to the hospital?" she asked of Vida.

"No"—shuddering. "You know how I hate such things. Look at me"—holding out her hands and looking down over her dress, her voice haunted and wretched, so miserable that even Corliss in that moment of complete loathing of the girl was moved to pity of her miserable weakness. "I'd just come in when

the bell rang and then I heard them there in his office. The man's daughter had died, under Norry's care."

Corliss said nothing more. She understood. There were people like that, people whose emotions ran away with them in a crisis and left them entirely bereft of reason.

"What hospital was he taken to?" she asked finally, scarcely feeling that she needed to. She knew. She had known there in the restaurant with Tony. When Vida spoke it was as if she was merely repeating aloud Corliss's own thought:

"Luray's—Doctor Luray's, wherever that is."

Corliss turned. She must go, of course. That was her kind. It had never been in her to shrink from anything. She couldn't bear the thought of Norry there alone. Very probably she couldn't be with him really. But she could be in the building. She could be near the door of his room and watch the faces of attendants as they moved in and out. That would be something. And he might even feel it, that there was some one near to whom his life meant much and it might help. Corliss believed fully in things like that.

"Would you like to go with me?" She turned a moment to ask Vida and was visibly relieved when the other girl shook her head.

"I couldn't!" Vida shivered.

Corliss hurried. There was such a strong family tie. Strange, too, when they were really only half brother and sister. But from Flame had come something of that warm, vital, vibrant reaction toward people, things and occasions. It was impossible for Corliss to be casual and mean it.

At the hospital she was allowed only a glimpse of Norry in a state of coma due to weakness from loss of blood. She stood trancelike looking



at him and then turned to the doctor and whispered:

"But he'll live?"

The physician's answer was slow.

"The hope is always affirmative," he said.

But Corliss, typically, refused to read into it the fear that the average girl would have. Norry must live. He would live. She felt the rebellion that was always with her crystallizing into a purpose and intention so firm that she would defy life itself. There was much of steel under her lovely, feminine exterior.

There was nothing to do but return home. She knew that Norry would get every care and attention and that she would not be allowed to be with or near him much. Not, anyhow, while he was in such a serious condition.

The house was very quiet when she returned to it. Its occupants apparently slept and Corliss saw no reason for waking any one to report on Norry's condition. She was emotionally worn out so she slept almost immediately but not without thinking several times and rather torturously of Tony and Magda and how strangely it had been Norry who hated him so who had inadvertently given Tony his hour of paradise.

There was irony in that. But there was irony in life itself.

With her mail in the morning her maid brought her flowers from Baird.

Violets again. And with them a line from him: "They still mean the same thing."

Corliss smiled. Bob was sweet. He was comfortable even if not too exhilarating. And the constancy and sincerity of his devotion were something. With her intelligence, Corliss liked those qualities. But her emo-

tion flowed toward Tony as naturally as a river flows from its source. She chided herself mentally for it but to no purpose. But oddly she kissed the violets and with a quite unconsciously fond gesture and then dialed Baird's number.

There was a kind, calm strength in his voice that did something for the girl on that trouble-shadowed morning.

"This is sweet of you, Bob," Corliss said, speaking of the violets as she held the huge velvety bunch against her cheek. "I love it but I think what I like best of all about it is that it gives me a reason for calling you. Your voice does things for me, gives me calm and courage which I need so much."

"You never need an excuse to call me, though, Corliss. But if you feel that way I'll send you flowers every day so you'll have reason to call me!"

"And then I'll have to scold you for being extravagant! But I really do mean it, Bob. You're something to me that no one else is—a sort of stay, prop, some one very satisfying to lean against. It's so comfortable to know you're there in the background."

"I wish I dared"—there was a gently wistful note in his voice—"take that for affection. But I won't. No use fooling myself. It's all right to kid other people when you can but the man who fools himself is the prize nitwit!"

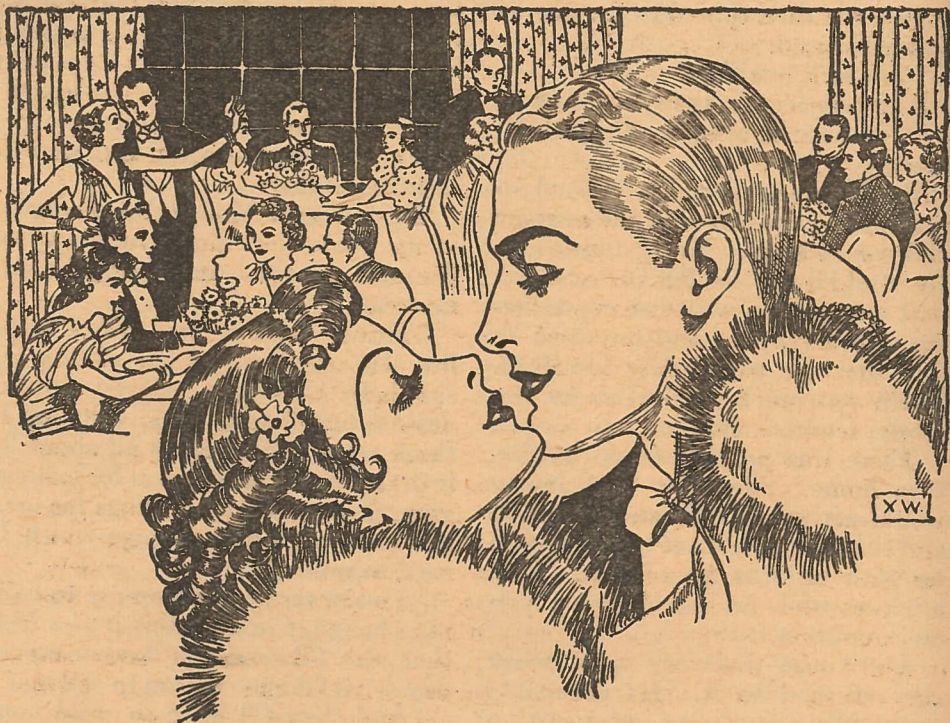
"Bob!"—in almost tender protest. "As if you could ever be such a thing! But you've been sweet to me beyond words!"

"I'm on the right track then, anyhow."

Corliss knew a sense of something that was almost like regret as she replaced the telephone.

TO BE CONTINUED.





# The Golden Hour

By Toby Thatcher

**V**ICKY LELAND was smoothing on quantities of lipstick of a ripe-cherry shade becoming to her creamy skin, dark eyes and tawny hair. At a knock on her boudoir door, she turned away from her absorption in her mirrored image.

It was the maid, whose eyes often seemed to regard Vicky superciliously.

Back in the small Massachusetts town of Riverhill, the comfortable but undistinguished honeysuckle-

covered frame house which had been the Leland home until they'd moved to New York three years before, had boasted of no smart white-capped maids. The only maid known to the Leland household in Riverhill had been the hired girl who cooked—cooked only, didn't serve. A butler and second man served now. She didn't say "mademoiselle," or knock deferentially on the door as Alise was doing now.

"A gentleman calling, mademoiselle."



That was nothing new! Gentlemen were always calling for Vicky, either by phone or in person. She was expecting one in a few minutes. But he was a trifle early.

Vicky momentarily suspended operations with her lipstick. A frown ruffled the brow described by Manhattan photographers of débutantes as "serenely delightful." She was having difficulty recalling just which gentleman of the many who formed her own particular stag line, was calling for her to-night!

There were so many who had rushed her since her début— Oh, yes, to-night her escort would be Stewart van Loren, known to intimates as "Stew," which perfectly described his usual condition. But he was a keen dancer.

It was to be dinner first at the Continent, then that very naughty musical show. Afterward, there'd be dancing at some swanky hotel.

Then, really late, they'd go to that gorgeous new late spot that was such a hit this season, the Golden Hour. The manager was said to be the most attractive man in town.

Vicky had never seen him, but some of her friends had, and were still raving! No one knew much about him. The air of mystery added to his glamour. "Mr. X," he was called.

Yes, Stew would take her to the Golden Hour. He would sign the check, as he invariably did, with a royal gesture, and be as lavish with his compliments as with his money. Stew's father was fabulously rich—richer even than dear old papa was, since that supposedly worthless oil stock he'd bought years ago, had turned out to be worth a fortune.

She turned to Alise. "Tell Mr. van Loren," she thrilled, "that I'll be down presently."

"But, mademoiselle, eet ees not Meester van Loren who ees downstairs," Alise began.

"Oh," said Vicky. "Then who is it?"

"A Meester Topping, mademoiselle. Shall I ask him to remain?"

Vicky's jeweled lipstick fell with a sharp, surprised sound, striking in a series of angry crashes the gold-and-crystal appointments of her dressing table. Her large eyes widened. Her lips opened to speak, but she checked the words.

She'd been going to say, "Of all the nerve!" but remembered in the nick of time that as one of the most charmingly sophisticated members of Manhattan's young set, she was not supposed to exclaim crudely, particularly in the presence of her maid.

But that was exactly what she meant. Of all the nerve for Fred Topping to come here from Riverhill, again!

The first time had been about a year and a half ago. She'd flatly refused to see him, but had known how he must have looked. She'd imagined the ill-suppressed scorn with which Hogarth, the correct butler, had told Fred the polite, hollow lie, "Miss Victoria is not at home, sir."

For Fred would have been so out of place in these elaborate, urban, surroundings. Tall, blond, and uncertain, he'd personify to perfection the picture of a country boy visiting the big city.

Her laugh had been brittle as she'd thought, "I suppose he thinks he can get me back!"

"No, Alise," she said now, very decidedly, "I'm not at home to Mr. Topping, ever!"

Alise understood and left.

With finger tips glowing with the newest rage in nail polish—an



opalescent effect achieved with one coat of cherry-red frosted over with a thin gold polish—Vick retrieved her lipstick from the confusion on her dressing table and concentrated on the mirror again.

She thought, "How I've changed! I am what I dreamed I'd be. I'm miles beyond a fool like Fred Topping. I have glamour while he's so stolid. I'm sophisticated, vivacious, while he's so—so dumb!"

She remembered their parting three years ago.

They'd been sitting together in the Leland porch hammock. The night, scented with honeysuckle, roses, and newly cut grass, pressed sweetly around them. Fred had taken her into his clumsy young arms.

"Gosh," he'd said wistfully, "you're sweet! I wish I was making enough money so that we could be married this summer."

Engrossed in speaking of his hopes, he failed to notice that she was unusually unresponsive in his arms.

"But," he continued, his young face eager, "in a couple of years I'll be getting a better salary in Uncle Foster's bank. And I'll have saved up something. Then we'll marry. We'll start in a small way—just a cottage, and—"

But Vicky pushed him away from her, her eyes flashing.

"That," she'd blazed, "is what you think. Well, I'll tell you something. I'm eighteen, and I'm not going to spend my life sitting around a hick town like this if I don't have to."

Then she'd told him about the money, that papa was now a very rich man. And while Fred sat dazed, she continued, "So I'm not going to stick around this dead place, waiting for you. You can stick here all your life if you want



*"A Meester Topping to see you, with a sharp, surprised sound, and her*

to, slaving in the bank—for what? To be a bigger and better bank teller—that's what! You've no ambition."

Fred interrupted unhappily, "But, Vicky, honey, I love you. I thought you loved me. Why, we're engaged."

"You mean we were engaged," retorted Vicky, "when I hadn't a chance of seeing anything beyond this stupid town, or having any fun. I'm going to New York to live. I'm going to be a *débutante*!" She paused for breath.

"If I thought you'd ever amount





*mademoiselle. Shall I ask him to remain?" Vicky's jeweled lipstick fell large eyes widened. Of all the nerve, for Fred Topping to come here again!*

to anything it might be different," she'd continued, hardly conscious of her cruelty. "But you're so easy-going, so nice and so dumb, you'll be content here forever, with no more excitement than a picnic or a town meeting!"

"Vicky," Fred said miserably, "you're throwing me over?"

"Yes, if you want to call it that," she told him definitely. Then a slight belated sympathy for him made her add, "I'm sorry, but I'm going to be somebody. I'm going places in this world, and you'll never

be able to travel fast enough to catch me!"

Then, in desperation and longing, Fred had taken her in his arms again. At this, which she felt was an attempt to restrain and convince her against her will that she belonged with him here in Riverhill, she grew angry and pulled herself free.

Fred rose. He looked bewildered, hesitant. The screen door banged after Vicky as she flounced into the house. But she heard Fred saying, "I'll show you——"



She'd been unable to resist a parting shot. "Show me what"—and already her quick young mind had leaped ahead, envisioning Park Avenue, parties, clothes, and dashing suitors—"Riverhill?"

She hurled it at him scathingly, and did not watch him stumble out the gate and out of her life—that life so soon to be magically exciting.

Well, it had been. Mamma'd managed everything. Vicky wanted a début, and mamma saw that she got it. Papa seemed somewhat bewildered, but paid the bills.

Début! It cost frightfully, and was not easily achieved by newly rich unknowns from a small town, without prominent friends or relatives to smooth the way.

But, the Lelands discovered, there were society secretaries, who arranged such things—told you what you should know, groomed you in every possible way. They sold you a list of the "right" people, all of whom you'd never met, but who would attend if your début promised to be sufficiently gay, extravagant, and diverting. Then you were invited to their parties and, after a while, actually got to know some of them.

Vicky found that there was much to learn before the début—diction, French, good tennis, the right make-up, the names of wines, how to select and wear the smartest clothes in the smartest way. There had to be a good address, and papa paid an enormous sum for an elegant, imposing white stone house on Park Avenue. There had to be tasteful jewelry, expensive furs, and a huge wardrobe of costly garments—no more organdies, absolutely!

Vicky, utterly bedazzled, found her life a continuous bright enchantment. She was like some

beautiful butterfly, reaching out with shimmering wings toward the blinding radiance of a social career.

Her coming-out party was talked about for months. No expense was spared—floral decorations costing thousands of dollars, a carload of gardenias, splashing fountains of real champagne, live parrots and cockatoos imported to disport themselves in the tropical palms and add to the bizarre atmosphere!

There were over a thousand guests. Two famous orchestras, hitherto only great names via radio to Vicky, played for dancing.

Her début was the success of the winter season. The Lelands' months of preparation were not spent in vain.

Vicky was merely amused when a slender, dashing young man, a complete stranger to her, cut in, held her very close, whispered the most surprisingly intimate things to her and then said, "Tell me, sugar, what's the name of the people who are throwing this party?"

She answered, "Oh, Leland."

He laughed. "Never heard of them. What's the blushing debbie look like? Some of these corn-fed would-be debbies from the sticks are pretty hard to take."

"I'm Victoria Leland," she informed him quietly. "It's my party."

Unabashed, he'd tightened his grip on her and said, "Pleasure's mine, sugar. I like your champagne. Nicer vintage, better stuff than at Carol Vibart's coming-out, last night."

It developed that he was Hobart Ramsdell, and his opinion could make or break a deb's first season.

That he was rude, frivolous and practically brainless didn't seem to matter. The Ramsdells had all but owned Manhattan for generations,



To Vicky his arrogant assurance, his diamond studs and links, his rich platinum cigarette case, spelled success, glamour, adventure. She was thrilled.

Fortunately, Hobart chose to pass the good word around the stag line. Vicky was swamped. She danced all night—danced the soles of her fragile white satin slippers through. Her swirling white velvet gown was crushed and mussed, her orchids wilted.

It was exciting to be given such a rush, cosmopolitan and daring to be cut in on and danced with by men who held in one hand a half-full glass of champagne. But Vicky sparkled brilliantly all night. This was New York—life at last!

The papers were full of Vicky's party. There had been only two fights that amounted to anything in the way of black eyes and some smashed top hats. There was one stag who had plunged into the champagne fountain, and then had to be fished out while protesting that he was looking for mermaids and meant no harm.

Some of the exotic live parrots had disappeared mysteriously from the palms, and one young man-about-town was seen leaving at dawn with a large parrot perched on his top hat. He was singing with more volume than skill, "Oh, The

Bird On Nellie's Hat!" as he fell into a waiting cab.

But such things, Vicky came to know, made the party. She was a successful débutante.

A year flew by—parties, yachting trips, horse shows, opera. Vicky's pictures appeared in the papers often. There were balls, and teas, cocktails and kisses, sophistication and glitter. It was easy enough to be startling, Vicky discovered.

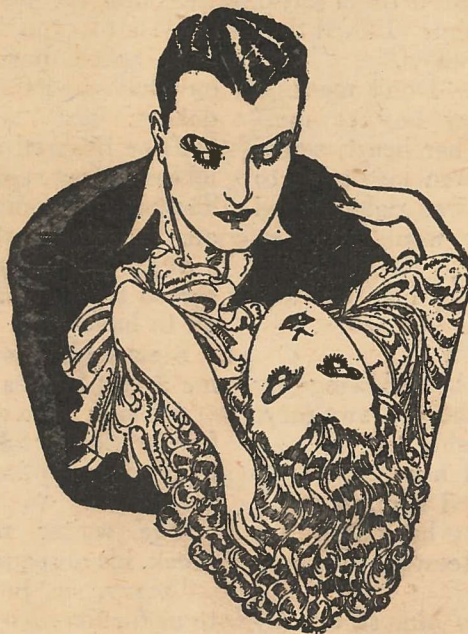
There were hosts of men now—Hobart Ramsdell, Stew van Loren, Archie Vanderdell, Ronnie Glade, the Bonwit twins, Alex, duke of Rannenburg, handsome, much-divorced Fritz Parker, and many others.

Very fascinating, flattering, and sophisticated, they told Vicky that it was "small-town" to believe in lasting love. She had laughed with them, remembering simple Fred.

Steadily, the pace of her gilt-edged existence increased. And months whirled by. Though now in her second season, her popularity had not waned. On

the contrary, it had increased.

She had a swift line, she was reckless with money, and she was beautiful. She'd learned to accept casual embraces indifferently, and to laugh off such things as the time on the Delabilt yacht when she'd awakened in the morning to find on her state-room's opposite bed a disheveled





young man. She'd gasped, "How did you get here?"

He'd replied, "Don't know. Mistake, no doubt. Think nothing of it!"

Afterward, she felt worldly-wise. It made a good story at which the crowd roared!

She thought her escorts superlatively satisfactory. But papa had different ideas.

Once he asked, "Why don't you marry one of your elegant beaux, Vick? I'd like to see you settle down."

She couldn't explain to papa that they didn't propose marriage.

Papa'd plunged ahead. "What do you hear from Fred these days? What's become of him? I liked that boy—fine, honest fellow."

Vicky'd snapped, "Don't mention that stupid country boy to me!" But deep down in her heart, something that had gotten lost tried to tell her that papa was right. Fred was fine. But she wouldn't listen to that something. She'd rushed out, without noticing how old and drawn papa looked.

In the maze of the following gay weeks, she hadn't thought any more of Fred until to-night.

She had finished her lips. Alise returned and handed her her wrap. "Meester Topping has gone," she announced, "and Meester van Loren has arrived."

The evening was almost exactly as expected. Vicky dismissed Fred from her mind.

After dinner, she and Stew were joined by Eve Delabilt and Hobart Ramsdell. They laughed a great deal over sparkling Burgundy.

Then Eve remembered that some one she knew was having a pent-house party. Glorious! They'd crash it!

It was two thirty before they sought the fresher glint and turmoil of the Golden Hour.

It was packed as always. Jewels winked, music blared, cigarette smoke twisted ethereally toward a ceiling as brightly gold as Vicky's gown.

Vicky felt again the unexplainable throb of expectancy and anticipation she always experienced here. She had no idea why.

It was a gorgeous place! The never-in-evidence Mr. X was said to have made a million out of the Golden Hour.

They danced to seductive rhythms, then realized that they were hungry.

"What'll you have, little ones?" Stew asked, poring over the menu on which no item was less than two dollars.

They lingered appreciatively over lobster, toast, coffee and ice cream. The check, when presented to Stew, amounted to a staggering sum.

With his usual flourish, Stew signed the check. The waiter went off to have it O. K.'d.

Stew said, "Hobart, old man, lend me a few berries for the tip."

A blank look came over Hobart's face. "Sorry, fella, haven't it with me," he replied with elaborate casualness.

The waiter returned with the check, his obsequiousness gone.

"Sorry, sir, but you are in debt to us for too many checks previously signed this season. You will have to pay this check in cash, sir."

"Who says so?" Stew blustered.

"Mr. X," replied the waiter firmly. It was easy to see that the word of the dominant Mr. X was law.

Stew turned to Vicky. "Well, kid," he said lightly, but his eyes were hard, "you'll have to shell out."

He was confident that she would.





*It was exciting to be given such a rush, to be cut in on and danced with by the handsomest men in New York society. Vicky sparkled brilliantly. This was life at last!*

with her. Papa hadn't yet given her her allowance this month.

"Haven't you got it?"

"N-no!"

Stew gave a disgusted exclamation.

"Why," he said to the waiter, "this is absurd. Mr. X knows me well as a regular customer."

The waiter shrugged, departed, then returned in a few moments.

"Mr. X says he knows you too well. You'll have to pay the check or we must call the police." As they gasped simultaneously, the waiter continued implacably, "There is one alternative. Mr. X says you may re-

She had before. Vicky had always felt it a small price to pay for the privilege of belonging to such a smart, gay, prominent crowd.

But to-night she looked desperately at Stew. She had no money



main and work out the check if you wish."

"Work it out!" chorused the group, aghast.

The waiter shrugged.

So, at four a. m., they went to work washing dishes, sweeping, then washing floors.

After a half hour of mopping the expensive linoleum of the café floor, Vicky was a wreck. Though exhausted, angry and humiliated, she did not complain.

But the others did, constantly. Soon they quit altogether. Only Vicky still swung her mop with determination.

"I'll have to get Mr. X," said the head waiter, eying them distrustfully.

"Oh," thought Vicky, "the fascinating Mr. X—the brute!"

Nevertheless, she couldn't help looking up when he came. After all, she'd heard so much about him and she'd never seen him before.

Or had she? She stared. Her breath caught in her throat. For Mr. X, tall, poised and perfectly tailored, was Fred Topping!

Vicky felt a wave of faintness sweep over her. This distinguished-looking man was the Fred she had dismissed as a country boy. She was tongue-tied.

"The work is not finished, but I suppose butterflies haven't much staying power," he said, looking at Vicky.

She thought her quickened heartbeat would choke her. Her blistered hands gripped the mop again.

"I'll finish the work," she said grimly.

She scarcely knew when her friends left. All she knew was that she had to do this work and do it well. She should be able to. Hadn't she mopped the kitchen back home often enough?

Her eyes blurred with tears. "I hate him," she thought, when all the time she knew that she didn't.

Fred stood silently watching her, hoping, she supposed, that she'd weaken.

When he said, "That's enough. I'll take you home," she cried wildly: "I hate you! I've never been so humiliated."

"You humiliated me once," he reminded her. "Now you know how it feels."

She was silent under this hurting truth.

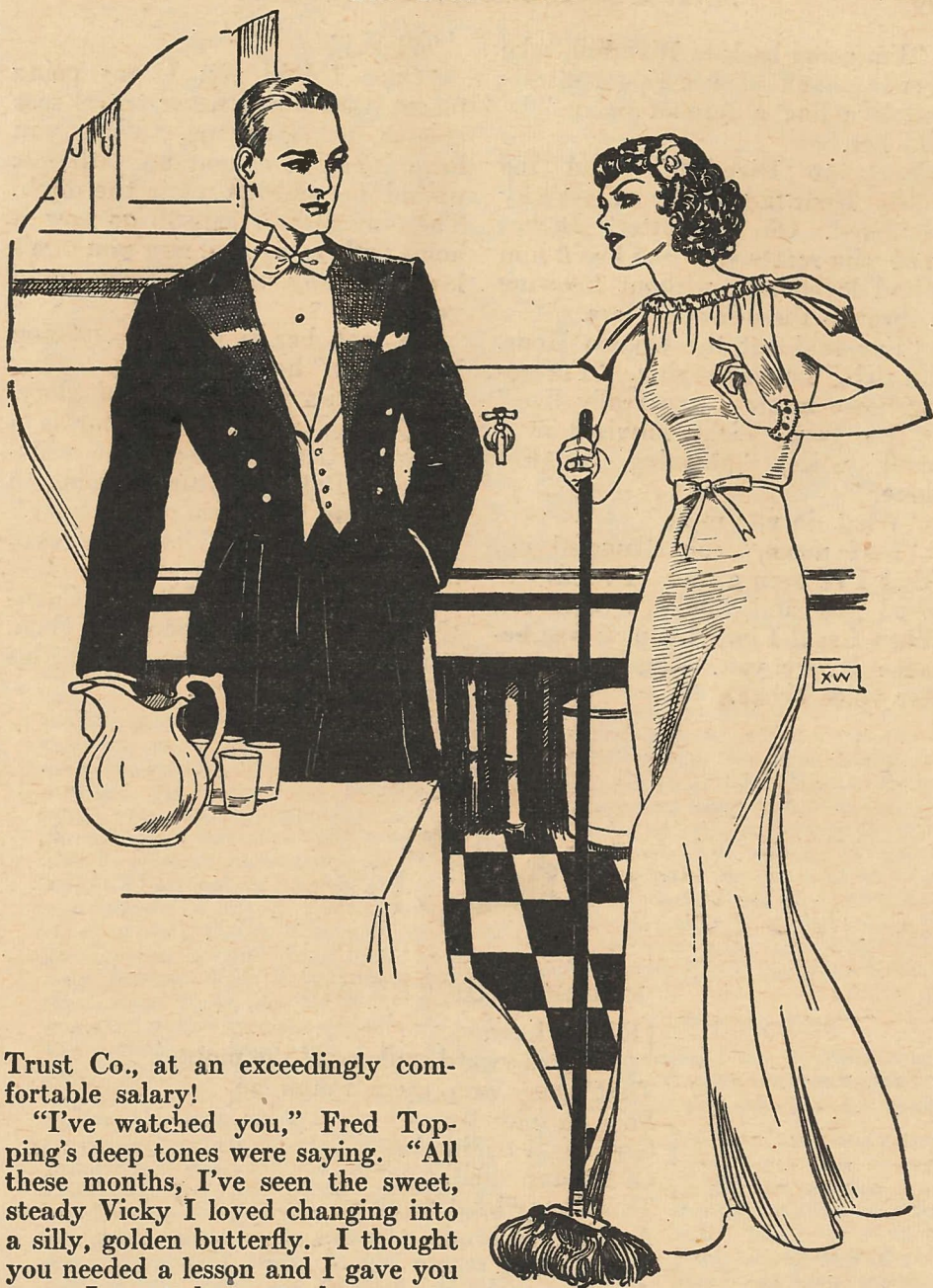
"You had your hour. To-night was mine. I was too dull for you," he continued. "That night when you snubbed me a year and a half ago, I made up my mind to prove to you that I could achieve success in the ways you seemed to value so highly. Well, the Golden Hour was the answer. It wasn't easy, but I made it.

"You snubbed me again to-night when I came to your house. But I really came to see your father, not you. He's been speculating to make more money for you and your mother to waste. I'd overheard some men planning to ruin him. I came to warn him not to enter the deal he was planning. He was out, and you shut me out. When I reached him by phone it was too late."

"Oh, poor papa," whimpered Vicky. For the first time in three utterly selfish years, she thought of some one other than herself.

Vicky didn't know then that her father wasn't heartbroken at all. On the contrary, Mr. Leland was considerably relieved to be free of the responsibility of too much money. And he had already accepted an offer of the vice presidency of the Riverhill Bank and





Trust Co., at an exceedingly comfortable salary!

"I've watched you," Fred Topping's deep tones were saying. "All these months, I've seen the sweet, steady Vicky I loved changing into a silly, golden butterfly. I thought you needed a lesson and I gave you one. I wanted you to know your exciting men friends for what they are."

"Oh," gasped Vicky. But it was true. She saw now how small and characterless were Stew and his crowd, how selfish she'd been. She

*Vicky felt a wave of faintness sweep over her. This distinguished-looking man was the Fred she had dismissed as a country boy. "I hate him," she thought, when all the time she knew that she didn't.*

was the dull one who didn't amount to anything, not Fred.



"I'm going back to Riverhill, take over the bank—Uncle Foster died—and live like a human being," he told her.

Back to Riverhill? Had the Golden Hour failed after all?—Vicky wondered. Oh, no matter! It was Fred who mattered. She loved him—had loved him without knowing it through these hectic years.

"I've sold out the Golden Hour. I'm rich," he was saying. "I'm going home where I can really live."

"Are you," Vicky inquired in a small voice, "planning to live alone?"

"What do you mean?"

"I—I mean," she struggled on, "that I've been a fool. I've always loved you and wouldn't admit it. When I said I hated you, it was because I love you. Oh, Fred——" Her voice broke.

"Vicky!"

"Once I told you I was going places, that you'd never travel fast enough to catch me. Well, you have. You've caught up with me, passed me, and left me in the ditch. The only place I care to go now is home with you. And now you don't love me any more. How could you?"

He took her in his arms. "You know I do," he said huskily.

Their kiss was a thing of glory.

"Darling, the Golden Hour is a thing of the past now," he whispered. "But our future is going to be one long, unbroken golden hour."

"Yes," breathed Vicky, her eyes misty with radiance.

"You see?" Fred exulted. "Country boy makes good!" Then, fiercely, he crushed her to him, his lips closing over hers.

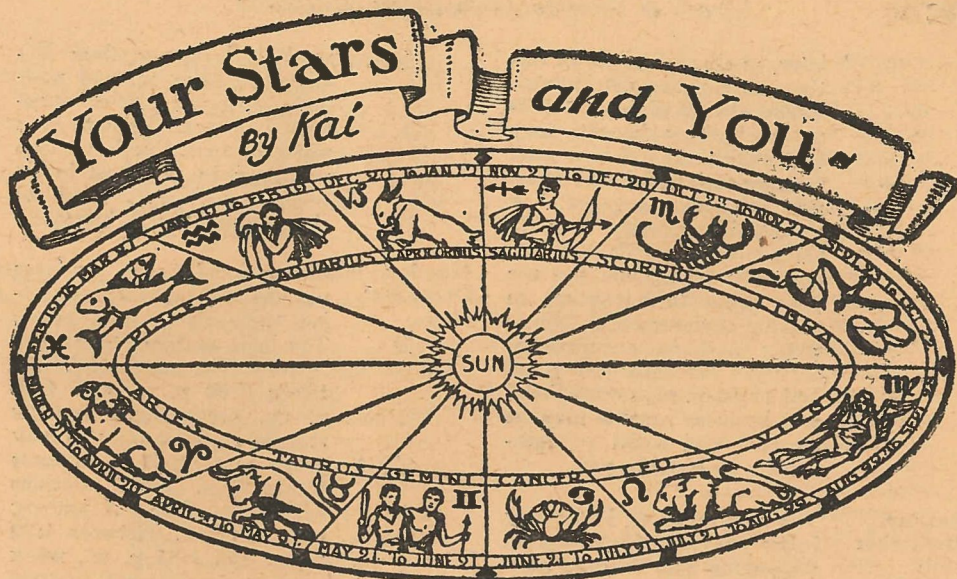


### RAIMENT OF THE AIR

LET me have  
 The wayward zephyrs of the morn,  
 That I may wrap them 'round me,  
 Fold on fold;  
 Give me a trifling bit  
 Of midday wind,  
 That I may bind its glow  
 Around my head;  
 Come, bring to me  
 A softly creeping evening breeze  
 And drape its coolness  
 Over all;  
 Then let me lie upon the grass  
 And weave those fabrics of the sky  
 Into my dreams.

IVY HOUTZ WOOLLEY.





### YOUR WEEK

During the week you will be under a number of mixed influences that will bring benefits and disadvantages in certain directions. Unexpected developments in money matters may interfere with your love and marriage plans; also some business deals may be adversely affected in an unexpected manner. In occupational matters, however, you will be mentally alert and through your mental activity you may be able to increase your income in some unlooked-for manner, or possibly you may devise financial savings in environmental and other matters that will amount to a net gain in your income. Your love and marriage interests may be restricted by environmental conditions, but if so, you will probably be able to make adjustments that will partially at least remove the restrictions. This will require careful and serious thought on your part. Select the best day for you this week, given in the "Born Between—" section, for making desired adjustments, if you would minimize incidental annoyance. A few minor employment benefits may come to you, but in the main you should mark time in employment matters and carefully attend to your employment duties. Love and marriage matters in some respects may tend to distract your attention or otherwise interfere with the proper performance of your work; if not careful, friends will visit with you during working hours, to your discomfort. If such occurs, be polite; but do not unnecessarily neglect your employment duties. In occupational matters not connected with

your regular employment, you may be assisted by generous friends who can throw business your way, or give you extra work to do to increase your regular income. In a general way you will be socially popular; but keep your social activities on an impersonal basis this week. Later you can make up for what may now seem passing opportunities in social life. People, mostly of an ease-loving disposition, will try to borrow money or personal belongings from you this week, and their requests will come as a surprise to you. Be prepared for such requests, no matter from what direction they may be encountered, so that you will not be rushed into doing something that you might not do if you had time to think it over.

### DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time. If not using that time, make correction to the time you are using.

Saturday,  
December  
12th

h

During the early-morning hours, mark time in environmental and marriage matters. Business matters may temporarily upset your marriage plans. Keep control of your temper in your matrimonial affairs. Occupational and business benefits may be received. Friends may prove helpful to you in a business way. Between 10:30 a.m. and noon, you may be urged to make environmental changes. Postpone your decision until



later, as changes made at this time may prove detrimental. Between 2:30 p. m. and 4:00 p. m., business benefits may be received. It will be a good time for social affairs for those not otherwise engaged. A pleasurable journey may be taken. Between 7:30 p. m. and 9:00 p. m., you can use your mind to advantage in making environmental adjustments and in occupational matters. Between 9:00 p. m. and 10:30 p. m., occupational and business benefits may be received and social advancement may come to you.

Sunday,  
December  
13th



The early-morning hours may bring unexpected expense in connection with business matters, travel, love and marriage. Some annoyance in connection with environmental matters may also occur. Between 8:15 a. m. and 10:30 a. m., marriage matters may be benefited, probably in a business way or as a result of a journey, your own or that of some one else. However, while you may be benefited in some respects, others may obtain benefits at your expense of time or money. Between noon and 1:00 p. m., mark time in employment matters and avoid transacting unnecessary business. It is not a good time to travel. Between 1:00 p. m. and 2:15 p. m., occupational and business benefits may come to you and friends may assist you. Social advantages may be obtained at this time. Between 2:30 p. m. and 4:00 p. m., mark time in employment matters and keep your temper in your matrimonial affairs. Between 4:00 p. m. and 5:30 p. m., you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Between 5:30 p. m. and 7:00 p. m., opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests may come to you. A pleasurable journey may be taken. Business transactions may bring you profit. You may profit as a

Monday,  
December  
14th



result of legal procedure. Between 10:30 p. m. and midnight, you will receive unexpected financial benefits as a result of mental activity; also you may be benefited in an occupational way. Your social popularity will increase.

Occupational and business matters will be benefited during the early-morning hours. The later morning hours will be somewhat uneventful. Between 3:00 p. m. and 4:30 p. m., occupational benefits may be received and you may profit as a result of business transactions. Social relations will be benefited. A journey may be taken. Between 4:30 p. m. and 5:45 p. m., mark time in employment matters and do not let social activities interfere with your employment duties. Between 5:45 p. m. and 7:00 p. m., occupational benefits may be received and opportunity to advance your love interests may come to you. Friends may do you favors. Between 9:30 p. m. and 11:00 p. m., you may receive unexpected financial benefits. Your love affairs may develop satisfactorily in an unusual manner.

Tuesday,  
December  
15th



The early-morning hours will be good for matters involving much mental activity, especially along occupational lines. Between 10:30 a. m. and noon, occupational benefits may be received and friends will do you favors. You will have opportunity to advance your love and social interests. The early-afternoon hours will be somewhat quiet. Between 5:30 p. m. and 6:30 p. m., a beneficial change in environmental matters may take place, or adjustments of a more satisfactory character may occur. Transactions involving real estate may prove profitable to you. Between 9:00 p. m. and 10:30 p. m., mark time in marriage matters and keep your temper under control. Occupational



and marriage interests may come into conflict at this time. Between 10:30 p. m. and midnight, your employment interests may be advanced. You may become romantic at this time, with pleasurable results.

**Wednesday,  
December  
16th**

♂

The early-morning hours may bring occupational and business benefits and you will have opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests. A beneficial journey may be taken. Between 8:30 a. m. and 10:00 a. m., unexpected financial expense may come to you. You will be asked to lend money and articles of personal property. Your social popularity may increase, to your added expense. Mark time in love and courtship and be careful in your association with the opposite sex. You may profit as a result of legal procedure. Between 10:00 a. m. and 7:00 p. m., matters will be quiet. From 7:00 p. m. to 8:30 p. m., opportunity to advance your marriage interests will come to you and you may receive employment benefits. Between 9:30 p. m. and 11:00 p. m., avoid unnecessary environmental changes. It is not a good time for transactions involving real estate. Mark time in occupational matters.

**Thursday,  
December  
17th**

♂

During the early-morning hours mark time in employment matters. You may be put to unexpected financial expense. You will be asked to lend to others money and articles of personal property. Keep yourself under control if something happens to annoy you. Minor occupational benefits may be received. Avoid elopements. Between 8:15 a. m. and 9:30 a. m., opportunity to advance your love interests in an unusual way may come to you. Friends will assist you in the carrying out of your love plans. Financial benefits may be received. The later morn-

ing hours and early-afternoon hours will be somewhat uneventful. Between 3:00 p. m. and 4:30 p. m., mark time in love and marriage matters. Avoid unnecessary business transactions. It is not a good time to travel. Avoid litigation. Be careful that you do not have misunderstandings with friends. Between 5:00 p. m. and 6:00 p. m., minor occupational benefits may come to you as a result of mental activity on your part. You will be alert in social matters and can advance your social interests. Between 7:30 p. m. and 8:45 p. m., the unexpected will happen in money matters and friends will borrow from you. Be careful in your association with the opposite sex. Avoid unconventionality.

**Friday,  
December  
18th**

♀

The early-morning hours will bring benefits in matters of environment, and friends may be of assistance to you. Avoid transacting unnecessary business. Curtail your social activities. Between 7:45 a. m. and 9:00 a. m., opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you. You will receive invitations to attend "showers" given to friends about to marry, or newly married, and your generosity will get out of bounds if you don't watch yourself. Avoid too much extravagance. The later morning hours and the afternoon hours will be somewhat quiet. Between 8:30 p. m. and 10:30 p. m., progress in love and marriage matters can be made and it will be a pleasurable time socially. A beneficial journey may be taken. You may profit as a result of business transactions. Legal procedure may bring you benefits. New friends will be made and others will assist you in furthering your material interests.

The influences affecting the particular zodiacal group to which you belong are



given in the "Born Between—" section of this article, which you should also consult.



### IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN March 21st and April 20th

(Aries ♈)

—Aries people born between March 21st and 28th will receive unexpected financial benefits this week. Mark time in occupational matters. Your judgment will be poor this week. Opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you. Friends will assist you with your plans. Best days for you this week are Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday. If born between March 29th and April 5th, your judgment will be poor in occupational matters. Friends will assist you in furthering your love and marriage interests. Best days for you this week are Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between April 6th and 12th, mark time in love and marriage matters and keep your temper under control. Be alert in matters of employment and attend carefully to your employment duties. You may profit as a result of a journey, either your own or that of some one else. Business benefits may be received by you. Best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between April 13th and 20th, mark time in home affairs. You may profit as a result of legal procedure and business benefits may come to you. You will have opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests. You will be socially active. Best days for you this week are Monday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday.

April 20th and May 21st

(Taurus ♉)

—Taurus people born between April 20th and 28th will have the unexpected happen in money matters this week. You will be alert in occupational matters and occupational benefits will be received. Mark time in love and marriage matters. People will borrow money and articles of personal property from you. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between April 29th and May 6th, you will be mentally alert in occupational matters. Mark time in love and courtship. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between May 7th and 13th, employment benefits will be received and working conditions will be more pleasant for you. Love and marriage matters will be under mixed influ-

ences. Keep control of your temper. A change affecting your environment may occur at this time. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between May 14th and 21st, home benefits will be received. You can advance love and marriage interests to a minor degree. You may profit as a result of business transactions. Legal benefits may be received by you. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Friday.

May 21st and June 21st

(Gemini ♊)

—Geminians born between May 21st and 29th will receive minor financial benefits of an unexpected character this week. Occupational benefits may also be received. Opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you. Best day for you this week is Thursday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between May 30th and June 6th, you can advance your love and marriage interests and friends will assist you in doing so. Occupational benefits may come to you as a result of your mental activity. You may be benefited in a financial way. Best day for you this week is Thursday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between June 7th and 13th, mark time in employment matters. Love and marriage matters will be under mixed influences. Advance your interests where possible; but mark time in matters that do not go smoothly. Avoid unnecessary business transactions. It is not a good time to consult lawyers nor to travel. Environmental conditions may be somewhat restrictive. Best day for you this week is Friday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between June 14th and 21st, home benefits will be received. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Avoid unnecessary business transactions. It is not a good time to travel nor to become involved in litigation. Best day for you this week is Friday. Mark time on Monday.

June 21st and July 23rd

(Cancer ♋)

—Cancerians born between June 21st and 29th will receive unexpected financial benefits this week. Mark time in occupational matters. Curtail your social activities. You can advance your love interests to a minor degree. Mark time on Monday. If born between June 30th and July 7th, your judgment will be poor in occupational matters. Opportunity to advance your love interests to a minor degree will come to you. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between July 8th and 15th, employment bene-



fits will be received. Mark time in love and marriage matters. You may profit to a minor degree as a result of business transactions. A beneficial change in matters of environment may come to you at this time. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between July 16th and 23rd, love and marriage interests may be advanced to some extent and minor business benefits may be received. Mark time on Wednesday.

#### July 23rd and August 23rd (Leo ♌)

—Leo natives born between July 23rd and 31st will meet with unexpected financial expense this week. Minor occupational benefits may be received. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Best day for you this week is Saturday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between August 1st and 8th, mark time in love and marriage matters. Be careful that you do not have misunderstandings with friends. Minor occupational benefits may be received as a result of your mental activity. Best day for you this week is Saturday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between August 9th and 15th, minor employment benefits may be received. You will have an excellent opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests. Environmental matters may be somewhat restrictive. Best day for you this week is Sunday. Mark time on Friday. If born between August 16th and 23rd, home benefits will be received. Opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Friday.

#### August 23rd and September 23rd (Virgo ♍)

—Virgo natives born between August 23rd and 31st, will receive unexpected financial benefits this week. Employment matters will be benefited in an unlooked-for manner. You may profit as a result of business transactions. Opportunity to advance your love interests to a minor degree may come to you. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between September 1st and 8th, you will be mentally alert in occupational matters. Employment benefits may be received. You can make progress in your love affairs. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between September 9th and 15th, keep alert in employment matters. Love and marriage matters will be under mixed influences. Some benefits may be received. Mark time in matters that do not go smoothly. Environ-

mental conditions will be restrictive; but avoid unnecessary change at this time. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between September 16th and 23rd, home benefits will be received. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Monday.

#### September 23rd and October 23rd (Libra ♎)

—Librans born between September 23rd and 30th will have the unexpected happen in money matters this week with probably mixed results. Your judgment will be poor in occupational matters; mark time. You will have an excellent opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests. Best days for you this week are Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday. If born between October 1st and 8th, mark time in occupational matters. You will have an excellent opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests, but may not avail yourself of it to the full extent as your judgment will not be good. Best days for you this week are Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between October 9th and 16th, minor employment benefits may be received. You will be under mixed influences in love and marriage matters. Keep control of your temper. Mark time in matters that do not run smoothly. Environmental conditions will be somewhat restrictive. Best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between October 17th and 23rd, mark time in home affairs. You can advance your love and marriage interests. Business transactions may bring you profit and you may benefit as a result of legal procedure. Best days for you this week are Monday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday.

#### October 23rd and November 22nd (Scorpio ♏)

—Scorpio people born between October 23rd and 31st will be put to unexpected financial expense this week. Occupational benefits may be received by you. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between November 1st and 7th, you will be mentally alert in occupational matters. Mark time in love and courtship. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between November 8th and 15th, employment benefits will be received. Opportunity to advance your love



and marriage interests will come to you. A beneficial change in environment may take place at this time. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between November 16th and 22nd, home benefits will be received. Opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Friday.

**November 22nd and December 22nd**  
(Sagittarius ♐)

—Sagittarians born between November 22nd and 29th will have the unexpected happen in financial matters this week. Minor occupational benefits may be received. Opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you. Best day for you this week is Thursday. If born between November 30th and December 7th, you can advance your love and marriage interests. Minor occupational benefits may be received. Best day for you this week is Thursday. If born between December 8th and 14th, mark time in employment matters. You will have an excellent opportunity to advance love and marriage interests. You may profit as a result of legal procedure. Mark time in environmental matters. Best day for you this week is Friday. If born between December 15th and 22nd, progress can be made in love and marriage matters. Best day for you this week is Friday.

**December 22nd and January 20th**  
(Capricorn ♑)

—Capricornians born between December 22nd and 29th will receive unexpected financial benefits this week. You may profit as a result of business transactions. Occupational matters will be benefited. Opportunity to advance your love interests will come to you. Best day for you this week is Monday. If born between December 30th and January 6th, you will be mentally alert in occupational matters. You can advance your love interests. You will be socially popular and will make new friends. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. If born between January 7th and 13th, employment benefits will be received. Mark time in love and marriage matters. You may profit from business transactions. Environmental benefits will be received. Best day for you this week is Tuesday, but mark time in marriage matters. If born between January 14th and 20th, mark time in home affairs. You may profit from business dealings. You will be socially popular. Best day for you this week is Friday.

**January 20th and February 19th**  
(Aquarius ♒)

—Aquarians born between January 20th and 28th will meet with unexpected financial expense this week. People will ask to borrow money and articles of personal property from you. Minor occupational benefits will be received. Opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you. Best day for you this week is Saturday. If born between January 29th and February 5th, love and marriage interests can be advanced and friends will assist in your plans. Occupational benefits may be received. Best day for you this week is Saturday. If born between February 6th and 12th, keep alert in employment matters. You will have an excellent opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests. You may benefit through legal procedure. A pleasurable journey may be taken. Your social popularity will increase. Environmental conditions will be less restrictive. Best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. If born between February 13th and 19th, you can advance your love and marriage interests. Business benefits may be received. Best days for you this week are Monday and Friday.

**February 19th and March 21st**  
(Pisces ♓)

—Pisceans born between February 19th and 27th will receive unexpected financial benefits this week. You may profit from business transactions. You can advance your love interests to a minor degree. You will be socially popular. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between February 28th and March 6th, occupational benefits will be received. Opportunity to advance your love interests will come to you. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between March 7th and 13th, mark time in employment matters and do not get disturbed by trifles. Also mark time in love and marriage matters. It is not a good time to transact unnecessary business. Avoid traveling unnecessarily. Environmental conditions may be restrictive. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between March 14th and 21st, you will receive home benefits. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Monday.

Note for "Born Between—" readers:  
The week referred to begins with Saturday,



December 12th, and ends with Friday, December 18th. Compare with information given in "Your Week" and "Day by Day" to see what the general influences are.



### MORE ABOUT SAGITTARIUS PEOPLE

It cannot be told in a general article what will happen in detail to thousands of readers. Groups of people, however, are affected in a general way by the positions of certain planets at a given time. All members of the group will not be similarly affected, as each person will react to the group influence according to his own horoscope and characteristic peculiarities. The majority members of any group, however, will be affected by the group influence along somewhat similar lines. Bearing this in mind, during the twelve months ensuing from November 22, 1936, Sagittarius natives will be affected, beneficially or otherwise, by the positions of certain planets, in the following manner:

If you were born between November 22nd and 27th, occupational and business benefits will be received by you during December, 1936, and you will be socially popular. You may materially benefit as a result of a pleasure journey. From April, 1937, to October, 1937, steady application to work may advance your business interests. You may benefit in connection with real estate. Long-pending matters may be satisfactorily closed at this time. You may receive benefits connected with the law or from lawyers. You will be serious-minded in business matters and will attract the favorable attention of serious-minded people. During October and November of 1937, opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you.

If you were born between November 28th and December 2nd, from November, 1936, to May, 1937, the unexpected will happen in money matters. Some unexpected benefits may be received; some unexpected expense may be incurred. You may take a journey that you do not anticipate. Unlooked-for developments in business matters may take place. Some of them may be good; some not good. Law matters may require your sudden attention. Meet the problems with wisdom when they arrive, and you will probably show a net gain at the end of this period. During December, 1936, and January, 1937, occupational and business benefits may come to you. You may take a journey with beneficial results, or may benefit as the result of a journey taken by some one else. Matters con-

nected with the law may bring you profit, or you may benefit by dealing with lawyers. You will be socially popular and will make new friends. Money matters will be better for you. During July, 1937, business benefits will be received by you, some probably to do with real estate. You will be serious-minded and your business judgment will be good.

If you were born between December 3rd and 7th, occupational and business benefits will come to you during January and February of 1937, and a profitable journey may be taken by you or by some one to your advantage. You will be socially popular and will make new friends. Your social and business interests will be advanced by friends. You may profit in some manner connected with real estate. From May, 1937, to November, 1937, the unexpected will happen in money matters. Unusual business developments may take place. You may be put to unlooked-for expense, some of which may be in connection with unexpected journeys. Legal developments may annoy you. You will meet with surprises; some of them may be pleasant; some not. Play safe in your association with the opposite sex; guard against surprise; avoid unconventional conduct that might embarrass you or lead to possible complications.

If you were born between December 8th and 12th, you may have employment worries from November, 1936, to October, 1937. Attend to your employment duties carefully and keep your mind on your work during working hours. Avoid becoming romantic. A journey, your own or that of some one else, may cause you annoyance. Business affairs may not go satisfactorily for you, although financial loss may not occur. You will be subtly disturbed in marriage matters; trifles will seem important. Many of the things you will worry about, will prove of no moment. You will be annoyed rather than materially injured. From November, 1936, to January, 1937, your environment may be such as to curtail desired activities. Business affairs may not run smoothly. There will be delay in closing transactions. Avoid unnecessary business activities. It is not a good time for environmental changes and they should be avoided unless necessary to make them. Avoid unnecessary traveling. Do not become involved in litigation if you can help it. It is not a good time to deal with lawyers. Transactions connected with real estate are apt to prove unsatisfactory or worse. During February, March, August, September, and October, 1937, occupational and business benefits may be received by



you. Lawyers or legal procedure may bring you benefits. New friends will be made by you in the social and business worlds and will prove helpful to you. You will be socially popular.

If you were born between December 13th and 17th, you will be benefited in a business way during November, 1936. Lawyers or law procedure may bring benefits to you. A journey, your own or that of some one else, may prove profitable to you. You will be socially popular and can advance your marriage interests. During January, February, and March, 1937, environmental conditions will be somewhat restrictive. Business matters will develop slowly and unsatisfactorily. It is not a good time to deal with lawyers. Avoid litigation, if possible. Mark time in marriage matters. Protect yourself from inclement weather and be careful around dangerous bodies of water. It is not a good time to unnecessarily change your environment. Avoid unnecessary traveling. Conserve your money. During March, April, June, July, August, October, and November, 1937, occupational and business benefits will be received by you. You will make new friends, who will be of much assistance to you. Your marriage interests can be advanced. Transactions connected with real estate may bring you benefits. During October and November of 1937, be alert in employment matters and attend carefully to your employment duties. Keep your thoughts on useful things; avoid becoming romantic. Avoid magnifying trifles, especially in marriage matters. If you don't discipline your mind at this time, you may create annoyance for yourself.

If you were born between December 18th and 22nd, you may be subtly disturbed in home affairs from November, 1936, to September, 1937, but no ill effects should come of it if you do not permit your scarcely defined feelings to bring them about. During November, 1936, you will have opportunity to advance your marriage interests and may be benefited in a business and a financial way. You may profit through lawyers or legal procedure. You will be socially popular and will make new friends. A journey, your own, or that of some one else, may prove beneficial to you. During March, April, October, and November, 1937, avoid unnecessarily transacting business. It is not a good time to travel nor to deal with lawyers. Do not mortgage real estate or unnecessarily deal in it. Be careful that you do not fall and injure yourself, especially if engaged in athletics. Also be careful around dangerous bodies of

water. Your environment may restrict your social activities and a desire for change may possess you, but it is not a good time to make environmental changes. During April, May, June, and November, 1937, occupational and business benefits will come to you. New business acquaintances will advance your material interests. Legal benefits may come to you. Opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will present itself.

In order to ascertain in detail the harmonies and discords that may exist between persons, their horoscopes must be cast and compared. However, the respective groups to which they belong, harmonize or discord in a general way. Certain zodiacal signs harmonize with each other, but discord with other signs. If your birth date is approximately the same number of days advanced in your zodiacal sign as is the birth date of another in a sign that harmonizes with your own, you will be in fundamental harmony with that person. The planets also have their harmonies and discords, but what they are between any two horoscopes can only be ascertained by a casting and a comparison of the horoscopes. Planetary influence may in seeming obscure sometimes the zodiacal influence. However, no matter what the planetary influence may be, nor how strongly it modifies or obscures the influence of the zodiacal signs, the zodiacal influence is still there, ready to express itself when a favorable opportunity presents.

Keeping all the foregoing in mind: You will agree best with natives of Aries, Leo, Libra and Aquarius. Libra and Aquarius are your best bets. You should avoid marriage to natives of Gemini, Virgo, and Pisces.



#### COMMENTS BY KAI

If you would make the most use of these articles, you should consider how they will apply to yourself. This will be according to your age, your sex, your industrial training, your education, your environment, and other factors which you individually will know and which will vary in countless ways with thousands of you. Influences that will bring marriage benefits may affect you much differently from what they will affect some one else. You may be single, or you may be married; you may want to be married, or you may be sorry that you are. You may be happy and desire little more; or your wants may be insatiable. You can easily see how beneficial marriage influences will affect you under such vary-



ing circumstances. A single woman may meet her future husband; an engaged one may marry; a married one may gain increased happiness. The influences can only be stated in general terms; their application to each individual case may vary widely. Sometimes the influences in operation at a given time are mixed, bringing adversity as well as benefits. A woman, who has been delaying marriage because she has a good job and likes more money to spend than her fiancé can give her in the event of their marriage, may lose her job and marry in consequence thereof, to find, perhaps, that she has gained in happiness something more worth while than the dollars she has lost. Or she may hang onto her job or even receive a promotion, and lose her sweetheart in consequence thereof. These are merely instances, cited for your guidance in gaining the utmost benefit from these articles. Use them in your daily life. Much threatened loss and adversity can be avoided, if you do so, and, if you work with the good influences, many benefits will be gained that you might otherwise pass by. The full extent of your net gain may never be known to you. Potential adversity and dangers averted are often never suspected. A midnight auto ride, taken at a time when travel is a potential danger, may result in a crash, or something worse. Refraining from taking such a trip would avert the danger. Whether or not it did, would be hard for you to say. Yet there are various ways in which you can observe the general accuracy of these forecasts. Benefits received at a stated time will be one. Another would be when people borrow money, or your best frock, or even your chewing gum, at a time when I say they are apt to do so. And if I tell you to guard your speech or you may have a domestic blow-up, you'll know it if you forget and the blow-up occurs. Study yourself. Work in harmony with the good influences; and set your will against being affected by the evil ones. You yourself are largely master of your own destiny. Make it a worthwhile one.

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*Kai does not send answers by mail*

MRS. E. M. P., widow, born May 18, 1890, 11:55 p. m., Illinois: I do not think you will be married again unless you bring

it about yourself by proper planning. You will have an excellent opportunity for doing this during 1937. You will be mentally alert and can probably contract a hasty marriage if you go about it rightly; but make haste when you see the man you want and he is in a marriageable frame of mind, for he will be of a type that will not remain long in such frame of mind. If not successful in marrying during 1937, you may go until 1942 before again having as good an opportunity.

M. F. C., male, born May 8, 1902, 6:00 a. m., approximately, Massachusetts: I have compared your horoscope with that of your fiancée. There are a great many very fine harmonies between you, and some rather strong discords. The harmonies should prevail, if you stress them and keep in the background the discords. There are so many things that you will mutually like to do, that you should both find it possible to ignore most of the things that might create annoyance or dissatisfaction.

ASSUNTA, female, born August 16, 1906, between 6:00 a. m. and 7:00 a. m., Ohio: I have examined your horoscope and that of your husband. Unless you can take back your property from the loan company on terms that you can handle without burdening yourselves with unnecessary financial worry, I think it would be well not to repurchase the property. Most of the influences in your nativity are good during the next few months; and there are quite a few good ones in your husband's horoscope, also; but they are not sufficient to warrant your repairing the property at your own expense, unless you can get the property back from the loan company on payments sufficiently small to enable you to make them without danger of defaulting on your contract. In view of the need of repairs, which the loan company would have to make, in all probability, before a sale could be made to some one else, it is possible that the loan company would make the payments very small, for a period of a year or so at least.

MISS L. D., born March 3, 1916: I have compared your horoscope with that of your boy friend. There are many fine harmonies between you; but there are also a considerable number of discords, most of which will become evident after marriage. You should, therefore, have a heart-to-heart talk with each other and try to anticipate, so far as possible, the subjects on which you will disagree, and then arrive at an under-



standing as to how you will handle such problems after marriage. It is better for you to agree on a marriage code now than to fight out disputed points of marital conduct after you are married. If you will do this, I think you can preserve the harmony that has prevailed between you during your engagement. Do not lose sight of the many harmonies between you; they are sufficiently strong to bring you permanent happiness if you will reach a compromise agreement on those matters that may prove a disturbing element.

A MISSOURI FAN, female, born September 26, 1908, between 6:30 a. m. and 7:00 a. m., Missouri: During the next twelve months, by careful planning, you can probably effect an engagement that should end in marriage the latter part of 1937 or sometime during 1938. Thanks for your kind wishes. Yes, my work is very interesting.

M. D., female, born June 6, 1916, 3:00 p. m., Louisiana: I have compared your horoscope with that of your boy friend. As between most horoscopes, there are some discords between yours and his; but there are many powerful harmonies; and I feel quite sure that you will both always regret it if you do not marry each other.

O. C., female, born May 20, 1920, 9:00 a. m., Arizona: An excellent opportunity to marry happily will come to you the latter part of 1938 or fore part of 1939.

M. C. M., female, born March 20, 1920, 5:00 a. m., Virginia: Opportunity to marry will come to you during 1939 and 1940. If opportunity to marry comes to you earlier than that, consider it carefully as it is likely to prove unsatisfactory.

MART, female, born April 5, 1920, between 11:00 and 12:00 p. m., Illinois: You may marry during 1937, but you may not be entirely satisfied, if you do. Avoid marriage during 1938; 1939 is a very good year for you. If not married by 1941, you will probably marry at that time.

MISS D., born March 27, 1918, 5:00 a. m., Illinois: You will probably marry within the next two and one half years.

MISS L. S., born March 23, 1913, 3:00 a. m., Illinois: You will have an excellent opportunity to marry during 1937 or early in 1938; but you are apt to meet with opposition from others, probably near kindred, if you have them, and also occupational matters may present difficulties. You can surmount these obstacles, if you exercise sufficient determination.

MISS LONESOME, born October 26, 1912, between 10:00 p. m. and 11:00 p. m., Pennsylvania: During the last half of 1937 and the first half of 1938, you will be under exceptionally fine planetary influences in a number of different respects and opportunity for marriage will come to you during this period.

D. K., female, born October 3, 1917, 6:00 p. m., Texas: An excellent opportunity for marriage will come to you during 1940. Scrutinize carefully the opportunity that may come to you during 1938 as it will probably prove unsatisfactory. The best direction for you to look for work during the next few months will be in some public office, possibly for a newly elected official; failing in which, canvas the fire insurance and real-estate offices and marine companies.

MISS C. S., born April 22, 1913, Canada: Opportunity to marry will come to you during the next eighteen months.

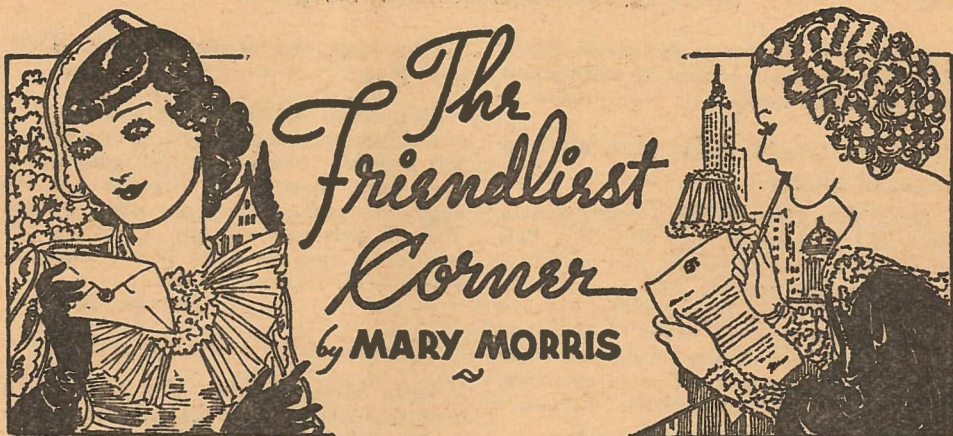
E. C. O., female, born February 23, 1913, 2:00 p. m., South Carolina: Your marriage prospects for the next six months are favorable; the twelve months following that, unfavorable; the succeeding twelve months favorable, but obstacles will be encountered.

MISS S. P. E., born December 15, 1918, 6:00 a. m., Illinois: Opportunity to marry will come to you during 1937.

**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 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. We are not responsible for money (coins) sent through the mail.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

*Do not mail letters to these Pen Pals after December 18th.*

**M**OST of us like to hear how the other half of the world lives, and finding out all about England and other near-by European countries ought to be a truly delightful pastime. Here is a plea from a lively English girl who is particularly anxious to find some American Pen Pals. She is eager to make friends with you no matter what your age. All you have to do is answer her plea. How about it, girls?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I join your circle of friends? I'm a young English girl of seventeen, live in Lancashire, England, and would especially like to correspond with American girls. Of course, every one is welcome, and I promise to answer all letters and exchange photographs. I'm fond of outdoor sports, including riding, swimming, tennis, skating, and dancing. Pen Pals, please write to me. I will gladly tell you

anything you want to know about this side of the world.

ENGLISH CLAIRE.

Island Nurse is interested in every one.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is a plea from a trained nurse. I'm in my twenties, married, and at present working as supervisor in a large hospital. I like all sports, have traveled some, and I'm always interested in meeting people and making friends. I promise to write long letters, and will be a steady correspondent. Come on, Pals, single or married, and write to me. Your letters will be more than welcome.

ISLAND NURSE.

She wants to hear about other cities and towns.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonely Jewish girl of nearly eighteen, employed as bookkeeper, fond of books, radio and opera. I have very few friends, and would love to correspond with girls everywhere. I'll try to make my letters interesting, and will



tell about my experiences in Poland, Palestine, and Canada. I want to hear about other cities and towns.

CLEO.

Vivian wants Pals who have a sense of humor.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young woman interested in corresponding with Pen Pals who have a sense of humor, and are interested in music, reading, and animal pets. I'm a New Yorker, have traveled through many of the Eastern States, and would like to hear from Western Pals, and those who live in Canada and foreign countries. I'll answer all letters received. VIVIAN.

A fun-loving twelve-year-old.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am only twelve years old, but I do hope that you will find room in your Corner for my letter. I'm a peppy, fun-loving girl, fond of writing letters, reading, football, horseback riding, and other outdoor sports. I'll exchange snapshots, and promise prompt replies. Please write to me, girls. LAUREL.

Let her tell you about her travels.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am interested in hearing from young married women who live in Florida, but will answer all letters. I'm a young married woman in my twenties, have traveled extensively, and intend to make a trip to Florida. I enjoy sports, horseback riding, reading, and writing letters. I'll be glad to exchange snapshots.

HAZEL PARK C.

She'll discuss the latest fashions in hairdress.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Does any one want a steady correspondent? Then please write to me. I'm a girl of nineteen, a hairdresser, and would love to hear from Pals from North Carolina and the West. I'll exchange snapshots, and promise immediate replies to all letters. Please, girls, take me for your friend.

WINNIFRED.

A friendly, sociable Pal from Maryland.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm an attractive girl of seventeen, have a friendly disposition, and love to make friends. I want to hear from girls everywhere, and promise to answer every letter I receive. I collect pictures of movie stars, and will gladly exchange photographs. Pen Pals, won't you try me?

MARYLAND JOAN.

She loves to write letters. Test her, Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Can you possibly crowd me into your Corner? I'm a girl in my twenties with brown hair and brown eyes, enjoy sports, and although not exactly lonesome, I love to write letters. Will all girls whose hobby is writing letters please drop me a few lines? Let's see whose letter reaches me first.

HOPEFUL MARY.

She guarantees prompt replies.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: You seem to be able to help every one find friends. Please try to help me. I'm a girl of seventeen, have a good-natured disposition, enjoy all sports, but my chief hobby is writing letters. I'll exchange snapshots with any one who is interested, so come on, girls, and try me. Prompt replies are guaranteed.

MISS NOVA SCOTIA.

Girls, write to a New Rochelle Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please print my plea. I'm another lonely girl in my early twenties, high-school graduate, have had two years of college, and enjoy all outdoor sports. I am particularly interested in psychology and philosophy. I'm of Jewish descent, and want to hear from girls who live in or near New York City. I live in New York State.

BETH M.

A New Hampshire girl is waiting for you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a sixteen-year-old high-school girl, very much interested in sports, especially basket ball, swimming and tennis. I collect stamps, love to write long letters, and hope girls everywhere will hurry and write to me. I promise to answer every letter received.

SCHOOL GIRL.

Boys, be sure to write to Sydney.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to join your Friendliest Corner. I'm a young fellow of nineteen, live in New York City, and at present I am fortunate enough to have a job. I like swimming, dancing, skating, and ball games. Come on, fellows, and write! I'll answer all letters.

SYDNEY.

Are you her birthday twin?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think you can help me find a birthday twin? I'm a



married woman born on August 16th. I would appreciate hearing from Pals everywhere, and of any age. I'm fond of fancy needlework of all kinds, making rugs, writing letters, and will exchange patterns. I live in Illinois.

MRS. P. W.

Two strangers in town would like to get acquainted.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two lonesome girls, strangers in town, and would love to hear from Pals of any age. We enjoy outdoor sports, and will try to make our letters gay and interesting. Come on, girls, let's get acquainted. Tell us all about yourselves and your interests.

RENI AND BILLIE.

Airplanes and motor cycles thrill her.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a blond girl twenty years of age, enjoy sewing, skating, horseback riding, and get a big thrill out of airplanes, motor cycles and automobiles. I can play the harmonica and guitar, and sometimes write songs. I'll exchange photographs with all, and to the first ten Pals I will send a surprise. Girls, write, and let's be friends!

DARING HELEN.

Bette will tell you all about New York City.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I want to hear from girls everywhere. I'm a lonely girl of seventeen, have blond hair, brown eyes, and my chief hobbies are collecting pictures of movie stars and writing long letters. I live in New York City, and if there is anything you would like to hear about this "town," just drop me a line.

BETTE.

She will send you a souvenir of her city.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope some of the Pals who read your Corner will write to me, especially girls who are between eighteen and twenty-one. To the first five Pals I will send a souvenir of my home city, and promise interesting replies to all letters received. I'll be waiting, girls.

ZELDA F.

How about it? Wouldn't you like an Ohio correspondent, girls?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonesome girl of eighteen, with brown hair, blue eyes, and a pleasing personality. I'm interested in anything that spells excitement and fun, and would love to hear from girls

near my age, especially English Pals who happen to want an Ohio correspondent. I'll answer all letters.

OHIO MAE.

Two peppy Pals from Indiana.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We want to write to fourteen-year-old girls everywhere. We are two lively Indiana girls, enjoy the outdoors, will gladly exchange snapshots, and promise to answer every letter received. How about it, girls? We are really lonesome and will appreciate hearing from you.

SHIRLEY AND JOAN.

Fernande wants California Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm interested in making friends, and would very much like to correspond with Pen Pals everywhere, particularly girls who live in California. I'm a girl twenty years of age, fond of dancing, swimming, and collect snapshots. Pals, let's get acquainted. I'm sure we can be good friends.

FERNANDE.

He values true friendship highly.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here is another reader of your Corner interested in finding congenial Pen Pals. I'm a man thirty-nine years of age, have traveled, taught school, tutored privately, and enjoy writing letters. I have a college education, and feel sure that I could make my replies sufficiently interesting. I value true friendship highly, and will welcome all letters.

DENIS.

From the mountains of California.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is a plea for Pals everywhere. I'm a jolly married woman forty years of age, live in the mountains of California, and have several interesting hobbies. I have traveled through many States in the Union, and feel sure that I can make my replies interesting. I want to hear from single and married Pals near my age. Who'll take me for a Pen Pal?

ELISKA.

Their replies to your letters promise to be entertaining.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two lively fifteen-year-old girls, very anxious to hear from Pals everywhere. Our favorite hobbies are reading, dancing, swimming, skating, and hiking. We want to correspond with girls between fourteen and seventeen, and promise to make our replies as entertaining as we possibly can.

ARITA AND KAY.



This New Jersey Pal likes all sports.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May another lonely girl join your Corner? I'm seventeen, live in New Jersey, like all sports, including football games. I would love to find a few sincere Pen Pals near my age, and promise to answer every letter I get. I seldom go out evenings, except to a movie, and have plenty of time to write. Please try me, girls.

E. M. P.

Elen collects pictures of radio stars. Write to her, Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonesome girl twenty years of age, enjoy the movies, listening to the radio, reading, writing, dancing and singing. My hobby is collecting pictures of radio stars and their favorite songs. Please, girls, try me. I live in New York, and am anxious to hear from all of you.

ELEN.

Married women, here's a Pal for you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope you have room in your Corner for a married woman of thirty-one. I am happy, but at times I have too much time on my hands and would like to hear from married Pals everywhere. I live in Canada, and feel sure I could make my letters interesting.

ALBERTA PAL.

This Pal has traveled all summer.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of seventeen, live in Maryland, and get very lonely. Won't some of you girls please write to me? I have traveled quite a lot this summer, and will tell you all about my trips. I have brown hair and eyes, a good-natured disposition, and am easy to get along with. Please try me, girls.

ESSEX DOT.

A want ad no girl should resist.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Help wanted: Several dozen Pals to chase the blues away from an eighteen-year-old girl by writing letters to her. No experience required; salary will be two letters a week and a whole lot of friendship. My hobbies are drawing, reading, movies, and collecting pictures of all kinds. I'm French, and promise to be a real friend.

LORETTA.

This Pal can tell you all about San Francisco.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Perhaps you can find room for my letter. I'm a single young man, have lived in San Francisco for years, and know many interesting stories about this colorful city. I enjoy reading, sports, and like the spoken drama better than the movies. Come on, fellows, let's get acquainted.

FRISCO J.

Janice has a cheerful personality.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think some of the girls would care to write to a high-school girl with a cheerful personality? I live in Minnesota, am fond of dancing, swimming, hiking, and most outdoor sports. My pet hobby is writing letters, so don't hesitate to take me for your Pen Pal, girls. Get out your pens and pencils and get busy!

JANICE.

Exchange snapshots with this Canadian girl.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am very eager to hear from Pals everywhere. I'm a Canadian girl of twenty, will gladly answer all letters, exchange snapshots, and if any of you are interested in hearing all about Quebec City, I hope you won't hesitate to say so. Girls, I'm offering you true and sincere friendship. Won't you tell me all about yourselves? Please don't disappoint me.

RHETA C.





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# THE FRIEND IN NEED

Department Conducted by

Laura Alston Brown

*Well-known Authority on Love and Marriage*

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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.

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**G**IRLS who are contemplating marriage must remember the fact that matrimony means submitting to innumerable emotional and material adjustments. How well a girl bears up under these usually depends on how deeply she loves the man she marries. It does not seem half as hard to give up a certain amount of independence if we are doing it for some one we love. But sometimes a girl, even though she is not in love, is tempted to marry a man who loves her, especially if she is anxious to get away from family complications. However, it is folly to disregard the well-established truth that mutual affection should be the main reason for marriage. It is fortunate that most girls feel they must love as well as be loved, and do not want to miss the sweetness and joy that can come only from such love.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: The thought of the future frightens me, so I am coming to you for advice. I'm a young girl twenty years of age, and for the past three years have been very good friends with a young man I like, but I don't think I can ever love him as he loves me. He is twenty-

five, and a hard-working boy. He wants me to marry him.

I am the youngest girl in a family of five children. My brothers and sisters are married, and my father often tells me to hurry up and get married because he is tired of keeping a home for me. He isn't unkind, but if I married he could live with one of my brothers who has a house and has long ago offered dad room and board. My sisters are also telling me I'd be better off.

Of course, I would like to marry a man I could love, but lately I have been discouraged and think I'll never find a man whose love I can return. I am now thinking seriously of marrying this boy. I'll call him Bev. We are not engaged, and I have often dated other boys. He didn't like it, but has never said anything to me or intimated that I can't go out with any one else.

Last year I met an out-of-town boy and fell in love with him from the first. He seemed to love me, and I was ever so happy. We saw each other twice a week for several months, although he never came to my house. I don't think I can ever love any one as I loved him.

Then his work took him to a city seventy miles away, but he promised to write and come to see me whenever he could. I waited a whole month before he even sent me a post card. I decided to write him a long letter, and after that he came to see me. He came to my house and met my father, and I was happy thinking everything was all right again. But I never heard from him after that. During the



time I was seeing this boy, I didn't have dates with Bev, but started going with him again when I didn't hear from the second boy.

During the past five months Bev has often asked me to marry him. He knows that I don't love him as he loves me. I'm fond of him, and we get along all right, and he says he is willing to take a chance. Do you think I should go ahead and marry him?

My folks are disgusted with me. They tell me that I have a good man and don't want him, and that I'll never find another fellow who is as honest and loyal as Bev. He doesn't make much, but I think we could manage. I know that my life will be changed if I marry him, and I'd be able to do as I like about a lot of things. I've never been independent like other girls; my folks have never stopped telling me what to do and what not to do. They treat me as if I were twelve years old.

If I could only be sure that Bev and I could be happy, I'd marry him. Do you think a marriage like that would work out? I have to give him my answer soon, and I don't know what to say. He tells me I'll have to marry him or not see him any more. The second boy has never tried to see me again, but I don't feel so sad any more.

I have often thought of leaving home and finding a job somewhere. I'm attractive, dress nicely, and have a pleasing personality, but somehow I have a hard time making new friends. In a pinch, I could go to another city and stay with an aunt, but my father doesn't want me to go away, although he tells me that when I'm twenty-one I can do as I like, and go where I want. My next birthday is five months away.

Please give me some advice, Mrs. Brown. I will more than appreciate it. I would love to have a home of my own, and get away from every one I know. I'm so sick and tired of having my folks boss me all the time. Bev says he could make me happy.

NETTA.

Well, my dear, when a girl marries a man whose love she does not return, she is throwing away all chance of finding one she does love. I can think of nothing worse for a girl than marriage to a man she does not love. Many, no doubt, think it will work out all right, but eventually where there was friendship and

liking, there will exist only pity, or indifference, and sometimes even hatred.

Sometimes we find unromantic individuals who look upon marriage as an arrangement of convenience. They think of marriage as a means to an end. Companionship and a satisfactory material arrangement are of more importance to them than affection. Any number of reasons might be given as to why people consent to one-sided marriages, including the intense desire young girls often experience when they are not happy at home and think that marriage will open for them the door to personal freedom. But this is a mistaken idea. After the knot has been tied, husband and wife must constantly consider each other in everything if they expect to find peace and the understanding that will weld their lives together in close harmony.

So think it over well before you promise to marry Bev. As time goes by, and you meet other young men, you will surely find a man you can love. Meanwhile, try to be patient. Perhaps a visit to your aunt in another city will help you find new interests. Try not to mind it if your brothers and sisters criticize you in any way. They only want to see you safe and happy, I'm sure.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Love makes people behave strangely, and I am afraid of making a mistake, so here's hoping that you can help me with my problem.

About a year ago I met a man who fell in love with me. I liked him a lot, and at times I thought I was in love with him. He is divorced and has a child in school. He is an engineer on a steamer and left for a foreign port some months ago, but has been writing to me regularly. He expects me to marry him when he comes home. I know that I could be very happy with him, but how can I marry him when I'm in love with another man?

This other man is married and living



with his wife, but they are like strangers toward each other. We often hear stories about poor, abused husbands and later discover there's very little truth in them, but in this case I don't see how he can go on being in the same house with a woman who treats a man as badly as his wife treats him.

She won't let him come near her. If he tries to talk things over she tells him not to bother her. He has even adopted a baby, with her consent, thinking it might change her, but instead of staying home and taking care of the child, she hired a maid and continued working.

She is a successful business woman and makes a better income than he does. She could easily get along without him, but refuses to give him a divorce. She even expects him to support her. Even their friends tell her they are not suited to one another.

I see him only once a week, although he telephones me quite often. I have tried several times to encourage him to talk to her, but she won't pay any attention to him. He doesn't know what to do; he could sue for divorce, but she would fight it.

Do you think I should marry the other man and try to find happiness with him? I almost feel I can never stay away from the second man no matter what price I have to pay to be near him. I'll be very grateful for any advice you care to give me.

T.

Don't you think, my dear, that you are deliberately making the situation more unbearable for yourself? The fact that this man is unhappily married is not your misfortune unless you make it so. I have no desire to sound pessimistic, but girls who become involved with married men usually get the worst of the bargain. I sincerely hope that you will make a real effort to put him out of your life and forget him.

As for the other man, I doubt very much if you could find real joy in marriage with a man you do not love, no matter how desirable a matrimonial prospect he may seem. There are instances when a woman has learned to love a man after marriage, but they are so rare that it does not seem advisable to take such

a chance. No woman wants to miss the heights and depths of love she yearns for, and a one-sided marriage is always a risk. Your happiness does not seem to lie with either man.

Carry on and make new friends. We can never tell what surprises are waiting for us in the future.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a young man twenty-one years of age, fairly good-looking, and do not find it hard to make friends. Last year I met a girl with whom I fell desperately in love, but so far she has not been able to care for me, except as a friend.

This girl is a college graduate while I have only a high-school education. I've asked her to marry me, but she told me she did not love me, and gave me to understand that because I am not working I could not support a wife. She also said that she has never been in love and did not intend to marry.

I could date lots of other girls, and often go out, but I can't seem to interest myself in any one else. Do you think I will ever be able to win this girl's love, or should I try to forget her? She is always in my thoughts, although at this time she is living three hundred miles away. Distance seems to make no difference.

I'm very blue and discouraged. My folks tell me she'll never marry me, but I hate to give up altogether. What do you think I should do?

FLOYD.

Before you begin to feel that it would be just as well to forget this girl, why not remain friends, try to find work, and be a little more optimistic about the future? I cannot tell you if you will succeed in winning this girl for your wife. However, the fact that she has a college education should not discourage you. Compatibility and real love go further in making marriage successful than a college education.

Of course, if you feel certain that this girl meant she could never care for you even if you had a job, and could support a wife, it's another story altogether. In that case, it is wiser to get her out of your mind by making other friends and finding new interests.



DEAR MRS. BROWN: I don't know whether to give up the young man I'm in love with, or marry him and try to get along on what he makes. I'm a girl nineteen years of age, and he is twenty-three. We have been going together for nearly three years.

We have often talked about marriage, but with this depression it seems hardly more than a dream. He earns only fifteen dollars a week, and while I know that some people might try to get along on that amount, I also know that lots of marriages go on the rocks because of worry about bills. I have always had a nice home and doubt if I could be satisfied in a one-room apartment.

The trouble now is that we quarrel frequently. Lately, he has begun to drink. He used to drink before we started going together, but gave it up when I asked him. My mother wants me to stop going with him on account of his drinking. She has seen him drunk, and she says that because he doesn't try to save he'll never amount to anything. But he says that if I marry him he will stop drinking and save.

Under the circumstances it is very hard for both of us. Do you think I should give him up? I'm very sure he loves me, and that I would be happy with him if it were possible for us to marry. I don't know when he will be making more money. Do you think we could make a go of it if we married now? Please help me decide.

WONDERING.

I can well understand how bewildered you are, and I am not going to advise you to give up this young man, but it would be wiser to wait until he is earning a larger salary. It is true that some marriages do not work out because of an inadequate income. But there are any number of marriages that turn out very happily. Whether or not a young couple can be happy on a limited income depends on their own attitude.

In your case, however, if after three years you are no nearer marriage than when you first started going with this boy, continuing along the same lines would not be encouraging to either of you. Why not give him six months or so to prove to you that he can save and stay

away from liquor? The time to straighten out your doubts is before marriage, not after. In order to be happy, a girl must be able to depend on the man she marries.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have always found it difficult to talk to my mother about my problems, and as there is no one else I can take into my confidence, I hope you will help me. I'm a girl of eighteen, and work as stenographer in a law office. I also have a chance to go to law school if I want to.

My parents have always been very strict, and I've had very little freedom, though the boys and girls I met at school considered me a good pal. I smoke once in a while and take a drink occasionally, but don't go in for petting, although I'm not exactly a prude.

Three years ago I met a boy of twenty-one, and dated him on the sly for about a year. Then we broke up over another girl whom I once considered my best friend. This boy moved away after that, and didn't come back to our town to live until recently. We have been going together since he came back. He tells me he loves me and wants me to marry him, although he hasn't enough money to get married. He wants me to promise to wait two years for him. He is a hard worker, and by the end of that time he thinks he'll have enough money to make a home for me.

However, while he was away I went out with another young man. This man has been married and divorced. I thought I was in love with him, and we became secretly engaged. During that time, being older and more sophisticated than I, he persuaded me to listen to his ideas about love, saying that since we were engaged everything would be all right. But afterward I realized what I had done and hated him. We quarreled and broke up. I bitterly regretted what happened.

Now I don't know what to do. Do I have to tell the boy I love how foolish I have been? I'd rather do anything than tell. There's no one else I can ask about this, so please advise me.

Another thing that worries me is that I'm not sure we'll get married even if I do promise to wait two years for him. I mean, I know other girls who waited for their sweethearts, and then they were disappointed. If I promise to wait, it will be as though we were engaged, because he has already told me that he would expect me not to date other fellows.



I'm in love with him and wouldn't care if I never went out with any one else, but two years seems such a long time. He said he wouldn't be able to take me anywhere because he's going to save every cent. My parents do not like him, so he doesn't want me to tell them about our agreement. I don't know what to do. JUNE.

Whether or not this young man will keep his promise to marry you when the two years are up, would depend on the type of person he is. But why make any promises when you feel so uncertain about everything? Binding agreements, like long engagements, usually become irksome, especially when a certain amount of secrecy is demanded. It would be wiser if you two remained merely good friends until this boy is in a position to offer you marriage.

Regarding the unfortunate outcome of your other romance, what is past is past, and the best thing you can do is to profit by your former experience and let well enough alone. Your life belongs to yourself, and you are not obliged to rake up the ashes of a past mistake. Make the future count.

Now cheer up and talk things over with this young man. If you are really in love with each other, waiting will not diminish your affection, even if you enjoy other friendships.

And when you do become engaged, announce it openly to your family and friends.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I hope my letter will not bore you, but I do need your advice. I'm a girl twenty-one years of age and work in a factory. The work is hard for me because I'm underweight, but that's the least of my problems.

My trouble is that my home life is making a wreck of me. My stepfather and my sisters are always quarreling, almost day and night, and every day is the same. My mother married when we were very young, but somehow my stepfather is jealous of us. My sisters are going steady with boys and will soon get married. But whenever I go to a show or for a walk with a friend,

there are all sorts of arguments when I come home. They call me an old maid and make things so hard for me.

Friends tell me that I'm pretty, but I haven't any boy friends because I have to stay home all the time. I love dancing, but I never get a chance to go places.

If I could only get away from home I'd be much happier. Whenever I try to talk to my mother and tell her I'd like to leave home, she only laughs at me and tells me I'm silly. My stepfather wants me to stay home because my earnings help to keep the house going. There is a man twelve years my senior whom my stepfather wants me to marry, but I shiver with dread just at the thought of it.

Please, Mrs. Brown, can't you tell me what to do? Must I go on being so miserable? I'll be waiting impatiently for your advice. LONELY MARY.

At twenty-one a girl is of legal age, and no one can prevent her from living her own life. You have every right to try to be as happy as you can, regardless of what your family may want you to do. Try not to let their remarks get under your skin. At your age a girl is just getting a start in life and should not worry about being an old maid. Decide what you want to do, and then do it. The only way we can get any satisfaction out of life is to get busy and try to make our existence as happy as we possibly can.

However, even though you are unhappy at home, I would not advise you to leave, for the world is a cold and friendless place for the girl making her way alone.

If your work is so hard for you, surely you could find other work that would suit you better? After all, you must guard your health.

As for the man your stepfather would like you to marry, just keep in mind the fact that no one can force you into marriage. Why not go out more and make new friends? There is no necessity for you to be miserable. You have a right to fun and freedom.



DEAR MRS. BROWN: So many other readers bring their problems to you that I am also turning to you for advice. I'm a widow thirty years of age, and have one child. My husband and I parted three years before he died because he drank and our home was not a suitable place for a child.

For the past two years I have held a responsible government position. I've also worked for five years in a political office and long ago learned to adapt myself to any person I was working with, though I'm considered somewhat reserved.

Several months ago, the manager of my office asked me to go out with him. He's a man about forty years of age, respected by every one, and although it has always been my policy never to go out with the man I was working for, I didn't hesitate in this case as he is not directly my superior.

I knew that he had been going with another girl. We opened a branch office eighty miles away from the city, and this girl was transferred there. She is very attractive, and when he asked me to go out with him I wanted to know whether or not he was engaged to this girl. He told me he thought she was a fine girl, but that he had not dated her for several weeks.

We started going to shows, parties, on rides, and any outing the office crowd went, and had some wonderful times together. He was thoughtful and considerate, and went out of his way to be nice to my child. It became a habit with him to take me home and call for me on rainy days. I didn't like this because I didn't want people to gossip about me, but he said there was no harm in it and that any one who knew us would never think badly of me.

After we'd been going together for several months I heard that this other girl was talking about me, and said that if she wished, she could make him stop seeing me and go with her again. After a while this got on my nerves, and I told him what was being said. He told me he didn't believe that this other girl would say anything like that.

One day I had to deliver some reports to his home. I took a girl friend with me. When we got there this other girl was there with him. Since then, he has become very cold and distant toward me. Later, I asked him if he was going with this girl again.

He said he was, and that he'd never promised any one he would not date her.

He also told me that he had heard people talking about his taking me home, and wanted to stop the gossip. We have never been sweethearts. That is, although he had kissed me, we were just very good pals. At times, however, I'd hoped that our friendship would develop into something more. But I have some pride and would never run after any man. What can I do to straighten things out? I'd hate to have others laugh at me behind my back because he dropped me for this other girl, or permitted himself to be persuaded to drop me.

Perhaps my letter sounds unimportant, but the more I think about it the worse I feel, and I don't know just how to act about the whole matter. Do you think I should say something to the others in the office to make them think that I don't care whom this man goes with? Please try to help me.

PUZZLED.

My dear, why take this entire matter so seriously? If you are not in love with this man and have no reason to believe that he has ever wanted to be more than a friend, why let his attitude worry you? Let well enough alone, and make no attempt to explain anything. Pay no attention to any gossip you may hear, or let the fact that he is dating this other girl worry you. After all, he can do as he likes and go with any one he wishes. Your co-workers probably understand the situation far better than you think. There is nothing to explain.

Be as cheerful as you can and try to pretend that nothing has happened to disturb you. If this man has adopted a cool, distant attitude toward you, you might follow suit. It is probable that he is embarrassed and resents your finding out that this other girl was at his home at the time you called:

