

STREET & SMITH'S

LOVE STORY

MAR. 2, '40

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MAGAZINE
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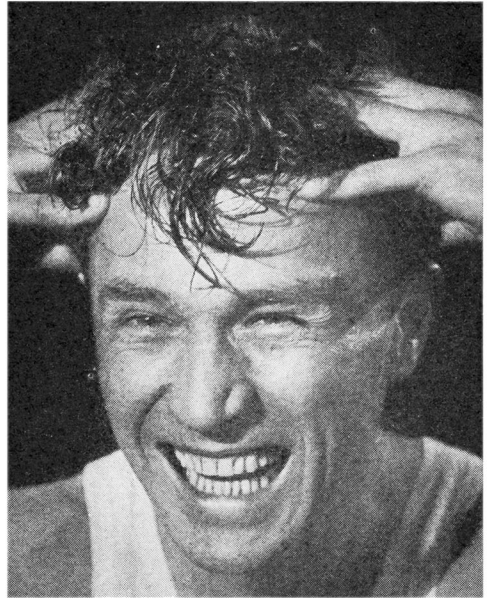
TEN CENTS
EVERY WEEK



LOVER, COME BACK!

by Phyllis Gordon Demarest

Good News! for **DANDRUFF SUFFERERS**



Listerine Antiseptic Treatment Fights Infectious Dandruff Clinical Tests Showed Marked Improvement in 76% of Cases

If you are troubled with infectious dandruff, give Listerine Antiseptic a chance to prove how helpful it can be...how quickly it attacks the infection and those humiliating scales...how fresh, clean, and invigorated it makes your scalp feel. Users everywhere acclaim its benefits.

The treatment is as easy as it is delightful. Just douse the scalp, morning and night, with full strength Listerine Antiseptic — the same Listerine Antiseptic that has been famous for 25 years as a mouth wash and gargle. Massage hair and scalp vigorously and persistently. In clinical tests, dandruff sufferers were delighted to find that this treatment brought rapid improvement in most cases.

Kills Bettle Bacillus

Dandruff is the most frequent scaly disease of the scalp. When this condition is due to germs, as is often the case, Listerine is especially fitted to aid you. It gives the scalp and hair a cooling and invigorating antiseptic bath...kills millions of germs associated with infectious dandruff, including *Pityrosporum Ovale*. This strange "bettle bacillus" is recognized by outstanding dandruff specialists as a causative agent of infectious dandruff.

Improvement in 76% of Test Cases

Rabbits inoculated with *Pityrosporum Ovale* developed definite dandruff symptoms which disappeared shortly after being treated with Listerine Antiseptic daily.

And in a dandruff clinic, 76% of the men and women who used Listerine Antiseptic and massage twice a day showed complete disappearance of or marked improvement in the symptoms of dandruff within 30 days.

Don't Delay. Use Listerine Now

If you are troubled with dandruff, don't neglect what may be a real infection. Start with Listerine Antiseptic and massage right now — delay may aggravate the trouble. It's the method that has demonstrated its usefulness in a substantial majority of test cases.

LAMBERT PHARMACAL CO., St. Louis, Mo.

THE TREATMENT

MEN: Douse full strength Listerine Antiseptic on the scalp morning and night. **WOMEN:** Part the hair at various places, and apply Listerine Antiseptic right along the part with a medicine dropper, to avoid wetting the hair excessively.

Always follow with vigorous and persistent massage with fingers or a good hair brush. Continue the treatment so long as dandruff is in evidence. And even though you're free from dandruff, enjoy a Listerine massage once a week to guard against infection.

Genuine Listerine Antiseptic is guaranteed not to bleach the hair or affect texture.



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This interesting, big pay profession was for years available only to a few. Its secrets were guarded jealously and fabulous prices were paid for instruction. This same instruction is now available to you at a mere fraction of the former price, and you need not leave your present work until you have qualified as an expert and can command an expert's pay. There is a big demand for trained men and women from beauty shops, hospitals, sanitariums, clubs, doctors and private patients. Prepare for this profitable profession *now*.

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The expert in Swedish Massage is recognized as a professional of the highest type, commanding the respect of everyone in his community. Here is a profession, now open to you, which makes you a public benefactor; for the skill we teach you is of great aid in many human ailments as well as in building beauty—it offers you position, both professional and social, it offers you independence, freedom from worry and the respect and admiration of your neighbors and friends.



YOU Can Learn at Home

Turn spare hours into money. Use spare time at home to master a profession which has made thousands of dollars yearly for ambitious men and women. Many graduates have completed this training in just a few months, but you can take your own time. It need not interfere with your other work or pleasure. All instruction has been prepared by the teachers in our well known residential school—the same material is used and a diploma is awarded upon graduation.

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hospitals, sanitariums, clubs and private patients are bound to come to those of our graduates who profit by the thousands of opportunities available to make money. Mr. Charles Romer, Wisconsin, writes, "At times I have had to turn away people; I have been so busy the depression never touched me." Miss Childs, Baltimore, Maryland, says, "I already have over 40 patients, I hope many others take your course and profit financially and socially as I have." Hundreds and hundreds of graduates have written similar letters. Get into Swedish Massage through our "Right in Your Own Home" Plan.

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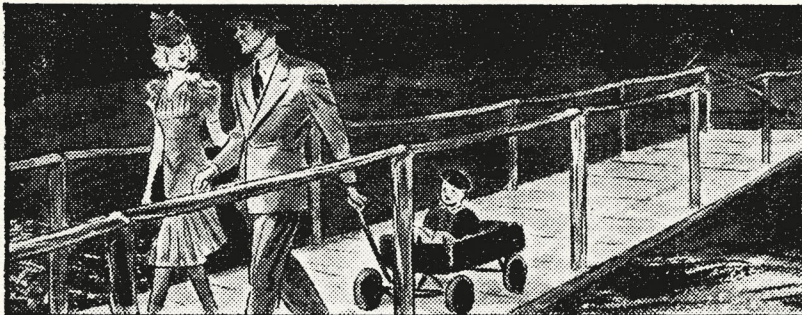
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"BLACK, SWIRLING WATERS SWALLOWED OUR BABY!"

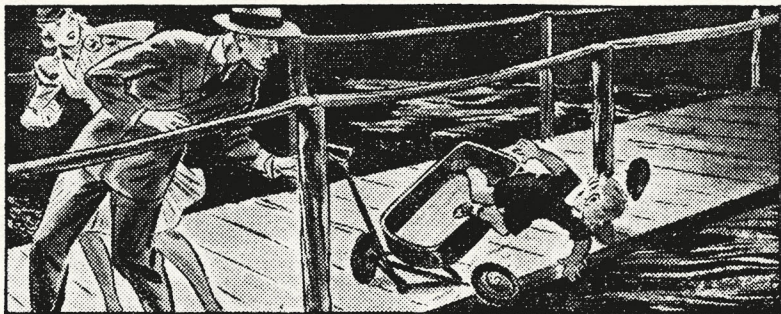


A true experience of GEORGE W. HOYT, Litchfield, Mich.



1. "NO FOREBODING of impending danger warned my wife and me as we walked home from town one night, pulling our two-year-old boy in his wagon," writes Mr. Hoyt. "We were in the middle of a narrow footbridge, spanning a stream, when fate struck.

2. "SUDDENLY A WHEEL came off the wagon, hurling our baby into the black, swirling waters of the river. Luckily I had my flashlight with me. I switched it on as I jumped over the railing. Despite a thorough soaking, that light did not fail me.



3. "ITS BRIGHT, faithful beam disclosed my boy clinging to the branches of a floating tree! Those dependable 'Eveready' fresh DATED batteries helped save our little boy's life. I will never be without them in my flashlight!

NOTE: An "Eveready" flashlight with "Eveready" batteries, will normally continue to burn under water. (Signed) *George W. Hoyt*
 The word "Eveready" is a registered trade-mark of National Carbon Co., Inc.



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STREET & SMITH'S

LOVE STORY MAGAZINE

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CONTENTS MARCH 2, 1940 VOL. CLVII, NO. 5 EVERY WEEK

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LOVE STORY NOTES

SO-O, Elaine Heyward! You wanted to be a history teacher, eh? And you're not, eh, because you turned out to be a love-story writer, eh? How come? . . . Eh? Because you're a push-over for love? Well, blow us down! B'golly, the gal had all her credentials and things packed ready to go to college and dig into the dusty ages, but did she ever get there? No! She got sidetracked by a nice blond young man and was railroaded into marriage instead. Does she like it? Hah! Wotta question! Who cares about Cæsar and Gaul when you can bake apple pies and sew gingham curtains and make a hobby out of hobbies? Not Elaine. Hobby No. 1—antique collecting. Hobby No. 2—sketching. And honest, sometimes her trees actually *look* like trees. Hobby No. 3—gardening, and manicures be blasted! Hobby No. 4—flower arranging. Say, she went to art school for that. Sure, didn't you know? There's more to it than just sticking 'em into a vase. Hobby Nos. 5-6—country and ranch life. Elaine lives in a little town in California known as "The Egg Basket of the World." So why shouldn't she know about hens and things? Hobby No. 7 to 100,000,000—writing! So sorry, Elaine, we meant ex-hobby, because we're duly aware that it's rocketed up into a passion. Lady, your passion is our passion. And when you write a story like "Dark-eyed Sue," in next week's issue, we can only breathe with fervent relief.

"Thank heavens for nice blond young men who pick up gals out of historical ditches and preserve 'em for Love Story!" That *was* a close shave, Elaine.

Puff-puff! What a chase, what a chase! Take it easy, Writing Urge, you've caught up with Anya Seton at last. For a gal whose mom and pop are prolific writers, she certainly did give printer's ink an awful run-around. Ain't you ashamed, Anya? When you can write such *oomph* stories like "Moonlight Madness," in next week's issue? Yep, it's her first signed magazine story, and take a look at that cover illustration our own Modest Stein drew in honor of it! A honey, no? Now, Anya (severely), what were you doing all the time while you were dodging your natural talents? Who, she? Why acting, singing ("very bad," sez she dolefully) and secretarial work in a mental hygienic clinic. And travel! Asia's the only continent that hasn't lodged Anya—yet. Now what, Anya? Oh, she's a wife and a mother who goes in for weird sauces in cooking, family celebrations, costume jewelry, bridge, movies—they gotta be good, though!—dancing and a little languid swimming. As for writing—that Urge's got her so well behaved now, she's actually working on a novel. And listen to this—a novel with love!



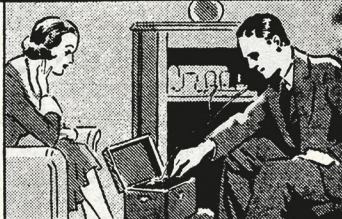


I jumped from \$18 a week to \$50
 -- a Free Book started me toward this
GOOD PAY IN RADIO

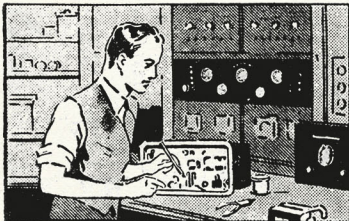
HERE'S
How it
Happened
 by **S. J. E.**
 (NAME AND ADDRESS
 SENT UPON REQUEST)



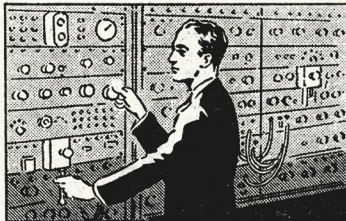
"I had an \$18 a week job in a shoe factory. I'd probably be at it today if I hadn't read about the opportunities in Radio, and started training at home for them."



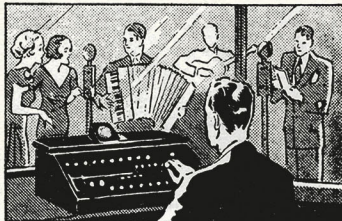
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A NOVELETTE



LOVER COMES BACK

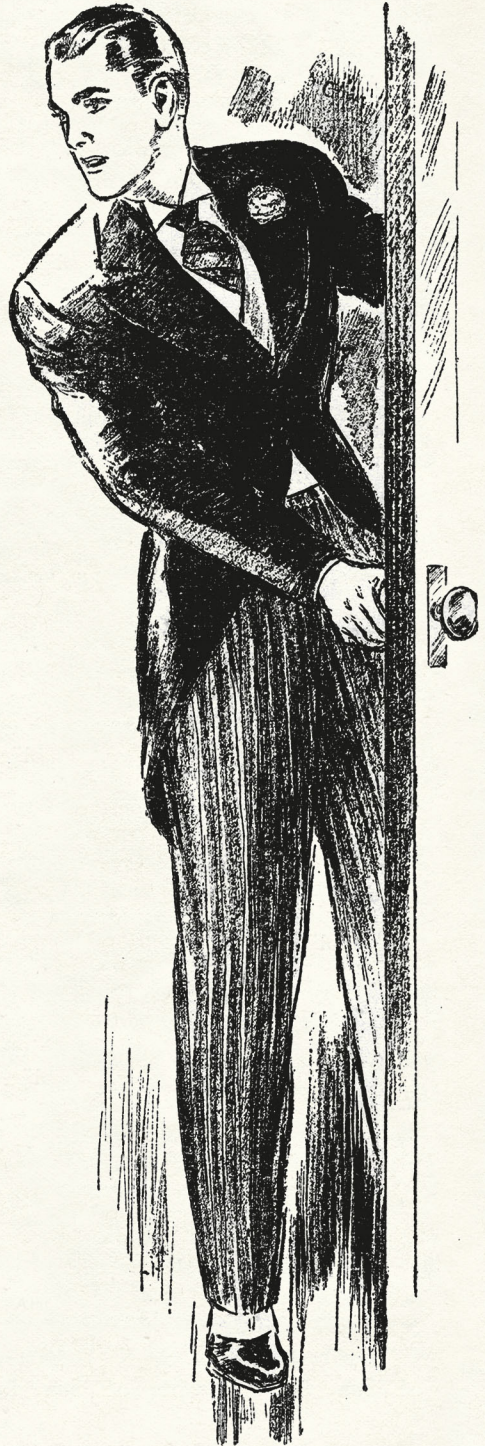
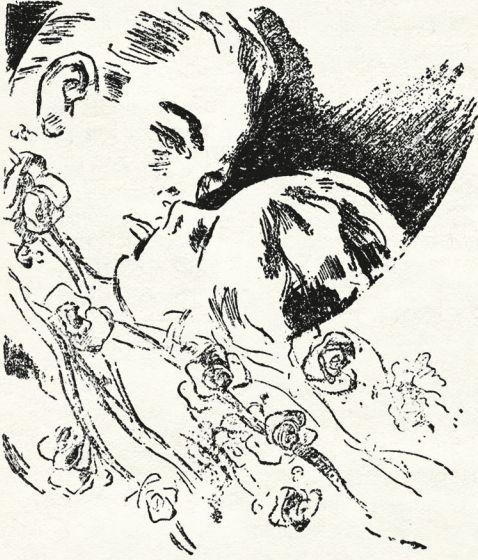
I.

SHE CAME out of Madame Celeste's a slender, copper-haired girl in a royal-blue outfit, her slender feet moving along as though they were treading on dreams. She was smiling at the sun. She was smiling at the crisp, promise-filled air. Gillian Castle was smiling at life.

Gillian of the white-rose skin, flame-bright hair and wide, eager eyes the color of warm amber. Gillian who, Madame Celeste said, was going to make the loveliest bride the shop had ever turned out.

She got into the roadster, guided it expertly through the city traffic. Only, she wasn't really on earth at all. She was high up in the skies, thinking about Cam, her whole being colored with the wonder of him.

And Gillian thought, "I love the breadth of his shoulders, the way he holds his tawny head, his tall, lithe carriage,



by Phyllis Gordon Demarest

His bride was waiting, but he turned from her to go to another woman. And so there was no wedding—only heart-break and the shattering of dreams for a lonely girl.

and the ingrained tan of his skin. I love him for the clear intensity of his dark-gray eyes, and for his firm mouth that can be all gay charm, or just quiet understanding. And I love him because he loved me back right from our beautiful beginning three whole months ago, and more than anything, because he's mine."

That was how it had been through the full, precious weeks: That was how it was going to be all the bliss-pressed days of their lives.

Gillian was parking the car now before Cam's office, stepping from the elevator.

"Cameron Ainsley, Attorney at Law," the door blazoned. Gillian looked at it and pride glowed through her. District attorney, one day, and maybe even governor. Nothing was too good for Cam.

She turned the knob, walked into the office. But halfway across the reception room, she stopped, her eyes going wide.

Cathy Lang, who managed things so perfectly for Cam, who was the ideal secretary, wasn't doing or being any of those things right now. Cathy was sitting at her desk, arms flung out across it, pale-blond head leaning on them. And Cathy's shoulders were shaking horribly, dismally.

Gillian exclaimed, astonished, "Why, Cathy! Whatever is the matter?"

The thin shoulders were suddenly still. Then the pale-blond head jerked up, and Gillian saw the pink, tear-streaked face.

"Oh," said Cathy quickly, "it's you!" She grabbed up a sodden handkerchief, made ineffectual dabs at her wet eyes.

Gillian came closer. "Here," she told her gently, "take this." She pushed a lacy handkerchief firmly into the shaking hand. "Now," she added, smiling, "tell me. Did you do something wrong? Has Cam taken to beating you?"

Cathy looked away. "N-no, of course not. Everything's all right, Miss Castle."

Gillian shook her red head. "But it isn't. Won't you tell me?"

Cathy looked at her suddenly, something unreadable in her eyes.

"You wouldn't understand if I did." The note of bitterness was oddly startling. "Why should you? You don't know what heartbreak means. You've got everything in the world to make you happy. You're going to be married in two days. Why should you care how anybody else feels?"

Gillian stood slim, puzzled. "But I do care, Cathy. If something's happened to make you miserable, I'd like to help. Please believe me."

Cathy said, "You're the last person in the world who could help." She stood up, walked unsteadily to the outer door.

Gillian stared after. "Cathy, wait!"

"Don't let it upset you." Cathy didn't turn. "I . . . I had some bad news from home, that's all. Forget it, Miss Castle." She went out.

Gillian didn't move. A long, uncertain moment, and she gave her slim shoulders a swift shake, went over and knocked at Cam's door.

"Come in," he called, and just the sound of his voice made her forget Cathy, filled her with the warmth of him.

Gillian stood there in the entrance, smiling. Cam rose from behind his desk, a tawny young god in immaculate tweeds, and came to meet her.

"Hello, glorious," he said softly, and then he had her in his arms, and their hearts were beating out the symphony of their love, his lips on hers sending drumming sweetness through her. Lifting sweetness that dragged her heart high into her throat.

Gillian drew back, laughing, tremulous. "Darling, did anyone ever tell you you're the greatest lover since Romeo?"

"And did anyone ever tell you," replied Cam, smiling, tender, "you're Juliet and Helen and Cleo all rolled up into one? For me, anyway."

Gillian said, her cheek against his bronzed one, "I want to be everything to you, Cam." She turned then, perched on the edge of his desk, swinging lovely, slender legs. "Darling, I've got the car downstairs and I'm taking you out to Long Island. Gramps is waiting. Do you know, I think gramps is more excited about the wedding than we are?"

Cam laughed. "Why shouldn't he be? You're the only chick he's got."

She made her voice casual. "Oh, Cam! What's wrong with Cathy?"

"Cathy?" Cam shrugged wide shoulders. "I don't know, except that she's been a bit moody lately. Said something about not feeling so well."

Gillian sat quite still. Cathy had said nothing about being ill to her. Cathy had said it was bad news from home. That didn't tally. And, madly, a strange thought struck Gillian. Was it possible that Cathy was just a little in love with Cam herself?

But she didn't voice the idea. She said instead, "Ready, lover?"

He frowned. "I've still got one more appointment. And, oh, yes, I promised I'd meet Faye for a cocktail at the Lido. Tell you what, glorious, run along and I'll meet you there."

Gillian opened her mouth to say something, closed it again quickly. She slid off the desk, blew him a kiss.

"If you're not there in a half-hour, I'll send the marines!"

The Lido was all chromium-and-blue and smart, chattering people. Gillian stood an instant on the threshold, eyes searching the noisy room. Over in a far corner, she spied Faye Beverly. You couldn't, Gillian thought, with a funny little twist of her mouth, very well miss Faye, anywhere.

She was wearing a black dress with a scarlot ascot and a small, rakish black hat to match, and her hat and her dress were almost as black as her raven hair. Her mouth was a wide ruby set against the alabaster whiteness of her face, and above it as always, the narrow, ice-blue eyes were a little startling. They widened ever so slightly as they saw Gillian.

"Hello." She waved a slim, languid hand. "Are you the advance guard?"

Gillian nodded, pulled back a chair. "Yes. Cam'll be along any minute. What are you drinking?"

Faye laughed. "I wouldn't know," she confessed. "Something the bartender whipped up. Guaranteed to drown your sorrows, says he. Oh, but I forgot! A bride wouldn't have any, would she?"

"Drinks or sorrows?" Gillian was smiling, but the smile was just the least bit stiff. Something rose inside her,

warning. If she weren't careful, she'd get the crazy idea that everyone was envying her her happiness. "I'll take the cocktail anyway. Waiter, the same, please."

A tiny pause. All at once Faye spoke rather quickly. "I'm glad you came alone, Gillian. I've been wanting to talk to you."

"Yes?" said Gillian and, queerly, her heart seemed to stop, waiting.

Faye was rushing on, "It's about—well, about my not coming to the wedding. You must think it odd because, of course, I am Cam's oldest friend. We practically grew up together, you know." Faye drew a long breath. "But I've explained to Cam and he understands. And Gillian, I hope you do, too."

Gillian said frankly, "But I don't. After all, as you say, you and Cam are practically lifelong friends. You haven't any people of your own, and I know how you've always relied upon him. So it does seem strange—"

"My not wanting to come to his wedding?" Faye shrugged lightly. "It's just that I can't abide weddings. They give me the willies, make me weepy. Even Cam's wouldn't be any different."

Gillian's voice came low, breathless. "Are you sure that's the real reason, Faye? Are you sure there isn't any other?"

The white face went a shade whiter. And then Faye laughed, a husky, mocking laugh that didn't quite go with her eyes.

"My sweet, if you're fondly imagining it's because I'm in love with Cam, I'm not. I adore Cam, of course, but not just that way." Faye looked at her abruptly sober. "Still, I don't blame you. When you've got as fascinating a devil on your hands as Cam, with Cam's money and charm, and Cam's good looks and future, it's just as well to be careful." She added, after a moment, "At least I should be, if he were mine."

Gillian sat there, aware of the crooked

smile wreathing the red mouth, but not looking into Faye's eyes at all. Not looking, because sharply, intuitively, she feared what she would see there. She would see, Gillian was thinking with an odd pang, that Faye was in love with Cam—yes, in spite of her proud denial. Faye and Cathy, too.

And then she didn't think any more because Cam was upon them, like a strong, fresh breeze, blowing the cobwebs out of her heart, making her all light once more. Only, strangely, it was Faye herself who revived the whisper of darkness again.

She said, "Cam darling, I've just been trying to explain to Gillian about the wedding, but I don't think she understands even yet."

The dark-gray eyes, flicking to Faye's face, seemed to Gillian very deep, wise. They held, too, the warm intimacy Cam always reserved for Faye.

"I understand," Cam told her. He turned his gaze, smiling. "If you'd seen how she bawled at the Da Costa affair, you would, too, loveliest."

Gillian smiled back. "Well, of course, it's up to you two, isn't it?"

Cam stood up. He bent, tweaked Faye's straight nose. "Remember, young and foolish, don't go tearing up the town and getting into mischief while we're off on our honeymoon!"

"If I do," Fay retorted, "I'll know where to holler for help!"

All the way out of the Lido, Gillian was aware of the brittle, ice-blue gaze following them.

The big white Long Island mansion was already thronged with week-end guests for the wedding, and gramps was playing proud host, when Gillian and Cam arrived.

"You young scallywags," he growled fondly, "you're late!"

And Gillian laughed. But, perhaps because she was still remembering ice-blue eyes and pale wet ones, the laugh tinkled the least bit hollowly.

She moved among the guests as a bride-to-be should move, gayly, proudly. And all the time a part of her mind brooded strangely. On Faye Beverly, on Cathy. It was queer finding out you weren't the only person in love with Cam. It left Gillian shaken, shocked.

And it wasn't mere jealousy. It went deeper than that. Because Faye and Cathy were both so inextricably bound up in his life, one as his best friend, the other as his secretary. Gillian didn't see just how she was going to cut them out of Cam's life either, and that frightened her.

After a while, she found herself dancing with Dyke Cavendish. Tall, dark, sophisticated-looking Dyke, with his wise eyes and crooked, reckless smile.

He was smiling now, as he looked down at her. "Gillian, I'm glad for you. Glad you're going to marry your Cam. It's good to know that someone in this world can find happiness."

Gillian smiled back at him and, because she knew Dyke's own story so well, it was a very gentle smile.

"Thank you, Dyke," she said softly. "But it won't always be like this for you, either. You've got to believe that. Some day Marla will get tired of dashing hither and yon, playing the Merry Widow. Some day she's bound to agree to a divorce."

His laugh was bitter-tinged. "You don't know Marla, Gillian. She'll never agree to divorce me as long as she can collect alimony, as long as she's clever enough and careful enough to make sure I can't divorce her." He shook his smooth, dark head. "Don't think I'm sorry for myself, child. I'm not." He drew a deep breath. "And, Gillian, it's helped knowing someone like you, someone clean, fine."

Abruptly, Cam's voice broke in on them then, laughing, gay. "Hi, there, Cavendish, unhand this woman. She's mine!"

Dyke stopped dancing immediately.

He turned to Cam, laughing, too, yet his eyes were sober.

"Only," he assured him gravely, "by the grace of Heaven and the laws of the United States. But for those, Cam, I'd be giving you a run for your money."

Cam grinned. "Hear that, Gillian? Come on, glorious, before I have to fight a duel over you!" And he whisked her away across the floor.

But Gillian wasn't thinking of Dyke. "Cam—" she began.

"What, light of my eyes?"

"Darling, there's something I want to speak to you about."

"Later," said Cam. His tanned face went against her vivid hair. "Just dance with me now, and love me, Gillian."

Gillian spoke to him that evening when they were together in the lush spring night, with a diamond sky echoing their shining oneness. It took courage to break that glittering spell, yet she knew that she must.

She began, heart pounding, "Cam, did I say you were Romeo? I take it back. You're really Don Juan!"

Cam sat up straight on the marble bench, eyes searching her face. Gillian's mouth was laughing, but her eyes were faintly desperate.

"Hey!" said Cam, puzzled. "What brought that on?"

"Well, there's me, and Faye, and Cathy, isn't there?" The breath was tight in her throat and she didn't look at him, trying to be casual.

Cam put a brown hand under her chin, forced her around to face him.

"There's just you," he told her softly, steadily. "You ought to know that."

"And you ought to know," Gillian said, rather white now, "that Faye and Cathy are in love with you, too."

Cam's hand dropped from her chin. He just stared at her. "Nonsense!" He frowned a moment. And then he laughed, his deep, sweeping laughter. "What on earth gave you such a mad idea?"

"It isn't mad. I know, Cam."

He stood up, his face suddenly grave. "You don't know. Cathy's just a darn good secretary, and Faye's my oldest friend." He shook his head at her. "But even if your unfair accusations were true, what would you want me to do about it? Throw them both out, like cast-off shoes?"

Gillian said earnestly, "Cam, don't you see? They'll be there like two shadows always over our happiness, our life together."

He jammed his hands into his pockets. "They'll be shadows, yes, if you persist in seeing ghosts. Why, I might as well be jealous of Dyke Cavendish!" Then, as Cam's eyes met hers, the smoldering in his flickered out and, abruptly, he flung himself down beside her. "Gillian!" Cam's voice broke queerly. His firm hands caught hers. "Glorious, what's got into us both? We're quarreling!"

She looked up at him, amber eyes glistening. "I know. It's awful."

And then she was in his arms and they were clinging to each other, and Cam just held her tightly, as though he were oddly frightened.

"I love you," Cam whispered fiercely. "You're the moon and the stars and all the light there is in life. Forget everything else!"

Only, Gillian didn't forget. And now, in spite of Cam's arms and the precious warmth of his lips, her heart was frightened, too. Because Cam wouldn't see what she saw, the dark danger threatening their love, and she couldn't make him.

In the morning, Cathy came with papers for Cam to sign. Gillian avoided Cathy's gaze, and she said nothing to Cam. But in the afternoon the telephone rang and Gillian answered. It was Faye.

"Hi, bride!" she said in a muffled sort of voice. "I'm tight, gloriously tight, and I want to speak to Cam. Mind?"

Gillian said she didn't mind and handed the phone to Cam. She watched

the chiseled bronze of his face, saw his mouth tighten swiftly.

Cam told her, "No, I don't want to get tight with you! I'm getting married!" He jammed down the phone sharply, turned back to Gillian, his smile wry. "Crazy kid! There's always been a streak of recklessness in Faye. One of these fine days it'll get her into trouble."

"Or us," Gillian thought wanly. But she forced Faye from her mind, and, when she awoke the next morning it was her wedding day, and there weren't enough Fayes or Cathys in the world to mar the glory of that.

In her clinging ivory satin gown, she was a slim, red-headed goddess and Cam, the beloved, was her god. In just a little while now he could claim her and their love would lift them above and beyond petty problems, into the shimmering, rainbowed world that would be theirs together.

Now Gillian was ready. Now the bridesmaids and guests were gathered below, and gramps would be coming for her, his old eyes wet and proud.

"Thank you, Heaven," Gillian whispered, and flung back her lovely head radiantly.

Then there was a knock at the door and she went to open it, the long ivory lace veil floating out like a shadowy mantilla behind her.

But it wasn't gramps. It was Cam. Cam, taller and more handsome than ever in his striped morning suit, his hair a tawny light above it. He came in quickly, shut the door, and his face made her heart quiver strangely.

She said, "Cam! What is it?"

"It's Faye." His mouth looked worried, tight. "Gillian, I told you she'd land herself in trouble one of these days!" He shook his head, bitter. "Though why she has to pick my wedding day on which to do it is beyond me!"

Gillian's fingers closed over the back of a chair. "What has she done?"

Cam's gray eyes were dark. "Run over a man. That's all."

"Oh!" Gillian gave a small gasp of horror. "Is he dead?"

Cam said wearily, "Dying, anyway. He's in the hospital now. They're holding Faye until they find out. If he dies—" He broke off, not looking at her. "Anyway, dearest, it means calling the wedding off. I'll have to run down and take care of Faye, get her out of jail."

Her breath caught wildly. "You mean," she whispered, unbelieving, "you're going to leave me now, just before our wedding, to go to Faye?"

Cam answered gently, "But, darling, I must. You realize that."

"No," said Gillian, and her voice was as stiff as her slim straight back, "I don't realize anything of the sort. There are other lawyers, aren't there? Even if Faye doesn't know any, you must."

Cam spoke very quietly. "But Faye's in trouble, serious trouble. She's locked up, maybe going crazy with terror, with being alone. This is manslaughter, Gillian. I wouldn't dare trust her to anyone else."

Gillian said queerly, "You don't mind leaving your bride in the lurch instead, do you, Cam?"

Color stained his face. "Gillian! That's not fair!"

"Isn't it?" She was shaking now, not with anger, but with the need for strength, determination. "Cam, you wouldn't realize it when I tried to tell you, but sooner or later you're going to have to choose between old friendships, old loyalties, and the new responsibility that is loving me, having me for your wife. Oh, I know you feel Faye needs you at this instant as never before." Her voice broke, and her eyes were shining, pleading. "But, Cam, I need you, too."

For a second he stood quite still. Then he came to her, set his hands on her shoulders.

"Glorious," he told her tenderly, "I want you to go on needing me all the



Then she was in his arms and they were clinging to each other, and Cam just held her tightly, as though he were oddly frightened.

rest of your life. But just for these few hours you can spare me to Faye. It isn't so terrible. Weddings have been put off before, you know."

She slipped from him, as if his touch were too much to bear. Gillian stood proud, erect, the red curls high.

"Even when the bridegroom leaves the bride to go to another woman? A woman who's in love with him? No, I don't think so, Cam." Over and over the aching knowledge was drumming itself out within her. If she couldn't hold Cam now, if Faye could take him from her at this moment of all moments, what peace

or happiness could she and Cam ever hope for together? "Oh, my dearest, don't you see? A few hours, you say! Do you think that will be all? Do you think there won't be other times? Next time, perhaps, it'll be Cathy. That's why I'm asking you, begging you not to go, Cam! For the sake of our love, our life together, you've got to make the break now!"

Cam shook his head quietly. "Darling, you choose a difficult time to ask that, with Faye's freedom hanging in the balance."

Gillian turned away. "Then go," she

said, choking. "Go to her! But don't come back. I can't share my love. You can't expect me to!"

She heard his quick, incredulous breath. "Gillian! You don't mean that!"

She faced him, nails biting into her palms. "But I do! You'd better understand that once and for all. If you go to Faye now, instead of sending another lawyer, it's the end for us."

Cam's face was dead-white suddenly. When he spoke, it was as though his control were a taut line within him.

"I think," said Cam slowly, "I think you do mean it, Gillian. And if that's true, if friendships and loyalties mean so little to you that you want me to snap them in the twinkling of an eye—then, well, I think it's best for both of us I don't come back."

A single instant the bitterness between them was a stifling shroud over the room, a black veil over Gillian's heart. Then Cam whirled.

"Cam," she whispered on a mad sob. And wildly, "Cam!"

He looked back at her over his shoulder, his mouth white, grim. "If you ever change your mind, Gillian, if you ever decide you love me enough to trust me, understand me without being prejudiced by foolish jealousies, you can come to me!"

The door slammed behind his tall figure. And Cam's running footsteps, hurrying down the stairway, out of the house, seemed to Gillian like the very lifeblood running out of her heart.

II.

So there wasn't any wedding. There wasn't any rice and old shoes and a honeymoon of long sweet days and romance-starred nights, as Gillian had dreamed. There wasn't any Cam. There was only tearing, wrenching heartbreak, the shattering of all the loveliness in life.

So that Gillian was hardly alive her-

self. So that she would sit long hours, gazing with empty eyes toward an empty future.

She might have gone to Cam. Going to Cam now would mean assuaging the gnawing hunger in her heart for his nearness and dearness, and the sweetness of his arms and lips. But, in the end, her surrender would only leave the essential problem that was wrecking them both unsolved.

Of course, Faye's case made the headlines, and Gillian devoured every word. Until her eyes were sick with pictures of Cam and Faye together, until they ached with the sight of Cam and Faye, getting into a car, coming down the courthouse steps. And always Faye was smiling, and always Cam looked careless, assured, as if there were no such thing as heartbreak in his world. No such person as Gillian Castle, either.

And it was all right, because the man Faye had run over didn't die, and Cam got her off with a suspended sentence and costs.

Gillian let her trousseau hang in her wardrobe, like remnants of a haunting bittersweet dream, and she went to Madame Celeste's and bought herself new, ravishing creations.

She went dancing with Dyke Cavendish, because Dyke understood.

He said, "I'm not going to make love to you, Gillian. That isn't what you want now. I'm just going to take you places to help you forget."

So they went places. She was a lovely, feverish-eyed robot on wheels, and the louder the wheels whirred the better, Gillian told herself, she liked it.

Only she didn't like it. Not when there was a tawny young Adonis called Cameron Ainsley, whom she adored to desperation, and who had forgotten her very existence.

And, presently, Gillian found out why and how Cam had managed to do just that. And the finding out shook her soul to its depths.

It was there on the front page of the newspaper. They saw it together, she and Dyke.

The engagement of the beautiful Faye Beverly to Cameron Ainsley, prominent young attorney, was announced last night. Mr. Ainsley recently defended Miss Beverly in court. Some time ago his scheduled marriage to Miss Gillian Castle was mysteriously called off—

The printed words went on, knives against Gillian's eyes, became at last only a black jumble.

"Oh, Dyke," she said then, above the tightness in her throat. "Oh, Dyke, how could he? How could Cam?"

"Child, men can." Dyke smiled gently, sadly, at young illusions.

Gillian shivered, but her wide, hurting eyes were stanch. "Not Cam. Cam's got ideals, inherent decency." She shook her bright head fiercely. "I can't—I won't believe it's just off with the old love, on with the new with Cam!" She caught at her lower lip blindly. "I did it! I knocked everything from under him, sent him stumbling into Faye's waiting arms!"

Dyke glanced away. "Perhaps it would have been wiser to wait until after you were married to try to break those old ties. Only, regrets can hardly make much difference now."

Gillian murmured, her mouth a small twist of pain, "No, not now."

The difference was in her heart, darkening her days, dogging her nights. And now Gillian didn't look in the papers at all, because soon there would be another announcement there. The day would be set for Cam's wedding to Faye.

And then, out of a clear sky, a voice said to her over the phone, "Miss Castle? This is Cathy Lang."

Gillian's breath caught strangely. "Cathy?"

"Yes. Can I see you? It's very important. Could we meet somewhere for lunch—say, the Middleton?"

Gillian said "yes," they could, then hung up to sit there wondering, uncertain. Cathy, wanting to see her? Queer!

There was a mad racing in Gillian's heart as she walked into the Middleton. But Cathy looked cool, competent, waiting for her at the table. Cathy looked as if she had come to a definite resolve.

She spoke firmly, breathlessly. "Please forgive me, Miss Castle, but I had to see you. It's about Mr. Ainsley and Miss Beverly."

Gillian made her voice steady. "What about them, Cathy?"

"Perhaps you'll tell me it isn't any of my business, but I can't help it." Cathy frowned, concentrating. "Miss Castle, there's something awfully funny about that marriage."

Gillian said, and now she wasn't so steady, "What do you mean?"

"I wish I knew!" Cathy smiled at her frankly, wryly. "Only, they don't act at all the way Fred and I do."

"Fred?" Gillian's brows lifted, questioning.

Cathy blushed. "My fiancé," she explained. "I . . . we're going to be married. We're terribly in love, of course, and we don't care who knows it." Cathy shook her pale-blond head. "But those two!"

Gillian said nothing for a long moment. And all at once, oddly, she felt very wise. Cathy might have had a crush on Cam. In all probability she had had one. Most secretaries were a little in love with their bosses at some time or other. But the Cathys of this world kept a firm head on their shoulders, and in the end they usually married their Freds. If only, Gillian thought wistfully, the added problem of Faye might have been as easily disposed of!

Cathy was saying determinedly, "You've just got to do something before it's too late! Did you know they're to be married in two days?"



Gillian went white. "No," she replied on a whisper, "I didn't know."

Cathy's glance was very even. "If you're in love with Cameron Ainsley," she told her, "you'll find something to do. Something that will force him back to your side. You can't let that marriage go through."

Something that will force him back to your side. That was what Faye had done, wasn't it? Faye had forced Cam to come to her, even at the most crucial moment in his life, just before his wedding. Well, now it was just before his wedding to Faye.

Gillian's eyes were limpid amber pools in the whiteness of her face. Something glittered far back in their depths.

"Perhaps," she said, above the faint sweet trumpet that was hope, "I may be able to do something, after all. At least, Cathy, I'm going to try!"

All the way home her brain was a whirling, desperate top. Forty-eight slim, terrible hours in which to think of something that would bring Cam to her side, before he went out of her life forever!

Gillian's heart was praying silently as she stepped from her car, walked into the

house. And then, on the living-room threshold, she paused.

"Why, Dyke!" she exclaimed, and her gaze widened in surprise.

He moved across the room to her, tall, dark and immaculate, smiling his crooked smile. He took her slim gloved hand.

"I came," Dyke said quietly, "to say good-by, Gillian." And as she looked at him, not understanding, "I'm going away. You see, it's best."

She drew her hand from his, walked a little away. "Because," asked Gillian, "you feel that my being seen too frequently with a man who's separated from his wife may hurt my reputation?"

Dyke spoke on a half breath. "Partly. But mostly because I'm falling in love with you." And when she turned around slowly, "I'm being honest, child. I want to save the pieces. That's why I'm going away. You see, I know how hopeless it is from every angle."

Gillian stared at the floor unhappily. "I'm sorry, Dyke. I'll miss you. Where will you go?"

He shrugged. "Anywhere and nowhere. I'm sailing on my yacht, *Cytherea*, midnight tomorrow." For an instant his eyes were off guard, yearning. "Gillian, you won't mind my wishing I were taking you with me?"

"No," she answered, her voice small and blurred, "I won't mind. Good luck, Dyke."

When he had gone, Gillian stood oddly still, gazing after him. Presently, her heart became a swift, thudding hammer. Midnight tomorrow, Dyke had said. He had wished, too, that he were taking her with him. And all at once, even as she stood there, the miracle she had been praying for evolved in her mind, emerged crystal-clear, made every nerve tingle within her.

Gillian hardly slept that night. Only, no one would have known that as she sat at her corner table in the Lido the next day. Under her jaunty green hat her hair glowed copper, her mouth was scarlet.

Yet, for all that, a thousand fears made needles along her spine. Maybe the thing she was going to do would only make Cam hate her. Maybe he'd just look at her in scorn, or shrug his wide shoulders. Her heart shivered at the thought. But she had to do it. Gillian knew that. It was the only way in the world she had of finding out if Cam still loved her, if he were merely marrying Faye on the rebound.

Her eyes searched the room feverishly. If today, of all days, he shouldn't come! But Cam always lunched at the Lido. Of course he'd come!

And then her pulses raced mad tumult as she saw him, lithe, tall and golden, straight as a young arrow, so that the very sight of him seemed to pierce the longing loneliness within her. Cam saw her, too, and he came to her, deep-gray eyes riveted steadily on her small, pale face.

He said, "Hello, Gillian." Not "Hello, glorious," as it had been once.

"Hello, Cam." And Gillian's heart was whispering, "Oh, my darling, it's been so long, so long!" "I didn't dream you still lunched here!"

Cam pulled back a chair, spoke low. "Green always was your color."

Her heart jerked. "Happy, Cam?"

"Oh, yes." His quick smile was a knife, striking deep. "And you?"

She nodded. "Naturally!" Cam and she talking lightly, trivially, like two strangers almost, not two people who once had loved each other beyond life itself. Gillian's lashes shaded her eyes. "How's Faye?"

Cam was busy with the menu. "Fine, Gillian, fine."

Now, she thought, excitement making wildfire in her veins, now!

"You and Faye are being married tomorrow, aren't you?" And as color stained the bronze of his cheeks faintly, she rushed on, "That's all right, Cam, and I really wish you happiness, because I'm going to be married, too."

The menu fell to the table. "You're being married, Gillian?"

She laughed. "Yes. To Dyke Cavendish."

Cam stared. He said slowly, uncertainly, "But Dyke's married. His wife refuses to divorce him."

"Oh, I know." Terror and tension made her the least bit breathless. "But Dyke and I have thought of a way out. We've thought of a plan to make Marla divorce him." Her throat felt dry, but she forced her gaze to meet his boldly. "We're going away together, Cam. We're leaving on Dyke's yacht, the *Cytherea*, tonight at midnight. Of course, it means an open scandal, but it means, too, that Marla will have to free him. You see, scandal is the only thing Marla really fears, and Dyke—"

Cam's hand shot out across the table, gripped hers so hard that Gillian could have cried out in pain. And Cam's mouth was a white, strained line.

"You're mad!" he said fiercely. "Stark, raving mad! Going away with a married man in the hopes his wife will divorce him! Gillian, what's happened to you? Don't you realize what you're doing?"

Her hand trembled under his touch, but her shrug was light, proud. "Of course I do! There'll be talk, a nine-days' wonder, and then Marla will divorce Dyke, and just as soon as we're married, people will forget."

Did he believe her? Gillian knew that he did, with the tightening of Cam's jaw line. She had made him believe her, even against himself.

"Listen"—Cam spoke through clenched teeth—"listen to me, Gillian!" His fingers were steel over hers. "Dyke's talked you into this. He's filled you with a lot of worldly wise drivel. You can't know what you're doing. Even if Marla divorces Dyke, you'll never be able to hold up your head anywhere again!"

Gillian wrenched her hand free. Her red mouth twisted, mocking him.

"How funny!" she said. "How funny for Don Juan to be giving advice!"

Cam's eyes were storm-black. "If we weren't in a public place," he gritted, "I'd shake you till your teeth rattled! Gillian, you can't do this mad thing. You'll ruin your whole life!"

"Will I?" Her laugh was a reckless, lashing taunt. "Why should you care how I choose to live my life, Cam?" She stood up, her smile ice, her red head arrogantly high. "Why should you care, Cam? By the time I'm sailing the high seas with Dyke, you'll be married to Faye. You'll have forgotten Gillian Castle ever existed!"

And she was gone from him swiftly, a slim, proud-looking girl with her heart shaking and frightened within her.

The fright was sheer panic by the time she reached the house. Because now she had nothing to cling to but a wild, desperate hope. A little hope that laughed at Gillian and tortured her as she walked up and down the long living room, waiting, waiting, as she watched the clock, her eyes aching.

Soon she'd know. She would know if Cam still loved her. If he did, he'd come to her, and marrying Faye tomorrow wouldn't matter. All that would matter to Cam was stopping her, Gillian, from doing the crazy thing she had told him she was doing. She thought of Cam's face. He hadn't been scornful. He had been angry. But, for all that, she mustn't let her own wistful longing turn that anger into a promise of love.

The light deepened to blue. Gillian turned on the lamps with fingers that shook.

Cam wasn't coming. It was sheer agony looking at the clock now. Suspense made darkness inside her, drowned out the wan hope. Over and over the darkness drummed at her, "Cam doesn't care, Cam doesn't care—"

So that, in the end, she didn't even believe the footsteps when she heard

them. So that she turned slowly, fearfully, and stared as if at a vision.

She had to moisten her lips to speak. "Cam," she whispered.

He stood there on the living-room threshold, stern, straight. And Gillian searched his face, her heart thundering. Searched for a softening light, for the precious gleam of an old love. But Cam's face might have been a dark, serious mask. She couldn't read it.

Cam said, and his voice made her shiver, "Gillian, you lied to me about going away with Cavendish. You never meant to go for a single minute."

"I never meant to—" Gillian stopped, stricken. She leaned against the grand piano weakly. But now it was here. Now she must face it, the one thing she had dreaded—Cam's scorn. She lifted her head. "You can't know that!"

"Can't I?" He came to her, and his laugh was a little strange. "But I do know it, because you see, I went to his apartment. I intended to knock some sense into him." Cam's eyes, boring into hers, seemed to burn shame into her soul. "You told me you were sailing with him tonight on his yacht. Remember? But you couldn't be, because the *Cytherea* sailed last night instead, and Dyke went with it."

She gave a small gasp, nothing more. In the half light her face was a lost white oval.

Cam said very quietly, "Why, Gillian, did you lie to me like that?"

"Why?" repeated Gillian forlornly. "It doesn't matter now." She turned from Cam, the weariness of defeat stifling her heart.

"I think it matters a great deal." Cam's voice came to her as through a hurting haze, oddly soft. "Was it because you wanted to stop me from marrying Faye tomorrow, as she stopped me from marrying you?"

She faced him then, her eyes wet, golden stars, yet gallant, too.

"I did it," said Gillian on a dry sob,



Cam's hand shot out across the table, gripped hers so hard that Gillian could have cried out in pain. "You're mad!" he said fiercely. "Stark, raving mad! Don't you realize what you're doing?"

"because I love you, Cam. Because I've never stopped loving you and wanting you all these long, terrible weeks. Because, yes, I thought I might be able to stop you from marrying Faye if I could do something, anything, that would bring you back to my side even for a moment. Only, it was a crazy idea, wasn't it? I should have known better than to try to fool your heart back into loving me again. So now that you know, will you please go—very quickly, Cam?"

But he didn't go. He stood looking at her, something deep, warm and shining far back in his eyes.

And after a moment Cam stepped close. "Didn't you know," he said, and his voice was a tender breath, "didn't you know, glorious, that the weeks of

waiting for you to come to me have been long and terrible for me, too?"

Gillian closed her eyes, and she swayed with the swift, incredulous rush of sweetness flooding through her.

"But Faye?" she said huskily. "Cam, you're going to marry Faye!"

"Look at me," Cam commanded. "Look at me, my darling." And when Gillian opened wide, wondering eyes, "I'm not going to marry Faye and I never meant to, any more than she meant to marry me. But when you didn't come, as I'd asked you to, I had to do something that would make you. At least, I prayed it would. You see, loveliest, you were so very wrong about Faye. She isn't in love with me at all—she's in love with someone else, and she hoped our pretend-engagement would wake him up, too.

"That was the real reason she didn't want to come to our wedding, because she thought seeing us so happy would only emphasize her own misery."

Gillian stood there, not saying a word, just trembling and feeling the light come alive inside her again. The light that was loving Cam and being loved by him,

and knowing that life was magic and glory once more.

"Oh, Cam!" said Gillian, and the magic was all mixed up with tears in her voice. "Oh, Cam, it's been so awful without you!"

And suddenly she was in his arms, against the bronze-gold strength of him, and Cam was kissing her. He was kissing her eyes, her lips and her throat, and the hunger they had both suffered so long was drowned out in ecstasy.

"Glorious," Cam whispered, and the whisper was tender, laughing, "now you know I'm no Don Juan. Now you know it was your loving me so much yourself that made you imagine everyone else was in love with me. And now you know, too, that even if all the wild things you believed had been true, there could never have been anyone else in the wide world for me but you. Never, loveliest, never!"

"And never," Gillian breathed, clinging to him, "is long enough, Cam dearest!"

GIFTS FOR YOU

If you want me to prove
My love with gifts,
I'll gather turquoise
Where the sun trail shifts.

I'll weave it into
A cloak shot with gold—
Threads of my thoughts
Winding you in their fold.

And I'll twine you a veil
Of the wind for your hair,
Vivid with stars
From the lucent air.

HARRIET A. BRADFIELD.



Their wedding day

BERNIE MCKEE'S lips tightened and her firm chin rose until it felt almost as high as Gart's. Ninety-nine pounds of red-headed temper quivered against his stubborn silence and her tense voice flared, "So I don't mean as much to you as . . . as a horse!"

by Lura G. Castlen

Strangely enough, it was the thing they both loved that came between them.

Garret Bryson shifted his weight from one long, booted leg to the other. His fingers toyed with the latch of Bernie's gate for a moment, while something that was almost a smile tugged crookedly at the rippling muscles about his mouth. Then he cupped his hand under her trembling chin and gazed soberly into her tear-starred blue eyes.

"You don't really think that!" he said with a slow wag of his head.

Bernie jerked her head away from his hand. "What else could I think?" she flashed at him. "Losing a good job that meant so much to both of us, spending the money you'd saved for our wedding, and going into debt. For what? To buy a race horse!" she finished scornfully.

Gart shook his head. It was a handsome head, narrow and fine, with lean cheeks and steady brown eyes. Wide, intelligent forehead, heavy dark hair, half curly, that Bernie's fingers loved to smooth.

"Not just a race horse," his voice leveled at her. "Our horse—Cupid's Promise. Stevens was abusing him. I thought you'd understand."

"Understand!" she cried. "Of course I'd understand, if you had any way of feeding him. But quarreling with Louis, after he'd given you a good job! You might have known what would happen! And we were planning to get married next month!" A short, bitter laugh jerked at her throat.

"I can get a job training—"

"Training!" Angry tears spilled down her cheeks. "You know that I wanted something else from you! Oh, Gart, I'd hoped and prayed that you'd make something of yourself!"

Gart drew her into his arms and held her while her wild temper melted into sobs. His lips nestled against her copper curls and he whispered, "I'm sorry, darling, but it'll work out. I couldn't let them knock Cupid around the way they did." Then he held her at arms' length,

a sudden enthusiasm lighting his face. "I never did like selling automobiles, anyway, Bernie, and I've got a chance to train for a big stable, really high-class, and maybe get a half interest in—"

"Stop it!" Bernie stormed. "I tell you once and for all, I'm not marrying a trainer! I've had enough of being a gypsy! Dad is a good trainer—better than you'll ever be—and what did it get me? Living from hand to mouth, rich one day and broke the next, rich friends and no money."

"Darling!" The word fell heavily.

"I mean it! I'm not living around a racetrack any more, not for you, or for Cupid, or—"

"Very well. So I'll never be a good trainer, eh? I suppose Louis Stevens told you that when he fired me! Well, maybe he's right, if it takes his brutal methods to turn out winners. Because I won't dope horses or beat them up, or—"

Bernie turned and fled down the flagstone walk to the low Spanish house where she lived with her father. She blinked to clear the shimmer that blurred the red-tiled roof and the splash of banana trees beside the door. She hadn't wanted much of Gart, only a little place like this, but security. She'd planned for it all her life. There was a roar as the engine of Gart's old car started, and for an instant she turned, wanting to call him back, but the car scooped up a dusty cloud of defiance, and he was gone.

It had all begun on a spring evening three years before, when Bernie and her father sat in the trophy room of Louis Stevens' famous stock farm. Bernie, sixteen, sipped a lemonade while the two men drank Scotch.

Garret Bryson broke in upon them with the news that Stevens' best race mare had died foaling a frail little colt that he held in his brown arms.

"We can't let him die, Mr. Stevens," he said. "I thought perhaps you might take

him into the house, where it's warm. He needs warm milk, a bottle—"

"Bottle, nothing!" Stevens growled, his blond face reddening. "Have Grayson knock him in the head and charge it up to profit and loss!"

The eighteen-year-old boy strained the colt to him, his jaw jutting. "Yes, sir," he said grimly, and strode off to the stable.

Bernie followed him, and with panting breath asked, "Do you really intend to destroy the pretty little thing?"

"What do you think?" Gart asked, his eyes twinkling.

And now the colt was Cupid's Promise, the three-year-old that had come between her and Gart. She must forget Gart, yet something told her that she would never forget his kisses that had rocked her out of girlhood and made her a woman.

She went to the phone and called Louis Stevens. She might as well finish it right now. And, after all, Louis wasn't so bad. Hadn't he tried to help Gart, giving him a good job and paying him well for the time he had spent raising Cupid?

"Hello, Louis," she called into the phone. "Do you still want to come over? . . . A half-hour? I have a surprise for you! . . . Of course you'll like it!" She hung up and hurried dressing so that she'd look her best for her wealthy suitor.

Louis' long, cream-colored convertible coupé sighed to a stop at Bernie's gate, and Louis slid out from behind the wheel. He had probably been as good-looking as Gart at his age, but his thinning blond hair, carefully combed, and the roll under his chin told his age, in spite of his youthful Palm Beach suit.

"Hello, darling!" he called to her as he strolled into the patio. "What is the surprise?"

"Sit down in the swing and I'll tell you."

"How do you manage to match those cute little sports suits to your eyes?" he

asked as he sank onto the swinging couch beside her.

She knew the exact color, because Gart loved it on her. "Now for the surprise, Louis. I've changed my mind. I'm going to marry you!"

"That's the girl!" Louis exclaimed, slipping his arm about her. "I was sure you'd grow up and get some sense, but you really had me a little worried." His words were muffled against her lips, and his kisses sent two bright danger signals flaming into her cheeks. "We'll get married right away, darling," he said huskily.

Bernie pushed back from him. "No," she protested, drawing the back of her hand across her lips. "Not yet! The race meeting will be over in three weeks. Then we could get away for a real honeymoon!"

"Perhaps you're right, dear," Louis admitted reluctantly. "Let's make it Saturday afternoon, right after the last race."

Bernie nodded. Three weeks to fall in love with Louis! By that time Gart would be gone to another track, and money would help her forget him.

"By the way," Louis said. "Funny thing—that boy friend of yours bought that colt from me that you're so crazy about. Cupid's Promise. Gave his note for twenty-one days."

"I know"—Bernie's voice was a whisper—"I'd heard."

"He got an idea that my trainer was being rough on him. But what good is a race horse if you can't get him away from the starting gate?"

"He used to start for me all right."

"Unfortunately, you aren't a jockey. Anyway, Bryson gave me a thousand dollars and his note for eight hundred. The poor sap seemed to think he could win a race with him and pay off the note, but he hasn't a chance. Cupid is a good colt though. Best-bred thing ever raised on my place. But what a sucker Bryson is!"

The next day, a great roar outside Bernie's gate was like a fire alarm in her heart. No car but Gart's ever made that much noise. She raced to the door in time to see his long legs swing over the car door.

"Hello!" she called. Then, remembering, she added coolly, "Good morning, Gart."

Gart pulled off his battered felt hat and threw it on the couch, then took her two hands in his, grinning. "Get that high-brow look off your face!" he said, kissing the tip of her tilted nose. "I have no time to waste fighting. I'm busy."

Bernie slid down onto the swing couch, her legs refusing to hold her up, and Gart settled himself beside her.

"Look," he said eagerly, "they're going to have a Ladies' Race on the last Saturday-Getaway Day-and you're going to win it."

"Me?"

"Sure. You've been looking for a chance to ride Cupid in a real race, haven't you? Well, here's your chance. Nothing in it but a bunch of cheap platers and girls who can't ride in a box car!"

Bernie gasped, "But I can't, Gart. I mean it!" Her fingers clutched at his arm. "I'm going to be married that day."

"What of it?" Gart asked. "We can get married either before or after the race. I wouldn't ask you to ride if I didn't know how crazy you've been about him. You've been talking about a ladies' race for—"

"But, Gart," she insisted, "I'm not marrying you. I'm going to marry Louis Stevens!"

"Quit kidding me!"

"I'm not kidding you," Bernie said with stiff lips. "I mean it. I told you yesterday that we were through."

"But you can't marry that heel!" Gart exploded, rising to his feet. "Helene divorced him for cruelty, and I don't believe it wasphony. Besides, you love

me, Bernie." Tenderness flowed over his face and brought tears to Bernie's eyes. She drew herself up, facing him, and took a long breath.

"I did promise to marry Louis Stevens," she told him, managing to hold her voice steady, "and I will!"

Gart's jaw squared and the tenderness in his eyes hardened into a steellike glitter. "I believe you mean it," he said quietly, picking up his hat and jamming it down over his eyes. "Very well, go ahead and marry him. And if you want a best man, be sure to call on me. A best man doesn't have to be rich."

A sleepless night left Bernie with dark circles under her eyes, which she carefully covered with make-up. Helene Stevens had phoned that she wanted to come over, and Bernie wanted to look well and happy. She wondered if Helene's visit was because Louis might have told her of his engagement. Bernie had always suspected that Helene was still in love with Louis, despite the fact that she had found it impossible to live with him.

The loud blast of an automobile horn announced Helene. Bernie took a swift glance in the hall mirror as she ran out to meet her, and was glad that she did not look as if she had cried herself to sleep the night before. She managed, "Hello, Helene!" with real gaiety.

Helene's slim figure, in dusty-pink slacks, swung out of the flashy sports sedan and down the petunia-bordered walk with the grace of a young ocelot. Her dark make-up contrasted sharply with the bleached paleness of her sleek hair, and her painted smile widened the outlines of her thin lips. Helene did a good job of making herself beautiful.

"Good news!" Helene greeted her.

"News?" Bernie asked. "I have news, too!"

"Really? Have you heard about the Ladies' Race on Getaway Day?"

Bernie nodded. "I'm not riding."

"So I heard. Gart was telling me. I think you're sort of foolish, since you've ridden Cupid so much and know him. Besides the prize money, the rider of the winning horse is to receive a gold trophy and fifty dollars! Not that I care about the fifty— Gart can have that."

"Gart!" His name echoed up from a sudden emptiness within Bernie.

"Yes." Helene lighted a cigarette and flipped out the match. "I'm riding Cupid. I thought Gart told you. He said he'd asked you first, but I don't mind being second choice. I was sure it was all right with you since you turned him down!"

"Oh, of course!" Bernie answered, swallowing hard. "That's really fine. I hope you win."

"Thanks. Now, what's your news?"

"I'm going to marry Louis."

Helene blew a great cloud of smoke out suddenly. "My successor, eh?" she said crisply. "How interesting! What about Gart?"

"That's over. I broke the engagement."

Helene's plucked eyebrows lifted. "How nice!" she smiled. "He's attractive. Maybe I'll marry him myself!"

Bernie gasped, but before she could speak, Helene went on, "Why not? I have plenty of money. I could do a lot for him! Well, I must be going. Just wanted you to know that I'd taken your place on Cupid's Promise."

Bernie walked to the car with her, trying to act unconcerned. "Perhaps I'll be riding against you!" she challenged, to keep her courage up. "Louis may give me a horse for the race!"

Helene's eyelids drooped. "That would be funny, wouldn't it? But he won't, my dear. Louis has never let any woman but me ride any of his horses, and he's not apt to begin now, even for you!"

Three weeks were an eternity when Bernie let her thoughts dwell on Gart. Yet, when she saw the days moving to-

ward her marriage to Louis Stevens, they flew by like telegraph poles outside a train window, and the last day of the races arrived. Getaway Day! Bernie laughed to herself at the irony of it. Her wedding day!

For twenty-one days she had listened for the telephone and for the familiar howl of Gart's old car. It had not seemed possible that he would let her go so easily, nor that she would give him up without a struggle, but it was better that way. She had not seen Helene, either, since that day she had told her she intended to ride Cupid. And Helene's words, "Gart's attractive. Maybe I'll marry him myself!" had tortured her day and night. Helene and Gart would be seeing a lot of each other, getting ready for the race. Maybe they were even engaged! Her heart sank at the thought.

Bernie rouged a smile on her full lips, tilted her hat over one eye and went to the races with Louis. They could easily have walked from her front gate to the track, but Louis brought his limousine and had the chauffeur drop them at the clubhouse entrance. He guided her up to the Turf Club, where screen stars and socialites hailed him by his first name.

Bernie settled herself in the box and ordered luncheon, while Louis sent for drinks. Below her stretched a picture that flooded her with a wave of homesickness and made her think of Gart. It was all so much a part of their lives together. Terraces of pansies, banks of marigolds, and the great, smooth loop of racing strip framing the infield. The glittering tote board, the judges' stand— Married to Louis, she would never again belong to that living, breathing part of racing. Horses were a means to an end to Louis and his friends, and betting was all that mattered.

When she only touched her lips with her highball and left her luncheon untasted, Louis frowned. "You'd better drink something, sweetheart," he said, "and get some food down. I know you

are excited. So am I, with only four hours to wait!"

Four hours! Panic welled up in Bernie, and an uncontrollable desire to see Gart just once more gripped her. She forced a smile and said, "I'm not hungry, Louis, so it must be excitement. I'm going down to place a bet."

"I'll do it for you. What do you want?"

"No," she protested, "I want to walk around. Maybe I'll get my appetite back." She slipped out of the box and wormed her way through the crowd to the stables, just as the bugle sounded for the horses in the second race to parade. Five more races, then the Ladies' Race. Then their wedding!

She passed Louis' elaborate stables, with their carefully painted buckets and feed bins, all green-and-gold. Then on down to the neat but shabby stall where Cupid's gold head poked out over the half door.

"Gart!" she called. But, instead of Gart, an old groom who had worked for Louis, and who was always known as the best groom and the crankiest on the place, met her.

"Well, if it ain't Miss Bernadette!" he said, his seamed face lighting. "I knowed ye'd come! I been tellin' Gart that ye'd never be the one to let us down!"

"Frank! I didn't know that you were here."

"Do you think I'd stay with that bluffer when Gart an' this horse was gone?" he asked scornfully. "I'd rather work fer Gart if it was fer nothin'! An' I told him ye'd come!" he added triumphantly.

"What do you mean, Frank?" Bernie asked in a puzzled tone.

"Why, we was wantin' ye to ride this horse in the Ladies' Race!"

"But Helene Stevens is riding him!"

"Her!" The old groom gave Bernie a withering look. "She's as big a double-crosser as Stevens, so she is! Walkin' out on such a horse as this, an' on Gart, at the last minute!"

"What do you mean, Frank?" Bernie asked breathlessly, her fingers plucking at the faded plaid of his shirt sleeve. "Isn't she riding Cupid?"

"Ain't ye read the program?" he asked, shoving a racing card into Bernie's hand.

She opened the folder with apprehensive fingers. She had not bothered to look at the card.

"Cupid's Promise—Garret Bryson, owner, trainer— No boy! Why, Frank, how, why—"

"Read the rest of it!" the old man thundered. "Puttin' his best stake horse in fer nothin' only to beat us! Then takin' our rider—"

"Pilot!" Bernie breathed. Louis' best horse! "Helene Stevens, jockey," she read aloud. "When did it happen?"

"Only today," he snarled. "When it were too late to get any girl to ride. But I knowed you'd come."

"But why did Mr. Stevens enter a horse?" Bernie asked thoughtfully.

"It's plain as the nose on yer face!" he scoffed. "Gart give him a note fer eight hundred dollars, comin' due today. We couldn't get a race fer the colt until this one, an' he could 'a' won it easy. An' Stevens is plannin' to take Cupid back if he don't win. An' that ain't all!" he went on. "You mind that nice gentleman, Mr. Houston, as was tryin' to get Gart to train fer him? Well, this mornin', he tells Gart that if he can get a bad post horse like Cupid so that in three weeks he's fit to have a lady ride, he must be good. So if the colt wins, he says he's turnin' over the management of his stock farm to him, an' givin' him a half interest. An' I was to go with him!" he moaned.

"Where is Gart?" Bernie asked, her heart pounding.

"He must be under the stands somewhere. I shouldn't wonder if he'd be gettin' drunk. He ain't a drinkin' man, but there's a first time fer everything! I wouldn't blame him, neither! Havin'



*"Oh, Gart," she cried,
"can't you see how I
love you? I can't pre-
tend any longer!"*

to scratch a horse in a race that meant everything to him!"

"Get him!" Bernie ordered suddenly, her lips tightening. "Get him quickly! And you get Cupid ready and report to the stewards that he has a rider and will not be scratched!"

"Will ye do it?" Frank asked, his face lighting.

"Of course!" she cried, a fighting light shining in her eyes. "But I'll have to get my clothes over home. Tell Gart to come after me. I don't want to get tired before the race. And don't let him drink anything. We're going to win, Frank!" she sobbed. "Oh, Frank! Tell him we're going to win!"

Bernie stumbled and ran across the fields and paddocks that lay between the track and her home. Her toeless sandals scooped up pebbles and sand, and fences tore at her new spring suit, the one she had bought for her wedding trip, but she jerked the cloth and struggled on, panting and gasping. When at last she reached her own room, she dived into the bottom drawer of her dresser where she kept her freshly ironed white breeches. Her hands shook so that she could hardly manage the snug-fitting black boots, but she finally pulled them on.

She dug out her racing silks—Gart's colors, turquoise-blue and royal-purple. She'd made them herself, when Gart registered his own colors. She fastened the collar with trembling fingers, pushed her tousled curls up under the jockey cap, and hurled herself out of the front door. She couldn't take any chances of being left out. Gart might even be marrying Helene, but one thing was sure. She wasn't going to marry Louis! And she was going to save Cupid for Gart if there was a chance in the world.

She started across the road on a run, but a cloud of dust and a deep roar sent happy hands gripping at her heart.

"Gart!" she screamed, turning back to the road.

The old car came to a bumpy stop and Gart slid out. "Frank told me," he said. "And it was sporting of you. But I can't let you ride!"

Bernie's eyes challenged him. "What are you talking about?" she stormed. "I'm all ready!"

"It wouldn't do," he said firmly. "Louis has a horse in the race. I can't let him get sore at you. You see, I want you to have his money, and I can't let you take any chances."

Bernie stiffened. "I've no time to fight!" she cried. "Take me back to the track!" There was no use trying to argue with him. If Gart were going noble, or if he were merely being stubborn, she would have to use other tactics.

"I'm not worrying about Louis," she snapped when she was in the car. "It's Helene! She had no business getting a horse of his to ride! I'm going to beat her if it's the last thing I ever do!"

Gart climbed into the old car beside her and the engine groaned into high. Bernie saw Gart's jaw muscles quiver against his set lips, and wondered if there wasn't just a slight twinkle in his eyes. Twice she started to tell him that she was really riding Cupid because she loved him. But no sound came, and the next thing she knew, they were at the stable.

The last race was being called when they returned, and Frank was giving Cupid a last-minute rubdown.

"Don't he look great?" the old man asked as he led him out.

Bernie followed along behind Gart to the paddock, and stood silently watching while Cupid's Promise pranced, whinnied, and flashed beams of sunlight from his chestnut coat. He lashed out with anxious heels when Gart saddled him.

"All up!" the paddock steward called, and Gart held his hand to boost Bernie into the saddle. Bernie's eyes met his for one brief second. Then she was on Cupid's back, and Gart gave her hand a

little squeeze that sent courage racing through her.

Helene, in Louis' green-and-gold, was mounted on a gorgeous bay. She was a one-to-two favorite in the betting.

"Ye're eight to one," Frank told Bernie as he walked beside her on the way to the track. "An' ye can be sure I've got a couple o' bucks on his nose!"

Gart turned her over to the pony boy as they reached the track. "Just talk to him," he said softly as she left, "and he'll remember you." And Cupid pranced out onto the track with the pony boy leading him.

She could hear the buzz of the crowd, the drone of the announcer. They paraded past the grandstand, past that little row of bleachers where the jockeys sat between races, and where she had loved to watch the races when she was a little girl.

The starter tried to back Cupid into the starting gate. Cupid backed out with a snort. Helene's horse was standing like a statue.

The starter jerked at Cupid's bridle, and he reared straight! "Whoa!" he yelled, and Bernie reached out around the horse's neck to keep her balance. The crowd gasped. Then Bernie remembered Gart's advice, petted Cupid's neck and crooned, "Steady, lad!"

But the starter reached for him again, and the starting bell rang just as his feet left the ground a second time. He left with a lunge, jumping into the air as the others broke from the gate. The crowd roared and Cupid hit his stride five lengths behind the rest of the field.

The announcer droned, "Around the clubhouse turn. Pilot leads by five lengths. Gray Streak is second by two lengths. Cupid's Promise trails."

Bernie hugged her body down close to Cupid's shining neck and let him take his own pace. Three quarters of a mile to make up what he had lost. But Pilot was a great stake horse.

"On the back stretch, Pilot leads by six lengths!"

Bernie thrilled to Cupid's long stride. She breathed, "You can do it, Cupid! You love him, too!" And as if the horse understood, he began to move forward.

"On the far turn, Pilot by four lengths, and Cupid's Promise is coming very fast!"

"Now, Cupid!" Bernie whispered, touching the horse's sides with her heels. He answered with flying strides, and all the others girls in the field except Helene fell back.

"Cupid's Promise is flying!"

Pilot came back to her. She could see Helene going to the bat, and hear the swish and snap as her whip lashed Pilot's ribs. Cupid reached the bay's shoulder. Then, with a stunning swiftness that almost threw Cupid off his feet, Pilot cut in front of him. Bernie had to take back to avoid going down!

"Down the homestretch—Pilot is in front and coming away!"

Bernie whispered, "Cupid, darling, try!" Her dry voice was a sob. "Try for him!" And the chestnut horse shot forward again. But it was too late. Pilot flashed over the finish line, a nose in front.

In spite of her hard ride, Bernie shivered as she took Cupid back to the judges' stand. Gart was there and took his bridle while Bernie jumped down.

"That was the greatest ride I ever saw!" He smiled grimly.

"I'm sorry, Gart," she sighed, and went to weigh out.

"Nothing to worry about," Gart grinned. "There goes the objection sign up. Helene fouled you and the judges caught it."

Bernie never knew just what happened in the next few minutes. Someone shoved a gold cup into her hand, and a huge wreath was looped about Cupid's neck. Photographers—congratulations—Then a strange man trying to tell her

about the half interest he was giving Gart, something about a farm, and never selling Cupid again. Then Gart's hand closing about hers and making her want to weep for joy when she saw his eyes.

Back at the stable, old Frank purred over Cupid while he rubbed him, saying over and over again, "Wasn't that wonderful?"

Gart followed Bernie into the tack room and closed the door. "I know you don't want thanks, Bernie," he said gravely. "And I'm sure I know why you did it. It wasn't to spite Helene."

"You great big dummy!" Bernie cried. "Can't you see how I love you? I can't pretend any longer!"

He crushed her close in his arms, with his chin nestled in her hair. "But I'll never be anything but a horse trainer," he faltered.

"Oh, Gart," she protested, "I love you and I love horses and racing. I was a trainer's kid, and I'd rather be a trainer's wife than to have all the money in the world!"

His lips met hers hungrily, and all the longing in Bernie's heart swept up to find comfort in his kisses—kisses that sent her into a heaven of their own, that no money could buy. He whispered, "Oh, my angel! When I think what a fool I've been, how near I came to losing you—"

Bernie giggled, "This was to have been my wedding day."

Gart hugged her to him. "We'll make it your wedding day if we have to fly all over the country to get a license!" he said between kisses.

Her wedding day! The happiest day in the world for two people so terribly, so hopelessly in love!

SINCE YOU CAME

I didn't see the roses growing
In my garden space;
Or, passing, feel the honeysuckle
Brush against my face.

I hadn't seen the morning-glories
Dropping from the wall;
That golden-red nasturtiums bloomed
I never knew at all!

I'd only seen the sticks and weeds
And branches falling down,
Sharp stones and crooked paths
With dried-up leaves of dusty brown.

How was it that my garden changed
The very day you came?
For now its beauties speak to me
And echo back your name.

ELFRIDA NORDEN.

END OF DREAMS



by Martha Ellen Wright

**A marriage postponed and love denied
for diamonds, mink and a penthouse.**

THE great maestro carefully clipped the end from his cigar with a gold clip and put it into his mouth, turning it meditatively.

"That boy is good, Miss Laydon. He has a nice, natural baritone, sweet and clear. I'm glad you dragged me here to hear him, because I can use him."

Julie caught her breath. This was the thing she had dreamed of and worked for. But the great man went on, "I can use him, but I can't predict the glowing future for him that you do. No doubt he was the idol of Tell City or wherever you both came from. I wouldn't be surprised if he hadn't been the white-haired

boy wonder of his home town. But he isn't good enough to be a star in the big time."

Julie's heart jumped up into her throat, because the maestro was as good as a fortune teller and that was exactly what they had called Tom. And Julie herself had spent three years convincing him that he was good enough to be a star in the big time.

She asked now, uncertainly, "What do you think he ought to do, Mr. Prinz? Go back where he came from?"

The famous orchestra leader looked at her where she sat across the table from him, slender, dark-haired and lovely, with her oval Madonna face, her hands clasped tightly together as if this meant a great deal to her. He answered, "No, I don't think he should go back where he came from. That would be a waste, too. He has a nice voice—not big, not amazing, but good enough. And he likes to sing, doesn't he?"

Julie nodded, remembering Tom as singing since he was in grade school, remembering Tom pouring out his heart in the choir at Easter, looking like a blond archangel.

Prinz said, "He'll always be able to make a good living with it, Miss Laydon—good enough to support you both, but it won't ever pay for diamonds or mink and a penthouse. And something tells me that is what you both had been counting on."

He was right once again. Julie and Tom had been putting off their marriage until the moment of high success. But Tom had never been as sure as Julie.

The maestro puffed at his cigar, looked across to where Tom stood, so tall and good to look at in his evening clothes, by the microphone, and summed it up. "I would call him a good, competent soloist and that's about all."

There was no appeal from this and Julie knew it. This man was the ultimate authority. He didn't make false guesses. He couldn't afford to. And even while Tom's honeyed voice was

pouring over her, protesting, "If I loved you more, I'd need another heart," Julie knew that the estimate was right. Moreover, she realized now that she had known it for a long time—maybe for years.

She gathered up her bright chiffon handkerchief, her sparkling evening purse and gloves, and stood up. She held out her hand to the maestro. "Thank you so much for coming, Mr. Prinz. It was very kind of you."

He took her hand and did not let go of it. "I wasn't being kind, Miss Laydon. I am willing to go anywhere and everywhere in search of new talent. You have Mr. Wirth get in touch with me. I can offer him a spot with my orchestra, singing occasional solos and playing the guitar. I'm hoping that he'll take it."

Julie looked at him. "I don't know," she said. "I'll have to talk to him about it."

She tried to release her hand, but he held it firmer. "Miss Laydon—Julie—will you let an old man who's been around tell you something?"

Julie sat down again in the chair she had just vacated. "Yes. What is it?"

"Whatever it may mean to you, for his sake be honest!"

Julie raised her dark eyes to him and he saw that they were wet with tears of disappointment. She said, "I don't know what you mean."

He gave her hand a pat. "You will. And if anything should happen—and by that I mean between you and Tom—I'm hoping you will come to me for consolation. I'm a bachelor, Julie, and a lonely one."

"Thank you," said Julie absently, only dimly realizing that she had been made an offer which half the girls in New York would have jumped at. "If you'll excuse me now, I think I'd better go to Tom."

"Of course."

She rose and found her way through the tables of the dingy little supper club, seeing none of the faces around her, hearing none of the music, colliding

Tom's honeyed voice was pouring over her, protesting, "If I loved you more, I'd need another heart."



blindly with dancing couples, murmuring, "Pardon me," and blundering on again, tripping a little on her silver skirt.

How could she tell Tom she had been wrong? How could she tell him without letting him think her high faith in him was gone? All through their lean days in New York, before she got her job with the broadcasting company and he began singing at the Blue Star Club, she had kept his hopes high. "Anything the others can do, you can do, darling," she had said. "What does René have that you don't have? He got a break, that's all! You'll have your own show, too, one day, and we'll have a town car and a place on Park Avenue—"

How could she face him now and tell him it was only a tinsel dream she had built? In the old days a job with Prinz's orchestra would have seemed the pinnacle to all their hopes. But they had built their hopes even higher. They had been living in the rarefied air of expectation of fame. It would be terrible now to face mediocrity. Sometime tonight she must tell him, but she could not do it now.

She came out behind the orchestra shell into the cluttered space where the members of the floor show collected, and there was Tom, wiping his flushed face with a white handkerchief and looking so handsome and debonair with his crinkled

gold hair and smiling blue eyes that her heart stopped for a second. He was talking to someone quite gayly, accepting a cigarette and a light from a member of one of the dance teams. Then he caught sight of Julie across the match flame and his face suddenly lost its animation.

Julie came forward with a brilliant smile. "Hello, darling. You were swell. Prinz says he can use you. You're to get in touch with him."

Tom turned to the other man. "Guido, this is my fiancée and biggest booster, Miss Julie Laydon."

Julie winced at this, but acknowledged the introduction. When the dancer had excused himself, she said a bit nervously, "Shall we eat before we talk things over?"

"Sure. Anywhere you say. How about Luigi's?"

"No," she answered. "Let's go to my place."

He looked at her oddly as he put his guitar into its case and snapped it shut. "What's the matter? Aren't we celebrating? Didn't you just tell me I was great and that Prinz was pleased?"

"Of course I did, darling, but we aren't rich yet. No use letting those chops in my ice box dry up while we're paying for Luigi's spaghetti."

"O. K.," he said. "But some day it's going to be caviar at the Ritz."

She thought his tone seemed a little forced. She looked up quickly as he put her wrap around her, wondering if he had already guessed what she had to tell him. And then, quite suddenly, it came over her that she need never tell him. There was no reason why she need ever say more than she had already said tonight. All of it was perfectly true. His singing had been better than ever and Prinz could use him. She could say, "Better take the contract, darling. It'll be a step in the right direction. It'll get you before the public eye. But, of course, you and I know that you won't stay with Prinz long. You'll get your



big chance to do your own program before very long."

She was so relieved that she let Tom hail a taxi before she thought, although it would cost them nearly as much as dining at Luigi's. She was very animated all the way uptown to the apartment, talking about Mr. Prinz and how he had come for her in his town car and how kind he had been, giving up his one free evening of the week to journey downtown to a cheap little club to hear an unknown baritone. Tom sat, smiling, watching her and thinking how very lovely she was when she was excited and her hands began to flutter—a trait inherited from a French grandmother.

She went through the tiny apartment, turning on lights and still talking. Tom dropped his hat on a table and sat down on the couch. She came back from the kitchenette, coffeepot in hand, and looked at him.

"Are you so terribly tired, honey?"

"I don't know," he said. "It's the let-down, I guess. We've been straining toward this evening for so long and, suddenly, it's over."

"I know." More completely over than he knew, she thought. She wanted to drop the coffeepot then, run to him and throw her arms about him. She wanted to cry out, "Tom, don't mind too terribly! I've found all at once that I don't care about the penthouse and I shall never miss the mink coat and I shall be perfectly happy to walk down Broadway with you instead of riding up Park Avenue in a town car!"

But if she said all that, he would not believe she was sincere. For three years now hadn't they talked of the day when he would be on top? If she told him what Prinz had actually said, he would walk out of this apartment tonight and never come back to her. He might give up that dream for himself, but he would never give it up for her. He would know, without being told, that Prinz himself,

and other men, would be ready to step into his place and give Julie all those beautiful things he had once promised her.

He looked up. "Why are you staring at me, Julie? Is anything the matter? Did Prinz say something else? Is that it?"

"No!" she cried. "Of course not! I've told you what he said. He raved about you." Pity for him made her overdo it a little. "He wants you to come to his office and talk over a contract. He said he was glad I had made him come to hear you! He was marvelous. And you're marvelous, too, darling!" She knelt beside him on the couch and kissed him, her arms tight around him. He kissed her back, and they clung to each other breathlessly for a minute, all their eager young love in their embrace.

Then he pulled away. "Julie, what if I don't make the grade?"

This was her moment to say, "It doesn't matter, darling, if you don't!" But habit was strong and she said instead, "That's silly, darling. Of course you will!"

"No," he persisted, "I mean it. I like to sing and I know people like to hear me sing, but lately, somehow, I can feel the audience as a dead weight. They don't care. I'm just another male voice to them, crooning words they're already familiar with. I'll always sing for you, Julie, but I wonder sometimes if this fame business—"

"Don't be like that, honey!" cried Julie automatically. She went into the kitchen again. She knew she had let him become infected with her doubt and she felt terribly guilty. She determined to be very gay. If this was to be their last supper together, at least it would have no shadow on it. She tied a bright apron over her silver gown and put the chops on. Tom started to come into the kitchenette to help, but she waved him back.

"Go sit down and rest."

"I'm not tired."

"Well, do something else. I'll set the table." She wanted to have a few minutes alone in the kitchen to think things out clearly. She got a head of lettuce out of the refrigerator and held it under the cold-water tap to loosen its leaves. If she made Tom promise to marry her as soon as he signed the contract with Prinz, wouldn't he suspect something? And if he knew the truth, wouldn't he at once assume it was a sacrifice on her part?

A sacrifice? What, after all, were they giving up? Tonight she had worn a silver gown and driven downtown in a town car and it hadn't been so wonderful, because her whole soul was concentrating on Tom. When it came to a choice between Tom and a penthouse—well, there just wasn't any choice! It was Tom, first, last and always!

What had they had? A dream that had sustained them, that had served its purpose during the lean years when they had needed to work toward something. But dreams come true become reality and reality is so often disappointing. What would have been the reality of Tom as a singing wonder? There would have been endless rehearsals, the fanfare of publicity, autograph hounds, hangers-on, grasping agents, idolatrous women. Somehow, Julie had never permitted these people a place in her dreams. The penthouse would have been beautiful in a cold, superficial way, but could it ever have meant as much to them as this apartment, which they had never planned to share because they were dreaming of Park Avenue?

She looked up from her stove and listened. Tom was tuning his guitar, touching its strings tenderly. She went to the door of the kitchenette. "Sing something for me, Tom."

He looked up, a little shamefaced. "I've sung to you all evening."

"There were too many people listening. Sing me something for myself."

"All right, I'll sing you something." He sat down on the edge of the table and

slipped the cord of the guitar over his shoulder. He looked like a troubador, she thought, with his crisp gold hair, his pointed eyebrows, his wistful smile. He struck a chord and began to sing, "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms, which I gaze on so fondly to-day—"

His eyes paid tribute to her as she stood there, framed in the doorway with her sleek, dark hair, her oval face, her warm, red mouth and the silver gown flowing about her slim figure.

"Were to fade by tomorrow and fleet in my arms,
Like the fairy gifts, fading away.
Thou wouldst still be adored
As this moment thou art—"

His ardent young voice wrapped her in flame. She clung to the door frame with one hand, while the other went up to her throat to push away the lump that had risen there. All her love for him swept over her in that moment, and she knew that she could no longer lie to him.

"And around the dear ruin, each wish of my
heart
Would entwine itself verdantly still."

Hope leaped into her heart as he stopped. Prinz had heard him singing swing music into a microphone without his guitar. If Prinz could hear him sing a song like this, so simple and so heart-breakingly sweet— She knew, all at once, that the world would acclaim him if it ever heard him sing like that, in an intimate room, or over the radio. But this time she was keeping the dream to herself. She was building no more top-heavy structures on hope. If fame ever really came to Tom—and she could not stop believing that some day it would—it would come quietly, unexpectedly, and would be worth so very much more to them both for not having been sought.

Tom sat very still, there on the edge of the table. He seemed to be waiting for her to say something and she knew now what she must say.

"Tom, will you marry me as soon as you sign the Prinz contract?"

"Of course, if that's what you want."

"It is. I don't want to wait any longer."

He raised an eyebrow. "You've changed. You've changed tonight, since you talked to Prinz."

She shook her head. "No, Tom. I'm the same as I always was. I love you as much, I believe in you as much. We've only lost one thing—our dreams. Prinz says you are a very competent soloist and he can use you as long as you want to stay in the business. But he says we must forget about . . . about your being way up on top."

She expected him to turn away from her in bitter disappointment. She thought he would pick up his guitar and say, "Then good-by, Julie," but he still sat there on the edge of the table and she thought she saw something like relief in his eyes.

She flung her hands above her head suddenly. "Oh, darling, think of it! We can be together now! We don't have to wait, because there isn't going to be any penthouse! No mink coats! No orchids! No town car! Isn't it marvelous?"

He crossed the room in two strides and took her in his arms. "Thank Heaven!" he murmured. "Thank Heaven, Julie, you told it to me straight out! I've been sitting here wondering why you didn't,

why you weren't being honest with me."

"When did you know?"

"I think it was the moment you came in from the club and I saw your face. You masked it right away, but I'd seen it. And ever since, I've been wondering what you would do and which you loved best—me, or the success you thought I'd make. And if you hadn't told me the way you did just now, I'd have walked out of here and given you your chance with Prinz or any of the others who could give you what you wanted."

She clung to him. "I don't want anything without you, Tom. I found that out tonight, and I'm so glad I did before it was too late."

He held her tight. "I know, because that's the way it is with me, too. Somehow, I know you aren't saying all this to make me feel better. Your voice rang with such sincerity just now when you said 'Isn't it marvelous?' that I felt it was marvelous, too. Anything is marvelous if I've got you, sweetheart!"

She stood in the circle of his arms and she thought, "It'll seem funny for us not to have our dreams to talk about, but maybe we've outgrown them."

He kissed her deeply. "I love you so very much, Julie."

She kissed him in return. "And I love you, Tom." What did dreams amount to when Tom's lips were real, warm and eager?

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Women in Love

Four young women,
all from entirely dif-
ferent walks of life,
who are drawn to-
gether by the magic
of love for a man.

I.

MR. COLLINS fixed his daughter, Betty, with a cold eye and said, "When are you going to make up your mind about Joe? You couldn't find a better lad, and he's been after you now for two years. It's high time you got married; you're twenty-one."

Betty poured milk on her oatmeal. She said wearily, "Oh, pop, do we have to go into that again? And at breakfast? I'll be late for work."

Her mother said, "Now, Betty, you have plenty of time. Your father is right. You've got to make up your mind sometime. Besides, you're too pretty to be running around loose. Your father and I worry about you. And Joe's a decent, hard-working boy. We'd like to see you married to him."

"Sure," Betty thought bitterly. "You don't care whether I'd like it or not. Just so I get married. So Joe can come here to live and help support the family."

Little Billy, aged ten, giggled, and sixteen-year-old Grace said, "I think Joe's swell."



3

WORKING GIRL

by Ruth Lyons

Desperate with longing, she wanted some romance in her life before she settled down to the humdrum existence of being a mere wife.



Betty said, "Oh, Joe's all right. I like him, but I'm not sure I want to marry him. And I don't want to get married yet anyway.

"Not until I've had some romance in my life. Not until I know what it is to feel trembly with love and desire, to

want one man so much that nothing else matters."

Mr. Collins took out his watch. "Well, guess I've got to run along. Now, Betty, you think over what I said. I was talking to Joe yesterday and he seems anxious to get married. I told him I wanted

you both to live here when you do, for awhile anyway, and he liked the idea."

She thought with horror, "They've got it all planned, without even consulting me. And I've never even told Joe I'd marry him."

She felt trapped, as if already they had forced her into this marriage and she must go through with it. She turned wild eyes to her father. "You can't make me marry Joe! I . . . I don't want to get married yet."

Her father's eyes held her in a cold, compelling stare. She had always been afraid of him, and now his look made her shiver. He said, "No one's forcing you to get married. I just told you what I thought you ought to do."

"Oh, sure," thought Betty miserably. "That's all. You as much as told me that I had to marry him or else."

She followed her father out of the cheap frame house that was in the wrong part of town with a vacant lot on one side, and a graveyard of abandoned cars on the other. It always made her shudder, and this morning more than ever. She thought bitterly of her father trying to force her to marry Joe and live here for the rest of her life. She wouldn't do it. They couldn't make her.

But she wasn't very optimistic. They always managed to make her do the things they wanted. They had made all kinds of excuses to keep her from going to the city that time she had been offered a better job, and she had finally given in, although she had known it was because they were afraid they'd lose her weekly contribution. Of course, she knew they needed her money, but if her father would work steadily they'd get along all right. But he was always getting into a fight and losing his job.

She waved good-by briefly to her father and started running in the opposite direction toward her bus. And then a car turned around a corner and pulled up alongside her and someone called, "Hey, Betty!"

She said under her breath, "Oh, darn," and turned to face Joe, sitting in a car, leaning over to open the door for her. He was beaming proudly. "How do you like the new bus? I just bought it yesterday. It's not exactly new, but she runs sweet."

Betty climbed in beside him, and the car started off. "But I thought you weren't going to buy a car for awhile yet."

"I know," he said. "But then I got to thinking, why not? I'm working on cars all day, I'm entitled to have a bus of my own. And I got a good price on this one. The only reason I didn't want to get one was because I was saving my money." He gave her a sidewise glance from his bright brown eyes. "You know why, Betty."

His nice-looking face became serious, and he said, "How about it, Betty? I've been waiting a long time for you."

"Oh, Joe, please don't ask me now. I've told you how I feel."

"Is it because I'm a mechanic?" he asked. "Is it because you think I'm not good enough for you?"

"No, Joe. Honestly, it's not that." And it wasn't, she told herself. "If I loved Joe, if I wanted him, I wouldn't care what he was."

She said softly, "You're sweet, Joe, and I do like you. But I'm not ready yet. I don't want to think of marriage yet. I want some romance in my life first. I want something thrilling and exciting."

"Your father said—"

She broke in quickly. "Please, Joe, don't let's talk about it now."

He didn't say anything for a long time, and when she saw the railroad station ahead she sighed with relief, because she'd soon be rid of Joe.

He drove on past the station and stopped the car at the little white building where Betty worked. She looked up at the sign that said, "Quality, Inc.—dry cleaning de luxe." And then she looked longingly at the other half of the

building that was a florist's shop. She wished she worked there instead of in the cleaning shop with its racks of soiled clothes.

Joe got out of the car with her, and took one of her hands in his, squeezing it hard, drawing her close to him. There was a bright animal charm about Joe. Strong and dominant, he radiated male vitality. You could picture him in another age, grasping a woman by the hair and dragging her along after him. It made Betty shiver a little. She was always expecting Joe to be brutal with her, but he never was. Sometimes she would think, "Maybe I'd like him better if he was. Maybe if he acted like a caveman I'd find it exciting."

"Will I see you tonight, Betty? We'll go for a spin in the car."

She said, "All right, Joe," impatient to be away from him.

He gave her a long hungry look, and then he bent down and kissed her hard, and she felt a little tingle of excitement.

She turned away from him angrily. "Oh, for heavens' sake, Joe. I hope nobody was watching us."

She got out the key to the office and opened the door, and didn't look around when she heard Joe's car start off. The boy who worked in the shop with her, delivering and collecting, came up just then, and gave her a broad wink.

"That your boy friend, Miss Collins?"

"You mind your own business, Eddie," she said severely, and swept past him into the small room that smelled musty and close, with a lingering odor of soiled clothes. She opened a window and sat down at her desk, and then one of the company's delivery cars drove up and the driver got down and opened the back and started bringing in racks of clothes.

This was a small Westchester branch office of a big cleaning establishment, and Betty often felt thankful that they did none of the actual work here, not even the pressing. Her duty was to talk with customers and take their clothes,

mark them, send them out and have them delivered, and listen to complaints and a lot of other tedious things.

The driver said, "Hello, beautiful," to Betty, and she answered coldly, "Please be careful with those clothes."

She thought, "How can I ever expect to have any excitement or romance in my life? All I ever meet are men like Joe, a garage mechanic, or these drivers. I deal with women all day long, and the few men who come into the shop never even look at me."

The morning wore on. Sitting at the little desk in the small room, the racks of soiled and cleaned garments seemed to close in on her, stifling her. She felt more than ever caught in a trap.

Feeling suffocated, wanting to scream, she looked up wildly, just as the door opened and a young man came in, burdened with several suits. He caught her look, and stood for a moment smiling down at her curiously.

"Say, young lady, I hope it wasn't my ugly visage that brought that look to your face."

She felt herself flushing. She said quickly, "Oh, no. Of course not. I was just thinking of something."

He was still looking at her, and now with their glances locked like that she couldn't take her gaze from him. He wasn't ugly in the least. He wasn't exactly handsome, but there was about him something so compelling that she thought, "He's the most attractive man I've ever seen."

His eyes were a bright blue, with dark crooked eyebrows over them, giving him a whimsical air, and his hair was dark and curly, and when he smiled, showing strong white teeth, she noticed a cleft in his chin.

He said softly, "Say, you're the prettiest thing I've seen in a long time."

And suddenly she felt lovely and proud and glad that she was here in this stuffy shop, because otherwise she might never have seen him.

He put the suits down on the counter between them, still holding her eyes with his. She said in a small voice, "Cleaned and pressed?" reaching for them with fingers that trembled a little.

He said, "Yes. Yes, I guess so," absently, and she knew he wasn't thinking of the suits.

"Your name and address, please?"

"Stephen Glenn. The Maybridge apartments down the street. I just moved in two days ago. If I'd known," he added softly, "that you were here, I'd have come a lot sooner."

She had never had anyone speak to her that way, and she didn't know what to say. Men had kidded with her, making passes with one kind of line or another, but this was different.

Excitement leaped through her. Excitement, and something deeper, something softer, that went through her whole body, mellowing her, leaving her trembling and aware.

He seemed about to say something, and she waited breathless for his words, and then they heard the whistle of the approaching train and he said, "Oh, gee, there's my train. I've got to run."

He flew out of the office, and through the front window she saw him running toward the little station. She didn't realize she had been holding her breath until she saw him swing aboard the train, and then she let out her breath in something like a sigh. She said, "Stephen Glenn, Stephen Glenn," over and over to herself, and just the sound of his name sent little flutters along her spine.

All day the memory of him colored her thoughts, and his face would flash before her inner vision—the charming smile, the dark crooked eyebrows, the blue eyes. Life was suddenly exciting, thrilling. This was how it felt to be really alive. And all because one special man had walked in and smiled down at her.

At five o'clock she started watching the trains that drew into the station from

the city. Perhaps he would be coming home on one of them. But each time she was doomed to disappointment, until at six o'clock when she was getting ready to close the shop, she looked out at the sound of the train, and when it stopped, there he was, the first one to get off.

She turned away, her hands suddenly moist with excitement. Would he stop in to see her? Out of the corner of her eye, she saw his tall figure hurry by the shop without stopping, and her heart caught in her throat with disappointment. She closed the window, locking it, turning leadenly for her hat, and then the sound of the door opening made her turn.

And there he was, bursting into the room, with all his charm flashing out at her, making the room seem suddenly glamorous and exciting.

He said gayly, "Here," thrusting a small box toward her. "And you'll have to tell me your name. I've been wondering all day what it could be."

She said tremulously, "It's Betty—Betty Collins." And her shaking fingers pulled at the gay ribbon tied around the white box. "Oh," she breathed. "Oh, how exquisite!"

Ridiculous tears sprang to her eyes as she gazed down at the fragile white orchids nestled in green tissue paper. She lifted her large blue eyes, sparkling with tears, and she saw him a little blurred, with light flashing from him. Like a knight in armor, she thought dreamily. No one before had ever done anything like this for her. She felt exalted somehow, and proud, and cherished.

She said huskily, "What a lovely thing to do. Oh, but you shouldn't have—"

"Why not? Something beautiful for a beautiful lady. And I thought—I hoped, rather, that you might wear them tonight and go some place to dance with me."

Happiness flooded through her. Why, this was what she had always dreamed of. Everything she had always wanted.

And then suddenly, like a dash of icy water in her face, came the thought of Joe, and her father.

She turned away from Stephen, and the old, dull feeling came over her again. She said, "I'd—I'd love to. But I can't."

He said, "Oh," disappointed. "Is it because you don't know me? I assure you I'm harmless, over twenty-one, white, and of sound mind. Please, Betty—"

He was smiling in such a gay, pleading way that she had to smile back. "It's because I have another date."

"Oh. I didn't think of that, although I should have. Well, look, how about tomorrow then? Will you go with me tomorrow night?"

She found herself nodding, and excitement ran through her. And then a touch of fear. She mustn't have him come to her home. She mustn't let her father meet him. Mustn't allow him to see her shabby home.

She said hesitantly, "I'd rather meet you somewhere. You see, I live rather far out and there's no sense coming all the way out after me. I can meet you somewhere near here."

He looked at her strangely for a moment, and she wondered what he was thinking of her, and then he said, "Why, yes. Of course. Meet me in the cocktail lounge of the Ardmore at seven." He smiled. "Don't forget to get all dolled up in your finest, because we're going to do the town."

Her heart sank. But she had no evening clothes! How could she have been so stupid not to realize what he meant?

He said, "Well, I'll run along now. Tomorrow night then, Betty."

All that evening, while she ate dinner with her family, and tried not to listen to their chatter, and later while she sat beside Joe in his new car, she thought of Stephen Glenn. If there were only some way she could get herself a decent evening dress. Would she have to give up her one chance of happiness because she had nothing to wear?

Joe said, "You're awfully quiet tonight. What's on your mind?"

She tried to be gay, then, because she didn't want Joe to suspect anything. She was a little afraid of Joe's temper if he should become suspicious.

When they reached her door he pulled her into his arms, but she turned her face away from him.

He said, "You're my girl, aren't you?" and kissed her with a violence he had never shown before. She felt a thrill of fear run through her, and of anger, and tore away from him.

He said, "What's come over you lately? If you've got your eye on some other man you'd better forget about him. I'm not letting anybody take you away from me."

She was suddenly fearful. He had never spoken like that before. She started away from him, and he said, "Listen, Betty, don't be angry. It's because I'm so crazy about you. Will I see you tomorrow night?"

She said, "No, Joe. I'm . . . I'm going to the movies with one of the girls."

He looked at her suspiciously, and then said, "Oh, well, all right," coldly, and left her.

Why was she tangling herself up in all these lies?

The next day she couldn't keep her mind on her work. She had the orchids on her desk in a glass of water, and every time she looked at them something caught at her heart. If she could only keep her date with Stephen. If she broke this date with him he might never ask her again. She had to see him again, because she hadn't stopped thinking of him since his dear face had smiled down at her. Because . . . because she loved him. As quickly, as painfully as that, it had happened to her.

She could borrow a cheap three-ninety-eight gown from Helen Barnes, but Stephen's clothes were fine and expensive, and she wouldn't want to go with him unless she could look fine and expensive,

too. She wouldn't want him to be ashamed of her.

And then, at four o'clock, Miss van Pelt's maid came in with some clothes to be cleaned, and after she had gone the awful idea came to Betty. It was while she was placing the beautiful black evening gown on a hanger, and the striking white evening coat with its white fox collar. These beautiful, luxurious things—if just once she could wear something like them.

She thought, "They won't be picked up until morning. They'll be here all night. And they're not really soiled in the least. Gloria van Pelt has more clothes than she knows what to do with; what harm if I wear this gown and wrap just once? No one will ever know."

Oh, she knew it was wrong, but she was too desperate to care. She fought with her conscience for a while, and then finally called home and said she wouldn't be there until late, that she was going home with Helen Barnes to dinner and then to a movie.

Another lie. She thought, "I'm getting in deeper and deeper." But she was too reckless now to care.

At six o'clock she locked the outside door and went to the little dressing room, and with fumbling, nervous fingers dressed herself in her borrowed finery. The black sandals she was wearing would have to do. She swept the lovely yellow curls up high on her head, and, startled by the reflection of her flushed cheeks, her sparkling blue eyes, her lovely figure in the clinging black dress, she thought, "Why, I'm beautiful."

When she walked into the cocktail lounge of the Ardmore, people turned to stare at her, and she held her head high, thinking, "Oh, I'm glad I did it. I've always wanted to know what it feels like to have people stare at me in admiration."

Stephen said softly, "Why, you lovely, lovely creature. I knew you were beautiful, but you're gorgeous tonight, Betty."

They had a cocktail, and she let him do most of the talking. She was content to sit there with her heart beating high, watching the change of expressions on his attractive face, loving him so much that it hurt. But he was watching her a little strangely, as if puzzled, and his manner seemed different somehow.

He said, "I thought we'd go to the Palmetto. They have a swell singer there—Clarice. And the band is tops."

When they left the Ardmore she thought for one horrible moment that she had seen Joe getting into a car. But she must have been mistaken. Joe would have spoken to her.

They went all the way to New York in a taxi, and once when the car skidded around a corner she was thrown against him, and he clutched her to him, laughing.

And then they stopped laughing, and she was still tight in his arms and his face was stern and serious all at once. And while her heart pounded, looking up at him, he caught her face in his hands and kissed her soft lips, and kissed them again.

He said huskily, "I don't know what you've done to me. I can't stop thinking about you. I've been wanting to kiss you from the moment I first laid eyes on you. And now that I've started to kiss you I don't want to stop. It's crazy. It's fantastic. I don't understand it."

She thought, "Oh, I know it's crazy. You're way out of my class, and it would never do for you to fall in love with me. But I don't care. If I can just have you for a while, have just one beautiful interlude in my life, I won't mind so much having to go back to Joe. Just love me now and I won't make any demands on you."

II.

The Palmetto was more glamorous even than she had expected it to be, and when Stephen took her in his arms and



When Betty walked into the cocktail lounge people turned to stare at her and she thought, "Oh, I'm glad I did it. I've always wanted to know what it feels like to have people stare at me in admiration."

they danced she felt as if they were floating off to paradise.

She closed her eyes and thrilled to him, and he tightened his arm around her, and she thought ecstatically, "Oh, it's perfect. Too perfect. Something will happen to spoil it."

A lovely girl with platinum-blond hair was singing with the band in a husky, heartbreaking voice, and as they passed her Betty looked up at her and smiled. For no reason at all except that she was happy and something about the girl's voice touched her. The girl smiled back at Betty, and her voice sang, "And the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true."

When the music stopped, Betty dreamily followed Stephen off the floor. This was so wonderful. So beautiful. They sat down at their table, and she smiled across at Stephen and he reached over and took her hand in his.

And then, over his shoulder, she saw something that made her eyes grow huge with fright. Gloria van Pelt, advancing toward her like an angry storm. Oh, no. Not now! She'd had her happiness such a little while.

Gloria said, "May I ask, madam, where you got this lovely ensemble you're wearing?"

Betty saw Stephen's eyebrows draw together, saw him stare incredulously at Gloria.

Betty looked imploringly at Gloria. "Please," she begged, "may I see you alone?"

But Gloria would have none of that. She was calling Betty a thief now, insinuating that perhaps Stephen was in on it, too. Betty couldn't hear it all, there was such a roaring in her ears. She drooped her head to hide the tears that had sprung to her eyes, and just when she thought she could stand it no longer she saw that the lovely platinum-blond singer, Clarice, had stopped at the table to listen.

Betty staggered up from her chair. She had to get away or she would die.



Stephen said, "Wait a minute, Betty," but she stumbled away from him, and Clarice grasped her arm gently.

She said, "Take it easy, dear. Come with me."

Betty never knew how she got across that room full of staring people, but soon she was in a dressing room, and she was weeping violently, and the other girl had her arms comfortingly around her.

"There, there," she said, "take it easy, honey. Tell Clarice all about it."

So finally, between great shuddering sobs, Betty managed to tell her story. When she finished, Clarice said, "You poor kid. I can understand why you did it. But, of course, it was wrong, and there's no getting away from that. However, Miss van Pelt might have been a little easier on you."

She stood up suddenly, very business-like. "Here," she ordered. "Take off that gown and see if you find anything among my clothes to fit you. I'll have a waiter get the coat and we'll wrap them up and have them delivered to her table. Now snap out of it. Crying won't do any good. And goodness knows what your boy friend is thinking. I'd better send for him."

"Oh, no," Betty cried. "I can't face him now. I'll never be able to face him again. He'll be disgusted with me."

"Well," Clarice said, "if he doesn't understand when you explain to him he's not worth much, so you'd better forget him. But I hope it turns out all right for you. I'm so happy myself I want to see everybody else happy. I'm in love with the most wonderful man in the world, and he loves me."

She looked so lovely, beaming and proud with her love, that Betty had to smile with her. She said, "I'm so glad for you, because you deserve something wonderful."

The waiter came to the door with the coat, and Clarice rolled it up carefully with the gown and wrapped them in heavy paper, and when she had finished gave the bundle to the waiter and told him to deliver it to Miss van Pelt.

"Now," she said, "we'll send for your Stephen so you don't have to go out there and face that crowd."

Betty managed to struggle into a green suit, managed to say laughingly, "This seems to be my day for wearing borrowed clothes," and then, before she had much time to think about him, Stephen was there.

Clarice said, "I think you'd better take Betty home now. The poor child is upset."

Betty couldn't look at him, and when he said, "Of course. Are you ready to leave, Betty?" she couldn't tell anything from his voice. What was he thinking? Was he despising her?

Clarice showed them out through a side door, and Betty tried to thank her, but Clarice said, "Forget it. Give me a ring here tomorrow night."

When Betty and Stephen were alone a silence fell upon them. She must explain to him, try to make him understand. But the words wouldn't come. They walked through the dark little alley

to the street, and when they were in the brightly lighted street Stephen said hesitantly, "Betty—"

She turned to him with fear cold in her heart. But she never knew what he was going to say, because just then someone grasped her roughly by the arm and she turned to face Joe.

He said, "So this is how you go to the movies with a girl friend? I thought there was something phony about that story, so I waited outside the shop for you tonight. And I saw you come out all dolled up in those clothes. Where did you get them? Did this swell boy friend of yours in his monkey suit buy them for you? And where have you been able to change your clothes in the meantime? There's something very funny going on here."

Betty glanced fearfully at Stephen and saw his jaw tighten. He said, "Shall we go on our way, Betty?" deliberately ignoring Joe.

Joe pushed up to him angrily. "She's going with me. You can run along now. I'll attend to her."

She saw Stephen make an angry move toward Joe, and she cried, "Joe! Leave us alone." And then she looked again at Stephen and saw the contempt and anger in his eyes as he glared at Joe. She felt suddenly sick and weak. That's how he must think of her, too. How had she dared to heap all this misery on him? What a mess she had managed to make of everything. How he must despise her. It would be better if she went with Joe now. Then he would be gracefully rid of her. He wouldn't have to torture himself trying to be polite. She had better end it now.

So she turned to Stephen, and managed a little laugh. "I guess I'll let Joe take me home after all, Stephen. I'm sure you won't mind. I'm sorry about everything." And she grasped Joe's arm and hurried him away before he could say a word.

As she got into Joe's car she had to look back, had to see Stephen just once more to remember him by. He was still standing there stiffly, his face expressionless and cold, and she said under her breath, "Good-by, Stephen. Good-by, my love."

She didn't listen to Joe's words at first. She didn't want to hear them. Now and then she caught a little of what he said, enough to know that he had followed her from the moment she left the shop.

She said finally, "Oh, stop, Joe. You're driving me out of my mind."

He was silent for a moment, and then he said shakily, "I'm sorry, Betty. I try to keep my temper, but every now and then it runs away with me. I'm so crazy about you that I don't think straight where you're concerned, and when I saw you with that guy I was afraid—well, afraid that he might hurt you in some way. You know why men like that play around with girls like you. Why did you do it, Betty?"

She thought, "Poor Joe. It must be pretty awful for him, too. He's not happy, either."

He said, "Why don't you marry me, Betty, and forget all this romance stuff? Your father is going to be pretty sore when you have to explain about tonight. Unless I tell him that . . . that you were with me and we were celebrating our engagement. How about it, Betty? Why cry for the moon? Take me and I'll be good to you, honey. I'll make you happy."

She was crying softly now. She thought, "What's the use? Maybe Joe's right. It's going to be worse now, loving Stephen. How will I stand it? And when Gloria van Pelt has me fired from my job, how will I explain that at home? Joe won't tell them anything as long as I keep him in a good humor. And they'll keep nagging at me to marry Joe. Maybe I should. Look what a mess I got myself into by reaching for the moon."

She said wearily, "I don't know, Joe. Maybe."

He cried, "You will! Oh, honey, I'm so happy I've got to kiss you right now."

He stopped the car and pulled her into his arms, and she hadn't the strength to resist him. His arms were strong, and it was comforting in a way to lean against him. Perhaps her mother was right. She shouldn't be allowed to run around loose. Maybe she'd get over her nonsense after she married Joe.

"Stephen, Stephen," her heart cried. "It's you I love."

Her father was still up when they got home, waiting for her, but his eyes lighted at sight of Joe, and when Joe said, "Betty said she'd marry me," she couldn't deny it. She was too weary to start anything now. They had her trapped at last. And she could even feel relieved that her father was too happy to notice the borrowed suit she was wearing.

She wasn't surprised the next day when Gloria van Pelt wouldn't speak to her when she called her. If the society girl would only let her explain she might soften and be lenient. And she wasn't surprised when the manager called from New York and told her she was through. He was sending out another girl to take her place.

He didn't waste any time. The other girl came in the afternoon, and Betty explained things to her, and wearily gathered her belongings together and left. So that was the end of that. And now she would never be able to look out of that window again to see Stephen jump from a train. And perhaps it was just as well. Because she wouldn't be able to endure the sight of his dear face turning away from her in contempt.

She had to lie at home about losing her job. She said the manager had wanted it for a friend of his. She had mailed the green suit to Clarice, and when the singer asked her to keep in



"There, there, take it easy, honey. Crying won't do any good. And goodness knows what your boy friend is thinking. I'd better send for him."

touch with her she said that she would, but she was afraid the other girl's happiness would only make her more miserable.

Joe was very tender and sweet to her now. It was almost as if he knew she had lost something precious and was trying to make up for it. She hadn't known Joe could be so sweet. She found herself really liking him in a lot of ways. And everything was so much smoother at home now. Her father didn't even grumble because she was unable to find another position. So she should have been happy. But she wasn't.

Why couldn't she forget Stephen? Why couldn't she put him out of her heart as she must? Sometimes when the phone rang her heart would leap madly, until she realized Stephen didn't know where to reach her if he wanted to. And he didn't want to.

She kept putting Joe and her family off about the wedding. It was as if she were begging for more time. Weeks went by, and hope went with them. Twice she almost had a job, only to be refused because of lack of references. She wouldn't be able to put Joe off much longer. If only she could get work so she could say she was saving for her trousseau!

And then the unbelievable thing occurred. One morning, as she was about to leave the house, there was a telephone call for her, and when she answered, a clear voice said, "This is Gloria van Pelt. I've been feeling pretty miserable about the way I flew at you. I've been thinking that I might have put you in an awful spot, and I want to make up for it in some way. I know you wouldn't have done a thing like that if you hadn't a pretty good reason."

Betty said, "That's all right. I'm not blaming you."

"Oh, but I'm blaming myself. I have so much, I shouldn't have begrudged you what happiness you might have gotten

from those clothes. I'm sending them to you as a gift. And I've talked to the manager—that's how I got your number—and he said he'd take you back again."

"Oh," Betty breathed. "Why are you doing all this for me?"

Gloria laughed happily. "Because I'm so happy I want everyone else to be happy. I'm going to marry the man I love, and I hope you are, too."

Betty choked a little over that. And finally, after stammering her thanks, she hung up. She should be very glad about this, but she could only think how everyone else was happy but herself.

Two days later she was back in the cleaning shop. The manager had been very kind and considerate. "The power of the Van Pelt name," thought Betty. But she wasn't bitter. It had been her own fault, and she was lucky to have her job back. Once more in the old routine, it was almost as if she had never been away. Almost as if there had never been that interlude with Stephen.

Until at five thirty, she looked out at the train pulling into the station, and her heart stopped dead and then jumped painfully to her throat at sight of that beloved figure hopping off the train. She sat at her desk with her hand at her throat as he hurried by, and his head turned to the window as if it were an old habit.

And then he stopped suddenly, and his brows drew together, and before she could move he had opened the door and was standing before her.

He said, "I thought you were a ghost. I didn't expect to see you here."

She couldn't speak, and her heart was pounding so hard that it hurt her.

He said, "How's your boy friend?" smiling a little crookedly.

"He's all right," she said finally.

He was smiling down at her ironically, his mouth twisted a little. "When are the wedding bells going to ring?"

"We . . . we haven't decided," she

stammered. "Oh, Stephen, don't look at me that way. I love you!" she wanted to cry.

He leaned over the counter toward her, his eyes mocking now, challenging. "How about one last fling before you make it legal?" he asked softly. "How about you and me going out on a little party tonight?"

"Why not?" she cried to herself. "Soon I'll be married to Joe and it will be too late. One last night with Stephen."

She said recklessly, "I'd love to."

His smile seemed to become even more mocking.

He said, "That's fine. Shall we meet in the same place? And do try to keep your belligerent boy friend from finding out about it."

All the way home she was in a fever of nervousness and excitement. Was she being a complete fool? But if she could spend just one happy evening with Stephen, then she didn't care what happened after that. She'd be a good wife to Joe. But she had to have this last night with Stephen.

Gloria's gown and wrap had come the day before, so she could dress tonight without fear. Now there was only the necessity of making excuses at home.

But she made none. When she was dressed and her parents stared at her

aghast, she found herself suddenly furious. She said, "I'm going out and I'm not giving any explanations. Tell Joe when he calls that I'm sorry, but I'll see him tomorrow."

Stephen was waiting for her in the cocktail lounge, and although his brows raised a little at the sight of her clothes he made no reference to them. Nor did she. She wasn't going to waste this last evening making explanations. She wanted only to be happy and carefree.

After the first cocktail she felt very gay, and she laughed with Stephen over a story he was telling about his office. Everything Stephen said seemed clever and amusing, and every now and then he would pause to say, "Have I told you how beautiful you are tonight?" Oh, she was glad, so glad that she had come.

They had dinner in the grillroom and danced to soft music, and finally Stephen said, "Let's make a real night of it. We'll go to the Doghouse."

"Oh, Stephen, that . . . that wild roadhouse? But it's miles!" And then recklessly: "Let's. That sounds as if it might be exciting."

It was a long ride, but she was glad, because she was thrillingly close to Stephen, just the two of them alone at last. And when he stopped the car and pulled her into his arms she gave herself to him

Baby CURTISS **5¢** **Ruth**

WHEN WERE BUTTONS FIRST USED?

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CANDY IS DELICIOUS FOOD ENJOY SOME EVERY DAY

with a wild abandon, her lips eager and throbbing under his, feeling the mad beat of his heart against her own.

He said finally in a shaken voice, "You're not getting away from me to-night. I'm not going to let you go."

She thought, "Oh, Stephen, don't spoil it now by being that way. Don't make me have to think of you as the kind of person Joe said you were."

But when he pulled her back into his arms and kissed her as if he couldn't get enough of her, she was faint with emotion, and her heart cried, "Why not? Why not? You love him, and it will be your last night with him."

When they reached the roadhouse she was trembling with a strange excitement, as if she were on the brink of some great and frightening adventure. But she made herself laugh, holding close to Stephen's arm.

She mustn't think too much. She mustn't let herself be anything but happy.

They had highballs, and danced, and then Stephen took her upstairs to the gambling rooms. She had never been in a gambling house before, and she felt very sophisticated and a little wicked, and somewhat dizzy from the highballs. They played roulette, and she squealed with delight when she won, and was very unhappy when they lost. She found it fascinating, and paid very little attention to the others around her.

She didn't know when she began to notice the dark man across from her. She didn't pay much attention at first, until she noted that every time she looked up she saw his face, and there was something cold and a little frightening about his eyes. Not quite human. Like the eyes of a wild beast that was searching for prey.

She was just going to say something to Stephen about him when she saw him move away from the table with deliberate backward steps until he was at the

door, facing them all. Then his voice cut into the room like a whip.

"Put up your hands!" he ordered. "This is a stick-up."

There was horrified silence in the room, with that voice seeming to echo through the stillness. There was a terrifying excitement racing through Betty, and she glanced swiftly at Stephen and saw his jaw tighten, the way it had that night Joe stopped them.

The fierce-eyed man had a gun in his hand. He barked, "Get them up! All of you." He jerked a shoulder at another man standing near him. "All right, Al, start collecting, and don't miss any of the jewels."

Betty wasn't looking at him. She was looking at Stephen. She couldn't take her eyes from him because she was suddenly terribly afraid that he was going to do something foolish. There was a strange look about his eyes. And if he did anything foolish, that gun would go off. and—

She saw Stephen's hand move before the gunman did. He had reached down and snatched Betty's cheap little purse where it lay on the table, and in a lightning flash, while terror welled up in Betty's throat, he had hurled it at the gunman. Hurling it with such accuracy that it knocked the gun from his hand. And then Stephen had bounded at him like a wild man, and two other men came to his aid, while others collared the gunman's startled accomplice.

It happened so swiftly that none of the women screamed until it was all over, and then someone gave a shrill, piercing scream, and Betty started to sob, running to Stephen, clutching at him, crying, "Oh, darling, darling, you might have been killed!"

The croupier and two big men were dragging their struggling victims out of the room, and Stephen, panting, turned from watching them to Betty.

His face softened. "I had to do it,

dear. I was so afraid that thug would get nervous and blast out with that gun. I was so afraid something might happen to you."

"Oh, Stephen," she whispered. "Stephen!"

He had his arm around her shaking body now, his strong, protecting arm. He said, "You called me darling before. Say it again, Betty, and mean it."

"I do mean it, darling."

"Betty, remember I said I wasn't going to let you get away tonight. Will you— Listen, darling, you don't love that Joe person, do you? You can't. You love me. I didn't know what kind of a runaround you were giving me before, and I still don't know. Except now I know that whatever you do must be all right. I've been half crazy these last few weeks. I thought you were playing some kind of game with me, and when you weren't in the cleaning shop any more I didn't know what to think. But now I won't let you go. I don't care what you've done or what you are. Betty, listen, darling, let's get married tonight."

She couldn't speak, and her heart was pounding so she had to press her hand over it.

He went on, "We'll start off right now in the car and go somewhere where we can be married. How would you like that? And then we can stay there for a short honeymoon. You can get some clothes along the way. And I'll wire dad to fix it up at the office—he's one of the directors of the company, and he knows all about you. I've talked of nothing else for the past few weeks. Do you want to call your family now, or shall we just go?"

She said shakily, "We'd better just go, and I'll send them a telegram afterward,

when they can't stop us. Oh, Stephen, Stephen, I love you so."

It was while they were flying along the highway that Betty thought of Clarice. Clarice, the lovely singer who had been so sweet to her, and who had wanted everything to turn out right for her. She wanted suddenly to call Clarice and tell her that everything had turned out wonderfully, so she asked Stephen to stop the car at a drugstore.

She went into a booth and called the Palmetto Club, her fingers trembling on the dial. When she got Clarice finally, she said, "This is Betty, Clarice. Betty Collins. I just wanted to call you to tell you that I'm eloping. With Stephen. You know, the man I was with that night. I wanted you to know that everything turned out beautifully. I'm so happy, Clarice, and I wanted you to be the first to know because you were so swell to me."

When Clarice spoke there was something funny about her voice. As if she were trying to sound happy. She said, "Gosh, I'm glad, Betty." And then she stopped.

"What's the matter?" Betty cried. "You sound funny."

"Oh, something terrible just happened to me. I can't talk to you any more, Betty." Her voice broke, but she managed to say, "Good luck, honey," and then sobbed as she hung up the receiver.

Back in the car with Stephen, hugging her own happiness to her heart, Betty kept thinking of Clarice. What had happened to her? And why must she be unhappy? She was such a grand person. What was it that had made her so miserable?

And then Stephen bent down and kissed her. "I love you," he said.

"Night-club Girl"—in next week's issue—is the last story in this dramatic group of short novels. You won't want to miss this exposé of a singer's life in a New York night club.

Isle of Enchantment

by Marguerite Brener

Married to and on a honeymoon with a man she hated—while the man she adored was begging her to forget her marriage vows!

PART III.



THE STORY SO FAR:

Penelope Vannort, ready to be married, receives a note from her fiancé, wealthy Brian Burke Bartleigh, known as "Burke," saying that though he still loves her, he can't marry her. Desperate, Penny runs away. She tries to jump off a bridge, but a man grabs her. She throws herself into his arms, calling him "Burke!" He finally gets her into a taxi.

Then she realizes that he isn't Burke, but looks exactly like him. "You must be his poor cousin, Brian," she says. The man agrees that that is who he is. She begs him to marry her, telling him that she can't be humiliated before everyone. Penny and Brian are married, no one knowing that he is not Burke. He promises to leave her on board ship, but her friends come to see them off and he cannot get away. After the ship sails, Penny receives a note from Cynthia, who is also in love with Burke, saying that she and Burke are on board. The four meet and Brian makes Burke confess that he is not rich, but that he has been impersonating Brian, who has been abroad. Then Penny realizes that she is really married to Brian, for the license was made out in the name of Brian Burke Bartleigh, which she thought was Burke's name.

V.

PENNY slowly opened her eyes. She blinked. This strange room, gracious in morning sunshine, with its satin furniture, flowered draperies, and painted walls. And that porch, beyond those opened French windows.

She stretched. Yawned. This bed she lay on— Bewildered, she became conscious of its peculiar rolling motion. As if it were being drawn along by some live power, whose heartbeat thudded like the turning of strong engines. Her eyes opened wider. What place was this? What was she doing here?

With a gasp, memory burst upon her. The *S. S. Macquintania!* And that was the sea, shining past the rail of that adjoining porch, its swelling ripples strewn with sunbeams.

Cyn was on this boat. And Burke. Poor Burke. She must see him. Tell him that she didn't care about that deception of names. That it really didn't matter.

Brian! Her heart gave a wild throb. Brian was on board, too! She paled in

ghastly fright. Brian Burke Bartleigh! And he was her husband. Legally her husband! She'd been married to him, before hundreds of witnesses.

Her glance, blanked with tragedy, quickened. That chair near the bed. She strained forward. Yes! That was her gray suit and hat, her sheer stockings, neatly spread out upon that chair. Horror shuddered through her. Who had lifted her from that deck last night, when unconsciousness had mercifully robbed her of the harrowing realization of her plight? Who had carried her into this room?

A riot of swift shame reddened her from slim white feet to tumbled, glistening curls. This nightgown, that clung to her in intimate chiffon revelation. Who, last night, had slipped it over her?

She turned. The breath caught suddenly in her throat. Through the closed door of the bedroom, the door leading into the drawing room, slight, but unmistakable noises sounded—the creak of furniture. The rattle of china. The blithe whistling of a man.

She got out of bed. Threw around herself the cloud-pink negligee that was on the chair. Slipped her bare feet into feathered mules. Then, quaking with terror, she hurried to the door. Opened it noiselessly.

The drawing room spread before her anguished gaze in gleaming order. And close to the French windows a breakfast table was delightful with snowy linen, a silver coffee service and rose-sprigged china.

She gasped aloud. Brian was seated before the table, drinking orange juice!

If he heard the panic of that gasp he gave no evidence. He looked up. Met her glance in smiling composure.

"Good morning," he greeted. And before her outraged vision, he finished his orange juice.

"Go away!" Her frantic words were scarcely louder than a whisper. "Or I'll scream for help!"

"But why?" he rejoined politely. "Neither of us needs help."

And before she realized his intent, he rose and reached her. Gripped her by her icy arm, hastened her over the threshold into a chair at the table. And reseated himself in the opposite one.

"Lovely morning, isn't it?" Then, in a fond, chiding manner: "You've overslept, my dear. I walked around the deck, returned and ordered breakfast, and was just starting it in despair"—he grinned maliciously—"without my bride."

She shrank back against her chair. "Go away!" she mouthed.

"Fruit juice, eggs, hot rolls, and coffee," he announced imperturbably. "I trust it meets with your approval?"

Her glance distended to blue despair. He looked so big. His height, the breadth of his shoulders, augmented, somehow, by his perfectly tailored suit.

"Casey," he called.

The door, leading to the other bedroom, opened. A short, red-headed, wiry man entered the room.

"This is my man, darling," Brian stated. "He's been with me for years." Then: "Mrs. Bartleigh, Casey."

"Good morning to you, madam. And congratulations. Sure, it's the grand pair you make." Casey's shrewd eyes twinkled at her. "And it's well you did for yourself, madam, if I may be so bold as to say it. He's a fine man, is Mr. Brian, and—"

"Casey's a flatterer, darling," Brian interrupted, his hand settling over Penny's cold white fingers. "You mustn't believe him."

Abruptly, she slid away from that warm grasp that sent strange tremors through her. "I don't," she rejoined frigidly.

"Serve madam's breakfast, Casey," Brian went on as if she hadn't spoken.

"No! I don't want—"

"Of course not." The throbbing tenderness in Brian's tone caused Penny a vivid blush. "Not on our first morning,

my love. Casey"—he turned to the valet—"you may go. We wish to be alone."

"Certainly, sir," Casey beamed.

Miserably, Penny watched the man leave the room. "You shouldn't have said that!" She blazed at Brian. "You shouldn't act as if we're in love! As if this really were our first morning, together!"

"Drink your orange juice," he ordered.

Quailing, she stared at him. All tenderness gone, now. And in its place, a frightening fierceness. "No!"

"At once!" he thundered.

She didn't want that orange juice. And she didn't want to be here, alone with this terrible man. However, she gulped the fruit juice, the glass chattering against her teeth.

"The weather is perfect, though it's quite cold." Calmly, Brian poured a steaming cup of coffee. Placed it before her. "We haven't passed the Gulf Stream yet." He selected two eggs, broke them into an egg cup. "Really your wifely duty, isn't it?" he murmured.

Rage tautened her. Was it possible that he thought she would countenance this farce? "I'm not your wife!"

"Pardon me." He leaned courteously toward her, astonishment in his glance. "Aren't you the girl I married last night?"

"Please—" Tears filled her eyes. "Don't keep this up. I can't stand any more. Even if we were married last night we—"

He placed the opened eggs before her. "Toast?" he offered. "Butter?"

Their glances met. She whitened at the covert mockery in his.

"We're not the only honeymooners on board, my love." He spoke gayly. "I saw so many of them this morning. They all looked so shy. And so exquisitely happy." He crunched his roll. Drank his coffee. "What's the matter, sweetheart?" He viewed her with extravagant concern. "Aren't you hungry?"

A slow smile widened his thin lips. "Didn't you," he paused, "sleep well?"

Sleep! Instantly it reminded her of that bed inside. And of the nightgown, clinging to her slim white form. "I can't remember anything!" she shrilled. "I know I fainted after I found out who you were. And that we were actually married! But when I woke up, I was in bed. And I don't know how I got there. I can't remember anything at all!"

"Can't you?" he breathed.

She blanched. The quick warmth on his face! The sudden light within his eyes! "Did . . . did you carry me into that bedroom last night?" she whispered.

"What if I did?"

"Did you?" she shrilled. "Did you?"

"You're shivering with cold," he said brusquely. "Eat your breakfast."

Such frightening ruthlessness about him! A ruthlessness that brooked no disobedience. Hopelessly, she placed a bit of crisp roll in her dry mouth. Washed it down with scalding coffee.

"That's better," he approved. "Now then, when you fainted, I carried you to your room, and—"

"Then it was you!" she screamed.

"You were fearfully exhausted," he went on tranquilly. "You didn't recover consciousness. You slipped from that faint, like a tired child, into a normal sleep."

Blood, in a tortured wave, flamed her. "You!" she gasped. "Then you—" She struggled past her shame. A shame that grew to outrage. "You took advantage of me while I was helpless! You dared put me to bed. Undressed me!"

A knock on the door interrupted him.

"Come in," Brian called.

The door opened. Olga, her gaunt body neat in a maid's uniform, her round eyes alight with love, stood there.

"I knew you'd be surprised, Miss Penny," she giggled.

"Where—" Penny gasped. "How—"

"It was yesterday, at the church," Olga explained joyously, "right before the

ceremony. I was outside in the vestry, cryin'. The idea!"—her head reared indignantly. "You wantin' to go on a trip all by yourself, Miss Penny. When you know you can't get along without me."

"But . . . but I don't understand."

Olga flashed a roguish glance toward Brian. "It was all Mr. Burke, ma'am," she said.

Mr. Burke? But, of course! Olga thought that Brian was Burke.

"I came on board right after you, Miss Penny. But I kept out of sight, like Mr. Burke said. An' after we sailed—well, I was waitin' here in this room, to surprise you—" She stopped, took tender hold of Penny. "That was an awful scare you gave me, Miss Penny. You were that white when he carried you into the room last night."

"L-last night?"

"Such a dreadful faint you had, too. I kept tellin' Mr. Burke it wasn't natural. You've never done a thing like that in all your life. But he said not to worry. That you'd gone into a sleep as quiet as a baby's. An' all the time I was undressin' you, you never moved."

Penny's shamed eyes met Brian's for a fleeting second. So that's what had happened last night! And she'd actually accused him—

"I was that frightened, I wanted Mr. Burke to get a doctor. But it was just like he said, Miss Penny. You weren't sick. You lay on the pillows, the color in your cheeks again, breathin' regular."

"We're going out on deck, Olga," Brian spoke pleasantly, "so select one of Mrs. Bartleigh's most charming frocks."

"Certainly, sir." Happily, Olga hurried into the bedroom. Clicked the door shut behind her.

Gratitude swept through Penny. To have Olga on this boat. Olga, whom she loved. Who loved her. She turned to Brian. "It was kind of you."

"Not at all," he grinned.

She glared. Even kindness from this man was added insult. "It wasn't kind!"

she contradicted herself furiously. "It was insufferable presumption! Burke and I—" She stopped.

"Yesterday you were so miserable," Brian said, "that it seemed to me that you should have Olga with you. That it might help—"

"More of your charming kindness?" she interrupted sneeringly.

"More?"

"Like your forcing Burke to act as he did yesterday!" she flashed. "To write me that hideous letter!"

"But I couldn't permit—"

"Couldn't you?" She shook with sobs. "And why not? What do I care that he posed as you? What difference could it make to me, when I love him? Don't you know that a girl doesn't care about anything if she loves a man? If he's the only being in the entire world—" Her face went stark. "Now, look what you've done," she wailed. "We're married!"

"If you'll stop shouting, I'll—"

"You're a criminal!" She flung the accusation at him. "You should be jailed!"

"Say, look here. You ordered me to marry you, yesterday."

"Ordered? Well, I didn't exactly order."

"You certainly did!"

"All right!" she cried. "You needn't have paid any attention!"

"I didn't," he reminded her. "And then you tried to vamp me."

"Vamp you!" she gasped. "How dare you say such a thing? I never—"

He caught her roughly to her feet. Crushed her against him. "You did your best to vamp me." His voice was low with wrath. "You even kissed me."

"All right, I kissed you!" Madly, she struggled for freedom. "But it was only because I was so upset. I'd rather die than kiss you! If you were the last man on earth—" Her voice was smothered beneath his mouth in a savage, hurting kiss. A kiss that shattered her from head to foot.

He let go of her as abruptly as he'd caught hold of her. Limply she staggered against the table.

"Your memory is short-lived, isn't it?" he jeered. And before her staring eyes he emptied his pockets of her priceless bracelets. Her precious pearls.

"Remember, now?" he taunted. "This was the wage you gave me." He glared at her. "I didn't know a girl could be so afraid of gossip. Of newspaper scandal. You should have seen yourself, yesterday. Cowering with fear because your friends—"

"Of course!" She caught at her defense eagerly. "Rather than let them know, I'd have died!"

"You would have died, if it hadn't been for me! Why, you were like a mad-woman. Nobody could stop you. You were hell-bent for that ceremony! I might have been a thief. A murderer. You never gave that a thought."

"But I never dreamed that we'd be legally married!"

His laughter rang out. "That was the thing that amused me most, my dear."

"You're a horrible man!" she spat. "I hate you!"

His laugh went louder. "A person of extreme emotions, aren't you? You hate me. You love Burke."

"Yes!" she shrieked. "I do love Burke! I'll always love him. If you think for a moment, because of this—" She gestured wildly. "But you can't keep me from him! No one can. I belong to him!"

"How nice," he murmured. "Does he know it?"

"Of course, he knows it!" she shrilled indignantly.

"And he let me marry you? Permitted us to spend last night together?"

Murderous fury mounted to her brain. "How dare you say a thing like that!" Her frenzied hand, groping on the table, closed over the handle of a knife.

As the blade flashed toward him,



Uncontrollable fury mounted in her. "How dare you say a thing like that?" she shrilled.

Brian's fist closed over her hand. Shook her almost from her feet.

"Please"—her suddenly frightened gaze clung to his enraged face—"you're hurting me." She heard the knife clatter from her helpless fingers. Shuddered. How could she have done such a horrible thing! "I'm sorry," she whispered.

"Are you?" The blood, receding from his face, left it ghastly.

"Yes." Her tear-filled eyes begged forgiveness. "I'm frightfully sorry."

And, somehow, she was in his arms again. His hand ruffling her curls. His mouth warm upon her lips.

Ecstasy pulsed through Penny. Mad ecstasy. Her arms crept about his shoulders. Her lips returned his kiss.

And then he was far away from her, looking out beyond the French windows to where the cloudless sky edged the smooth blue ocean.

Penny trembled. Why did the touch of this man's arms, his mouth, run fire through her? Rob her of all control? "I . . . I love Burke," she whispered. And she did! She always would! "I love Burke!" Her voice was stronger.

"Of course."

She scarcely heard Brian's muffled acquiescence. "Love's a strange thing," she mused. "You can't explain it. There's no logic to it. But the moment you meet the one person—"

"Yes." His tone was oddly bleak. "You're right. Love is like that."

"I'll get a divorce," she said abruptly. "At once!"

He turned around, his eyes cold, his face expressionless. "At once."

She shivered. Why should she feel so tragic? So utterly lost?

"Now then," he continued pleasantly, "on what grounds? Infidelity?"

"You mean," she paled, "there's someone—"

"Well, there are professional correspondents."

"But isn't that illegal?"

"Yes, but it's done every day."

"I've had enough trouble with this marriage!" she snapped. "I won't take any chances on untold legal litigation."

"Certainly not," he responded courteously. "I'll see to it that a professional will be quite unnecessary."

"I knew it!" Revulsion shuddered her. "There is a woman!"

His eyes met hers. Were hastily averted.

"It's my divorce!" Her voice was strident. "I'll manage it myself! I can't go to Paris, as Cyn did. But I'll go to Reno."

"I remember," he smiled.

She stared. Was it possible that he had been the reason for Cyn's divorce?

"I was in Paris at the time," he continued.

"I'm not interested in your travels." Her head rose imperiously. "I'm getting off this boat at the first stop. I'll return to New York. Then go West. Burke will be with me. And the moment that I'm free, we'll—"

"Go to your room and get dressed," Brian said shortly. "We're going out on deck."

"On deck?"

"Yes. If we don't, people will be sure to gossip."

Gossip! The word transformed her to immediate alarm. "You mean that people on board are talking about me?"

"Well"—he watched her cautiously—"we headed this morning's captions, in the *Ship's News*."

"How awful!"

"Awful," he echoed.

"You're right! I'll get dressed at once. I can't have people talking! We must be seen together." Unthinkingly, her hand caught at his arm. "And you must be very loving to me. That's what everyone expects. You see, for weeks the papers have been full of Burke and me. How much we love each other. Please"—her hand became a spasmodic urging—"you must act as if you adore me. As if you love me more than anything—"

"Like this?"

And again she was in his arms.

"Like this?"

And once more her mouth was bruised by his kiss.

"Grand actress, aren't you?"

Her bewildered glance lifted to his furious face. "I—" she whispered. "I—"

"Well, you'll find me as talented as you are, my darling," he taunted. "Whenever we're in public, my love-making will be entirely at your disposal."

She blushed. Broke violently from his embrace. Fled into her bedroom.

The sight of Olga, drawing her bath, arranging her clothes, calmed Penny. Idiotic, her reactions to Brian's love-making. Still, he was so like Burke.

"That dress is exactly the color of your eyes, Miss Penny." Olga's admiring voice broke through Penny's reverie. "An' the way that hat frames your face, ma'am. Mr. Burke will be delighted."

Sudden curiosity assailed Penny. "What's changed you toward him, Olga?"

"I don't know, Miss Penny." Olga's forehead wrinkled. "It's almost as if he were a different man."

"He is," Penny said. And then she told Olga everything.

"Then," Olga vibrated with amazement, "he's the real Brian Burke Bartleigh?"

Penny nodded.

"That's why I never liked Mr. Burke!" Olga ejaculated. "He isn't honest! That's stealin', Miss Penny. Takin' another man's name."

"It wasn't his fault," Penny defended. "People are always mistaking them for each other. They're so alike."

"But they're not, ma'am!" Olga contradicted excitedly. "There's somethin' awful different about Mr. Brian. He's a hard man, Miss Penny. With his straight jaw. And his clear eyes. I'm afraid of him!"

Penny shivered. She was afraid, too. Terribly afraid.

Brian was waiting for her on deck, morosely watching the sparkling horizon.

"Do I look all right?" she asked confidently.

"Don't you always?"

Pique almost stifled her. After his promise, too. This insulting indifference! "You know I requested that when we're in public—" she began.

"We're quite alone, now," he cut in tersely. "There's no need to act up."

Her pique turned to fury. "I assure you that any show of affection from you is completely loathsome to me! And—" Her voice ended in a gasp as his arms

went tight about her. And his impassioned mouth found hers.

"Darling," he breathed.

"Ideal day, isn't it?"

Penny jumped at the strange voice. A young man and girl stood beside them. So that explained Brian's sudden ardor!

"I thought we were alone." Brian's laugh was obviously embarrassed. "My wife, Mrs. Bartleigh," he introduced. "Mr. and Mrs. Jason."

"Delighted," Penny said.

"I met them hours ago, while you were still asleep, darling." He turned to the Jasons. "She sleeps so soundly."

Penny winced. There was his arm again. Possessive about her shoulders.

The deck seemed to come alive. Other voyagers appeared. Chairs began to fill.

"We read about you this morning in the *Ship's News*, Mrs. Bartleigh," Mrs. Jason remarked. "Didn't we, Ned?"

"Yes," Ned confirmed. "I pointed the item out to Helen."

"My wife always rates the newspapers."

Penny heard the sting in Brian's remark. "Dearest," she murmured, deliberately leaning close. Then, to the Jasons: "You're honeymooners, too, aren't you?"

"No," Helen answered, "we were married last year. Still, this is really our honeymoon. It's the first trip we've ever taken. We've saved for months—"

"Look here," Ned cut in hastily, "no one's interested in our affairs."

"We are," Brian assured him warmly. He turned to Penny. "Ned's a floor clerk in Newbury Stokes. That's Stock Exchange, darling. And Helen is in the stenographic department."

"You mean, I was," Helen said worriedly.

"There's a marvelous view on the other side of the boat, Helen." Ned's voice was uncomfortable. "Er . . . see you later."

"Two nice kids," Brian observed as the Jasons moved off. "But they're fearfully concerned."

"Why?"

"Because they're poor. And she's lost her job," he told her. "Still, they're fortunate." His eyes went somber. "They're in love. And they've got each other."

"So what?"

He flashed her an exasperated glance. "Self-centered little piece of egotism, aren't you?"

"I'm not!" she denied sharply. "But why should I be interested in an insignificant couple whom I scarcely know?"

"May I ask what really does interest you?"

She flushed at his evident sarcasm. "Me!" she retorted hotly. "My troubles! My joys!"

"Is this a private quarrel?" a voice cut in gayly. "Or may two strangers barge in?"

Penny started. Cyn, smart in a white ensemble. And next to her, Burke.

"Burke!" Penny cried. "Darling!"

"Penny!" Brian's warning recalled her to the fact of the crowded listening deck.

"Er—" she stammered. "Good morning."

"Grand day, isn't it?" Burke said.

"Grand," Brian agreed curtly. Then: "How about a swim before lunch?"

"I'd love it," Cyn replied. "And the pool downstairs is in full swing."

"You girls get ready. Come on"—Brian turned to Burke—"there's a couple on the other side. I'm going to ask them along."

Penny watched as the two men walked away. To have Burke on board this boat. To see him every day. Every hour.

"Why do you look so miserable, darling?" Cyn asked.

"I don't know," Penny sighed. "But I am."

VI.

Downstairs, in one of the luxurious locker rooms, Penny slowly changed to a one-piece yellow bathing suit, its satin sheen vying with the gold of her hair.

Suddenly she frowned. Why had Cyn come on this cruise? And how was it that Burke had arrived with her? Moodily, she left the locker room. Strolled toward the pool.

A tall thin man crouched in the shadows near the entrance. He turned at Penny's approach. For a moment his glance, obscured by dark-smoked glasses, concentrated tensely on her. Then he vanished in the direction of the men's lockers.

Amazed, Penny stared after him. What a strange person. And the way he'd looked at her. With menace! She grinned in self-derision. Ridiculous, a thought like that.

She eyed the pool in admiration. Such a lovely place! Enormous crystal domes blazing above the small tables that circled its white-tiled edge. Stewards hastening back and forth. People in bathing suits, slacks, and shorts, eating, drinking. And that inviting length of white-tiled, limpid greenness illuminated by glass-encased electric light, beneath water that was alive with splashing, shouting swimmers.

Cyn, exotic in a black jersey suit, was waiting for her at a secluded table.

"A drink?" she queried, as Penny sat down.

"A Martini," Penny answered.

"Two Martinis," Cyn ordered. "Well," she grinned as the steward hurried away, "how's married life?"

Penny's eyes quickened with reproach.

"I'm sorry, darling," Cyn apologized with extravagant affection. "But I thought it might be easier for you if I pretended."

"What made you take this cruise?" Penny queried with sudden tenseness.

"Because you were in trouble. And I thought you might want me with you."

"I was in trouble. I still am."

"You mean Brian?"

Penny nodded. "I'm going to divorce him. At once."

"Divorce." Cyn's heavy lids veiled her

Penny blinked when she saw Helen. That was her suit! A brand-new import! How under the sun had Helen— Brian must have given it to her! With swift, angry strokes, she swam over to them.



eyes. "That's easy. I managed it in record time."

"What was he like, Cyn?"

"Who?"

"Sanford Janneth."

"San?" Cyn shrugged. "Not so bad."

"Then why—"

"Perhaps he was too good to me."

Cyn's mouth went bitter. "Perhaps if he'd have beaten me up occasionally—" She drained her cocktail.

"Burke was with you in Paris when you got your decree, wasn't he?" Penny questioned slowly.

"Yes. So was Brian."

Certainty roused within Penny. "Brian was the man, wasn't he? The reason for your divorce!"

Cyn smiled. "You sound interested, darling!"

"I'm not!" Penny contradicted. "Not at all! And the moment that I'm free, Burke and I—" She stopped. "Cyn"—she leaned closer—"how was it that Burke came on board with you last night?"

"He phoned me just before the ceremony. Told me everything. He's so in love with you, my dear."

Penny sighed. Burke was in love with her. And in a short while, he and she— She sighed again. Looked about idly. Started. The tall man with the dark glasses! He was seated at a nearby table, watching. "Cyn, there's a man over there—" Her voice died in her throat. The man had disappeared!

"What were you saying, dear?"

"Nothing. It was just a man, staring at me."

"No wonder," Cyn giggled. "You're something to stare at, darling."

"But he was watching for me when I left my locker room! And just now—"

"So what? He's most likely a reporter."

"Of course," Penny heaved a relieved sigh. Undoubtedly, a reporter. Prying. "Oh!" she gasped.

Cyn jumped. "What's the matter?"

Wrath muted Penny. Brian, at the shallow end of the pool. And next to him, Helen Jason. It couldn't be. But it was! Helen was wearing a pale-blue rubber suit.

"What's the matter?" Cyn repeated.

"N-nothing," Penny stammered. That was her suit. A brand-new import! How under the sun had Helen— Brian must have given it to her! "I'm going in the water," she said tersely. "See you later."

She made for the deep end. Mounted the steps that led to a lone diving board that towered above the others. Trembling with rage, she slipped the yellow cap over her bright curls.

"Thanks for loaning me this suit," Helen greeted with shy gratitude, as Penny reached the shallow waters.

"I didn't loan it to you!" The words bit through Penny's teeth.

"Oh, didn't you?" Helen flushed.

"Get my husband to buy you a suit your size." Penny's voice cut. "Mine's too small for you." Abruptly, she swam away, splashing the water in swift, angry strokes.

"Mean little devil, aren't you?"

It was Brian, swimming next to her, at the deep end of the pool.

"You stole my suit! You gave it to that woman!"

"Remember your public, darling," he retorted.

"You'd do anything, wouldn't you?" she spat.

"Anything."

He caught her close. Acutely, she became aware of his long, strong body.

"Anything," he taunted.

And the fierce impact of his mouth on hers, hurtled them both beneath the water.

Frantic, she struggled free. Rose to the surface. Gasping for breath, she swam weakly to the pool rail.

Lunch. Miserably she sat through its tedium. Cyn. Burke. Brian. All three of them, gay and laughing.

"Dieting?" Brian queried, his glance on her untouched food.

"I'm tired." Her voice was grim. "I'm going upstairs to rest."

"I'll go with you, dearest."

This cloying adoration to impress strangers! "I prefer to be alone," she rejoined icily.

Her own private deck. Gloomily, she surveyed it from the comfort of a wicker lounge.

Casey appeared at the French windows. "A cup of tea, madam?" he suggested. "Or a highball?"

"Nothing," she said curtly. Then: "Where's Mr. Brian?"

"Sure I don't know, madam."

"Get him for me!" she flung imperiously. "Tell him to come here at once!"

Casey disappeared.

"An odd man, that Casey," Olga announced, hurrying out onto the veranda. "Always praisin' Mr. Brian. Why, you'd think there wasn't anyone like him in the whole world, Miss Penny. Casey says—"

"That'll be enough!"

Penny's sharpness shocked Olga. "Have you a headache, ma'am? Would you like something?"

"No! I don't want anything!"

Olga vanished.

Rage simmered in Penny. The nerve of Brian! Leaving her here alone. How dared he act indifferent when everyone on board was watching! Whispering! Her mouth drooped. Her lovely swim suit. Well, she didn't want it now. Not after that stenographer had worn it. She'd never put it on again. Moodily, she yawned. She fell asleep.

Warm arms, holding her close, awakened her. Warm lips, pressed to hers, brought her back to consciousness.

"Darling," she whispered. Her eyes sprang open. "Burke!" she gasped.

Burke, seated next to her on the lounge, was smiling down upon her. "You looked so lovely. So utterly adorable." Suddenly, he scowled. "Penny"—his fingers bit into her smooth bare flesh.

"This farce of a marriage! What does it mean? Why did you do it?"

She remembered yesterday. With all its turmoil. All its anguish. "How dare you ask me that!" Her mouth was bitter. "When yesterday you—"

"I couldn't help it," he interrupted. "Brian was mad enough for murder. And when he threatened me with jail—" He broke off, began again: "Last night I almost went mad, Penny. Knowing that you were both in here."

"Olga was with me," she said hastily. "She never left me for a moment."

"I hate him!"

She started at the venom in Burke's voice.

"Some day, I'm going to kill him!"

"No!" She caught at Burke desperately. "You mustn't, dearest! Besides, it's only for a little while. I'm getting a divorce at once. And the moment the decree is signed we'll get married."

"Darling." His mouth brushed her bare arm from wrist to elbow. "Just a few weeks. Then you'll belong to me."

Would she? But of course, she would! That was what she wanted. "Burke," she said, her lips deliberately provocative.

His arms tightened about her. His kiss met hers.

Bewilderment paled her. Why did his embrace leave her cold? His kiss, frozen?

"I can't wait until you're free," he muttered, his mouth against her soft, cool throat. "Until you get rid of Brian."

Quickly, she pushed Burke aside. Sat up. "Have people on board mistaken you for one another?"

"No. They never do, when we're together. Why, last year, in Paris—"

Paris. It reminded her of Cyn. "You and Cyn—was it your friendship that broke up her marriage?"

"Certainly not," he denied hastily. And his mouth sought hers again.

"Stop!" she shrieked.

He eyed her in surprise. "Sweetheart mine—"

"Go away!" Her voice was sharp.
"I'm tired. I want to rest."

Alone again, she brooded on the ocean, basking in the late sun. Poor Burke. She shouldn't have spoken to him like that. But she was so unhappy. So beset by this chaotic tangle of her life. She sighed. Strolled into her deserted bedroom.

Sudden fear tautened her. There was no key in the lock of her door! And Olga slept on C Deck in the servants'



The music drifted out to her. At times, soft and low. At others, quick and strident. She sighed. She felt so lonely. So utterly lost.

quarters. She couldn't be here, alone in this suite, with Brian. And no key! She'd call the steward. Order a key at once. But she couldn't! How could a presumably loving bride lock out her presumably loving groom, without giving rise to amused murmurs that would undoubtedly culminate in loud malice?

Outside again, she viewed the ocean with disgust. Of all the idiotic predicaments! A cruise she didn't want to take. A honeymoon—

A quick step behind her startled her. She turned. Brian! Incomprehensible rage reddened her. "What do you want?" she snapped.

He lit a cigarette. Flipped the match over the deck rail.

"What do you mean by coming up here?" she demanded hotly. "I want to be alone!"

"Do you?" he murmured. "With me?"

She could not shriek out against this insult. Her voice was stifled in her wrath.

"Well," he grinned, "you sent Casey for me."

And still she could not speak.

"I was downstairs, playing bridge."

She found her voice. "Bridge!"

"Why not?"

"Must you let everyone know that this is not a real honeymoon?" Her mouth trembled. "Must you start them talking?"

"Sorry, I forgot your orders." He stretched out calmly on a lounge. Yawned.

"A key!" she grated. "I want a key for my bedroom door!"

"I thought you would." He slid his hand into his pocket. Brought out a key. "Here"—he tossed it over to her. "I told Casey to get one for your room, this morning."

Her fingers closed convulsively over the metal.

"Clever, aren't I?" he drawled. "The way I figured that you'd want that key." His eyes met hers, held them. "You see,

I knew you'd be too vain to realize that you really wouldn't need it."

Her hands clenched. Her fingers clawed. "You—" Then, impotently, she raced from the porch. Out of the suite.

In the corridor, she collided with a man.

"Pardon me, I didn't see—" She paled. The tall thin man, with the dark glasses! "Why were you waiting at my door?" she shrieked in instant panic.

"But I wasn't. I was on my way to my cabin."

His well-bred voice. His charming smile. "I'm sorry." Awful, to think she'd been so rude! "But I noticed you, before. At the pool. You were looking at me."

"Well, if anyone's at fault for that"—his smile went whimsical—"I think you're the one to blame."

Really not a frightening person. In fact, quite nice. But, no! That stealthiness about him. Mystery. And once more panic robbed her of all color. And she hurried on in search of Cyn and Burke.

That night the boat was agog with the excitement of the first dance on board.

"I'm going to invite the Jasons," Brian announced at dinner.

"They're cute," Cyn said, "but tiresome."

"Very," Penny agreed.

"Not at all," Brian declared. "They're both delightful. Particularly Helen. She loved the pool this morning."

"And my bathing suit?" Penny questioned.

He flushed. "She hadn't any," he explained. "I'd have bought her one, but I feared it might embarrass them. So I said that you'd be glad to loan—"

"It was an outrageous thing for you to do!" she cut in wrathfully.

But the Jasons did not attend the dance. Penny wondered about it as she stood beside Brian in the ballroom. "The Jasons." She viewed him curiously. "Didn't you invite them?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I thought that they'd suffered enough humiliation for one day," he answered quietly.

Anger flamed Penny. Her golden head rose haughtily.

"But I'm sorry now," he continued. "They'd have gotten such a kick out of all this."

Penny, in sheer white lace that cascaded from her slim waist to fragile fullness, thoughtfully eyed the ballroom with its high-banked flowers and soft lights. Was it possible that anyone could relish all this boredom?

"What do you think about this dance?" Brian queried abruptly.

She shrugged. "The usual thing." Her sweet mouth curled. "Although, perhaps tonight, the music may be a trifle better." She nodded toward the orchestra, headed by a famous leader.

"You've had too much!" he fumed. "All your life!"

"Stop glaring," she whispered. "Everyone is watching us."

He turned to Cyn. "Let's dance."

Penny's angry gaze followed them on the dance floor. How close he held Cyn. How pleased he looked.

"Our dance, Penny." Burke put his arm around her. Swung her out onto the floor.

"What's the matter?" he queried. "Why are you so pensive?"

"I'm not." And, of course, she wasn't. Why should she be?

"Penny"—his lips were on her clustering curls. "Why must we wait? I want you! I want you, now!"

"Now?" she echoed.

"Why not?" he persisted ardently. "You're mine! You belong to me!"

"I don't understand."

"You do!" he contradicted. "You know I'm mad about you!"

The knowledge ought to leap her pulse. Quicken her heart. "Are you?" she murmured sadly.

"I want you. And I won't wait! Tonight, Penny!" His whisper was passionate, demanding. "Tonight!"

The insult of his words. Outraged, she tried to break his clasp.

Strong arms caught her from him. Spun her along the dance floor. "B-Brian!" she gasped.

"That was a charming love scene, just now!" Furiously, he forced her trembling body to the swaying rhythm of the music.

"It . . . it wasn't," she quavered.

"It was!" His dark eyes blazed. "And everybody witnessed it!"

"Oh, no," she shivered.

"As long as you must give rise to gossip," his voice struck out at her, "wait until you're divorced, my dear. Right now, there's my reputation to be considered!"

And he rushed her from the dance floor. Plumped her down at a deserted table. Stalked gloweringly away.

Couples at surrounding tables. She became flinchingly aware of their curious glances. Their amused amazement. "Steward," her voice was high and clear, "my husband will be back directly. Brandy and soda for two, please."

"Certainly, madam."

Cyn and Burke approaching. She heaved a grateful sigh. Brian returning with them.

"They're marking off the honeymooners, sweetheart," Brian finally said at last, "and they've missed us on the floor. We'll have to dance together again. Or there'll be gossip."

The lights, dim this time. The music, a languorous tango. Unconsciously, she gave in to its abandon, her slim grace close against him.

"Angel." Brian's voice, that thrilling depth? Her blue eyes fastened wonderingly on his face.

"Your skin is so white against the mistiness of that gown." His tone was strangely shaken. "And your hair. It's spun gold in this light."

"Compliments from you?" She compelled the scorn that tinged her speech.

"Practically all over, isn't it?" He sounded harsh again. And cold. "In just a little while, you and my delightful cousin will be moored upon your island."

Her glance went stark. The isle of enchantment! Where two people, loving each other— Having each other—

"Suppose it had been different?" His voice was warm again. "Suppose you and I—" And then the circle of his arms went tight. And his mouth was deep and sweet upon her lips.

"You kissed me back!" His whisper was exultant.

And suddenly trembling, she slid from his embrace. Hurried through the crowded ballroom. Went out on deck.

Huddled in her ermines, she lay shivering upon a chair. She must get off this boat as soon as possible! End forever the mockery of this marriage. But afterward she wouldn't marry Burke. She shuddered. How had she ever thought to marry Burke?

The music drifted out to her. At times soft and low, and poignant. At others, quick and strident.

She sighed. She felt so lonely. So utterly lost. And tragic. Everyone was inside, dancing. No, not everyone. A man, sleeping in a distant chair. His face hidden beneath an outflung arm.

She turned. Looked out at the sea. The moon. Drearily, she noted it in the dark velvet of the sky. And the water, flowing to eternity, beneath its radiance.

She sat up suddenly. Such a startling quiet! No music now. And no more lights. Her mouth went forlorn. They'd forgotten all about her—Brian, and Cyn, and Burke. She was all alone on this dimmed deck. With no one near except that sleeping stranger.

She strained forward. Peered through the surrounding darkness. A man and woman in the shadows. Even as she watched, their bodies melted into one. Their lips met.

Bitterness blanched her. To be out here under the heavy warmth of this starlit night. To witness a love scene. Another woman's love scene.

She looked again. Something vaguely familiar about those two. She started. A shadow amongst other shadows. A tall thin shadow! Watching that man and woman!

The lovers kissed again. Then turned. Disappeared into a doorway. Penny's mouth drooped. To be in love like that. Oblivious to everyone. To everything. Tears blurred her. But why was she crying? Because two people were happy?

Impatiently, she dabbed at her eyes with a small handkerchief. It wasn't tears, this wetness on her lashes. It couldn't be! It was just the passing of the lonely hours. And she was sleepy now. Numb with fatigue.

She rose. Stole down the deck into a deserted salon. Mounted the steps leading to her suite. At the top of the short flight she paused. Was that Brian, striding down the corridor before her?

Her glance went wide. A door, opening noiselessly. A man, furtive upon its threshold. Stealthily following Brian.

It was that tall thin man! The one who wore dark glasses! And a knife glittered in his upraised hand!

She saw his arm flash out. The hurtle of the blade. Heard its sickening dull impact as it struck. Saw Brian stagger. Fall.

And as her mouth opened to scream her horror, the voice was strangled in her throat beneath the pressure of a smothering hand.

Who is the mysterious man whose shadow haunts Penny wherever she goes? What part does he play in this chaotic drama?



by Ruth-Ellen Storey

MARIETTE STEWART tried to hide the dark circles under her eyes with a thick dusting of powder. Bob would not approve of dark circles. Bob would notice that she was thinner, too.

She fluffed out the blouse of her pleated silk dress. She would have to drink milk, rich with cream, eat cereals and red, juicy steaks. Then her young curves would come back, and her blue eyes would not look so startlingly big in her pale oval face.

A little knot of fear caught in her throat. Maybe Bob wouldn't find her beautiful and lovable any more! Three months was a long time.

On the eve of her wedding to Bob, she had left for the Middle West to be with her father when he died. The wire came just two hours before the marriage ceremony was to have been performed.

"I have to go, Bob," she told him. "Mother wants me. Can't you see? I'll be back in two weeks and then we can be married and have the rest of our lives together."

Bob had never looked so dear and desirable as he did then, pleading with her to remain and carry out their plans. He was an orphan, and had struggled hard and alone to achieve the position he held as top-ranking bond salesman for Scott & Co., where they both worked. Naturally, he couldn't understand family responsibility. Of course, he would take it hard that she should postpone the biggest event of her life to rush to the aid of her mother.

It was unthinkable that the two weeks had stretched into three months, or that before she left her home she had seen her fading, sorrowing mother laid to rest beside the other grave. No tears came to Mariette's eyes as she thought of her father and mother now. She was alone, but they were together.

She ran the hairbrush through her curls until they gleamed with the luster of sunshine. Then she hurried into the dinette of her apartment and, for the tenth time, rearranged the breakfast table.

Bob was coming for breakfast. Last night, a late bond-club banquet had prevented him from meeting her train or coming to her afterward. He would be here any minute now. She popped a pan of biscuits into the oven, biscuits that would be crisp and golden, and as fluffy as summer clouds for Bob's delight.

Her telephone bell buzzed.

"It can't be Bob," she thought in sudden panic. "Oh, perhaps he isn't coming." Her hands trembled as she picked up the phone.

It was Tony Scott, her employer, and Mariette breathed out, "Oh," with a little sigh of relief. She wondered why her voice was shaky in her throat as she tried to thank him for keeping her position open. Bob had written her about the many girls who had tried to get her place as Tony Scott's secretary.

"I'll be at the office promptly at nine," she promised, after she had thanked him.

"That's why I called," Tony replied quickly. "Don't come down today. You'll be tired after your journey, and tomorrow will be soon enough to get into harness. However, I have a report to get out and if you would go over the records at home today, it would save time tomorrow. I'll stop by your apartment and drop the papers."

She slowly replaced the phone in its cradle. Tony Scott turning thoughtful! That wasn't like Tony. She had been his private secretary for a year—in fact, ever since he had come into his father's bond house. She thought she knew him as only a private secretary knows her boss. Charming and debonair, with an easy flair for business and living—that was Tony.

"He gets by in business on his charm," Bob always said. "He trades on his old man's name."

Mariette could see that much herself. Then she had heard plenty about Tony's other life. Bob kept her informed about Tony's wild parties. He told her of Tony's many girls. Tony collected broken hearts in strings, like his polo ponies.

She was glad she found out about him before she had added her silly, fluttering heart to the others. It had been a long time since his keen brown eyes had created those unexplainable tremors down her spine. She made her own eyes like blue ice when they looked at him and he soon understood what she meant. He

stopped using his husky, intimate voice on her. Now his orders were direct, often savage.

She realized suddenly that she had missed Tony. Even if she did dislike him, they made a wonderfully smooth working team. It would be good to get back into harness with Tony.

The coffee was bubbling, and she turned down the flame under it. Everything was ready. Bob surely must be on his way up now. She would go to the head of the stairs to meet him. She knew that it wasn't entirely her eagerness to see him that made waiting seem an eternity. The quiet apartment was giving her a sense of being entirely alone in the world.

She opened the door, almost stumbling over something that lay in her path. Then she looked down, and her eyes widened to round blue lakes in their amazement. Choking back a smothered cry, she brushed her hands swiftly across her eyes as if to clear her vision. It couldn't be possible!

Then she sank slowly to her knees, hardly aware that it was her own lips making those soft, whispering sounds. She bent closer. It couldn't be possible, but it was!

Mariette was gazing in wonderment and awe at a tiny baby, cradled in a cheap market basket.

The baby was asleep, covered with a pink, woolly blanket. There was a note fastened to the robe, and her fingers shook as she removed the pin.

She read through her tears:

DEAR KIND LADY: You will take care of my Mariette, I know. See, she bears the same name as you, and for that reason I know you will not give her to the orphanage. Please love her always.

It was unsigned.

Without hesitation, Mariette picked up the baby, basket and all, and carried it into the bedroom. Then she tiptoed out,

unlatched the catch on her door, and raced down the stairs.

There was one thought uppermost in her mind. She must find the mother and prevent her from doing this dreadful thing. The poor girl must be in terrible need of help to give up her baby. There was always a way out. And Mariette knew she could help her find the way.

Her hope sank as she scanned the deserted street. How long had the baby been at her door? How much time had been lost? She turned and ran back into the building. Of course, the mother would be hiding inside, waiting until the baby was found.

But there was no clue, although she rapidly covered the three floors of the small walk-up apartment house before she returned to her rooms. She was afraid to ask questions. If the police knew they would take the baby away from her and place it in the orphanage. That must never happen!

"Poor little Mariette," she whispered to the sleeping baby.

As if she had heard, the baby stirred in her sleep and smiled. Mariette sat very still. She could feel something new and strange coming to life within her. Why, this was her baby. This tiny, helpless human had been sent to fill the empty place in her heart.

"I'll take care of you always, little namesake," she vowed softly. "No matter what happens."

She sat by the baby until she heard Bob's ring, then she closed the bedroom door quietly and went to meet him.

He was the same dear Bob—square, dependable, and with steady eyes that made everything seem good and safe from now on. His arms were the same, and they held her close against his heart. When she didn't feel the old, arduous response to his kiss, she told herself that three months was a long time and, besides, she was overwrought from the excitement of the baby.

She drew away from his lips and buried her face against the rough tweed of his coat.

"I've missed you so much, Bob," she whispered. "I've needed you."

She knew she needed him now, more than ever. She wanted his strength and assurance in this new crisis. She needed

to hear him say that he would love tiny Mariette as much as she, and that they would keep her forever and ever. Yet, she shrank from the thought. She was afraid to tell him. Afraid of Bob? That

"That's enough from you, Bob Deems," Tony said with white-lipped finality. His arm shot out and, almost without a sound, Bob slid to the floor.



was absurd. She would tell him now, at once!

But two things happened. A wail, first tiny and obscure, then growing into a demanding cry, came from the bedroom. And smoke, black and smelling, poured from the kitchen.

"My biscuits!" Mariette cried. Then, in the next breath, "My baby!"

Bob followed her as she ran to pull the blackened smudges of biscuits from the oven. He followed her as she went to the bedroom and stooped over the basket cradle. She made clucking noises with her tongue, and the baby stopped crying and regarded her with a long, wise stare.

"Look, Bob"—her face was radiant—"her eyes are blue, like mine. And she is mine. She has my name, too. I found her at my door just a few minutes before you came. Her mother must have left her—"

Her voice was hushed and breathless as she told him the few things she knew of the baby. She handed him the note that had been pinned to the blanket, and ended, "And if we can't find her mother, we'll keep her and rear her just like one of our own, won't we?"

Her heart stood still as she looked up, searching his face, waiting for his answer. His answer came, sure and definite. And she knew now why she had been afraid to tell him. It was just like Bob. Sure and definite, proving that nothing could turn him from the ultimate, secure goal he had set for himself.

"We certainly will not! It's preposterous," he stated, waving the letter at the helpless baby as if in blame. "We know nothing of her parentage. Look at that basket, at that cheap, pink blanket. Obviously, she is from the lower classes with all the lower-class evil tendencies. We can't afford to take such chances. Besides, if you had a baby, how could you keep on with your job? No, I'll turn the whole thing over to the police, and they'll look after things."

Her question was a desperate plea.

"And if they can't find the mother?"

"In that case, they'll send her to the orphan's home, of course."

Mariette saw red—a good, healthy blood-red. She stood up to her full height and faced him defiantly.

"You'll not turn this baby over to the police!" she told him. "I'll never let her go to the orphanage. You don't understand. You're cruel, you're hard!"

Bob grew rigid in his anger, and it came to her, suddenly, that this was the first time she had ever gone against his wishes. She had always believed he was so right about everything!

Perhaps he was right in this. Perhaps tomorrow she would be sorry. Undoubtedly, it was a risky thing to take a baby from nowhere. But life itself was full of chances. To sidestep every chance, every risk, wasn't living—not true living.

Her voice softened, became gentle. "Please try to understand, Bob," she begged. "This baby came to me. If I'm all she's got, I intend to keep her. If you love me, you'll have to love me enough to love little Mariette, too."

He grasped her arm and shook her roughly. "You can't ask me to do that," he raged. "I love you, and I want you for my wife. I'm going places, Mariette. I haven't had time to tell you yet, but I was elected president of the bond club last night. Think of that! I'll be a big figure in this town soon. I can't afford to saddle myself with a foundling. Don't you see how foolish—"

He broke off abruptly, and she could see a strange glint come into his eyes. At the same time an ugly, sneering smile curled his lips. She watched him while his narrowed eyes raked her slim body slowly, with a hateful insinuation. She could only draw back trembling, powerless to move or speak.

"So," he drawled, "you thought you could put one over on me. I may be slow, but eventually I catch up. No wonder you wanted to run away on our wed-

ding night! Then you were gone three months. Look at you now! Did you think you could fool me for long?" Fury took possession of him.

"Tell me whose baby it is, Mariette!" he demanded. "Tell me the man's name, and I'll kill him! If you won't, I'll . . . I'll—" He raised his clenched fist and held it before her stricken eyes.

"Pardon me, Miss Stewart, would you care to have me throw this man out?"

It was Tony Scott. Neither Bob nor Mariette had heard him enter. They did not turn now. Bob's fist dropped, but that was all the sign he gave.

"No, no, Tony. Not yet." In her desperation, Mariette did not know that she called him by his first name. "Bob and I have something to settle first."

She swallowed over a sob in her throat. She had loved Bob so long. It wasn't over—it couldn't be over! Bob's anger must be coming from some unreasoning jealousy. It was his love for her that made him so cruel. She must try to make him see reason.

"Bob," she began softly, "it isn't my baby. I have told you the truth."

"Lies!" he contradicted. "All lies."

Her hope was being slowly crushed within her. With startling clearness she knew that love had to trust and be trusted. And love had to be forgiving. If Bob loved her enough to forgive what he thought was this sin against their love, wouldn't that be even better? It was the last desperate chance she could take.

"All right then, Bob," she said, surprised at the calm steadiness of her own voice. "It is my baby. I made a mistake and I'm sorry. Will you forgive me? Will you marry me and . . . and take my baby?"

Bob's laugh was hideous. She covered her ears, but his searing words burned through.

"Just as I thought! You tried to trick me, you . . . you— I wouldn't dirty myself with such a—"

He got no further. Without asking permission this time, Tony Scott leaped forward.

"That's enough from you, Bob Deems," he said with white-lipped finality.

Mariette's impulse was to stop him. Bob was so much heavier, Tony wouldn't have a chance. She was totally unprepared for the incredible swiftness and strength of Tony's lithe body. He waited just long enough to make it a fair fight by giving Bob time to square around, and then his arm shot out.

Accurate and forceful, his fists found their mark—first Bob's mouth, and then his chin.

Almost without a sound, Bob slid to the floor, and Tony, a disgusted grin replacing the taut line of his mouth, gripped him under the arms and dragged him out the door.

Tony closed the door gently, shutting Bob's sprawling figure out into the hall. Then he turned and dusted his hands together with exaggerated nonchalance.

"Thank you," she said in a ragged little voice. "I had no idea you were so strong."

She dropped into a chair and held onto the arms for support. Nothing seemed real. She had just lost Bob, who had been her lover, her fiancé, and she felt no pain. Her heart ought to be breaking. How could she be sitting here, looking at Tony and thinking how unsuspectingly strong he had been? She could never completely hate Tony again after the way he had helped her.

Tony lighted a cigarette, took a few puffs, then crushed it out.

"I'm sorry if I intruded," he said at length. "Your door was open so I barged in. It was bad for you, and I'm sorry about Bob. You know, he takes himself pretty seriously."

He glanced nervously toward the bedroom where the baby had been crying for some time.

"Yes, I know he does." Mariette watched Tony, puzzled. Tony was ill at

ease. He was not at all like the self-possessed Mr. Scott of office hours.

"You see, I . . . I—well, I—" he stut-tered, stopped. Then exploded with, "Well, darn it all, I could fix it up for you if you wanted me to."

She shook her head. "No, thanks. Love is love, or else it isn't. You can't fix that. I'm glad I found out that this wasn't love."

"But, Mariette, look!" Tony towered before her, demanding an answer. "You were begging him back there, begging him to marry you."

"Not exactly," she told him. "I had to be sure about his love, that was all. I had to give him every chance. I found out that Bob doesn't take chances." She smiled ruefully. "Come look at the baby. Let's forget Bob."

They went in, stood by the bed and looked down at the baby. Tony gave her a light poke and she gurgled happily. Then she screwed up her face again and cried.

Mariette laughed. "It isn't you, Tony," she explained. "Little Mariette is hungry. She needs to be fed."

"I know," Tony said. "The matron warned me she'd get hungry. There's a nursing bottle under the blanket."

Mariette whirled. She looked at Tony with wide, questioning eyes. He lowered his head, avoiding her gaze.

"The matron!" She caught him by the lapels of his coat and forced him to face her. "Tony, you . . . you did this?"

He nodded miserably. "I'm sorry, Mariette," he said humbly. "I didn't think it would be as bad as it was."

"Oh, Tony, why?"

Her question was very close to his lips because, somehow, he had put his arms about her and was holding her against him.

Without her will, those old forgotten thrills started their exquisite race through her veins. Her heart was beating in a new mad rhythm against his. Oh, she

must not be like this! If she were going to be foolish enough to love him, she must never let him know. She had too much pride to ever be another forgotten, crossed-off name in Tony's little red note-book. Bob said he kept one. Bob said—

Her mind came to a sudden halt. For one wild happy moment her heart stopped its thunder. Bob said! How stupid that she hadn't thought of it before! All the damaging stories she had ever heard about Tony had come from Bob. Bob must have been jealous of Tony the whole time.

Now Tony spoke against her cheek, and she forgot everything else. There was a throbbing caress in his husky voice as he said earnestly:

"I did it because I love you, honey. I've loved you since the first time you came into my office. I've never been able to get you out of my mind. I knew you were making a mistake about Bob. He's not a bad sort, but he's not your man. I'm your man, honey, and you're my kind of girl. You could learn to love me, if you'd just forget to hate me."

His love-hungry lips hovered over hers, and Mariette raised her own to meet them. It was a tantalizing agony of pleasure, waiting for that kiss. It flashed over her that her whole life had been steadily and constantly moving toward this priceless moment.

Then tiny Mariette screamed from her basket—an enraged, hungry wail.

Mariette fled from Tony's arms. She knelt beside the baby, searched through the blankets for the bottle and then, suddenly, straightened. She looked at Tony and two big tears welled into her blue eyes.

"Then this isn't going to be my baby," she said longingly. "Her name isn't Mariette, and she belongs to someone else. Oh, Tony, how could you?"

He drew her to her feet and gathered her in his arms.

"She's yours if you want her, darling.

And her name is Mariette. I'm on the orphanage board, you know, and when I was going through the wards the other day, I saw her. She looked so much like you that I couldn't pass by her bed. She has your quick smile, and your blue, blue eyes. Only her blue eyes didn't look at me with ice the way yours always did. When the matron told me that her mother and father were dead—an automobile accident—and that her name was Mariette, I was completely lost. I had to have her."

"Then she's really yours?"

"Not yet. She has to have a mother, too. A mother and a father. I persuaded the matron that I would make a swell father, and told her I thought I could find her a mother if I could borrow the baby for a day. It was against the rules, but she took a chance."

He put one finger under her chin and tilted her face up to his. "How about it, Mariette? Did I find her a mother?"

He seemed to read the answer in her eyes, for his hold tightened and he strained her against him. "I was sure I would, darling," he breathed. "And now about me. Did I find me a sweetheart, too? The sweetheart I've been dreaming about for a year?"

She didn't hesitate. She put both hands up and threaded her fingers in his crisp, dark hair.

"I love you, Tony," she whispered. "I know now that it never was hate. It was always love."

He kissed her then, and tiny Mariette watched from her basket, never knowing that the shining, glorious radiance that filled the room was heaven, and nothing less.

LOVE LETTER FROM BURMA

Here in far-off Burma country
 I think of primroses
 Wet with English rain,
 Of white sands and a blue, blue sea.
 I dream I am seeing gardens—
 Many gardens in the sunlight,
 Flower filled, sweetly scented,
 With fountains playing.
 Birds singing in the hedgerows.
 And I dream of a thatched roof,
 Of a door flung wide
 And a voice from somewhere inside—
 Oh, Rosemary, could it be your voice,
 My love, calling me!

DONALD H. STONE.

Unmarried Couple

PART V.



by Maysie Greig

Gloriously happy in his love for Kathleen, Clive is brought down to earth with the unexpected arrival of Claire.

THE STORY SO FAR:

Kathleen Manton, wealthy American girl, runs away half an hour before her marriage to Count de Seligny. She hides

on the barge of Clive Garston, who is on his way to England, to see his uncle who has promised to leave his estate to him

instead of to another nephew, Ralph Horton. Before he gets to England, Clive gets a letter from Ralph saying that their uncle had died, leaving the estate to Ralph. Suspicious, Clive determines to check up. He gets Kathleen to consent to pose as his wife and they hire out as butler and maid to work for the Hortons. Kathleen realizes that she is in love with Clive, but he has an "understanding" with Claire Dawlin. Petunia Horton, who has been living in the city, arrives home, bringing with her Dale Cowan. Kathleen recognizes him as having been a professional dancing partner at a hotel where she stayed with her mother. She bribes him to be silent, but he goes to her mother, nevertheless, telling her where Kathleen is. Clive confesses his love for Kathleen and asks her to marry him. Unknown to Clive, Claire has arrived to visit the Rawltons, who live next door to the Hortons. The Rawltons are discussing the Hortons' good-looking butler and his wife when Claire lets out a scream. She had known about Clive working as butler, but she can't understand about the wife.

XI.

"NO, OF COURSE not," Claire stammered. "I . . . I don't know why I was surprised. But I've never thought of butlers as having wives, although I suppose they must have. That . . . that's why I was startled."

She was talking nonsense, of course. Anything to try and cover her confusion. She couldn't believe it. They must be talking of someone else, not Clive. Perhaps Clive was a footman, or there might even be two butlers in the household.

"Jones certainly has a wife," Peter repeated, "and a mighty pretty one, too. She is the parlormaid."

Claire sank down into a chair. She mustn't—she mustn't give herself away. She had never fought so hard for self-control as she did in that moment. And

still she couldn't believe it. Clive with a wife! Oh, no, it was not possible! And yet he had written her that he had taken the name of "Jones." Was that the explanation of the change in the tone of his letters? But if he were married, he would have told her. He couldn't have let her go on in ignorance, loving him, waiting for him? No man would be as cruel as all that.

Sir Oswald was saying:

"I don't know what the modern generation is coming to! All this talk about handsome butlers—you ought to be ashamed of yourselves, children. In my young days, we never discussed servants. I mean, not in that way."

Marjorie laughed.

"Oh, we don't discuss our own, daddy, only other people's!"

But Peter was looking at Claire curiously. Why should she have been so upset to learn that the Hortons' butler had a wife?

Somehow, Claire got upstairs to her bedroom. Once there she sank down in the chair before the dressing table. She was trembling all over.

"It can't be true," she said over and over again to herself. For if it were true, how could she get through this evening? She had thought it would be a grand joke, seeing Clive masquerading as a butler. She had imagined them exchanging winks behind the others' backs, even perhaps a handclasp. But if this were true it was no longer a joke. It was a ghastly nightmare. Oh, why had she come? And yet, if it were true, wouldn't Clive have stopped her coming? Her thoughts went around in circles. Nothing seemed to make sense. But the evening had to be got through somehow, she couldn't back out now and, anyhow, if it were true, she'd have to see Clive. He must give her an explanation, otherwise she would go mad.

A clock in the hall struck seven thirty, a deep, musical chime. She sprang to her feet and started dressing, kicking off

her walking shoes, pulling off her stockings, throwing her clothes about the room anyhow.

She took the pale-green net dress with the full gathered skirt she had bought in Biarritz out of the closet. It had cost far more than she could afford, but she had bought it for Clive.

She slipped into it quickly, rolled sheer silk stockings up her slim legs and thrust her feet into silver sandals. Before she left the room she bent down and glanced for a moment at her face in the mirror. How pale she was! How curious her eyes were. She vigorously rubbed rouge into each cheek. She couldn't afford to look pale tonight.

When Peter saw her coming down the oak staircase he ran up three steps to meet her. He caught both her hands.

"Oh, Claire, you look divine. Like a fairy princess."

She smiled. "That's sweet of you, Peter." She hoped he wouldn't notice how cold her hands were, that the color in her cheeks wasn't real.

"Where's your coat?" he asked.

She gave a small laugh.

"Oh, Peter, it's far too warm for a coat!"

"Nonsense," he said. "I can't have you catching cold. Even these late-spring evenings are apt to be treacherous. You might get a chill."

She sighed mockingly: "How awful it would be married to a doctor, his mind full of chills, colds, and influenza," and then suddenly she colored.

"Wouldn't you like to be married to a doctor?"

She forced a light laugh.

"A home from home! Don't forget that my father is a doctor, Peter."

Luckily, at that moment, the others came out of the sitting room.

"Well, are we all ready?" Sir Oswald said. "The car's been at the door these past ten minutes."

There was a full moon that night. As they turned in at the driveway that led

up to Oakfield Park, the house looked as though it were standing in a silver lake. It was almost unbelievably beautiful, and for a moment Claire felt her heart stop beating. Clive's rightful home, the home she had dreamed of sharing with him.

"It's a lovely place, isn't it?" she whispered.

Peter, who was still holding one of her hands under the car robe, said with a laugh:

"At one time I was afraid my little sister was going to be mistress here, but thank heavens she didn't take to Master Ralph!"

"I'd rather live in a tent with someone I . . . I liked," Marjorie retorted.

"You mean someone like the handsome count you met today?" her brother teased her.

"Well, yes," she said, her voice half laughing, half defiant. "Wait till you see him tomorrow, Peter. He's like something out of one of the pages of those sophisticated novels I adore."

"Did you tell him you had a mere twenty thousand a year of your own? That should encourage any count," he said brutally.

"How dare you, Peter?" she flashed back.

The chauffeur opened the door and helped the women out of the car. Peter pressed the bell, and Claire stood taut and rigid, scarcely breathing. The seconds seemed hours before she heard footsteps crossing the polished hallway. Would it be Clive? And if it were, how could she face him? Suddenly, the door was flung open and there Clive stood, incredibly handsome; for some odd reason the butler's costume didn't make him look even faintly comic. She caught her breath in a hoarse, rasping sound.

"Claire, what is it?" Peter turned toward her anxiously.

"It's all right. I . . . I was trying to smother a cough."

Clive ushered them into the hall and then he saw for the first time that Claire

was with them. He stared at her as though he could not believe his eyes. Luckily, the others were occupied taking off their wraps at that moment, but Claire saw him start and for a moment their eyes met—hers tragic, demanding, his startled and embarrassed and a little angry, too. Why had she come upon him like this without giving him any fair warning?

After that one glance they did not look at each other again. He led them into the drawing room where Mrs. Horton, Ralph, and Petunia were waiting. Clive poured out the sherry and passed the glasses around on a tray. As he stood before Claire, her lips framed the words: "I must see you." He coughed and said loudly: "I think some of the sherry in that glass spilled over, miss. I'll get you another one." She followed him to the table on which rested the decanter of sherry, and while he poured out a fresh glass for her, he said in a very low voice without looking at her: "Tomorrow afternoon at three o'clock by the stile behind the Red Boar Inn."

Claire did not go back to join the others immediately, she was feeling too faint. She drank the sherry almost at a gulp.

Presently, she forced herself to walk back to join the group about the fireplace. She sat on a deep couch beside Marjorie.

Marjorie whispered: "What did you think of the butler? He is good-looking, isn't he?"

She nodded. "He certainly is," and even tried to laugh.

"But wait till you've seen my count!" Marjorie went on in the same whisper. "He looks as though he could ride well, too; he has the right sort of figure."

Petunia seemed restless. She paid no attention to what anyone was saying. She stood by the mantel shelf smoking one cigarette half through and then throwing it into the fireplace. What was this mysterious business which had taken Dale up

to London?—she wondered. He had refused to tell her anything about it, but when he had returned, he had showed her a check for five hundred dollars signed by a woman named Lucy Manton.

"There'll be more coming," he had said. "Things are looking up, my pet. We might even be able to finance a little dance club of our own on the Riviera."

Clive stood for a moment outside the closed door to get his breath and take stock of the situation. Claire was here—actually here in the house. Why hadn't she let him know she was coming? How was he to go through this evening and carry out his duties with those anxious, demanding eyes of hers upon him? And what of Kathleen? Had Claire heard that he was supposed to be married and Kathleen was his wife? Was that the reason for the agonized accusation he had read in her eyes?

He went below to the butler's pantry. Kathleen was arranging some silver on a tray. He closed the door and stood with his back to it.

"She's here, Kathleen. I don't know why or how she's here, but she is."

She turned her head toward him. "You mean the girl you were in love with, Claire Dawlin?"

He came and stood beside her. "I know now I was never in love with her, but I got the shock of my life when I saw her standing there in the hall with the Rawltons."

"You didn't know she was coming?"

"You know I didn't know. I would have told you."

"I'm glad you would have told me."

"What are we going to do about her?"

She gave a small laugh.

"Isn't it rather what are you going to do about her? How are you going to feel about her now that you've seen her again?"

"I told you this afternoon I love you. That still holds, Kathleen," he spoke roughly, as though half ashamed to show his emotion.

She felt a tremor run through her. She was conscious of a sense of happiness that was almost unbearable.

"Kathleen"—he caught hold of her arm and his voice was hoarser—"I wish I'd written her about us before."

"Were you afraid to write her?"

"I suppose so," he admitted. "Yes, I guess I was a coward. I should have written her the truth from the first. But I couldn't believe—" He stopped.

"You mean you couldn't believe you'd fallen in love with me, a crook, whom you think no better than she should be!" Her voice was suddenly bitter, taunting him.

"Look here," he began angrily, when there was a knock on the door.

"Mr. Jones"—it was Effie's rather scared voice. "Dinner's been ready to serve these past five minutes, and Mrs. Beeton is having a fit."

"All right, Effie," Clive called sharply. "Tell Mrs. Beeton I'll announce dinner at once."

It was not the most cheerful of dinner parties. Mrs. Horton talked to Sir Oswald. Peter, Marjorie, and Ralph made desultory conversation. Claire was silent. Petunia and Dale seemed occupied with themselves. Clive and Kathleen moved about the room, serving the meal. Kathleen was terribly aware that Claire's eyes rested upon her often. "She must know!" Kathleen thought, and felt her heart turn cold.

Claire's face was so very white, those spots of rouge on her cheeks stood out grotesquely and there was real misery and mortification in her blue eyes. It was all very well to fight a rival whom one had never seen, Kathleen reflected soberly, who was nothing but a name, but to fight this fair, blue-eyed child who obviously had no weapons to fight back with, was as bad as murder. They said everything was fair in love and war, but to be haunted by those tragic blue eyes of Claire's all her life would be almost

unbearable. "How hateful life is," she thought.

She almost wished she had never gone into this adventure, and yet she could not quite wish that. Whatever happened in the future, she would have the memory of Clive's arms about her, his kisses on her lips, his voice saying: "I love you. No matter what you've been, I love you, Kathleen. I want to look after you, to protect you."

That night as she started to go up to her room, Clive followed her and caught her by the arm.

"What's the matter, Kathleen? You are going to bed very early."

"Perhaps I'm tired."

"Well, I'm tired, too." He ran a hand through his rough fair hair. "Thank heavens, the party ended early. One might almost think the guests hadn't been amused. The family seemed a bit out of sorts, too. I gather Master Ralph's suit with Miss Rawlton isn't going any too well." He seemed to be talking to avoid saying anything that mattered.

She burst out suddenly: "Oh, Clive, she's pretty, isn't she, and sweet?"

He said: "Whom are you talking about?" But he knew. There was a pause. Then he said gravely: "Yes, she is pretty and she's sweet, too, Kathleen. I'm a cad, because I'm going to hurt her so much." His hands clenched by his sides. "If only one needn't hurt the nice people in life, but it seems those are the ones one is always hurting. The villains escape, or perhaps they never lay themselves open to be hurt. I . . . I wish I'd never seen her again."

She said in an odd, cracked voice: "One can justify oneself in doing anything against a person one has never seen. One can even be callous about their sufferings. It's like reading in the paper that thousands have been killed in a South American earthquake. You're sorry, but you can't really feel it. I couldn't feel for her, or perhaps I wouldn't let myself, until I actually saw



*Clive poured out
the sherry and
passed the glasses
around on a tray.
As he stood before
Claire, her lips
framed the words:
"I must see you."*

her tonight sitting there looking so bewildered. Oh, Clive, if you were going to tell her, you should have told her before. You shouldn't have let her come here!"

"I didn't know she was coming. I swear it, Kathleen."

"You should have made it impossible. Why didn't you write and tell her before?" Her voice broke again. "You said you were a coward, but is that the only explanation?" Suddenly she put out her hands and gripped his arms. "Clive, you must tell me. You had so much time to write to her."

"But I didn't know I loved you," he growled hoarsely. "At least I knew, but I wouldn't let myself admit it. Heaven help me, Kathleen, if you want the truth, I didn't want to love you. You weren't the sort of girl I wanted to make my wife. I wanted a sweet girl like Claire."

Her hands dropped from his arms. "I see." She turned away from him and started to go on up the stairs, but he followed her.

"Kathleen, but you do know I love you now?" he pleaded. "I love you more than anything in the world. I don't care who you are or what you have done. I want to marry you."

She swung around to face him again. "But supposing you were with Miss Dawlin again for days, for weeks, as you have been with me? Mightn't you come to love her again and remember me as just a . . . a dream?"

"I swear I love you, Kathleen," he repeated. "I swear it by everything—"

But she broke in upon him again: "Don't swear anything tonight, Clive. It's too late to go in for dramatics and we're both too tired."

"My darling!" He tried to draw her into his arms.

"Oh, Clive!" She looked up into his face and her brown eyes were full of tears. "If you'd only admitted that you loved me sooner! If we'd only been married before I saw her!"

"But you do love me?" he insisted, and now his arms were close about her.

"Heaven help me, I do," she whispered as his lips met hers.

Kathleen did not remember to go down and see Johnny until well after lunch. She was too mentally distressed. She loved Clive, but could she take her happiness and know she would be breaking this other girl's heart? She longed to be with him every moment, to be reassured of his love; and yet, perversely, she avoided him. Nothing could be decided, she felt, nothing settled, until he had seen Claire today. "She must have her chance," she thought, "as I have had mine." Her lips twisted wryly. "I hope I'm a good enough sport for that!"

It was after two when she remembered about Johnny and, being free, she went down to his cottage.

Johnny did not seem so convinced that he was going to die that day. He had got up and dressed himself and was not only far more cheerful but he seemed comparatively sane.

"You've come," he said eagerly when he saw her. "You're a good girl, missie, and Johnny has got to share his secret with someone. Supposing he should die and there was no one to tell the master's nephew about the will? That's what I've been thinking, missie, since I've been lying in my bed. You see, the master trusted the will with me. He took it out of his pocket and gave it to me as he lay dying when the gamekeeper had gone to the house for help."

"He gave you a will?" Kathleen couldn't keep back the sharp exclamation.

The old man nodded and went on: "It's only a draft will, Johnny," the master gasped out, "but it's properly witnessed by the butler and his wife. So it's all right, but don't give it to them, that Horton crowd, Johnny. They might destroy it. You keep it safe and give it to my nephew, Clive Garston, when he ar-

rives from Australia. Put it into his hands yourself.'

"I took the paper, missie," Johnny went on after another brief pause. "But I was afeared of bringing it back with me. There are those here who says I'm not right in my mind. You know who I mean," he went on darkly, "and I thought maybe they'd be liable to search my cottage, so I hid the paper near where the master died." He chuckled suddenly. "Oh, I knew it would be safe enough there! I've hidden things there since I was a kid. I've been waiting for the master's Australian nephew to come, as Sir Richard said he would, but he hasn't come. Maybe those folks, those wicked folks up at the house"—he cast an angry, resentful glance through the window—"are keeping him away from here. That's why I want you to know about the will and where I hid it, so that if anything happens to poor Johnny you can give it to the master's nephew—"

He was suddenly clutching her arm. "You will do it, missie, you swear you will? You see, Johnny promised the master."

Kathleen could scarcely control her own excitement, but she managed to say with a semblance of calmness: "Don't worry, Johnny, I'll see that this will gets into the hands of Sir Richard's nephew. You see, I know where he is."

"You know where he is?" the old man shouted.

"Yes," she said. "But now let us go and find this will. Then I promise you Sir Richard's nephew will have it immediately."

It took them about fifteen minutes to reach the place where, from childhood, Johnny had hidden his most prized possessions. He had been born, he told her, in a cottage which had once stood near this spot, but which had since burned down.

The hiding place was in a gnarled trunk of an old tree, but it was located

so high up that it could only have been found by the sheerest accident.

In spite of his age and his many infirmities, Johnny climbed the tree as though it were something he had been doing every day of his life. Kathleen was amazed. For a time he was hidden from view among the bright-green foliage but, presently, he was down on the ground again, clutching a folded piece of paper, dirty from lying so long in the tree trunk. He pushed it into Kathleen's hands. She opened it and read:

This is the last Will and Testament of I, Richard Brendon Garston. I do hereby revoke all previous Wills and I bequeath—(there followed numerous legacies to servants, friends and relatives) and I leave the residue of my entire estate, together with the remainder of my capital, to my nephew, Clive Brendon Garston.

(Signed) RICHARD BRENDON GARSTON.

(Witnessed by) HERBERT PRICE (Butler)
MARY PRICE (Cook)

"Oh, Johnny!" Kathleen could not contain her joy. Tears were streaming down her cheeks. She could scarcely speak. "You don't know how wonderful it is finding this!" She drew his arm through hers. "But now we are both going back to the house and we are going to give this to Sir Richard's nephew. I won't tell you any more now, but, oh, let us hurry, Johnny!"

She started to walk back toward the house, almost running, dragging Johnny with her; but suddenly she paused. She stood very still. Her face was whiter than the white collar at her throat, her brown eyes were staring, for there, in the clearing a short distance away from them but with their backs toward them, were Clive and Claire. His arms were about her, her head was resting against his shoulder.

XII.

Clive was at the meeting place for some minutes before Claire came. The

green dress she wore with the small red flowers embroidered on it was so horribly in contrast to her very white face, her anguished eyes, that he turned his head sharply away from her. She looked as though she hadn't slept all that night and, as a matter of fact, she hadn't.

"Hello, Clive." The note of forced gaiety in her voice was pathetic.

"Hello, Claire." But he did not smile. He took both her hands. "I'm terribly sorry. That sounds easy to say, I know, but what else can I say?"

"Then . . . then it's true?" she whispered. "That woman, the one who is the parlormaid, is your wife?"

He shook his head. "No."

She glanced up at him sharply, her blue eyes staring, her face suddenly red. "Then . . . then—"

"It isn't that either, Claire," he said earnestly. "You must believe that. Had it been, I . . . I would have written you. I wouldn't have let you go on believing —" He broke off.

"Believing you loved me," she whispered. Her eyes entreated his, her lips trembled. "Don't you love me any longer, Clive?"

"Yes," he said, "but not . . . as I love Kathleen. Heaven help me, Claire, but I have to tell you the truth."

"I see," she murmured when he had finished and she closed her eyes. Suddenly she opened them again and cried: "Who is this girl, Clive? What do you know about her? How do you know if she is a fit person to be your wife?"

"I love her," he said roughly "That's enough."

"But you thought you loved me."

His voice was suddenly humble. "I did love you, Claire, but almost as one loved the princess in a fairy story. You were so different from every other girl I'd met. I will think of you like that always."

She caught her breath for a moment. "But you think fairy stories aren't life?"

He hesitated. "I suppose that's what I do mean."

"Oh, Clive, is it fair to me? If we were together again, I might step out of the pages of a fairy story and become real, too. Are you sure you really love her? Couldn't it just be an infatuation, because all these weeks you have been thrown into such close proximity with her?"

"Do you think I haven't asked myself that?" he said harshly. "Do you think I could bear to hurt you like this if I wasn't sure? I hate myself because of what I'm doing to you. I almost hate her because of it, but I can't hate her. I love her. I'm sorry, Claire, but I love her terribly."

"Oh, Clive, Clive!" she whispered.

He saw she was crying. She wasn't even attempting to check the tears running down her cheeks. He took both her hands again. "What can I do, Claire, what can I say to you?"

She tried to fight back her tears. "I think you've said enough, Clive. I'll get over it, I suppose, one gets over these things, or so they say."

"Oh, Claire, what can I do for you?" His voice was a groan.

"Put your arms around me once more," she whispered. "Just once more and then I'll go quickly. I won't make a fuss. I'll even try not to cry any more. But just once, Clive—so I shall remember."

"Claire, you are too good," he muttered. He put his arms about her and held her gently to him. He bent once and kissed her lips. "My dear, I'm awfully sorry."

She drew away from him. "That's all right, Clive, don't worry. Good-by."

She turned and without another word left him, walking straight through the woods, her small body erect. "Good-by, good-by, good-by," she kept saying it to herself, and presently, because she had to do something desperate, she started to run.

"Kathleen, you do know I love you now?" Clive pleaded. "I love you more than anything in the world. I don't care who you are or what you have done. I want to marry you."



Peter was out in the woods looking for her. One of the gardeners had said she had gone down this path, so he had followed her. He had been worried about her all day. That morning he had been shocked when he had seen her face across the breakfast table; almost ghostlike with those dark circles under her eyes. What

was troubling her? Something very serious, he knew. It seemed to have all come upon her so suddenly, too. When he had met her boat, she had been so gay, so

full of laughter and happiness; now she was like a wraith haunted by tragedy.

He couldn't bear to think of her being unhappy, she was too sweet a kid. Why, she was made for laughter and happiness with those blue eyes of hers and her bright golden hair. He loved the mischievous dimple that showed in her cheek when she smiled. He loved every blessed thing about her. He felt his heart tighten, his teeth set. If anyone was hurting her or harming her, let that person look out! Suddenly in a bend in the pathway which led through the wood he stopped short. She was running toward him, her head bent. He had to grasp both her arms and shake her a little before she realized he was there.

"Claire, what is the matter? Oh, my dear, my dearest Claire, don't cry, please. I've seen you were in trouble all day and I've been so worried."

She looked up at him, her tears stopped. She said in a ghost of a voice: "I'm sorry, Peter, but why should you care?"

He put his arms about her, his one idea was to comfort her. "I don't know," he said in a muffled voice, "except that I've fallen for you in a big way, if that's any reason. I suppose I've been half in love with you all my life, even though you were scarcely more than a kid. Look here, darling, you're in trouble; you've got to tell me what it's all about. I'm sure I'll be able to help you."

"It's nothing you could help me in," she said, but her sobbing had quieted. The feel of his arms about her was comforting. The pain was still there in her heart, but there was no longer that awful agony of despair.

"Come back to the house, darling," he pleaded, "and while we walk, tell me if you can bring yourself to. I hate the thought of there being any secrets between us."

And, presently, as they walked back along the pathway, arm in arm, toward

the lovely old house, she told him the whole story.

"The fellow is a cad!" he cried harshly when she had finished.

"Oh, no, he isn't, Peter! One can't help love—even I know that. Clive was terribly distressed. I know this is something which has come upon him unawares. Oh, if only one could help love!"

Suddenly, he swung toward her and took her in his arms. "I'm glad one can't help love, Claire, my darling. If one could, I might be able to help loving you. But I know I can no more help loving you than you can help loving him. I won't ask you to say anything encouraging to me now. I know that would be impossible, but just say you're glad that I can't help loving you. Just say my love gives you some measure of comfort, just say you'll let me help you forget him."

"Oh, Peter." She smiled faintly. "If you will let me talk to you, if you will try and understand, it will mean so much."

He shook her a little. Then he bent and kissed the tears off her cheeks. "You little goose," he said tenderly, "I'm going to do more than that. I'm going to take you out of yourself. We're going to do so many different things together within the next few weeks that you won't have time for even one regret. You can forget that I've said I love you. Just think of me as a friend who understands and later, after I've passed my exam, we'll go to Perrier together and I'll have a chance of meeting your father, who my father tells me is one of the finest men in the world."

"Oh, Peter," she sighed, "I don't know what I should do without you. I felt like dying, but now—"

"Yes?" He tried to keep the eagerness out of his voice.

She gave again that very faint smile. "Well, I don't want to die anyhow," she said.

Kathleen had stood there just long enough to register in her mind the fact that Clive had his arms about Claire and her face was pressed against his shoulder. She even saw him bend to kiss her. She turned abruptly away, dragging Johnny by the arm without giving him a chance to recognize who the couple were.

"Let's go the other way," she said. "One doesn't want to disturb lovers, does one?"

"Oh, no," Johnny chuckled. "One doesn't want to disturb lovers."

She walked so fast he could hardly keep pace with her. She was not running, yet she seemed to be.

"What's the matter, missie?" he asked. "You look as though you'd seen a ghost."

"Maybe I have, Johnny," she said, and again her voice grated. "Maybe I've seen a ghost of what might have been. There can be ghosts of the future, as well as ghosts of the past—at least, I think there can be. But now we must get back to the house. I have to leave this will and a letter for your late master's nephew, Clive Garston."

"Do you know Mr. Clive Garston?" Johnny asked incredulously.

"Yes, I know him," she said. "You know him, too, Johnny. Listen, I'll tell you a secret. Mr. Clive Garston, Sir Richard's nephew, is none other than my . . . my husband whom you know as the butler, Mr. Jones. You see, Sir Richard wrote to him telling him he was going to leave him this place, and then Sir Richard died and there didn't appear to be any will, so Clive came over here and took this position to try to find out if there had been a later will." She said it all very slowly, as one explains things to a child, and finally he seemed to grasp it.

"You mean Mr. Jones is the master's nephew?" he cried. "Oh, missie, I'm glad. He's been so kind to me. One day he knocked Hawkins into the vegetable bed for my sake, didn't he?" He chuck-

led. "Hawkins has been mad as ten snakes ever since!"

"Well, no one will hurt you from now on, Johnny," she said as she hastened along. "Mr. Clive will see to that. He'll be a good master to you. He'll be a fine master of Oakfield Park." Her voice broke a little.

"But you . . . you're his wife, missie. You'll be here, too?"

"I don't think so, Johnny." There was a catch in her voice. "But we won't talk of that now. We'll concentrate on hurrying back to the house. Don't say anything about this to anyone now. Promise me that, Johnny. Don't say anything to anyone until Mr. Clive gives you permission to do so. You understand?"

The old man nodded. "Yes, I understand. Poor old Johnny won't say a word. And maybe," he added, smiling, "he ain't going to die so soon neither. If the master's nephew comes to this place there'd be no sense in old Johnny dying, would there?"

"No sense at all," she said brusquely. "You're not going to die, Johnny. You're going to live on here with Mr. Clive for years and years."

"And you, missie?"

"I—" She gave a small, hollow laugh. "Maybe I'll be miles away, Johnny. But you know I'll be thinking of you, don't you? Thinking both of you and Mr. Clive." She blinked angrily as though ashamed of the emotion which threatened her.

Yes, she would be far away. But where? At the moment that did not seem to matter. The only thing that mattered was that she should get away quickly. She had seen Clive's arms about Claire. That could mean only one thing; seeing her again he had realized he still loved her.

Claire was sweet. Even she, Kathleen, admitted that. She had liked Claire immediately. If she hadn't, she could not have given up Clive to her. She would have stayed and fought for him.

Once they were back in Oakfield Park she went up to her bedroom. She sat down at the small table near the window and wrote:

DEAR CLIVE:

I saw your arms about Claire in the woods today. Believe me, I wasn't spying; I was out there with Johnny. We just stumbled upon you. I understand, of course. You've found out that you really love her, after all, and I don't blame you in the least. This is my parting gift to you. Your uncle's will in draft form. It is duly witnessed and signed by the butler and his wife who were here while your uncle was alive and who I think I heard are now in Cumberland, but it should be quite easy to trace them. I didn't have to crack a safe to get it. Johnny had it all the time, waiting for your uncle's nephew to appear, but when he thought he was going to die he became scared. And so he gave it to me, to pass on to Clive Garston.

Good luck to both you and Claire. Don't worry about me; I'll get along.

KATHLEEN.

She left the letter and the inclosure in a conspicuous position on Clive's dressing table, then she went back to her own room and started to pack. She was owed a week's wages, anyhow. The Hortons could think what they liked. It would not make it awkward for Clive either, since he had that will. None of the staff she cared very much about except Effie, so it did not matter not saying good-by to them. She could write to her afterward and try to do something to help her.

The suitcase was heavy, but she struggled down the back stairs with it. She hoped to escape through a side door without anyone seeing her, but one of the treads near the bottom of the staircase was loose. She fell headlong just as Ralph was crossing the front hall. He pushed open the door and ran into the back passage to find Kathleen bending down to pick up her suitcase. He looked from her to the suitcase.

"What does this mean?" he demanded, and then his crafty eyes narrowed. "Making a getaway, eh?"

"I've a perfect right to go if I wish to," she said with as much dignity as she could muster in the circumstances. "You can keep my week's salary in lieu of notice."

"It's not quite so easy as all that," he said and smiled unpleasantly down at her. "You should give us a month's notice, not a week. Besides, what's the idea of sneaking off without so much as a by your leave? Does your fine husband, whom you have told me was such a good boxer, know about this?" His voice was openly caustic.

"Even if I am entitled to give you a month's notice, you can't keep me here by force," she said.

"Perhaps not," he agreed. "But, at least, we're entitled to have a look through your suitcase before you go. What about those bracelets I once saw on your arm? Those weren't honestly come by. How do I know you haven't got things in your suitcase which belong to us? Come now"—he caught hold of her wrist—"you're coming with me into the drawing room, you're going to open up that case in front of my mother and myself. After that, you can go if you like and good riddance to you, but we're going to make sure that none of our valuables leave with you."

She couldn't resist him, he was too strong for her. Besides, she was still shaken by the fall and, anyhow, they wouldn't find anything of theirs in her suitcase. She only prayed they would get the search over and let her go before Clive returned.

Mrs. Horton, in a white silk dress, was sitting knitting in one of the armchairs. She looked up in surprise as Ralph brought Kathleen into the room and deposited her suitcase on the floor.

"I suppose you didn't know that Kathleen was leaving us, did you, mother?"

Mrs. Horton's small eyes flew wide open. "Certainly not," she snapped. "What is the idea?"

"I found her about to leave the house



"What did I tell you, mother?" Ralph cried triumphantly. "Would an honest parlormaid have jewelry like this in her possession?" Kathleen stood motionless, trembling with rage.

carrying her suitcase, and since I am rather doubtful about her past, despite Mrs. Wyman's excellent recommendation"—again that caustic note was back in his voice—"I thought it would be as well for

us to look through her case before she goes. It seems rather odd her leaving in this way without her husband, or is our worthy butler really your husband, Mrs. Jones?"

A bright color flooded Kathleen's cheeks.

"Ha-ha!" he gloated, his hands in his pockets. "I thought as much!" He turned toward his mother. "This girl is no more Mrs. Jones than I am, mother. I've thought that reference of theirs was phony for some time past. I bet neither of them have ever been in Mrs. Wyman's service. She's probably in it with them and, if you ask me, I think they're as pretty a pair of crooks as anyone has set eyes on for many a long day!"

"How dare you?" Kathleen said, her voice hot with fury, her brown eyes blazing.

"Say, but she is lovely when she gets mad," he thought. "Why wasn't she a little nicer to me? Then this scene need never have happened."

"Disgraceful," Mrs. Horton snorted. "I'm sure you're right, Ralph. And to think we have had people like that under our very roof! If I find anything of ours in this woman's case I shall have the police here. I don't hold with condoning thieving—even petty thieving. I never did. What about the supposed husband? Was he going with her?"

Ralph shook his head. "It doesn't seem so. But, undoubtedly, he meant to join her later. That's the way these people work."

"Well, open up her case," Mrs. Horton said impatiently. "Even if there's nothing of ours, she'll never get a reference from me!"

Kathleen was standing motionless, facing Mrs. Horton and Ralph with stiff, compressed lips. Inwardly, she was trembling with rage. How dare these people speak to her like this? And yet how could she get out of this intolerable situation without confessing everything, who she was, just why she had come here?

Better let them look through her suitcase and be done with it. She had forgotten for the moment the jewelry which she had taken with her that day she had fled from Perrier and which was now thrust in one corner of her case.

But it wasn't many minutes before, with a definite cry of triumph, Ralph discovered it. He found a diamond bracelet, a long rope of pearls, an exquisite sapphire-and-diamond necklace with earrings to match, and various other trinkets. He produced them triumphantly before his mother's startled gaze.

"What did I tell you, mother?" he cried. "Would an honest parlormaid have jewelry like this in her possession? For these are no fakes, I'll guarantee that! Obviously, the girl is a thief and I'll bet the police will be glad enough to lay their hands upon her and I'll bet they'll have a fair idea where this stuff came from, too. Jewelry as valuable as this can't be missing without the police being on the watch for it."

He turned back toward Kathleen with an unpleasant grin.

"Why didn't you cash in on it, darling? Was the hue and cry too hot? Did you think you'd wait a little while before turning it all over to some fence?"

"That jewelry is mine," Kathleen said in a cold, even voice. "Put it back in my case at once, please. Otherwise, it is I who shall have you arrested for theft. You will find no property of yours in my suitcase."

"Didn't you think mother's jewelry was valuable enough to add to this collection?" he asked with the same smirking, detestable grin.

"It certainly isn't," Kathleen flared, suddenly quite beside herself. "I know something about jewelry and most of your mother's jewelry is false."

"Oh, ho!" he chuckled. "So that's why you're going? Not worth your while staying here any longer in the circumstances, of course!"

"I didn't mean that," Kathleen said furiously.

"Didn't you?" He turned toward his mother. "Nevertheless, I think she had better do a little explaining to the police, don't you, mother?"

"I agree with you, Ralph," Mrs. Horton said decisively. "I think you had better telephone for the police at once."

But before Ralph got to the telephone, his attention was caught by the sound of a car coming up the drive. He glanced through the window and said:

"A limousine, mother. You must have callers. We'd better get this girl into the morning room. We can lock her up there until your visitors have gone, then we can get hold of the police."

"Who is it, Ralph dear?" Mrs. Horton asked. "If it's no one important I can say I am out." She was enjoying this scene far too much to have it interrupted by a mere casual caller.

"It's Dale," Ralph said a few moments

later, after the limousine had drawn up before the front door. "He's got someone with him, a small woman but very well dressed. He did say something last night about having a wealthy American friend come to stay in the neighborhood. Perhaps you'd better—" His words were interrupted by the loud peal of the bell.

Kathleen caught her breath sharply. Had Clive returned? Would he answer the bell? But apparently he hadn't returned for, after a pause during which the bell pealed again insistently, Lottie went to answer it.

"I've brought a friend of mine to call upon Mrs. Horton," they heard Dale's voice in the hallway. "She is at home, isn't she, Lottie?"

"Oh, yes, sir, I think she is. If you'll wait a moment, sir—"

"Oh, that's quite all right, don't bother to announce us," Dale was speaking again. "I'll take Mrs. Manton to her myself."

It never rains but it pours! What will Kathleen do now that her mother has arrived? How will she explain Clive to her mother and Jean, the man who is waiting to marry her?

TO BE CONCLUDED.

THANK YOU

It was a gorgeous place
Wherein we met, and joy was ours;
The moon made such a silver space
Midst perfume of flowers;
And how we talked and then grew still,
My hand in yours—
I shall remember it and thrill,
While time endures.

GRACE MEREDITH.

PARIS

in the spring

Tender memories of an idyllic past, of magic and crazy romance under moonlit skies.



by Nancy Crosby

JUDY had stayed in Paris too long. She should have gone home with the other buyers instead of letting Maida Carr, her partner, take back their samples. But she had memories to check up on, and so she'd lingered.

And now even the American embassy

couldn't advise her as to just what she might expect in the way of transportation. They suggested an automobile to Genoa, and a possible boat. And she said she'd have to go back to her hotel and count her money.

The only shop open in the Rue de Rivoli was a little tobacconist's. She stopped and bought cigarettes, thinking how hard it was to believe there was war, even in the face of mobilization and excitement. The Paris of six months ago had been such a different place. Paris in the spring, a Paris of magic and crazy romance. Her mind went back to it. She thought it was part of her memories when she saw that car.

It was standing right in front of the door to her hotel—a long streamlined roadster, coupé of a famous American make. And the sight of it stopped her heart. But those crazy memories rushed on.

They'd driven that car out to Versailles. And along the Champs Elysées, to find moonlight in the Bois. To their particular little place on the Left Bank, to Montmartre. They'd sat in it and looked across at the Basilica of Sacre Cœur in the dawn. They had— But now something roughly awakened her from memories. A long blast of a siren, then sharp staccato notes, vivid with warning. It was no longer Paris in the spring. It was a shadow-darkened Paris, in spite of the sunshine. She'd better hurry. But when she tried, her feet suddenly seemed like lead.

Then someone grabbed her, dragging her along to the dimness of the hotel lobby, almost tumbling her down the long steps into the hotel's wine cellar. She sensed the fright in the candlelighted faces of the other guests. But she couldn't believe the rest of it. Eric's tall lithe figure, making a long shadow on the wall, Eric, as bronzed and fit as ever. Gray eyes as cool, mouth as dangerously tender, chin just as stubborn as it had been that night in that glittering

Parisian dance place, when somebody had introduced her to that young under-secretary from the American embassy.

"You're not to dance with him again!" Eric had told Judy tensely. And, after that, he'd said a lot of other things that Judy wouldn't give him the chance to be sorry for. She'd sailed from Havre, and he'd taken the plane for England. After that, there had been complete silence and utter emptiness.

And now he was saying, as impersonally as if he'd never met her before, "If this isn't a real bombing, and if my car is still out there when they signal 'all clear,' I'm driving you to Italy. I've been promised space on a boat from Genoa. I've already had your bags put into the baggage compartment of the car. I told the porter it was all right, that you . . . you were my wife."

Judy gasped. But she met his eyes levelly. She'd be a fool to pass up a chance like this. One of the men here in the cellar had just said that Paris taxi men were being called to the colors by the dozens already, and that train service couldn't be counted on because of moving troops. She'd better take it just as Eric offered it—one American to another, in a terribly tight spot.

An hour later, they were on their way, somehow managing to talk casually about their chances of making that boat, wondering if the others at Hotel Rivoli had finally gotten cars, regretting that this car was only a two-seater, wondering if maybe they'd been criminally selfish, not squeezing in another person.

Everything was very cool, very commonplace, until Eric said, "I don't care about any of 'em except you. I came to France to get you."

That suddenly made it hard for Judy to talk. It sounded like the old Eric. Then she straightened her shoulders. He probably thought she'd been seeing that young secretary, Rate Lovell, again on this trip.

"You needn't have troubled," she told

him dryly. "I'd probably have managed just as well alone."

It was getting dark now. She could just see Eric's big shoulders dim against the dusk. He was driving with the top down, just as they always used to. And his brown hair was awry in the wind.

All the world around them was sweet with the scent of hay. A rising full moon glowed on the edge of the sky. But there was a war. And there was bitterness between them. Crazy, all of it. Everything wrong, and yet Eric's sleeve touched her arm. She could smell the fragrance of the tobacco he always used, the tang of tweed clothes, the man touch that a girl misses so horribly after she'd had her man and lost him.

It was dark—not a light anywhere. They crept through with their car lights out, too. Suddenly, Judy shivered. It was all just like Eric and her—blackness and distrust, and no good reason—yet she could bring him to her with the slightest movement of her slender body, with a hand on his arm, with a whispered word. He could have her back by just reaching out and putting his arm around her. But they rode on in the dark, not speaking, eyes straight on the dim road ahead.

Eric was pushing on, not stopping anywhere yet. If they didn't catch that boat — But at Nimes he decided they'd better put up for the night.

"There's a comfortable hotel here," he said suavely. "And we're a good way out of Paris. It's as safe as anywhere, and you've got to rest."

Safe? Judy wondered about that a few moments later. The landlord was making a thousand apologies for his lack of service. "Half my men have already been called," he explained. "And my house is full of Americans trying, like yourselves, to get to the border. The only room I have is small, and with but a single bed. Still, perhaps monsieur and madame could manage."

Judy held her breath, hating herself for wanting to laugh, hating Eric for his

casual, "Certainly we can. It will be quite all right, I assure you."

All through the excellent dinner she tried not to think of it. She managed, somehow, to keep to a cool casualness herself, in spite of the glowing moon that hung over the garden—the same mad sort of moon that had lighted Eric's eyes there in the Bois that night, when his kiss had torn her heart apart.

Moonlight and the smell of flowers, and a stillness that took one's breath. And Eric right here beside her, yet so far away. She snuggled deep into the big garden chair to keep from reaching out to him. She was so deathly tired with that long, harrowing ride. The kind of weariness that aches for comforting. But a pride that was stronger than her need, held her back.

Eric was smoking. The moonlight touched his face, and she saw its weariness, too. He'd come to France to get her. He'd take her home to safety, or die doing it. Just one American to another.

Suddenly, out of the moonlit sky, from all the air around them, came a sound—a doleful whimpering at first, then a rising sound of warning that shrieked through the stillness in an ever-increasing crescendo that made terror of the night.

The lights in the inn blacked out in a breath. But the moon over the garden was like a spotlight of doom. For the first time in all these days of trying to get out of France, Judy was realizing the reality of the war. Those sirens, here in the peace and quiet of the garden!

She heard Eric's breath sing through him, like a man who had been running. In another swift second, he had caught her up and was racing to the house with her.

In the blackness of the hall he managed to find the stairs. A tiny light on the doorsill showed where their room was. But the room itself was utterly dark.

Eric set Judy on her feet. But his



The touch of his hands burned into her and sent her blood to fever heat. She'd have to get out of here. This was too dangerous. In another moment she'd be flinging herself into his arms.

arms still held her. And she knew his racing breath now had nothing to do with air raids. It had raced like that one mad night in New York, when they'd done all the places from the Starlight Roof to Harlem, when they danced to the beat of drums in a crazy place near Lenox Avenue, and Eric had asked her to marry him.

For a long, still moment she stayed against the beat of it. Then she felt Eric draw away. Fury stung her. Why hadn't she done that first? Here they were alone, in this absurd single room, and Eric was the first to remind her that they were to take it casually.

Why was she still such a fool? Those sirens, wailing across the moonlight, a girl he had loved one spring in Paris and grabbed back into his arms for one terrorized, exciting moment—wouldn't any man react like this? It didn't mean a thing.

By the time the lights flashed on again, with the now-familiar "all clear" signal, Judy was searching in her bag for her make-up kit. "Of course, you'll find some other place to sleep," she told Eric steadily. "The landlord made a natural mistake, but if you'll explain, he'll surely give you another room."

Eric looked at her with a twisted grin. He had himself quite in hand again—Judy knew that grin of old. This was an Eric who would be getting all the kick any situation afforded. The Eric who had taken their quarrel with a tight, hard mouth. The Eric who had taken that plane to England.

The Eric who drawled now, "I have already inquired, and there isn't any other room. And one doesn't explain situations like this to landlords in France even in war time."

Judy gasped. Then anger flashed over her. All right, if he was going to be that way about it!

She crossed her arms, took hold of her dress and dragged it over her head. In her silk bras and panties, she looked like

a slim, pretty child. But her eyes on Eric weren't a child's eyes. They were cool and sophisticated, and just a little bit daring.

"Then you won't mind if I go to bed? This has been a pretty hectic day, all in all."

For a long moment Eric managed to keep that grin, then he caught an unsteady breath and said, "I'm going down to be sure the car's all right."

But just as he opened the door, Judy stopped him. "Eric, I'm a heel. Of course you're not going downstairs to sit in some old chair. You've got to sleep, if we're ever to get to Genoa and catch that boat. I won't be a pig. I'll give you half the bed. Come on, be a sport. Remember, we're escaping from a war."

"Just the same, I've got to go and see that car. Somebody might swipe our gas. Other people are just as anxious to reach the coast as we are."

Judy asked levelly, "But you'll be a sport, and come back?"

"Yes," he answered shortly, and slammed the door after him.

She must have dropped asleep immediately, for she didn't hear him come in. But a little later, when she awakened, shivering, from a horrible dream of air raids, she suddenly felt his arm come around her, heard him say in a voice that was strangely gentle, in spite of the words, "Shut up and go to sleep again. Everything's all right."

She lay very still, considering that. Funny, wasn't it, with half the world around you at each other's throats, how you could forget it and go to sleep, just because a big dark-haired chap told you to?

She found herself rather desperately wanting to say that to Eric right now. But something held back the words. You never really knew how a man felt about a quarrel. He'd be so gayly friendly, even joke with you, and still keep the

hurt in his heart, an untouchable buried thing that you'd better let alone.

Hadn't Eric let her alone all these months? He'd never even passed her smart little dress shop on Madison Avenue. She was sure of that, for she'd spent hours looking for him—stolen hours when she should have been at work. She was that kind of fool. But now she felt she'd be a greater one to let Eric know it, just because the excitement of running away from a war had set their emotions at a pretty steep pitch.

Of course, he'd said he'd come to France to find her. But he was like that, always taking care of stray kittens.

She turned now and crept farther from the warmth of him. She'd better just remember that it was a necessary part of their escape, this crazy, unconventional episode. This was no time to try to patch up a quarrel with any man.

But his eyes had an illusive touch of the old tenderness, looking at her in the light of the early sun. He leaned up on one elbow and said, "Crazy sort of stunt, this. You always were the best sport in a jam of any girl I ever knew. Thanks a lot for that night's sleep. The chairs in that place downstairs were oak, and they didn't even have arms. I'd probably have gone to sleep at the wheel on the rest of the trip."

He crawled off the bed to stand tall and lean in the belted robe he wore over his pajamas. "How the heck did you sleep under that crazy feather quilt?" he asked with a grin. "The French may make the swankiest clothes, but they sure have queer ideas about bedclothes."

"Meaning to be funny?" Judy wanted to know. Then she added very coolly, "Maybe it stayed on because you were lying on the outside of it. Weren't you cold?"

"No," he told her dryly. "And you get up and hustle dressing. We've got to be on our way. I'll go down and tell the landlord that my wife likes her eggs cooked four minutes."

In spite of trying for the old casual conversation, they seemed to drop naturally into a friendlier manner on the next stretch of their journey.

Judy thought, "Perhaps that's the best way to make up a quarrel. Just forget the cause of it, and go on from there. Maybe, without knowing it, we'll drift back together again."

But, watching Eric as he sent the car along over the roads toward Nice, she wasn't so certain. He'd demand more than just drifting back to a casual friendship. She began to be sure of that. With Eric it was all or nothing. She'd better let things ride for the present.

Something in the taut line of Eric's mouth, in the tenseness of his body, told her that. It was too probably that last night's part of their journey was still gripping his emotions. It wouldn't mean anything lasting if she tried to make up with him now.

He had been deeply hurt, as well as jealous, over that young diplomat. In spite of everything, Eric was intensely modest. He always stubbornly believed that the other guy had a lot more to offer than he did, no matter who the other guy was. And, of course, Rate Lovell was terribly attractive. He'd been trained to be.

And she'd been so furious over Eric's silly distrust of himself as well as of her. So their quarrel had gone pretty deep into both of them—the sort of quarrel that couldn't be made up because of the melodramatic excitement wrought by their nearness to each other last night. Yes, she'd better let it ride.

Nice was jammed. Americans in flight, soldiers on the march, hours wasted while Eric checked up on his reservation on that boat from Genoa.

But, as usual, he found them a cozy, quiet little place to lunch in. Sat at the table with her, and entertained her as if they were calmly eating at the Plaza. But when he leaned forward to light her cigarette, his eyes were curiously dark.

"Pretty swell, hasn't it been?" He snapped the lighter shut, and sent a spiral of smoke into the air from his own cigarette. "I've been sort of thinking that we've been a couple of fools."

He reached for her hands across the table. But she managed a quick laugh as she drew back. "Don't let war romance get you, mister."

Then she looked up and met Eric's eyes. Gray and deep and very still, just as they had been back there in Paris in the spring. Adoring her, wanting her, begging her.

She came to her feet and knew it was a gesture of fright. The little corner in which they were was shielded from the rest of the room by a screen. The next second, Eric had her in his arms.

"I told you I came to France to get you," he told her huskily, and bent his head and kissed her.

From there on, the journey was pretty swell. Judy sat with her head against Eric's shoulder, watching the road ahead disappear under the wheels. Watching the deserted farms along the way, with eyes that were saddened a little by the thought of so much unhappiness when she was so happy. These roads they were traveling, filled with people on the move. War again, and she had love.

Eric was driving with the accelerator almost to the floorboard now, his eyes steady on the road. They had been told that the border was closed to all traffic after dark. And in the gathering dusk they were suddenly halted at a barrier. French soldiers, under arms, came up to them. Judy held her breath while Eric answered questions.

"Americans. Passports all in order. Trying to catch a ship out of Genoa."

After that, the whole thing became a vague race with time. Judy didn't remember much of it. She could hardly stand on her feet when Eric lifted her out of the car. Could hardly believe this was really the dock at Genoa.

Eric said, "Stand here. Don't move. I've got to check that space again."

She watched him as he fought his way through the milling crowds. He'd get it. She was sure of that. Eric always got what he wanted, didn't he? Hadn't he found her, there in Paris?

Then she lost sight of him, for someone touched her arm. "Well, it certainly is a small world!" said a gay, laughing voice. And, of course, it had to happen that just at that exact moment Eric came back. There was nothing to do but say:

"Eric, you remember Rate Lovell?"

Eric looked Rate up and down. "Yes, I remember. And this time I'll make sure not to be such a fool again as to forget. Come along, Judy. I've got that cabin."

Judy caught a tight breath. Did he need to have said that last thing? What would Rate Lovell be thinking now?

In the tiny stateroom, Eric made it very plain he didn't give a hang what Rate Lovell thought. He grabbed Judy by the shoulders in a grip that hurt.

"So that's why you were so darned willing to come with me, why you were so anxious to sail from Genoa!"

"Eric, stop! You're incredible. I've never even seen Rate Lovell since we were in Paris last spring. And how could I possibly have known he was taking this boat? Sailing from Genoa was your idea, if you'll use your brain to remember. I'm getting out of here. There'll be plenty of places for me to sleep. I saw a lot of cots in the lounge."

"Nothing doing!" Eric's fingers bit deeper into her shoulders. "You're staying right here for the whole voyage, if I have to lock you in. And this time it's going to be real. No more casual politeness. Not a chance of hiding in deck corners with that Lovell kid. I told you I came to France to get you, and now I'm going to have you."

Judy held her breath. Funny what Eric's eyes did to her when they looked like that, no matter how furious she was.

Infuriating to feel how the touch of his hands burned into her and sent her blood to fever heat. She'd have to get out of here. This was too dangerous. In another moment she'd be flinging herself into his arms and doing as he asked.

She began to fight. But Eric let go of her shoulders and swept her up against him, tight and hard.

"I'm not the romantic sap I was, last spring in Paris," he gritted at her. "That doesn't get a man anywhere with a girl like you. You need a man who takes first and asks afterward, not a chap who goes off and sulks because he can't have what he wants. This boat is jammed to the gunwales. Nobody'll care a darn what goes on."

Judy leaned back on his arm to look at him, her heart pounding.

"I suppose the captain of a ship can and will protect his passengers, even if there is a war."

"No captain protects his passengers from their own private wars. We'll fight this out on our own lines."

Then, his voice softening a bit, "Look here, Judy, you know I would never act like this if it hadn't been for that good-looking Lovell kid. When I think of the hell I've already gone through on his account—well—"

He pulled her closer. "I'm not going through it again, I can tell you, without something to remember."

Judy said quietly, "I'll tell the captain. I know I don't have to stand for this unless I want to."

Suddenly, Eric put his fingers under her chin and lifted her face to his. "Just what will you tell the captain?" he demanded. "It's too fishy a story. The captain won't believe you."

"He will, because I'll tell him the exact truth. I'll tell him how you dragged me on board this boat. I'll tell him how

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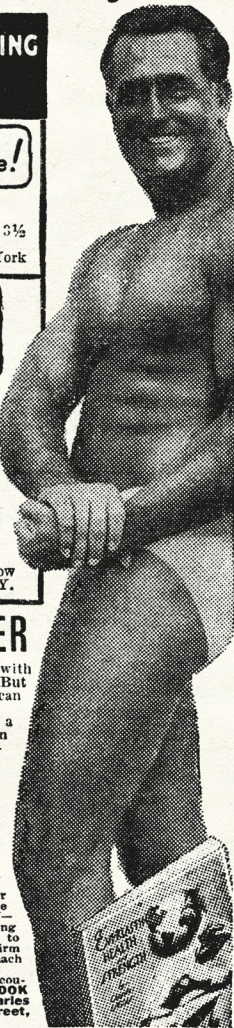
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you've threatened me. I'll tell him how you went off and left me in Paris, way back last spring. And that now, because I was willing to escape from a war with you, you think that you can demand crazy, impossible things of me, even when you know that you don't even love me."

Eric's gray eyes shot fire. "What did you say?"

"You heard me. And you know it's true. No man really loves a girl if he goes off and leaves her for a silly, no-account jealous reason. No man who's married a girl in Paris in the spring, who has kissed her with the moon shining down through the trees in the Bois, who has sat in the dawn with his arms around her and heard her swear by that dawn light on Saint Coeur that she'd always love him—no man like that would ever go off, just because the girl danced with a good-looking boy out of an embassy. No, sir, if a man goes off and leaves a girl after that, he has no right to ask her to believe he still loves her."

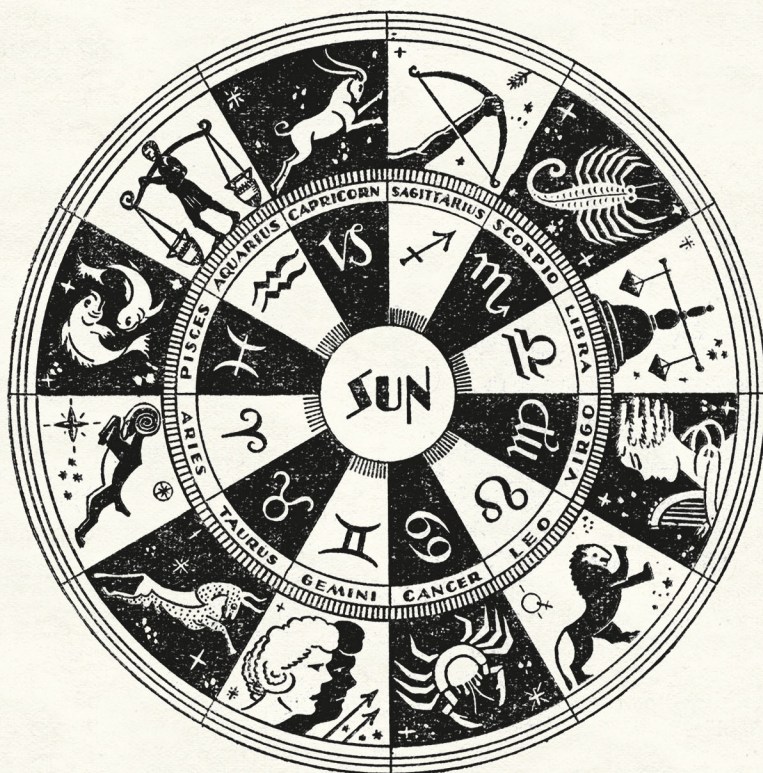
For a long moment Eric looked down at her, his mouth twisting into a taut gray line, his eyes just one ache of longing that went to the depths of her heart, even before he asked hoarsely:

"Judy, you aren't really meaning that?" The utter bleakness of his eyes, the sudden shiver that shook him! "Perhaps I shouldn't blame you. I've been such an awful heel just now. But seeing you with Lovell again, after that deep understanding we came to, finishing our flight from Paris— Oh, good heavens, Judy darling, I know I've been all kinds of a sap from the very beginning. But don't say that I don't love you. Why, I—"

Judy laid her fingers across his mouth. "Yes, I know. You came to France to get me. Well, then, you precious, adorable idiot"—her voice broke on a choked sob that was half laughter, too—"why don't you put out your arms and take me? Didn't you ever hear that at the end of every war, somebody always has to surrender?"

YOUR STARS AND YOU

by KAI



YOUR WEEK

DURING the week, a beneficial business opportunity may present itself, requiring a change of environment; but love, social, and other considerations may prevent your taking advantage of it. Also a business opportunity with less inconvenience attached may turn up. There is likelihood of business benefits coming to those who devote their energy to constructive purposes. In financial matters you may be pleasantly surprised. New ways of making money may come to your attention. Prompt and efficient attention


to your work may bring additional benefits that are not expected. In employment matters, some annoyance may occur. If so, keep cool and look for beneficial developments during the week. Such developments, if they occur, are likely to be of a financial nature. Material obstacles or personal opposition may arise in the carrying out of some of your plans. Should this happen, postpone important decisions for a few days, if possible, and matters may adjust themselves satisfactorily without necessity of

your forcing the issue. You may meet with some disappointment in connection with social activities so it would be well to avoid elaborate parties, as something may happen to spoil them for you. In love and marriage matters, some benefits may be received.


DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time. If not using that time, make correction to the time you are using.

Saturday March 2nd


 During the early-morning hours business benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing. You may also benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. Elderly people will do you favors. Avoid any unnecessary environmental changes. The later-morning hours and the early-afternoon hours may be quiet. Between 4:00 p. m. and 5:30 p. m., avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Mark time in occupational matters. Between 5:30 p. m. and 10:30 p. m., curtail social activities. Between 10:30 p. m. and midnight, love and marriage interests can be advanced. Business and environmental benefits may be received.

Sunday March 3rd


 During the early-morning hours, financial benefits may be received. Between 9:30 a. m. and 10:15 a. m., be conservative in business matters. Between 10:15 a. m. and 11:00 a. m., love and marriage interests can be advanced. Environmental benefits may be advanced. Between 11:00 a. m. and noon, business and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Between 3:30 p. m. and 4:30 p. m., mark time in employment matters. Between 4:30 p. m. and 6:00 p. m., mark time in love and marriage matters. Postpone important

decisions. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Between 8:00 p. m. and 9:30 p. m., avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Between 9:30 p. m. and midnight, unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you.


Monday March 4th

 Between 8:30 a. m. and 10:00 a. m., employment benefits may be received. Between 10:00 a. m. and noon, be conservative in business matters. Between noon and 1:30 p. m., avoid extravagance in money matters. Keep your temper under control. Between 4:00 p. m. and 5:30 p. m., mark time in occupational matters. Postpone important decisions. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people. Between 6:00 p. m. and 7:30 p. m., curtail social activities. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Between 8:00 p. m. and 9:00 p. m., friends will do you favors. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Between 9:00 p. m. and midnight, mark time in love and marriage matters. Curtail social activities. Avoid misunderstandings with friends.

Tuesday March 5th

 The morning hours may be quiet. Between 2:00 p. m. and 3:30 p. m., mark time in employment matters. Do not take offense at trifles. Avoid misunderstandings with friends. Between 3:30 p. m. and 7:30 p. m., curtail social activities. Between 7:30 p. m. and 9:00 p. m., avoid extravagance in money matters. Keep your temper under control. Avoid misunderstandings with friends. Between 9:30 p. m. and midnight, business benefits may be received.

Wednesday March 6th

 During the early-morning hours be careful what you say, write and sign. Love and marriage interests may be advanced. Environmental bene-

fits may be received. Between 9:00 a. m. and 9:30 a. m., you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Avoid misunderstandings with friends. Between 9:30 a. m. and 11:00 a. m., avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Curtail social activities. Between 11:00 a. m. and 11:30 p. m. may be quiet. Between 11:30 p. m. and past midnight, avoid misunderstandings with friends and elderly people. Be conservative in business matters. Postpone important decisions.

Thursday March 7th



During the early-morning hours business and financial matters will be under mixed influences. Some benefits may be received, but mark time in matters that do not go smoothly. Friends and elderly people may do you favors. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a writing. The later-morning hours, the afternoon hours and the early-evening hours may be quiet. Between 11:00 p. m. and past midnight, love and marriage interests can be advanced. Financial benefits may be received.

Friday March 8th



During the early-morning hours love and marriage interests can be advanced. Business, financial, and environmental benefits may be received. Between 11:00 a. m. and 2:00 p. m., business and financial benefits may be received. Mark time in employment matters. Keep cool if annoyed. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people. Between 2:00 p. m. and 3:30 p. m., avoid extravagance in money matters. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Between 3:30 p. m. and 5:00 p. m., curtail social activities. Between 5:00 p. m. and 6:30 p. m., employment and financial benefits may be received. Between 8:30 p. m. and midnight, love and marriage interests can be advanced. Environmen-

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tal and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you.

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 26th may receive business benefits this week. Social interests can be advanced. Best days for you this week, Monday and Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between March 27th and 31st, financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday and Sunday. If born between April 1st and 5th, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Business, financial, and environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between April 6th and 10th, love and marriage interests can be advanced. Environmental and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between April 11th and 15th, mark time in employment mat-

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ters. Financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Monday. If born between April 16th and 20th, mark time in love and marriage matters. Postpone important decisions. Be conservative in business matters. Environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Saturday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Mark time on Monday.

April 20th and May 21st

Taurus



—Taurans born between April 20th and 26th should curtail social activities this week. Financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday and Tuesday. If born between April 27th and May 1st, avoid extravagance in money matters. Keep your temper under control. Best days for you this week, Saturday, Sunday, Thursday, and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between May 2nd and 6th, avoid extravagance in money matters. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Business and environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between May 7th and 11th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. Environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between May 12th and 16th, employment and financial benefits may be received. Love and marriage interests can be advanced. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between May 17th and 21st, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Business and financial benefits may be received.

May 21st and June 21st

Gemini



—Geminians born between May 21st and 26th may advance social interests this week. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Best days for you this week, Monday and Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between May 27th and 31st, financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday. If born between June 1st and 6th, business and financial benefits may be received. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between June 7th and 11th, unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Avoid any unnecessary environmental changes. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between June 12th and 16th, mark time in employment matters. Financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. If born between June 17th and 21st, love and marriage interests can be advanced. Business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people will do you favors. Be careful what you say, write, and sign. Best days for you this week, Wednesday and Thursday. Mark time on Saturday.

June 21st and July 23rd

Cancer




—Cancerians born between June 21st and 27th may advance social interests this week. Be careful of your speech. Avoid misunderstandings. Best day for you this week, Thursday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between June 28th and July 2nd, financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Thursday and Friday. Mark time on Saturday and Sunday. If born between July 3rd and 7th, be conservative in business matters. Financial and environmental benefits

may be received. Love and marriage interests may be advanced, but obstacles may have to be overcome. Best day for you this week, Friday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between July 8th and 12th, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Environmental and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Best day for you this week, Friday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between July 13th and 18th, employment benefits may be received. Avoid extravagance in money matters. Mark time on Monday. If born between July 19th and 23rd, avoid falls and dangerous bodies of water. Postpone important decisions. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Environmental benefits may be received. Mark time on Monday.

July 23rd and August 23rd


Leo

—Leo natives born between July 23rd and 28th may receive business benefits through being mentally alert this week. Mark time on Monday and Tuesday. If born between July 29th and August 2nd, avoid extravagance in money matters. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between August 3rd and 7th, avoid cuts and burns. Keep your temper under control. Be careful in courtship. Avoid extravagance in money matters. Business benefits may be received. Mark time on Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between August 8th and 13th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. Environmental benefits may be received. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between August 14th and 18th, employment and financial benefits may be received. Love and marriage interests can be advanced. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between August 19th and 23rd, you will find it

an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people will do you favors. Best day for you this week, Saturday. Mark time on Wednesday and Thursday.


August 23rd and September 23rd

Virgo

—Virgo natives born between August 23rd and 28th may advance social interests this week. Best day for you this week, Saturday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between August 29th and September 2nd, financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Sunday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday. If born between September 3rd and 7th, business and financial benefits may be received. Love and marriage interests can be advanced in some respects, but obstacles may have to be overcome. Best day for you this week, Sunday. Mark time on Friday. If born between September 8th and 13th, unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Be careful in courtship. Best day for you this week, Sunday. Mark time on Friday. If born between September 14th and 18th, mark time in employment matters. Keep cool if annoyed. Financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Monday. If born between September 19th and 23rd, be careful of your speech. Avoid misunderstandings. Be conservative in business matters. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Saturday.

September 23rd and October 23rd

Libra

—Librans born between September 23rd and 28th may advance social interests this week. Be careful of your speech. Avoid misunderstandings. Best days for you this week Monday and Tuesday. Mark time on

Saturday. If born between September 29th and October 3rd, avoid extravagance in money matters. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday and Sunday. If born between October 4th and 8th, be conservative in business matters. Avoid financial extravagance. Keep your temper under control. Environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between October 9th and 13th, avoid impulsive actions in connection with money matters. Environmental benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between October 14th and 18th, employment benefits may be received. Avoid extravagance in money matters. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Monday. If born between October 19th and 23rd, mark time in love and marriage matters. Postpone important decisions. Avoid falls. Do not quarrel with elderly people. Environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Saturday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Mark time on Monday.

October 23rd and November 22nd
Scorpio

M—Scorpio people born between October 23rd and 28th may receive business benefits this week. Curtail social activities. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday and Tuesday. If born between October 29th and November 2nd, avoid extravagance in money matters. Best days for you this week, Saturday, Sunday, Thursday, and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between November 3rd and 7th, avoid extravagance in money matters. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Business and environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between November 8th and 12th, you may be put to unexpected financial

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expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. Environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between November 13th and 17th, employment and financial benefits may be received. Love and marriage interests may be advanced. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between November 18th and 22nd, be conservative in business matters. Environmental benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Wednesday and Thursday.

November 22nd and December 22nd
Sagittarius



—Sagittarians born between November 22nd and 27th may receive business benefits this week.

You may benefit in connection with a writing. Social interests can be advanced. Best days for you this week, Monday and Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between November 28th and December 2nd, keep your temper under control. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday. If born between December 3rd and 7th, business benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. Avoid extravagance in money matters. Be careful in courtship. Do not make unnecessary environmental changes. Avoid unnecessary lawsuits. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between December 8th and 12th, avoid impulsive actions in connection with money matters. Curtail social activities. Do not make unnecessary environmental changes. Avoid unnecessary lawsuits. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between December 13th and 17th, mark time in employment matters. Business and financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. If born between December 18th and 22nd, love and marriage inter-

ests can be advanced. Business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people will do you favors. Best days for you this week, Saturday, Wednesday and Thursday.

December 22nd and January 20th

Capricorn



—Capricornians born between December 22nd and 26th should curtail social activities this week. Be careful of your speech. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. If born between December 27th and 31st, financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Saturday, Sunday, Thursday, and Friday. If born between January 1st and 5th, be conservative in business matters. Financial and environmental benefits may be received. Love and marriage interests can be advanced, but obstacles may have to be overcome. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. If born between January 6th and 10th, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Environmental and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. If born between January 11th and 15th, employment benefits may be received. Avoid extravagance in money matters. Best day for you this week, Monday. If born between January 16th and 20th, avoid falls. Postpone important decisions. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Wednesday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday.

January 20th and February 19th

Aquarius



—Aquarians born between January 20th and 25th should curtail social activities this week. Business benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Monday and Tuesday. If born between January 26th and 30th,

avoid extravagance in money matters. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. If born between January 31st and February 4th, avoid cuts and burns. Keep your temper under control. Avoid extravagance in money matters. Business and environmental benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Friday. Be careful on Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between February 5th and 9th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Environmental benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Friday. Be careful on Wednesday. If born between February 10th and 14th, mark time in employment matters. Financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. If born between February 15th and 19th, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people will do you favors. Best days for you this week, Saturday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

February 19th and March 21st

Pisces



—Pisceans born between February 19th and 24th may receive business benefits this week. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. If born between February 25th and March 1st, financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Saturday, Sunday, Thursday, and Friday. If born between March 2nd and 6th, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Business, financial, and environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. If born between March 7th and 11th, love and marriage interests can be advanced. Environmental and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. If

born between March 12th and 16th, mark time in employment matters. Keep cool if annoyed. Financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Monday. If born between March 17th and 21st, business and financial benefits may be received. Love and marriage interests can be advanced. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Saturday.

Note for "Born Between—" readers: The week referred to begins with Saturday, March 2nd, and ends with Friday, March 8th. Compare with information given in "Your Week" and "Day by Day" to see what the general influences are.

More About Pisces People

If you were born between March 7th and 11th, you speak well and people like to listen to you. Your reasoning powers are excellent; your conclusions usually sound; and your judgment good. You have a high moral code and try to live up to it. Others soon learn that they can rely on your word. You get along well with people and do not shirk your share of responsibility. You will go more than halfway to establish and maintain harmony in your relations with others. You are strongly attached to home and family and do all you can to bring happiness to those you love. Your self-control is usually good, but should be strengthened to stand you in good stead when you need it most. You should discipline your thoughts and avoid too much thinking along lines that have no useful purpose to be accomplished. Plan carefully toward the attainment of worth-while results. You are scientifically inclined. You may become a successful lawyer. You may follow an industrial occupation requiring a high degree of training. You may hold public office or work under those who do. You

develop excellent ability in whatever you undertake as a means of earning your livelihood. Too much solitude is not good for you, so do not neglect your social life if your work does not enable you to meet interesting people. Be careful in your selection of friends and associates and do not encumber yourself with those whose chief aim is to waste time and impoverish themselves mentally and otherwise. You should become safety-minded and avoid hazardous occupations and pastimes. You should not take unnecessary chances around dangerous bodies of water. You should avoid physical overexertion.

If you were born between March 12th and 16th, you should avoid engaging in ventures in which chance plays too prominent a part. Should you work for yourself, you are likely to meet with success in occupations that can be conducted along well-established lines that have proved successful in the past. Unless you can get into something wherein success is practically assured through the following of sound business practices, it would be better for you to work for someone else. If working for yourself, do not hesitate to call in expert advice if a situation arises that you do not know how to meet; but do not ask advice of those not qualified to properly give it. You may have opportunity to work into a successful business in which you have served an apprenticeship. Be sure, however, that your apprenticeship has familiarized you with all angles of the business you would engage in for yourself. You are impulsive and sometimes are imposed upon because of your desire to please. Do not jeopardize your financial standing by inability to say "no" when you ought to say "no." You like to help others and unless you use discretion you are likely to overdo it. You are pleasing of speech and you have an attractive personality. You should discipline your emotions, especially when associating with the opposite sex. If necessary you

can adjust yourself to a distasteful environment; but you are not likely to be happy unless your surroundings are harmonious. You should have a laudable object in life and work toward its attainment. Avoid doing to any great extent the things that will make you lose sight of it. You should cultivate silence regarding other people's affairs which do not concern you.

If you were born between March 17th and 21st, you are inclined to not make the best use of your time. You should have a get-together meeting with yourself and plan the important things you desire to do during your life and then keep them in mind in your daily activities. In union of purpose you will find strength. Do not divide your energies too greatly or you will not be likely to accomplish many of the things you would like to do. Success may be slow in coming, but if you do not lose sight of the object which you wish to attain, you will be very apt to eventually attain it. In planning your activities it would be well not to raise needless antagonisms. You will find it to your advantage to co-operate with others when possible to do so. You may meet with success in business enterprises that can be conducted along sound lines that have proved generally successful for others. Those of you who prefer occupations requiring scientific training, may gain their livelihood in research or experimental work. If you take to this line of work, you may make important discoveries that can be utilized by industry. You should avoid experiments that can have no commercial value. Avoid dabbling in matters that cannot be reduced to a formula capable of certain duplication by others of scientific training once they have the formula in hand. You may do laboratory work for the benefit of the medical profession. Your speech sometimes gives offense by its abruptness. You have confidence in yourself. Sometimes you may become overconfident in matters involving your personal safety, leading to recklessness that may invite trouble. You should be careful near, on

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(Pisces article to be continued next week.)

QUESTION BOX

Mrs. R. W., born September 29, 1922, about 3:00 o'clock: You did not state whether a. m. or p. m. You did not state where you were born. You did not give complete birth data of your husband. I suggest that if you and your husband will agree on the things that are not worth arguing about, you can cut down on the number of arguments between you.

Mrs. J. E. F., whose son was born September 21, 1914, 9:00 p. m., New Jersey: He should make a note of the following approximate times: Middle of April, 1940, marriage interests may be advanced. Last half of May, first half of June, 1940, mark time in home affairs. Middle of August, 1940, possibly business and financial benefits; marriage interests may be advanced. First half of October, 1940, unexpected benefits, pleasant surprises. Last part of January, first half of February, 1941, marriage interests may be advanced; business benefits may be received.

L. E. S., female, born December 23, 1917, 10:50 a. m., Virginia: This date fell on Sunday, not on Tuesday. About the middle of November, 1940, you will come under excellent influences that may enable you to advance marriage interests.

H. C. S., male, born July 27, 1896, between 5:00 p. m. and 7:00 p. m., Pennsylvania: You will come under beneficial influences that may bring you employment benefits about the last half of April, 1940.

Miss N. M., born August 9, 1916, 4:00 o'clock: You did not state whether a. m. or p. m., and you were rather indefinite about the place of your birth.

A. F., female, born March 18, 1922, 3:00 a. m., Texas: Your answer was published in the October 7, 1939, issue of Love Story Magazine. I'm sorry you overlooked it.

Mrs. A. V. B. B., born November 3, 1876, 5:15 a. m., New York: About the following times you will come under beneficial influences that may bring you financial and other benefits and a journey may be taken: Middle of October, 1940; March and last half of May, 1941.

V. L. S., female, born August 1, 1917: You did not state where you were born nor the time of day of your birth.

Mrs. M. E. F., born January 30, 1883, 9:00 a. m., Maine: This date fell on Monday, not on Tuesday. About the following times you will come under excellent influences that may bring you business, employment, and other benefits: Last half of November, first half of December, 1940; last half of February, first half of March, 1941.

Miss O. W., born September 10, 1916, 5:00 a. m., New York: I think you made the right decision when you refused your boy friend's request. Furthermore, I am of the opinion that should you marry him you will find the marriage unsatisfactory.

V. E. R., female, born March 17, 1905, 1:00 p. m.: This date fell on Friday, not on Thursday. You did not state where you were born.

"ANXIOUS," female, born July 19, 1912, 2:00 a. m., Pennsylvania: I think you can qualify yourself to follow a scientific pursuit. You may have an excellent opportunity to advance marriage interests

about the last half of June and the first half of July, 1941.

Miss L. D'G., born December 18, 1911, "12:00 p. m.", Minnesota: What time of day is "12:00 p. m."?

R. F., female, born July 14, 1919, about 4:00 a. m., Oklahoma: When one becomes overweight like one's parents, in many instances it is because the family dinner table is loaded with fattening foods. The things we learn to eat when young may be the things we continue to eat all through life. Some people need more food than others. Each person should learn what is best to meet his individual requirements. A good plan to reduce is to loiter over your food. Rapid eaters are inclined to eat more than necessary before they decide that they have had enough. You will come under excellent influences that may enable you to advance marriage interests about the last part of October and the first half of November, 1940.

"ABC," female, born November 23, 1908, 12:15 a. m., Ohio: This date fell on Monday, not on Thursday. You will come under excellent influences affecting marriage matters about the last half of December, 1940, and the middle of March, 1941.

E. B., female, born May 17, 1909, between 6:00 a. m. and 7:00 a. m., Georgia: You will come under excellent influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Last half of May, first half of June, middle of November, 1940.

M. L. M., female, born April 8, 1912, 6:00 a. m., Virginia: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: First half of May, 1940, adverse. Last half of June, 1940, excellent.

A. W., female, born November 22, 1919, about 10:00 p. m., Michigan: You will come under influences affecting mar-

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riage matters about the following times: First half of February, 1941, adverse. Last half of February, first part of March, 1941, excellent.

J. I. L., female, born February 22, 1901, between 4:00 a. m. and 6:00 a. m., New York: You will come under excellent influences affecting marriage matters about November and December, 1940.

V. B., female, born June 11, 1920, 5:40 p. m., Michigan: About the last half of April, 1941, you may have an excellent opportunity to advance employment interests. About the last half of April and the first part of May, 1942, you will come under excellent influences that may affect marriage matters.

M. M., female, born July 24, 1914, about 7:00 a. m., Ontario: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Last half of August, 1940, excellent. Last part of October, first half of November, 1940, excellent in some respects, but obstacles may have to be overcome.

I. R., female, born December 13, 1919, 12:00 noon, Ukraine: About the following times you will come under excellent influences that may enable you to advance employment interests: Last half of June, last half of September, last part of November, first half of December, 1940.

E. H., female, born November 3, 1913, 11:00 p. m., Saskatchewan: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Last half of March, first part of April, 1940, adverse. Middle of May, last half of June, first half of July, 1940, excellent.

I. S. M. B., female, born February 14, 1917, between 8:00 p. m. and 8:30 p. m., Illinois: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: First half of December, 1940, may be obstacles. First half of January, 1942, excellent.



The FRIENDLIEST CORNER

by
Mary Morris

IT'S not hard to make friends if the "other fellow" makes the first move. But why not be the first to make that move? California Rose is eager to exchange not only long, friendly letters, but also souvenirs, picture post cards, snapshots, and anything else of interest to you all. So why not sling some ink her way and gain a new friend?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's hoping Pen Pals everywhere will answer my plea. I'm a sociable, good-natured girl of almost eighteen, will gladly exchange souvenirs, picture post cards, snapshots, and anything else other Pals would like. I enjoy sports, making friends, and hope to hear from girls in every State in the Union. All letters will be answered promptly. How about it?

CALIFORNIA ROSE.

Who wants souvenirs?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please print my plea. I'm a young married woman, age twenty-three, collect stamps, souvenirs, snapshots, and will exchange them with other Pals. I'll answer every letter I get, and promise to be a true-blue friend. Come on, gals, write to me.

STERLING LOLA.

Happy-go-lucky Canadian girl.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hello, girls everywhere! I'm a happy-go-lucky Canadian

girl of eighteen, fond of sports, writing long letters, enjoy dancing, and just about anything of interest to other Pals. I'll exchange souvenirs, snapshots, and promise to be a steady correspondent.

TORONTO DELL.

Drop her a few lines at once.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May a lonesome girl come to you for help? I'm seventeen, and very eager to correspond with girls all over. I like sports, music, and have lots of interesting things to write about. I'll also exchange snapshots with anyone who drops me a few lines. Please, Pals, don't pass me by.

MARYLAND MARY.

Let her tell you about Georgia.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't someone please answer my plea? I'm a married woman of twenty, live in a lovely town in Georgia, and have ever so many interesting stories to tell you about this part of the country. I enjoy dancing, movies, sports, and am easy to get along with. I promise to answer all letters received.

GEORGIA KITTY.

A sincere, true-blue Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: If anyone wants a sincere, true-blue Pen Pal, I hope she will answer my plea. I'm a young woman of thirty, have several interesting hobbies, collect picture post cards and will ex-

change them, also snapshots and souvenirs. I'd like to hear from one Pal in every State in the Union. How about it?

ARKANSAS HAZEL.

Send your letters to a high-school miss.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please help me to find some friends. I'm a high-school girl eager to hear from Pals between fourteen and sixteen. I have blond hair, blue eyes, adore sports, and have lots of free time to write. I want at least one Pal in every State in the Union, and also in Canada. Who'll answer my call?

VIN.

She devotes her life to others.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I don't know if there are Pals who'd care to try me, but here goes. I'm a young woman thirty years of age, employed as matron in a mental hospital. I hail from Missouri, and my people are still living there. I have few friends, due to the fact that I work at least twelve hours daily, and I would like to correspond with single and married Pals of any age all over the world.

MATRON.

She loves to write long letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Living over a hundred miles away from home is rather lonesome, so here's my plea. I'm a girl of eighteen attending private school, often get very blue, and think it would be wonderful to hear from Pals all over the country. Please, girls, won't you add my name to your list of Pen Pals? I'll tell you more about myself later.

MONTANA JOY.

Just mention music to her!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman of twenty-two, have one child, a wonderful husband, and live on a farm in Wisconsin. I like singing, movies, sewing, sports, playing the guitar, mouth organ, and have lots of time to

answer all letters that come my way. Come on, everybody, let's be friends.

YODELING COWGIRL.

From sunny California.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hi, gals! I'm looking for true-blue Pen Pals. I'm a teen-age girl living in sunny California, have blond hair, blue eyes and a good-natured disposition, though I'm somewhat shy. I have ever so many interesting things to tell, and will be eagerly waiting for your letters.

CALIFORNIA MABS.

Her replies will be interesting.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please find room for my letter. I'm a lonesome widow, considered good-natured, friendly, and want to hear from Pals over thirty. I have blue eyes, dark hair, and feel sure that I can make my replies fairly interesting. Pals, write to me, single or married. I promise prompt replies.

JUST FLO.

Temmy enjoys active sports.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Has a Canadian girl a chance to find new friends? I want Pals between fifteen and seventeen. I'm a high-school girl, enjoy drawing, skating, basketball, tennis and dancing. I will answer every letter I get, and tell you all about Canada. Girls, please give me a chance to correspond with you.

TEMMY.

Answer her signal of distress.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: S O S! I'm a girl of nineteen, live in Vermont, and hope to hear from Pals all over the country, especially those in California. Everyone is welcome, and I will try very hard to make my replies as interesting as I can. I promise prompt replies to all letters received.

MARY AGNES.

Don't keep Daisy waiting.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a country girl twenty years of age, and very lone-

some. I'll exchange snapshots with anyone who answers my plea, and offer sincere friendship. Pen Pals, won't you drop me a few lines and tell me about yourselves and your hobbies? I'm sure we can become good friends. DAISY.

Calling all Southern gals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's another plea. I'm anxious to correspond with Southern Pen Pals around my age, twenty-two. I'm a married girl fond of writing long, friendly letters. Some of you Western girls might also give me a try. I have plenty of spare time, and will tell more about myself later.

ELZA.

A Pal who needs your cheer.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonesome young woman cooped up in a sanitarium fighting lung trouble. I would greatly appreciate it if some of the Pals, regardless of age, single or married, dropped me a line. It would certainly cheer me up no end to know that someone cares, and all letters will be more than welcome. GEORGIA PAT.

Souvenirs from Maine.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm sure that writing to Pen Pals far and near can be a wonderful pastime, and I'd love to hear from girls all over the world. I'm a girl of eighteen, live in Maine, fond of music, singing, will exchange souvenirs, gifts and snapshots with anyone who is interested. I want to be swamped with letters, Pals, so don't ignore my plea!

SARRA.

Match-folder collectors, get together.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a friendly married woman, have two children twelve and eight years of age, collect match folders, and want to correspond with Pals all over, especially other match-folder collectors. I promise to answer letters promptly, and have many things of interest to talk about. Pals, please try me, regardless if you are single or married.

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She's interested in everyone.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who wants a Pal from the South? I'm a girl of nineteen, interested in everyone and everything, and want a chance to correspond with girls who appreciate sincere friendship. I promise prompt replies, and have ever so many things to tell. Please, girls, don't pass me by.

TRUE-BLUE EVE.

* You're wanted! Give yourselves up, Pals!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Wanted: Pals between seventeen and twenty. I'm a girl eighteen years of age, considered friendly, will gladly exchange snapshots with anyone, and hope to hear from Pals far and near. Those of you who want a real friend, won't you drop me a few lines? I hail from New York State.

PALMYRA.

Peppy is the word for her.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I have a chance to find friends? I want to hear from Pals between twelve and fifteen. I'm a peppy girl, fond of ball games, skating, and have loads of time to answer letters. I promise prompt replies, and will be a real friend. Who'll try me? I'll be waiting!

IDAHO BROWN EYES.

Get busy, teen-age Pals!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: There's nothing I'd like better than hearing from teenage Pals everywhere. I'm a peppy girl fond of making friends and writing letters, and have plenty of time for the latter. I hail from Michigan, but don't let that stop you from answering my plea, girls. Let's get acquainted! WELMA.

Miss Mary Morris 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, so that mail can be forwarded. We are not responsible for money (coins) sent through the mail.

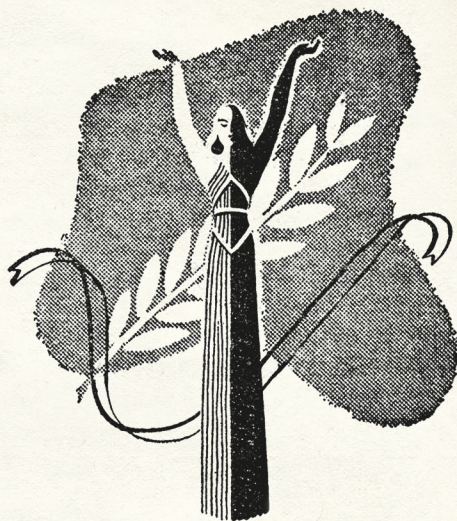
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THE FRIEND IN NEED

conducted by

Laura Alston Brown

*well-known authority on
love and marriage*



MUST jealousy travel the same road with love? No doubt some of us believe that it is natural for people in love to be jealous of each other. Of course, a little jealousy on the man's part, due to the fact that other men admire his best girl, is sometimes stimulating. But it is dangerous to romance when jealousy and suspicion are permitted a free hand. Giving in to jealousy is a sign that we are afraid a rival may be waiting at every turn. Shouldn't we trust those we love?

Here are two young people who cannot stand the thought of parting, and neither can they get along together. Why? It seems that the green-eyed monster won't let them!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: We are a boy and girl very much in love with each other, and wonder if the course of true love is always rough. Mac worships me and I adore him, but we are awfully jealous of one another. We think it's because we care so much for each other.

Mac tells me he can never love any other girl, and I feel the same way about him. I don't mind if he talks with other girls in our crowd, but I can't stand it when he fools around with them, though I know I'm the one he cares for.

I'm so glad when we are getting along all right, but it doesn't last. Sooner or later either he or I do something to make the other jealous, and then we're off again. And we both have awful tempers. Do you think we'd quarrel and feel as we do about each other if we weren't so much in love? Mac is twenty-two, and I'm eighteen. We've known each other for a year.

Another trouble is that we seldom agree on anything. I know he's a wonderful boy, and I'm sure he loves me, but still we don't often see things from the same point of view.

Mrs. Brown, when we are apart, even if it's only a week, I'm so miserable I wish I could stop living. And Mac says he feels the same way about me. But do you think we would be happy if we got married? We haven't announced our engagement yet, but plan to marry in about six months. We can't stand the thought of giving each other up, but what are we going to do? We can't go on quarreling and making up all our lives. Mac says that people in love are always jealous of each other. **MAC AND BABS.**

You are quite right. You cannot go on quarreling and making up all your lives. Perhaps you two are in love, or

it may be only infatuation. Each of you seems to be thinking only of yourself. Perhaps you want to own each other as you once owned toys that amused you. And this awful jealousy that grips you is only a fear that someone else may poach on your preserves.

Before you can find happiness together you should give yourselves time to grow up a little more. Learn to trust and believe in each other. Otherwise neither of you will find the peace and joy you expect in marriage.

Getting married now, if only to make sure of each other, will not cure your jealous spasms. I doubt if you could be happier than you are now. I suggest that you wait a year or so, have other friends in the meantime, and learn to be less possessive and self-centered.

What's your opinion, readers? Should sweethearts be jealous of each other if they are really in love? Let's hear!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Won't you help a miserable girl of twenty? About a year ago, my girl friend and I met two boys who were very good friends. We went together for about a month.

I didn't care much about the boy I was dating, but liked the other one very much. Then my girl friend moved to another State, and the boy I had been dating also moved away, and I began dating the boy she had been going with.

We went together for about two months, and I fell in love with him. He seemed devoted to me until his boy friend returned. Then he quit coming to see me for no reason at all.

He and this other boy began running around together. Then he wanted me to date him again, but I refused.

I often see the boy I care for. He talks to me, but never mentions coming to see me. When I am talking to him, and another boy speaks to me or asks me to dance with him, this boy looks daggers at us. He rarely goes with other girls.

Should I have a long talk with him and ask him why he stopped dating me? Do you think he cares anything about me, and should I tell him I care for him? He has lost his job recently, and I would very much like to offer my sympathy. I love him so much I am miserable without him. Your advice will be appreciated.

DORA.

It would hardly be wise to go to this boy and tell him that you care for him and want him back. After all, you have never had any claim on him because he did not tell you he was in love with you. It seems to me that girls often take themselves, and the boy they like, too much for granted. If a boy dates a girl several times, or comes to see her once or twice a week for a while, she assumes that he loves her because she happens to care for him.

But that is not always the case. Boys date girls they like without being in love with them, and they naturally feel no compunction when their interest wanders. And when such is the case, all the girl can do is make new friends and concentrate on someone else, but not too seriously until she is sure she has found the right man.

So try not to feel so badly, my dear. Have other dates, and continue to be friendly when you meet this boy. He may yet want to date you again. But if not, then you should not break your heart over him.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I don't know if anyone can help me, but here's my problem. I'm a girl of seventeen and would appreciate your advice.

Next month will mark the second year of my marriage. When I was a sophomore in school I began going with Don, who is now my husband. We always dated with my best girl friend, Lou, and her steady beau, Jack.

Lou and I met Don and Jack at a party. Lou and Jack paired off, and Don

and I did the same. I felt a very strong attraction toward Jack almost at once, but I didn't say anything about it to anyone because I thought that Lou was in love with him.

We four had many good times that summer and the following winter. Then, one night, we took to drinking and we all got pretty tight.

I didn't go with Don after that for almost two months, and then one day I went to see a doctor and he told me I was going to have a baby. When Jack came to see Lou the next time, I asked him to bring Don over. He told me that Don and he were not on speaking terms and when he said he wouldn't bring him, I told him why I had to see Don.

When Don came over I could see he was quite drunk. He told me in front of Lou and Jack that the baby belonged to someone else. When he said this, Jack took him aside and talked to him. Then Don asked me to forgive him and if I would marry him.

I told him I would tell my mother first. She was so glad to get rid of me that she didn't even care if it was true about the baby. However, my folks turned against me after I was married. We went to live with Don's people. A month later, I discovered the doctor had been mistaken. Don's folks looked at me questioningly after that, but Don and I were happy.

We lived with his folks for eight



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months and then moved to a house of our own. We went out quite often with Lou and Jack. Then they quarreled and stopped seeing each other, but Jack continued going out with us. Don and I were very happy, but later had to move. Two weeks before we moved, Jack offered to help me look for a house. Don was working and he didn't have time.

Every day for two weeks Jack and I were together.

One day Jack took me in his arms and told me that he loved me and I told him that I loved him, too. In that moment we both forgot everything else. Afterward, we agreed that in a year's time I would get a divorce and marry him as by that time he would be able to support a wife.

Well, we hunted everywhere, but couldn't find a suitable house, so I finally agreed to stay with my folks and Don with his.

One day I met Jack and he asked if he could take me home in his car, and Don saw us. That, of course, ruined their friendship. They have not spoken to each other since. Don was not angry with me, but blamed himself for what I had done. He forgave me, and I promised to forget Jack.

I lived with my folks all that summer. In September we moved with his folks again. They have found out about Jack and me and are very cool. Don's sister and mother are always finding fault with everything I do.

His mother got him so mad at me last week because I used the car, that he threatened to throw me out. Afterward, he told me he was sorry. Anyway, I wouldn't want to leave him.

I know he loves me and couldn't stand it if I divorce him. He also has a bad heart, and I'm sure that he would take to drinking if I left him. He says he could never marry anyone else. Tell me, Mrs. Brown, do you think I love Don? Or am I really in love with Jack?

PUZZLED.

My dear, do you remember your marriage vows? Do you realize all they

stand for? Marriage isn't just a temporary period of security for a woman, during which she can decide whether she wants to stay with the man she married, or leave him for someone else. And you cannot find happiness by deliberately hurting someone else. In your case, the one who would probably suffer most is the man whose wife you are.

You say your husband loves you. Then why not keep the promises you made on your wedding day and try to make him happy? Regardless of the fact that you were young, or the circumstances of your marriage, it is up to you to make something of this partnership.

I don't mean to preach, my dear. But marriage is a serious business, and since you did take Don for your husband your job seems cut out for you.

I cannot tell you whether you love Don, or whether you would be happy with Jack. But why not give yourself more time to forget Jack? I know most of us make mistakes of one kind or another, but would a worth-while man make love to his friend's wife simply because she was attracted to him?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm only seventeen years old, but I've been on my own since I was twelve, which makes me a lot older for my age than I should be. My problem is that I don't know if I should choose between my father or my fiancé.

My mother is dead and I have kept house for dad for five years. Two months ago I went away on a vacation fifteen hundred miles from home and met the boy I love. Now I'm torn between love for him and love for my father.

You see, I want to marry this boy, and if I do, I will have to leave my dad. I feel that to leave him would be like deserting him, as he would be all alone. I couldn't take him with me because this boy's job isn't secure. My dad has a good job. If I leave him and anything

happens to him, I would always feel it was my fault.

Another thing is, my dad hates small homes. We have a six-room house with all new furniture. If I leave my dad he will have to sell everything. That would break his heart, but I love this boy and I know there will never be another. I know that if I give him up I will be an old maid. He is willing to wait a year for me, but I'm afraid many things can happen in a year when we are so far apart. Mrs. Brown, should I leave my father and think of my own happiness, or is that selfish?

LONA.

No one can blame you for thinking of your own happiness. That is natural. But young people are apt to be very impatient. When they want something, they want it, or else! That, too, is understandable. However, even if you consider yourself somewhat older than other girls of your age, don't you think you really have plenty of time to think of marriage?

At this time, a whole year may seem to you like a very long time. But stop and think a moment. If you wait it will be not entirely to your disadvantage. For one thing you will have an opportunity to make sure that you both are really in love. And if you are, then time will not diminish the affection you feel for each other.

I would urge you to wait at least a year. It will give you a chance to work out some plan regarding your father and the house. Perhaps when you marry he will not want to sell the furniture. He may want you to have some of it, and keep the rest for himself.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl of eighteen, and my boy friend is twenty-one. We have been going steady for two years and would like to get married, but he isn't making enough to support two. It may take two or three years before he earns more.

We love each other very much. There is nothing he wouldn't do for me, and he says it wouldn't be wrong if we belonged to each other now, and that we are going to be married anyway. But I can't see this his way. I've heard so often that boys change their minds afterward and don't marry the girl.

Even though my mother and I are good friends, I know she would be shocked if I asked her what to do. She approves of this boy, and knows we are planning to be married. She is helping me get some things together.

Do you think we should take a chance and get married on fifteen dollars a week without anything saved, or should I listen to him and chance losing him? Or do you think we should marry and keep it a secret?

I wouldn't want to hurt my mother by getting married secretly as she has always been good to me. Please give me some advice.

UNDECIDED, PENN.

Your mother might not approve of this young man if she knew of his proposals as an alternative to immediate marriage. You have been very wise not to listen to his ideas regarding love. Girls who are short-sighted enough to do so, sooner or later discover that marriage is farther away than ever.

I'm afraid that you would find it rather hard to get along on his present income if you marry. Even with the slimmest of budgets, additional and unforeseen expenses would provide continual anxiety.

However, since you are young and there is no special reason why you should rush into matrimony, why not wait awhile? In the meantime, tell your young man that rather than run the risk of allowing your emotions to rule you, it would be more sensible to have other friends. By that, I mean that both of you should consider yourselves free to the extent of dating someone else if you wish, and see each other less often. If

you are truly in love, no one will come between you.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a girl of nineteen, considered pretty, and came to this city about three months ago. I am staying with a married girl friend.

After two or three weeks, she suggested calling up one of her old beaux to see if he would take me out, as I didn't have any other friends. We had several dates and I enjoyed myself. The last time we went out together he coaxed me to have a few drinks. I didn't want to take them, but in order to be a good sport, I did as he asked.

What happened was that I became dazed and didn't realize what was going on, and spent part of the night with him. I have regretted it bitterly ever since, and hate myself for not having more will power.

I told him what I thought, and he said not to worry about it. He said we were broad-minded and knew what we were doing. But since that time he has never dated me. That was nearly two months ago. I told him on that last date that I might go home, but I got a job during the next few days and stayed. He knows that I'm still here.

I'm in love with him, Mrs. Brown. How can I make him date me again? Or do you think it's hopeless to wait for him? Why do men take a girl's love and then drop her? It's so unfair.

RUTH N.

It is too bad that you have had this regretful experience. However, judging from your letter, I doubt if you are actually in love with this man. You only imagine it. How can a girl truly love a man who deliberately coaxes her to drink and then takes advantage of the fact that she does not realize what she is doing? Of course, it was up to you to refuse the drinks. It's really a pity when a girl is so eager to please a new acquaintance that she doesn't stop to reason things out.

My advice to you is to make up your mind to put this man out of your thoughts and have nothing more to do with him. Don't even speak to him, and store this incident in the background of your memory where it will stay put and not pop out every time you are lonesome and blue. Make every effort to join clubs where you will have a chance to meet eligible young men and make friends with other girls, so you will have no time to sit on the side lines and brood. Time will help you forget.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Some of my friends have written to you, so I am coming to you, too. I really need your advice.

I am eighteen years old. I have a little sister and brother and my daddy. My mother died three years ago and I have been keeping house for them ever since and going to school. So you see I have a lot of responsibilities.

I do all the work at home. I love to keep house, but I am tired of it now, especially as my brother and sister won't mind me any more.

I am also in love with a very nice boy. He is a hard worker and seems to be in love with me. We are engaged to be married, but he says now that he doesn't want to get married till he is twenty-one. I am so disgusted going to school, keeping house and looking after the children that I want to get married soon. I am afraid that if we wait two years something may happen.

You know how boys are. They want to run around, and he has been doing that lately. It hurt me very much, and we have almost broken off, but he has promised he wouldn't do it again. He says he still loves me, but won't get married till he is twenty-one.

I love him so much that I can't stand it not to be with him every day.

If I pass my exams this year I will finish school. But I hate school and don't feel like going on. I would rather get married. So please tell me what you think about this. Should we go ahead,

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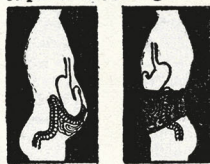
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or should we wait until he is twenty-one?

My sister and brother need someone to mother them more than I can, and they think they don't have to mind me. And if I leave home I am pretty sure that my father will send them to my aunt. She is very sweet and wants them.

AMY.

Well, my dear, I don't think that you would regret finishing school. Education is important to everyone, and I would urge you to stick it out. A few months more will not really be such a great trial to you. However, the housework and studies and keeping an eye on the two younger children are a little too much for a girl of your age. Would it be at all possible for your father to find someone to help you with the harder work? If you could send out the laundry, and have someone give you a hand with the heavier cleaning, it would certainly lighten your tasks. Talk it over with him, Amy.

As for getting married now, it might not be a bad idea to wait a year or two, but with the understanding that each of you is free to have other friends. Long engagements are hardly ever advisable. And if you two are really in love, then waiting, having other friends, and postponing the wedding date will make no difference at all. In fact, it would be a sort of test to make sure that you are meant for each other.

So don't worry about something happening. Not that I want to sound pessimistic, but in case you find that this boy did not really love you, just remember that it is always best to find that out before marriage.

And a word more about your younger brother and sister. Couldn't your dad impress upon them that since you take care of them, they should pay attention to you and be more obedient?

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