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LOVE



JULY

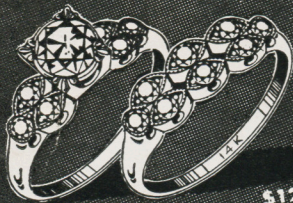
SHORT STORIES

SENATOR'S

Daughter

by
HELEN
AHERN





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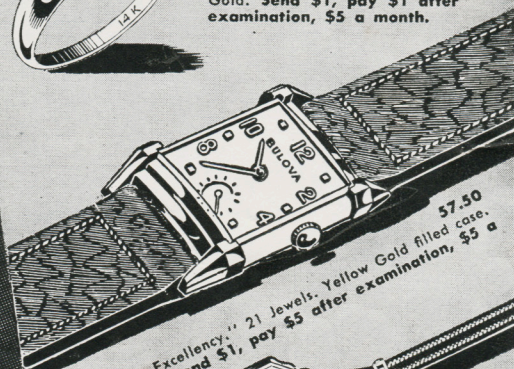
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REPORTER 'SHOVING THUMB WITH GUN'S BUN!'

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A RAZOR? TAKE MINE

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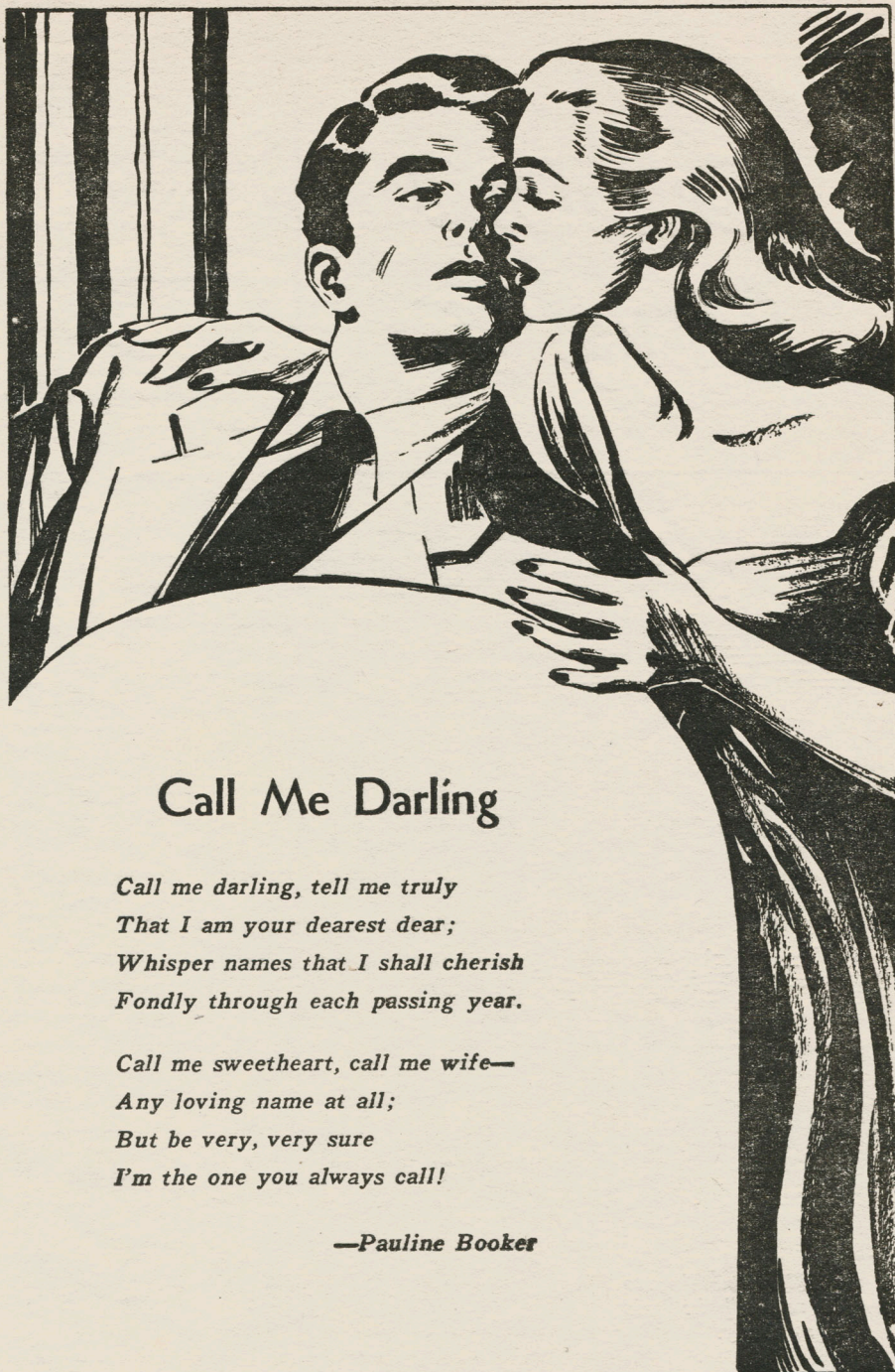
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ALL STORIES NEW

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Call Me Darling

*Call me darling, tell me truly
That I am your dearest dear;
Whisper names that I shall cherish
Fondly through each passing year.*

*Call me sweetheart, call me wife—
Any loving name at all;
But be very, very sure
I'm the one you always call!*

—Pauline Booker

Senator's Daughter

Treachery is one
thing a woman can
never forgive in the
man she loves.



*"I can't take what you offer
because I have nothing to
offer in return," he said
somerly.*

By
HELEN
AHERN



SENATOR ANDREW HAMILL had not wanted his daughter to come to the national nominating convention. Chicago, he had warned her, would be warm and uncomfortable. He gave her an I-told-you-so glance as he guided her through the lobby of their hotel on Michigan Drive. It was crowded with delegates of the Party, milling, perspiring and haranguing.

"This is it," he said. "Sure you don't

want to go on out home, or back to Washington?"

Penelope Hamill—Penny—from Heaven, to her friends—shook her head. Her father headed for the elevators, smiling and promising appointments later to the numerous people who tried to stop him. Senator Hamill was one of the acknowledged leaders of the party, a tall distinguished man with iron-gray hair, who managed to look statesmanlike and unruffled in spite of the confusion and heat of the June day.

He and Penny had a suite high above the teeming city. It was air-conditioned, and seemed as remote from the political convention as Penny herself. She was cool and lovely in a suit of pale gray shantung with shining dark hair falling to her slim shoulders. Her eyes were the blue of wood violets in an ivory oval face. Her father watched her, with a little frown, as she took off her hat and explored the suite.

"I still don't see," he said, "why you made an issue of attending this convention. You never showed any interest in politics before."

"Didn't I?" asked Penny. "Then it's about time I did. After all, I'm a politician's daughter."

She kept her face averted as she spoke. She was furious at the guilty color she could feel rising. It shamed her to admit even to herself that her decision to come to Chicago had been influenced by a gangling young man with blond hair perpetually in need of combing.

Seth Geary was his name. He was a political commentator. Penny had met him at a cocktail party, one of the big brawlsh kind. She had not liked him. He was acid-penned and acid-tongued. He was opposed to her father's Party's policies.

Seth had not liked Penny. He did not like debutantes, particularly the Washington variety. He considered them an utter-

ly useless part of Capitol life. Penny had pointed out that she had acted as her widowed father's hostess in their Georgetown house for three years, ever since she had been seventeen. She had met and entertained men of national and international reputation.

Seth jeered. "Sure," he said. "A bunch hand-picked by your father, who have treated you like a little princess. You've seen nothing of the seamy side of politics. You know nothing about the problems of your country or even your father's own Party. I'll bet you're not even going to the convention."

Penny had not intended to go to the convention. The idea had not entered her mind, but here she was cooped up in a Chicago hotel suite. She could have gone on to her home in the lake country. She had been invited to a Long Island house party, along with Rod Seaton. Rod had begged her to join the gang. They would be having fun. Penny was exasperated with herself and could not understand why.

She and Seth Geary had quarreled over cocktails. They had gone on to dinner in, a small F Street restaurant to quarrel more, although less vigorously. It was April in Washington, and the cherry trees were in bloom. They had driven around the Tidal Basin to look at them and, afterward, walked in Potomac Park. The Reflecting Pool mirrored the tall obelisk that was the Washington Monument. A silver crescent of a moon gleamed softly on Lincoln's marble tomb. Strolling through the fragrant spring night, Seth and Penny had forgotten to quarrel.

Standing beside the Reflecting Pool, he had taken her hand. In the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial, he had put his arms around her to hold her tightly. He smiled down at her. He had a diffident, yet engaging smile.

"You're beautiful, Penelope Hamill," he told her. "Too beautiful to be walking

beneath the moon with a two-bit reporter. You don't fit into my picture; I don't fit into yours. It's screwy, but—"

His head, golden in the moonlight, bent. His mouth brushed hers gently. In actuality, it had not been much of a kiss. Penny was amazed to find herself trembling and, at the moment, convinced that Seth Geary was as shaken as she. He had taken her home saying nothing about seeing her again, but she had been sure that he would call her the next day, or the next. She had waited near the telephone.

THAT HAD been in April, and it was now June. There had been no telephone call, no word from a gangling rude young man with ill-combed hair.

She walked impatiently to a window and looked out at the blue of Lake Michigan.

Her father continued to fret. "You're going to have a very dull time," he said. "I shall be busy day and night. Homer must have made a hundred appointments for me. I wonder if you'd phone him and tell him that we've arrived and I'd like to see him."

Homer was Senator Hamill's Man Friday. Homer Catlin. He had come to Chicago two days earlier to arrange hotel accommodations and take care of advance business. He had a room on the same floor of the hotel. Penny went to the telephone and called his number.

She could almost hear him quiver with joy to the sound of her voice. Her father's secretary loved her hopelessly, and a little annoyingly. He said that he would be in at once and, thought Penny, he must have been wearing wings. She had barely time to replace the telephone in its cradle before there was a rap on the door. She answered it without haste, then stared disbelievingly.

It was not Homer, slight and horn-rimmed. Standing in the hall was a tall,

loose-limbed young man with unruly, sun-bleached blond hair.

"Hello, Beautiful." He grinned at her, gray eyes wicked. "I have here the magazine offer of a life-time, and am giving you a chance to help a worthy young man through college."

"What goes on here?" demanded Senator Hamill.

Seth Geary walked into the room. Speechless, Penny closed the door behind him.

"Geary." The Senator recognized him, with his frown deepening. "Of course, you could get my room number from the desk but you are well aware that I receive newsmen only at press conferences or by special appointment."

"Yes, sir, and I'll be wanting to talk to you later," Seth Geary said. "This call is upon your daughter, Penelope. 'Weren't you expecting me, Penny?'"

He smiled at her, and she nodded weakly. If she had not, she told herself, her father would have had him thrown out.

"It's not a very opportune time for a social call, young man." The Senator's voice dripped icicles. "I'm expecting my secretary at any moment."

"I understand, sir." Seth spoke soothingly. "You'll no doubt be engaged in affairs of state all afternoon, and all evening. I thought it might be a good time for me to show Penny around the convention. You came, didn't you," he turned to her again, "to see the convention?"

"Most certainly." Her tone defied him to suspect any other reason for her presence. "I'll be ready in a jiffy."

SHE PICKED up her flowered trifle of a hat and yellow chamois gloves, accents to her pale gray suit.

Her father eyed her uncertainly. "I don't know—"

He was interrupted by a second rap on the door. Penny opened it to

Homer Catlin. He was a wispy little man with mouse-colored hair and pale blue eyes that adored her behind horn-rimmed glasses.

"I've brought the mail," he said. "It's nice to see you again after-after—"

"Two days," Penny reminded him with a trace of sarcasm. "How's it been going?"

Without waiting for an answer, she left him to her father and went into her own quarters. She had a small sitting room and bedroom of her own adjoining the main suite which would, undoubtedly, be unofficial Party headquarters during the convention.

As she freshened her make-up and put on her hat, Penny could hear the men talking outside.

"I don't suppose, Senator," Seth said, "that it would do any good to ask you at this stage whom you're supporting for the nomination."

"Your question, Geary, is distinctly out of line." Senator Hamill was stiff. "You have, I believe, a social engagement with my daughter. Or are you taking her out in hopes of getting some inside information from her?"

"Sir!" Seth's exclamation was outraged. Then, abruptly, he laughed and his voice became amused. "My dear Senator Hamill, do you fancy that your very lovely daughter has any political information either inside or outside that I could get from her?"

Listening, Penny heard her father say "No", and echo Seth's laughter, glacially. It was obvious that both regarded her as a backward child. Anger, succeeded by determination, swept her. She could and would learn politics. She merged from her own rooms with her violet eyes glinting. Homer hurried to meet her with a telegram that he had sorted from the mail.

"It came this morning," he said. "I would have forwarded it but I didn't know just what plane you were taking out of

Washington. No one offered to tell me."

No one ever told Homer anything about Penny, and yet there was little that he did not know. She tore open her telegram that was, as she had expected, from Rod Seaton. It read:

*Long Island is deadly without you.
Am on my way to Chicago. Expect
me when I get there. Love. Rod.*

THE MESSAGE had been filed at seven that morning in Cleveland, which meant that Rod and his big fast roadster would be in Chicago before the night was over. Penny felt at once excited and hunted. Her father's gaze was upon her, inquiring. She handed him the telegram. It would take his mind off Seth Geary. Rod was one of Senator Hamill's favorites.

He and Rod's father were old friends. Rodney Seaton, Senior, had backed the Senator ever since he had first campaigned for office, and his backing was important. He was one of the biggest industrialists in the state and had powerful influence in the Party. It was not, however, Rod's father alone that had caused Senator Hamill to approve him.

Rod was the kind of boy of whom any parent would approve. He was well-mannered and good-looking. He had just finished college creditably if not brilliantly and had a choice of positions waiting for him in his father's mining and lumber empire. Penny knew that most of the girls in her crowd envied her Rod. It was assumed that she would marry him.

The Senator said, "Better not wander too far from the hotel. Rod would be disappointed to arrive and not find you around. He's like his old man, very possessive with the people of whom he's fond."

Penny laughed. "Bossy, you mean."

From beneath long sooty lashes, she shot a glance at Seth. She wondered how he was taking what was as good as a

"Hands Off!" warning from her father, but she could tell nothing from Seth's thin smile.

"Shouldn't you be making like a newspaper man?" she asked as they waited for an elevator.

He grinned down at her. "I've written my story for the day, most of it, and I've got a side-kick who'll send it out and cover me if anything important comes up. I put her to work as soon as I saw your name on the register."

"What was important about that?" Penny tried to suppress the warm glow that spread through her. "You didn't waste even a nickel telephone call on me in Washington."

"I haven't been in Washington since the night we met," he said. "There were shipping out orders waiting for me at the office. The boss wanted a poll of the opinion of the 'little man' on the subject of the various candidates, from coast to coast. I mounted my trusty jalopy the next morning and took off in all directions."

Penny was silent. He could have written.

"Like most newspapermen, I'm not much good at letters." Seth answered her unspoken thought. "Then, too, being sent out of Washington struck me as a sign, maybe. As I told you before, you didn't fit into my picture. I didn't fit into yours—"

He broke off as the doors of the elevator yawned open in front of them. Penny had no chance to ask him what had made him change his mind and seek her out, here in Chicago. She could only be strangely glad that he had.

Downstairs, the lobby was more crowded than ever. Seth was hailed on all sides, as if he had been an oracle instead of a reporter and commentator.

"Hi, Geary, what's the dope? Who are you betting on to get the nomination?"

Seth grimaced. "Let's get out of here. I'm tired of politics."

"And I'm just getting interested in them," said Penny with mock mournfulness. "Your fault, too."

He laughed ruefully. "I'll never forgive myself if a swim and dinner and a dance doesn't interest you more. I know an inn on the north side that rents bathing suits and features one of the best dance bands in Chicago. How does that sound?"

It sounded delightful to Penny.

THE BEACHSIDE Inn was a luxury hotel, built directly on the lakeshore. Its landscaped grounds swept down to a white sandy beach dotted with gaudy umbrellas and cabanas.

Penny and Seth swam out to the anchored float. They dived until they were tired and then lay upon the sun-warmed boards to rest. The afternoon was waning and they had the float to themselves. Surrounded by water, Penny had a feeling that there were just the two of them in the world. She caught herself thinking that it might not be bad to be alone in the world with Seth. He was not gangling in trunks. He was thin but hard-muscled. His arms looked capable of holding a girl hard and safe. He raised on one elbow to look at her in turn.

"Nice," she said hastily, blushing in confusion. "Lake swimming, I mean. I think I like it better than ocean swimming, although when I swim in Florida or on Long Island—"

She realized that she was babbling and stopped. Seth's gaze had gone to the vast lake that the setting sun was painting with rose and gold. It was a minute before he spoke in an off-hand voice.

"The Seatons have houses all over the country, don't they?" he said. "You could have your lake, you could have your ocean, you could have everything, if you married Rod Seaton."

"What makes you think I'm going to marry Rod?" she asked.

Seth shrugged. "It's common gossip

around Washington, and I'm a newspaper man. I hear things. What's more, I figure things out—such as how suitable it would be, you and young Seaton—the daughter of the Party leader, the son of his big backer.”

“You make it sound like an alliance of state.” Penny sat up, angered. “If Rod and I do get married, it won't be a mercenary, planned wedding. We grew up together. Our fathers are college fraternity brothers. Our mothers were friends, before mine died.”

“I'm sorry,” Seth said. “It's all very natural, as well as beautifully right. I'm a fool, that's all.”

There was a finality in his voice that was like a chill breeze blowing across her. She became aware that the sun was gone for the day.

“It's getting late.” She rose and was preparing to dive as she spoke. “We'd better go in and dress.”

Seth's long body cut the water as soon as she had cleared the diving board. They swam into shore side by side.

THE INN'S dining room opened upon a terrace that faced the lake. Penny and Seth had cocktails and dined out there, and watched twilight appear over the water. The promised band appeared with their dessert.

“We'll go in and dance,” he said, “as soon as I make a call to convention headquarters and check with Paula.”

“Paula?”

“The girl reporter who's doing the dirty work for me today. A good kid. She always has been.” Seth laughed lazily, reminiscently. “She was a WAC and worked with me at Army headquarters in Paris during the war, and I imposed on her then just as I do now.”

“How do you do it?” asked Penny.

“Paula Ord's anxious to break into political reporting,” Seth told her. “She likes to do my work for me.”

Penny smiled and pictured a big, good-natured girl victimized by ambition and his contradictory kind of charm.

“You're a heel,” she said without rancour, and Seth went off to the telephone booth, grinning.

He was gone only a few minutes. Paula had filed his story. All was quiet at headquarters. The Party leaders and delegation chairmen were giving out statements of little importance. Nothing of real news interest was likely to happen until the convention settled down to the serious business of balloting. But just to make sure, Seth explained, he would check with Paula again when he got back to the hotel.

“Meantime the night is ours,” he said. “Let's dance and have fun. Feel like it?”

Suddenly Penny felt very much like dancing and having fun. The dance band was indeed one of the best. Its hot, sweet music banished her earlier mood of chilled depression, and Seth danced amazingly well. There was rhythm in that long, loose-jointed body of his. His arms held her strongly and surely as she had imagined, out on the float, that they would.

They danced again and again and, between dances, went back to their terrace table. Darkness had fallen and the stars came out one by one to be reflected in Lake Michigan's restless waters. Penny was reminded of Potomac Park and the Reflecting Pool.

“Chicago has parks too,” said Seth with almost uncanny intuition. “But they'll be full of rallies tonight. How about a walk down to the lake before we go home?”

She smiled assent, trembling inside herself. Emotions were tugging at her that she had never known before, that she was not sure she wanted to know. She noticed, as Seth paid their bill, his hand was not quite steady. His gray eyes were very bright.

THEY WENT out into the night and found one of the stone benches that dotted the grounds. Far out on the lake a heavily weighted ore boat moved with its lights close to the water. To the south the Loop was a glow of red against the starlit sky. A dreamy waltz drifted out from the hotel, quickening Penny's emotions, awakening longings that were touched by loneliness. She moved a little closer to Seth and his arms closed around her.

"Sweet," he whispered, "sweet and lovely. Whether it's right or whether it's wrong—"

His mouth found hers, and his hard arms crushed her to him. Tonight it was no butterfly kiss that he gave her. His lips demanded and had their answer. Penny's arms went around his neck and her body strained to his. She was conscious of a pure and singing happiness within her.

I've found him, she thought. I've been waiting for him always.

She drew away a little to look at him, her eyes filled with wonder. Seth's face was troubled.

"Darling—" She tried an unsteady laugh. "It isn't the end of the world."

"It's both a beginning and an end for me," he told her somberly. "I can't take what you're offering because I have nothing to offer in return."

"You have yourself."

"And what am I?" His voice was bitter. "A roving newspaper man who may be sent to the ends of the globe any day. I couldn't take you with me."

"Because I've never done anything worthwhile?" she asked. "Because I don't know anything but how to dress and dance and entertain at nice parties? You said that before. You made fun of me for not knowing anything about even my own father's affairs."

"I was trying to kid myself out of wanting you," he said. "I knew it wouldn't

work, even if there were no Rod Seaton around."

Rebellion blazed in her violet eyes. "I'm not married to Rod."

"But you can't deny that you've contemplated the idea, can you?"

Penny was silent, debating her explanation. There was no definite engagement between her and Rod, but marriage had been more than contemplated. Both had taken it for granted that she was his girl. She had gone to all his college parties. They had spent their holidays together, either with his parents or her father. It had been understood, without putting it into actual words, that they would be married when the worries of election were over.

"It's almost eleven o'clock." Seth was looking at the luminous dial of his wrist watch, frowning. "We'll have to be amscraying. I want to see Paula and have you meet her. You'll like her."

Penny smiled with twisted lips. She doubted very much that she would like Paula, earnest hard-working girl that she might be. At that moment, Penny had little liking for Seth. He was inhuman, a typewriter instead of a man. He had erased their kiss from his mind as easily as he would erase a word from a sheet of paper.

Torn between hurt and fury, Penny mustered what dignity she could. "By all means, let's get going," she said. "Rod's probably taking the hotel apart looking for me. Did I tell you that we were expecting him tonight?"

"I gathered as much from what your father said," Seth told her tonelessly.

THEY DROVE swiftly back to the Loop which had a New Year's Eve appearance. Delegates paraded with banners advertising their candidates. Seth and Penny made their way into the Michigan Drive hotel with difficulty. She felt tired and bedraggled and would have

liked to postpone the meeting with Paula. But pride and curiosity prevented her.

Seth had arranged to meet Paula in the Green Room of the hotel. He propeled Penny through more delegates hurriedly.

"My nose for news tells me that some kind of story has busted," he said, in careless explanation of his haste. "I hope Paula was on the job."

At the entrance of the Green Room he paused to look over its occupants anxiously. A girl waved to him from the bar. Seth's relief was visible.

"There she is. That's Paula," he said. "And she's got us covered. I can tell by the smug look on her puss."

Exulting, he dragged Penny forward willy-nilly. She was staring incredulously at the tall slim girl whom he had identified as Paula. She bore little resemblance to the wholesome hard-working ex-WAC of Penny's imaginings. The real Paula was a smooth, exotic creature. She had mahogany hair that she wore up-swept; narrow tawny eyes and a startlingly pale face slashed by a sensuous scarlet mouth. A cocktail suit of gold satin set off her striking coloring.

"Hi, lug." She greeted Seth exuberantly. "Kiss me quick. I've just finished saving your hide."

Seth laughed and gave her a quick but thorough kiss. "Good girl. Let's find a table, and you tell me about it. Paula Ord, this is Penelope Hamill."

"Senator Hamill's little Penny, isn't it?" asked Paula. Her eyes were traveling over Penny in a way that made her feel very young and gauche.

Seth had spied a corner table just vacated and paid no attention to the exchange between the two girls. Grabbing an arm of each, he beat a couple of delegates to seats in what was close to a photo finish. A harrassed looking waiter took their order for drinks. Scotch and soda for Seth and Paula. Perversely, Penny took a daiquiri.

"Now give," said Seth when the man was gone. "What happened tonight, and where?"

"At the Lincoln Park rally, Martin Brandt's." Paula paused and turned a thoughtful gaze upon Penny. She said: "He's quite a friend of your father's, the Senator, isn't he?"

"Dad's had him out to the house to dinner several times." Penny's reply was cautious.

Seth frowned. "Don't try to interview Penny, Ord. She's not in politics, doesn't know anything about them. What's the dope on the Brandt rally? Did our paper get the story?"

"Yes, my lazy love." Paula was teasing. "I phoned it in an hour ago, Brandt's speech word for word. And it was dynamite."

"What did he say?" Seth was fuming.

"Nothing much," drawled Paula, "except to advocate increasing governmental controls on defense necessities like iron and lumber and stopping works on the Great Lakes Waterway until the present international situation is more settled. He thinks we should concentrate on building air fields."

SETH whistled softly. "He makes sense but the Senator and his pal, Seaton, won't like it, a bit. They'll put the skids on him when he comes up for the nomination."

"If they can," said Paula. "The public is getting a little tired of snooty senators and millionaire dictators. Hamill and Geary may have to take it and like it."

Seth nodded. "You've got something there, keed. If Hamill were wise—"

He analyzed the situation, while Penny squirmed inwardly with embarrassment. Her father and his best friend were the subject of discussion but her own existence was forgotten. Not until the waiter appeared with their drinks did either Paula or Seth seem to remember

that she was Penelope Hamill, and in their midst.

Only Seth apologized. "I'm afraid we've been giving your old man a bit of a going-over, but that's politics."

Paula leaned across the table to inspect Penny with innocent interest that failed to conceal malice. "It doesn't seem possible," she said, "that you live in Washington among political people and have no idea what it's all about. Don't you vote?"

Penny had an answer to that one. "I won't be twenty-one until next May."

Paula, she thought, must be at least twenty-five, but it was small satisfaction. Paula was beautiful in her fashion, and she could talk Seth's language. No wonder he had been able to kiss and forget so easily. Penny burned with shame as she recalled her own wild response. She had been nothing to him but a pretty girl who had walked with him beneath the stars and asked to be kissed.

The waiter brought their drinks. She drank hers in untasted gulps. She wanted only to be done with this evening which had begun so gayly and was ending so miserably. She had half risen and was starting to murmur an excuse about weariness, when she saw the big dark young man at the door.

IT WAS Rod Seaton.

Penny recognized him with mingled emotions. He loved her. His presence would bolster her stricken ego. Then she saw that Rod was in one of his jealous sulky moods. Her slight movement had caught his eye, and he was bearing down upon the corner table, his expression grim.

Seth stood up with an ironic bow. Rod slowly skidded to a stop at the table, and glared at Penny. When he was not in a temper, he was a handsome boy. His heavy features, however, did not lend themselves to scowling.

"Roddy, darling!" Penny was effusive

in her effort to divert him. "How nice. I didn't expect you for hours. You're just in time to have a drink with us. Have you met Paula Ord and Seth Geary—of the *New York Chronicle*, isn't it? Rod Seaton."

Paula and Seth made polite acknowledgements of the introduction. Rod merely grunted and returned his dour attention to Penny.

"I drove almost all night last night and got here around dinner time. And what happens?" He answered his own question aggrievedly, "I learn from your father that you're out on the town. Is that any way to treat a guy? I ask you."

While Penny fumbled for soothing words, Paula spoke up flippily. "Not a handsome hunk of man like you, chum."

Rod gave her his full attention for the first time. He looked her over and must have liked what he saw. He relaxed and sat down beside her in the chair that she indicated with an inviting gesture. Seth ordered more drinks for which Penny had no desire. From her point of view, Rod added little to the party.

"I've seen you play football," Paula told him, "and I promised myself that I'd meet you some day. What a big bruiser you are."

Rod beamed and devoted himself to her. He was proud of his past football achievements, and easily flattered. It was, moreover, a habit of his to avenge a real or fancied slight by rushing another girl. Penny was not surprised by his behavior. She had had experiences with his jealousy before and, usually, felt no more than mild irritation. But tonight she found herself ready to slap both him and Paula. There was a sardonic twist to the sympathetic grin that Seth gave her.

Paula was dishing out admiration in nauseating proportions.

She switched the subject from football to politics and the convention. "You're staying over for it, of course," she said.

"Being the son of your father you couldn't help but be interested in politics. I wouldn't be surprised but what you'd be a candidate yourself at a convention some day. You must know the inside of the game."

Rod chuckled. "The last is right. I could give you plenty of undercover stuff, but as for being a candidate some day, I've got a way to go yet. It's an idea, though. I've followed politics all my life."

The statement was outrageous. His lack of interest in politics was his father's despair.

Penny choked on a giggle, and Paula looked over at her. "What's the matter dear?" she asked. "Political talk bores you, doesn't it?"

"Sure." Rod answered for Penny. "She's a feather-brain."

"Whatever kind of brain I have it's tottering for lack of sleep." Penny pushed back her chair, yawning deliberately. "But don't let me break up the party, please."

SETH was already on his feet and insisted upon walking to the elevators with her. Rod made only a gesture of rising. He returned eagerly to Paula's talk.

"I'd like to know what she's up to," Seth said worriedly.

He had lost his sardonic grin. He looked all at once tired and unhappy. His hand on Penny's arm halted her from entering a waiting elevator.

"Please," he begged. "Give me a minute. I'm beginning to think that maybe I was wrong about you and me."

"If you're talking about there being no place for me in your picture, or you in mine, you were oh, so very right." Penny contradicted him coldly. "Tonight has proved it. I don't like your way of living. I don't like your friends."

"And I don't like yours," he said.

"Our one point of agreement. Good night. And thanks for an—entertaining—evening."

Smiling wryly, Penny stepped into the elevator. Its doors closed out Seth's troubled face.

Her father had preceded her up to the suite. She found him at his telephone, looking, and sounding, troubled. He was making arrangements to meet someone at the airport the following afternoon.

He finished with, "Okay, R. S. I'll be there at one-thirty. I'll have Rod drive me out to the field. That will give us a chance to talk on the way back without a chauffeur or taxi-cab driver listening in. 'Bye."

With surprise, Penny gathered that Rodney Seaton, Sr. was arriving in Chicago tomorrow. "R. S." was Senator Hamill's name for him. He called the Senator familiarly "Ham".

"What's on his mind?" she asked with real curiosity.

"Plenty, and none of it good." Her father ran a hand through his iron-gray hair, then said, "I hope Rod found you tonight. There's going to be enough trouble around here without you and he being on the outs."

Penny avoided the implied question. "I suppose," she observed, "that Mr. Seaton is upset about Martin Brandt's speech tonight."

"What do you know about that?" Her father gave her a sharp glance.

"I heard some talk downstairs," she told him.

"What are they saying?"

"That you and Mr. Seaton weren't going to like it, and that you'd try to put the skids under Brandt."

The Senator frowned. "I wish you hadn't come to this convention, and I wish you wouldn't listen to cheap talk and pick up cheap phrases." He paused, then added, "But you might as well get your facts straight, not that you'll under-

stand them. I wish you would, though."

Penny sat down with a sigh. "I'm not a half-wit. Or am I?"

Her plaintive query went ignored. Senator Hamill was in a mood to unburden himself, no matter what his opinion of his audience's intellect.

He said, "I heard Brandt's talk tonight. I liked it. R. S. doesn't. He threatens to withdraw his backing if I support Brandt for the nomination. It will cost me my Party leadership, it may cost me my senatorship, but it has to be done."

"Why?" Penny urged him on with a whisper.

"Brandt's got the right idea. It's a time of crisis, and we can't afford to consider selfish interests. We need more airfields. We need more control over utilities that would serve us in time of war. His program is opposed to all that R. S. has stood for, but it's what the country needs. Brandt's the man we need. I have to support him, even though it's going to mean a break between R. S. and me—"

HE LEANED back in his chair wearily and closed his eyes for a moment. Penny regarded him with pity, and with pride. He was making a brave sacrifice.

"It's not going to be easy," the Senator went on. "R. S. and I have been friends for a long time. I've played practical politics with him. We've never disagreed except on minor issues that could be adjusted. This is something else. I only hope I can talk him around tomorrow. And I'd better get some sleep to be in form."

He straightened up and switched out the light over his desk. Penny rose and put a sympathetic hand on his shoulder before going into her own rooms. She could see that he did not want words from her.

She slept restlessly and awakened to a day that was as gray and dreary as yesterday had been blue and gay. It fitted

her morning mood. She showered, dressed in mauve and rose slacks and shirt, and went out to join her father and Homer Catlin, who were working in the main room.

"Mr. Seth Geary called," Homer said. He took telephone calls in his own room for her as well as the Senator. "I told him you were sleeping and could not be disturbed. Was that right, Miss Penelope?"

"More than right. Keep it up." Penny smiled at him. "You're a great help, Homer."

"I want to be," he said earnestly. "I'd do anything to make you happy, Miss Penelope. Anything."

Senator Hamill smiled a dry smile. His secretary's adoration of his daughter never failed to amuse him. It touched Penny unexpectedly this morning. She was at low tide, where she began to wonder if she might not have to marry wispy, worshipful Homer. She had no idea whether Seth called again or not. It did not matter. She was done with him, and his Paula. It looked as if Rod were really done with her too. Homer had instructions to transfer his calls, but none came.

ROD himself, however, appeared at one o'clock to pick up the Senator. His humor had improved over night.

"Hi, Funny-Puss." He hailed her in the manner of his crowd. "I've decided to forgive you and let you go dancing with me. How about it?"

"I can stand it, if you can," Penny said.

"I thought we might make it a party." Rod hesitated. "Get Paula and that lug Geary, maybe."

Penny regarded him stormily. "If I never see those two again, it will be too soon."

"What's wrong with them? Paula struck me as a pretty slick chick, and you liked Geary well enough to stand me up for him yesterday." Remembered

grievance darkened Rod's face. "If I'm willing to pass that one—"

"You don't have to pass anything," said Penny. "Have your party but include me out."

"Of all the—"

Rod's threatened explosion was halted by Senator Hamill who came out from his bedroom with hat and stick.

"Come on, son." He spoke briskly. "We don't want to keep your father waiting."

Grumbling a promise to have a show-down later, Rod let himself be urged from the room. Penny made a face at his departing back. He could put up no arguments that would make her endure another evening of Paula's and Seth's company.

Her resolution faltered, however, when she thought of her father. It would not be fair to quarrel with Rod at this juncture and further weaken the ties between him and Mr. Seaton. Feeling trapped, Penny gazed moodily over Lake Michigan that today was shrouded in mist and anything but a cheerful sight.

She said, "Come in," to the rap on the door, without turning. It could be no one but a waiter collecting her breakfast-luncheon tray.

"Hello, Beautiful."

It was no waiter speaking. She whirled to find Seth, tall and uncombed, in the middle of the room with the door closed behind him. She choked with anger that was sharpened by fear. Fear not of him but of herself.

"You!" She managed a strangled voice. "What do you mean by walking in on me like that?"

"I was invited, wasn't I?" Seth grinned his most engaging grin, then became very sober. "Penny, you wouldn't talk to me on the telephone, and I must talk to you. I've been making a bad mistake—I'm sure of it today. You're making another, my sweet."

"A mistake about what?" Her voice was sharp.

He was moving toward her, and every nerve in her body was crying out to him.

"About us." His gray eyes held her blue ones.

She threw his phrases back at him once again. "I don't fit into your picture. You don't fit into mine."

"I was afraid, darling," Seth said quickly, "of you, of the lovely sheltered world that has always been yours. I was afraid to take you from it lest you be unhappy and come to hate me. I kept thinking about all the things that Rod Seaton could give you and that I couldn't—"

Penny's soft mouth twisted. "Are you still trying to sell me Rod?"

"No!" Seth stepped so close that she could feel the warmth of his body. "Rod isn't half good enough for you. Now that I've met him, I'll never let you marry him. He's nothing but a spoiled brat. I'll make you a lousy husband, but he'll make you worse—"

"Husband. You?"

"What else?" His laughter was tender. His arms reached for her. "Penny, I love you."

HE WHISPERED the words but they sang in the room. She yielded to his hands and raised her face blindly. Lips met lips, and pressed tight. Penny closed her eyes and floated in soft, scented darkness. She clasped him and her hands held him to her.

"Seth, I love you."

He snuggled her head into the hollow of his shoulder and smoothed her satin-black hair. He was all gentleness. And she had believed him callous. But the heart had known.

The telephone rang, bringing them back to the world around them. Penny answered. Homer was on the wire.

He said, "Miss Penelope, have the

Senator and Mr. Seaton come in from the air field?"

Her eyes flew to the desk clock. Inexorable time had passed.

She gasped, "Not yet. Shall I have him call you?"

"I'll contact him later," said Homer.

It was, Penny realized, a warning that her father might arrive momentarily. Somehow Homer must have known that Seth was with her and that the worried Senator would not welcome seeing him. Penny marveled anew at Homer. The wispy secretary was one of those nondescript people who had the gift of seeing rather than being seen.

She turned from the telephone to Seth. "You'll have to scram, but quick. Dad and Mr. Seaton will be here any minute now."

"Big-shot Seaton is in Chicago?"

She nodded. "And they're probably in the midst of a battle about Dad standing up for Mr. Brandt. My father mustn't be distracted by finding you here."

Seth stared, unmoving. "The Senator is going to support Brandt in spite of last night's speech?"

"Because of last night's speech. He—"

Penny stopped herself. The curiosity of a newspaperman had been in Seth's voice. She looked at him uncertainly.

"It's off the record." Seth interpreted her hesitancy correctly. "I'm a political reporter, not a keyhole snoop. You can trust me. And I'm on the Senator's side if he's trying to get the nomination for Brandt. Brandt's the man for the presidency at this time."

"That's what Dad believes. That's why—"

Seth interrupted with a note of reverence in his voice. "And he's risking his career. The Senator is a better man than I gave him credit for. He's a patriot, and," he drew Penny back to him and kissed her gently, "a worthy father of the most wonderful girl in the world."

She clung to him for a heart beat, then pushed him from her. "Seth, you must go. Please."

"Consider me gone."

He left swiftly and just in time. Five minutes later, Senator Hamill opened the door for himself and Rodney Seaton, Senior. Both men were tense and too absorbed in their own conflict to notice Penny's agitation.

"Hello, Penny wise," said Mr. Seaton. That had been his name for her since she was in pigtails. He used it abstractedly.

RODNEY SEATON SENIOR was a huge man with thinning hair. He had probably once looked as Rod did but he had gone to beef. He had a triple layer of chins and an enormous paunch. His chins were quivering with indignation and hurt.

Penny's father gave her a pointed glance. "R. S. and I are in the midst of a very dull discussion, dear."

She laughed, trying to lighten the sullen atmosphere. "I can take a hint."

With a wave of her hand, she went into her own rooms. The men's voices followed her.

R. S. said, "You of all people turning radical, Ham. It's beyond me."

"It's not radical to want to keep America safe and prosperous." Senator Hamill's rebuttal was soft. "I believe in the same things that you do, R. S., the right to work and earn, the right to own what you earn."

"You're not acting like it." Seaton Senior was bitter. "You're double-crossing me. And after all these years."

"No, R. S. I'm just trying to do what I believe to be my duty. Think it over. You're an American too."

"Of course, I'm an American," snapped Mr. Seaton, "as good an American as you are. But if you support Brandt on the ticket, I'll—"

"Don't say it," ordered the Senator.

"I'm making no threats," Mr. Seaton said. "Not yet. As long as you haven't committed yourself publicly to Brandt—and you haven't, have you?"

"I told you I'd keep it out of the newspapers until the first ballot but," there was no relenting in Senator Hamill, "I'm for Brandt. Get that straight, R. S."

"If that's the way it is, I'd better get out of here."

Penny could hear the movement of Mr. Seaton's huge body as he lifted it from a chair. He said, "Good day, Senator Hamill." It was no longer "Ham". Penny went out to her father. He was sitting with his head in his hands.

"It's bad," he said. "But I have hopes that I may yet swing that old mule over. Hold everything, my dear. I have an appointment at the Drake."

His adjuration was cryptic but concise. He wanted her to placate Rod. Rod and she were the last tie between the two old friends and Penny remembered that when Rod appeared a little later. He came in, his manner an odd mixture of belligerence and diffidence.

He said, "About the party tonight—"

Penny smiled resolutely. "Make any arrangements that you please." She could do no less for her father.

"It's okay then, a foursome? Paula and Geary?"

Seth's name trumpeted in Penny's heart. "Okay," she said. She could explain to Seth that she was only trying to keep the peace. And she would see him.

Rod came over and put his arms around her. "You're a good egg, Funny-Puss."

His mouth took hers, unresisted. It seemed to make no difference. There was no clamoring in her blood or her brain. It was just Rod kissing her, as he had kissed her since they were in their teens. She thought of Seth's lips on hers, making her feel as if she were dying and being born again. She withdrew from Rod's arms.

He said, "I'll pick you up around eight, baby. Maybe Paula and Geary will join us, maybe not. There's a lot going on around here and they may be busy getting their stories."

That, thought Penny, was a real understatement. The afternoon, however, dragged, and grew drearier. The mist had turned into a real Windy City rain. Penny prowled the big lonely suite. She hoped, without expecting, that Seth would pay another surprise visit. He could not know that her father would be absent and he, as well as she, was respecting the Senator's worried nerves.

LATE in the afternoon, Penny set about dressing for the evening. She was determined to give Paula some real competition that night. She chose a ballerina dress of black chiffon with a matching ruffled cape, young but sophisticated. She brushed her dark hair until it shone and emphasized the violet of her eyes with purple mascara.

"Slick chick," she told herself, looking in the mirror. Then she wrinkled her small straight nose. A silly expression. Rod's. An adolescent expression. Rod was an adolescent.

He was only a few years younger than Seth, but he was a child. Seth was a man. Her man.

She had a cocktail with her father while waiting for Rod. The Senator was in a more optimistic mood.

"I saw R. S. again, over at headquarters," he said. "I may bring him around. He won't say who he's holding out for. I'm hoping that he'll come out for Brandt after the first ballot. And then there's you and Rod."

Penny held her tongue with difficulty. It was not she and Rod. But now was not the time to tell this tired harrassed statesman.

Senator Hamill turned on the wall radio to the news of the day. There was a

commercial advocating the use of somebody's vitamin pills. Then—

"We are broadcasting from the news room of the *New York Chronicle*," the announcer said.

Penny sat up in her chair, interested. The *Chronicle* was Seth's paper, and Paula's. The speaker went on:

"Fresh from the Chicago convention comes some red hot news. Here it is, friends. There has been a serious split in the Party. It is reported from reliable sources that conservative, old-line Senator Hamill is committing himself to the support of ex-Governor Martin Brandt. It has caused a serious breach between him and his old friend and backer, Rodney Seaton, the well-known, industrial—"

Penny looked over at her father. His face was drawn and despairing.

He said, "That does it. I might have persuaded R. S. to the sane, patriotic point of view. But now that they've put

it to the public that he's against Brandt, the old mule will never back-track."

Penny sat, motionless. She was facing treachery. It was not a pretty thing to face. Numbly, she heard her father ask the inevitable question.

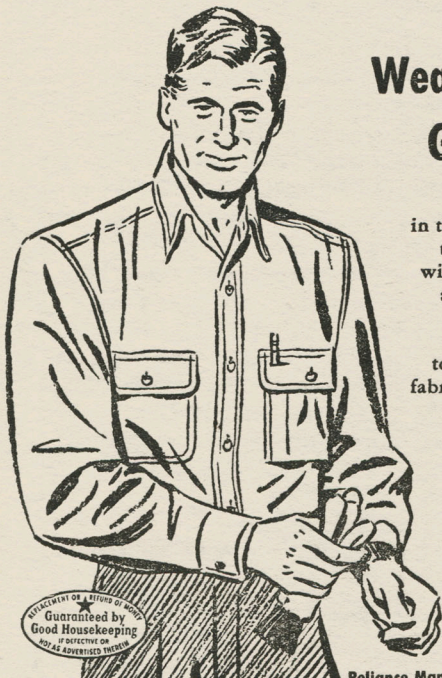
"Who could have done it? Who could have given out the story to the *Chronicle* that R. S. and I were opposing each other? I tried to keep it strictly hush-hush. I know that he did. Who?"

Penny summoned all her courage. "I, Dad," she said.

Senator Hamill stared. Then comprehension came to him. "You talked to that newspaper fellow—Geary. He wormed the information out of you."

He had kissed it out of her, thought Penny bitterly. She waited for her father's wrath but none came. He stood up looking older and more tired than she had ever seen him.

He said only, "You shouldn't have



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been allowed to come here among the wise and the weary. You were too young." He put a hand on her dark bowed head. "It's done, dear. It's too late for tears. I'd better go over to Brandt's headquarters and tell them that the *Chronicle* is right. I'm still supporting Martin Brandt."

PENNY was alone with her disillusion. It was too late for tears. She faced Seth dry-eyed when he rapped on her door.

"You've heard the broadcast. It will be in tomorrow's *Chronicle*." He was haggard. "You think I did it."

"Yes." Penny's eyes were violets, deep frozen.

His gray eyes poured a deep look into hers. "She of so little faith," he said. "Good-by, my love."

She saw him go and he was gone. Love was gone. She was alone. So alone.

It was an anti-climax to have Rod appear promptly at eight, but Rod's mind was not on parties. He admitted frankly to having the jitters.

"Everybody's gone nuts," he said. "Your old man, my old man. Geary wouldn't speak to me—"

"What about Paula?" Penny could not resist that thrust.

Rod looked a little ill. He consigned Paula to regions of which Penny approved. Then he came over to circle her slim waist with his two hands.

"Funny-Puss." His voice carried a note of desperation. "Let's barrel along, go home, get married on the way. We have to pass through a state where it's easy to get married on the rocket plan. What say?"

Penny was silent. The world was whirling too fast on its axis, and the numbness within her left her uncaring.

"It's the answer to the sixty-four dollar question," Rod said urgently. "Once we're hooked up, our ancestors will get together. And we've been pals for a long

time. We have no reason to wait. Right?"

Penny had to admit that everything that he was asking was right. She said, "I guess so."

Rod pulled her close to his impressive football chest. He did not attempt to kiss her. Something in her immobility stopped him.

"It's a go, Funny-Puss," he said. "How soon can we roll?"

"I'll have to pack an over-night bag and—" She paused, frowning. "Shouldn't we tell my father and yours what we're going to do."

"Over my dead body." Rod gave a hollow laugh. "The way the old men are feeling at the moment this will have to be a Capulet-Montague affair. But it's what they really want."

PENNY agreed with him and sent him away so that she might make her preparations. She could not elope in a black chiffon ballerina dress.

She had just changed to a trim summer suit of black faille when Homer Catlin called her. Penny listened to him impatiently. Her over-night bag had yet to be packed and Rod would be back in thirty minutes.

Homer said, "Miss Penelope, might I have a word with you in private. It's important."

Penny could enumerate many things that were important. She must never look again into Seth's treacherous face. She must help her father and Mr. Geary preserve their friendship, by marrying Rod.

"Not now. I—Rod and I—are going away. I mean—we're going out."

"Miss Penelope!" Homer's kind voice came distressed. "You sound strange. Is anything wrong?"

Her laugh was an echo of past laughter. "Nothing at all, Homer. Thank you."

His complaint was coming over the wire as she hung up. "Miss Penelope, you don't sound happy."

Later, Penny promised herself, she would make up to Homer for her rudeness in cutting him off. She hurried to pack her bag. She put on a small straight sailor banded in white, and regarded herself critically in the mirror of her dressing table. She did not resemble a bride. She shrugged. Why look like a bride when you do not feel like one?

She went out and sat down to wait for Rod. She was a beautiful automaton in a black suit and a black straw hat banded in white. A key turning in the lock of the door startled her into animation. No one but her father had a key.

Penny jumped up to face him, becoming belatedly conscious that he was not alone. Beside him was Seth and, trailing behind, was Homer.

"I was waiting for Rod," said Penny when the silence became unbearable.

Seth's voice was mild. "I fear your Rod is having a session across his father's knee. Our friend Homer, you see, knew the score and told it to his old man."

Penny sat down again. Her knees were too weak to hold her upright.

Her father smiled at her encouragingly. "I understand, daughter," he said. "You feared that you had hurt me, the Party and the country. You were trying to make amends. You would have married Rod to preserve R. S.'s association with me, if it hadn't been for Homer."

Seth said, "You tell them, Homer. Come on, now."

THE HORN-RIMMED wispy little man did his best, blushing. "Miss Penelope, your happiness has always been my most sacred charge. Naturally, I'm devoted to Senator Hamill—"

A sigh stopped him from elaborating on his loyalties. He hurried with his story.

"I was having a late luncheon today. My table adjoined that of young Mr. Seaton and the red-headed young lady,

Miss Ord, I believe, who works for the *New York Chronicle*. Young Mr. Seaton was being very informative about the political situation, the rift between his father and Senator Hamill. The young lady was drawing him out cleverly."

"That's Paula," observed Seth.

Penny's voice rose in reproach. "She sent out that story. You didn't tell me."

"You wouldn't have believed me," said Seth. "Besides, she made no off-record promises. She was doing her job as a reporter. If Rod Seaton let himself be played for a sucker—" He shrugged.

Senator Hamill said, "When you would not talk to Homer, he came to me. In all decency, I had to apologize to Seth," he paused, smiling, "and set you straight about Rod."

"That lad has been scared to death ever since the broadcast from the *Chronicle* news room. He's not too dumb to realize that he'd been taken by an ambitious red-head. As a matter of fact, Paula told him to go peddle his papers. Rod knew that retribution would be his, so—"

"He asked me to elope with him, and I was going to." Penny admitted it shamedly. "But how did you know?"

Seth made an elaborate bow to Homer who blushed more violently. He said, "Miss Penelope, your happiness—I watch, I listen. Will you forgive me?"

There was a laugh from Seth that shattered some of the emotional strain. "Homer, old boy," he told him, "you're going to be Bachelor Uncle Number One in our household."

"My dear boy—" The Senator spoke up dryly. "Since you haven't yet asked father for her hand, have you asked daughter?"

Seth said, "Yes. And both of you should say no. You'll probably be a Cabinet minister under Brandt. His nomination is assured now, and the election is already in the bag. What do you

(Please turn to page 98)



IT HAPPENED on a Wednesday night. The moon hung low, the stars were bright, and Michele was eloping.

Her hair was the palest gold, wound in a coronet around her head. She was quiet, reserved, with all the poise on the world. No one ever knew exactly what Michele might be thinking. But Dion knew, all right. He slanted wicked dark eyes at her as he drove, grinned a little, and murmured, "You can always change your mind and walk home, Mike."

No one had ever called her Mike before. She had been the smartest girl ever to graduate from Elmwood high, but now, at twenty-three, she knew she was the dumbest girl in town.

"I shan't walk home," she said in a small, still voice.

"Mad money?"

She lifted cool gray eyes to him. "Maybe I was wrong. I thought you wanted to marry me."

He said, "Well, if somebody has to hurt you, you might as well have a little fun out of it. Sure, I want to marry you."

She thought, Yes, for fifty thousand dollars, what man wouldn't? And then she shied away from that thought sickly because there was a man who wouldn't. Johnny Robertson—

Dion said lightly, "The trouble with you, baby, is that you don't know how to play. You've been a little sobersides all your life. You've been wrapped in dreams."

He had said that to her once before, years ago, when she was sixteen.

Dion Shane. She turned the name over in her mind with a numb sort of curiosity. All her life Aunt Amanda had been warning her to stay away from boys like Dion Shane. Nice girls, Auntie told her, did not go out with Dion. But even when she was sixteen, Michele had known it was because Dion did not ask the nice girls.

He was wild, Auntie had warned her. Spoiled. Undisciplined. Once the Shanes had had money, and had proved they kept their grandiose ideas by sending Dion to an expensive private college. They even wore shabby clothes so he could flirt around the campus in a sleek convertible.

He had been driving that convertible down the streets of Elmwood one Saturday morning when he had slowed down on an obvious whim to shout, "Hey, Mike! Want to go to the game?"

The Wrong Heart

By

VAL NEWELL

Dion wanted to teach Michele about living but she wanted to learn about loving.

*He said directly, "If I want
to make love to you, I'm
going to do it."*



Michele had not meant to go. It was probably just a gag, anyway. Certainly with all the girls he could choose from, he would not select quiet, studious little Michele Carre, who had never gone out with anyone in her life but the boy next door.

But she had been rankling under the unjustified, headache-inspired tongue lashing Auntie had given her before sending her to the post office, and when she saw the way the convertible gleamed in the sun, and the dark laughter in Dion's eyes, she went.

They had a wonderful time, munching popcorn and shouting themselves hoarse, drinking cokes with the crowd afterward at a place where Dion seemed to know everyone, and stopping somewhere for an informal dinner at a rather elegant high-way place. Then there had been the long, moonlight ride home.

It was somewhere on that ride home that Dion had stopped the car under a tree and kissed her—too long, too hard, too recklessly, scaring the wits out of her but thrilling her shamelessly.

"You're a dreamy little kid," he had murmured against her lips, while her heart fluttered madly. "When are you going to wake up?"

"Wake up?" she whispered.

He laughed a little. "You don't know, innocent. Maybe you'll never know. But it would be fun to teach you."

"Teach me what, Dion?"

"Life, love, and the way the world waggles," he said lightly, drawing her so close she couldn't breathe, couldn't think, and worst of all, didn't even want to think. He had kissed her again for long heady moments and then had released her abruptly, to drive her home so fast, she sat wide-eyed and motionless.

Auntie had had hysterics when she arrived home at two in the morning. And the next day both she and Johnny, who lived next door, had hammered at Michele

until she was ready to scream at them.

"He's no good, Michele." "You know the sort of girls he runs around with, girls like Candy Sutton." "He's wild, he's selfish, he's irresponsible." "He'll make love to you and go back to Candy."

That had been true enough, for the next time she had seen him, weeks later, giggling, seductive-looking Candy Sutton had been riding in his car, her bright red hair drifting in the breeze. Not that Michele had wanted or expected anything else. She had always been a bit ashamed, whenever she remembered.

How was she to know that some dark night, years later, Dion Shane would have that chance to teach her—what was it he had called it—life, love, and the way the world waggles.

HER PALMS felt cold and damp, clammy. A thudding fear was emptying her heart of everything save sheer panic.

What am I doing? she thought wildly. Oh, Johnny, stop me, quick! Say it isn't true, darling, that you never meant those awful things you said.

"Want a cup of coffee?" Dion asked lazily, as if eloping with a girl were nothing to be excited about. Even a girl with fifty thousand dollars.

"That would be nice," Michele said in a dim, far-away voice.

He drove into a roadside place that seemed to have acres of neon and Venetian blinds. They had pie and coffee, while a juke box blared and a group of teenagers giggled and scuffled in a booth nearby.

Dion said, "You look like a poetess, pale and remote. You look like a hymn to the moon."

She lifted her eyes slowly, but he was a million miles away from her, a slim, dark-eyed stranger with a quirk to his mouth and two wicked devils in his black eyes. Just a man she hardly knew—

He's a heel, she thought without emotion. He could break a girl's heart and blithely walk over the pieces, with fistfuls of Aunt Amanda's money sticking out of his pockets.

No one had dreamed Aunt Amanda had money, least of all Michele who, orphaned when she was a baby, had spent virtually all her life under Auntie's sharp-tongued, miserly care. Upon her death two months ago Michele had been stunned at the news, and a little dismayed, when she remembered all the years of wearing made-over clothes and never having quite enough food in the house.

Fifty thousand dollars. She stirred her coffee around and around until it had a slight depression in the middle.

"Dion," she whispered, and stopped.

He was watching her, waiting. She drew a slow breath and lifted her chin.

"I heard what you said to Candy Sutton at the party tonight."

"Candy?" She saw the dark eyes go shuttered. "She's an old friend whom I haven't seen since I was in college. I probably said a lot of things to her. Specifically, what?"

They had been dancing, Candy and Dion. It was the first time Michele had seen Dion in years, for he had quit college to join the Navy, and go overseas. No one had seemed to know what had become of him. But Candy must have, for there he was, suddenly, her escort to a party in a town he hadn't visited for six years.

Dion dancing with Candy. Michele had felt so terribly sedate, watching them. Candy had soft curves and a tempting giggle. And Dion, so tall and dark and graceful had been whispering things into her bright red hair.

It was romance, Michele had thought. Pure, undiluted romance, and she had felt queerly desperate, realizing that she had been engaged to Johnny for years but nothing had ever come of it.

"You mean," Dion had murmured softly as they danced near where Michele was standing with Johnny, "there is a girl here with fifty thousand dollars and no husband? Baby, tell me more!"

Candy had giggled a little. "Oh, Dion, you're horrible! But you wouldn't want her, darling, not Michele Carre."

"Michele Carre?" he had repeated slowly, looking down at Candy. "You mean that quiet, brainy little kid who belongs to Johnny Robertson?"

"They'll go on being engaged forever," Candy said. "I guess they're waiting for his mother to die, or something. Keeping her hospital bills paid is all Johnny can handle, without taking on a wife. Though now, with Michele's inheritance from her aunt."

Dion had said queerly, "Fifty thousand—and Michele Carre? What a natural for a smart guy! It would be like taking candy from a kid."

Candy breathed, her eyes blue and scared. "Dion, don't talk like that!"

He had held her closer, laughing a little, and they had drifted away. She had watched them for quite a while, not feeling hurt, not feeling sorry, just wondering why a man like Dion should have such a gay, ingenuous charm.

If only Johnny would hold her the way Dion was holding Candy. If he would, just once in his life, draw her breathlessly close in his arms and kiss her as if he couldn't live any longer without her.

But when she turned to him, Johnny had heard all of it. He had looked down at her, his nice mouth a trifle thin, his eyes turned to stone. He said, "That's the pay-off, isn't it?"

"Johnny, they didn't mean it?"

"I marry you and support my mother on your money. Swell. Everyone in town apparently has it figured out but you and me."

She whispered, "Oh, Johnny, no—"

"Or," his voice was icy steel, "do we

just wait for my mother to up and die?"

She could not answer that one. His mother had been ill for so long, ever since she could remember, though there had been some insurance money that had lasted from the time of his father's death until Johnny finished high school.

"Johnny, we've waited so long," she said shakenly. "What does it matter whose money it is? Oh, Johnny, I love you, and I'm sick of waiting. I want to get married."

He said bitterly, "I suppose you do. Why don't you? If it's a prince consort you're looking for, Dion Shane would make a swell one. He's got the looks, the personality—"

She had not believed, at first, that he was saying it. She had whispered each word separate and stricken, "Oh, no—no—no—"

But in the middle of it, Johnny had turned on his heel and walked blindly away. Michele stood there for a long time, in a frozen sort of unbelief. Ever since she could remember, there had been Johnny next door, to ride her on his bicycle, soothe her when Auntie's tempers upset her, inform her loftily that girls must not play baseball.

JOHNNY, she thought now in misery, How could you do this to me when I loved you so? She spoke, the words coming out a trifle thickly.

"It isn't that I mind so much being married for the money Aunt Amanda left me, Dion. But I-I don't want to be deceived about it. I don't want you pretending that-that you care about me, when—"

She was unable to go on. Not with his eyes, dark and steady, watching her like that. He said slowly, "Are you sure you don't want to be deceived, Mike?"

She sat there numbly, her eyes locked with his.

"You're a brainy little thing. No ordi-

nary girl would have walked up to me and said, 'Johnny Robertson has just jilted me. Will you marry me, Dion?' You weren't kidding yourself then, Mike. Don't try it now."

She whispered, "Kidding myself?"

"You weren't looking for permanence or security or anything like that. You had pinned your whole life on Johnny and he'd just ripped the tapestry apart. Maybe it was your heart, or maybe it was just your pride that hurt. But for a few minutes there was nothing to go on living for."

That was true, but she hated him for saying it like that, with a brutal candor that left her no pretense. He went on, "And then you realized that you had never really lived anyway, didn't you, Mike? So you went haywire. You're still haywire. If you want me to straighten you out, I will. Otherwise, dig out your mad money."

She was white. "That didn't answer my question."

"It wasn't a question. You said you didn't want to be deceived, you didn't want me to pretend. But you picked me off a bargain table, baby, and I come strictly as is. If I want to make love to you, I'm going to do it. You should be old enough to tell if a man is deceiving you, or you had better start learning. Yes or no?"

He was hard hitting and direct. And for one lone second, Michele found her mind reaching for her purse and walking out. She had no business here with him. It was the maddest escapade she had ever got herself into. Sedate little Michele Carre, who was so quiet and sensible.

"Go home, Michele?" her heart whispered. He's selfish and ruthless. He'll play with you as an intriguing new toy, and then go back to Candy.

Her face was a small, pale triangle as she stared at him, seeing the brilliant, half angry eyes, the dark carelessness of his hair. His mouth had a full reckless sweep

to it—spoiled, maybe, but very exciting.

She closed her eyes, remembering from long ago the feel of that mouth against hers, and the new, frightening tumult it had stirred within her, things that even now made her pulses go faster to remember.

Marriage, she thought dimly. Security, that was what she had expected from Johnny. She had planned her entire life to that end.

She could go back home, but it would not be to Johnny. She would go back to loneliness. If someday a man came along who seemed to like her quietness, how would she ever know that it was not Aunt Amanda's heritage that he was liking?

With Dion, she knew. He wanted a rich wife, but in exchange he could give her his own intriguing charm. If she crossed out love, took him exactly as he was, she could be happy. Life would be fun with

Dion for a while. Maybe from him she would learn the things a girl should know.

She whispered, "Yes, Dion. Marry me for a week or a month, or a year. You said once you'd like to teach me about life and love, and the way the world goes 'round—"

His eyes were oddly shadowed as he watched her speak. But he only said, very softly, "Then let's go, innocent." And he rose.

They were married one hour later in a rambling little brown parsonage across the state line. The bride wore a slim blue gown with a little dark coat, and a smile that was cool and remote.

Dion looked down at her with an odd, half tender amusement. She knew it, but whether he was laughing at her for being a fool about Johnny or a fool about him, she could not decide. It was not really important.

His lips touched hers gently.

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"Hi, Mrs. Shane—"

"Hi, darling." That was right, wasn't it? Wives always called their husbands darling, or was it dear?

They sat in his car on the driveway, not saying anything. Michele looked down at her hands, which seemed to be amazingly steady. Dion was watching her, but she would not look.

"Now what? Where do we go now?" she whispered.

"We can go to a hotel." He was taking a cigarette absently from a pack, watching her. "Or I have a rather fairish apartment in the city, if you don't mind a couple hours' drive. In any case, I have to be back tomorrow afternoon."

"Why?"

"Six o'clock broadcast." The cigarette was dangling fantastically as he reached for the lighter switch on the dashboard.

"Is that what you do? What sort of broadcast?"

"News, gossip, local color, what have you. It's purely city stuff, not a network. But the *Star* column is what pays the rent."

"Oh." She was watching his hands, brown, steady, with a nice economy of motion. They looked competent. Competent to do a good job—or to hold a girl close.

Lifting her eyes slowly, she saw a smoke ring settling neatly about her head.

"Do you always wear it like that?"

Her gaze met his brilliant black eyes, dangerous black eyes.

"Wear what?" It was the smallest sound.

"Your hair." It was husky. "It should be loose."

Her lips moved slightly, but nothing happened. She sat there hypnotized.

HE MOVED so suddenly she did not realize what had happened. The cigarette was gone and she was in his arms, her mouth a frightened inch from his.

"Moon maid," he whispered. "Dreams, Michele—don't you know it's always the dreamers who get hurt? Don't dream, darling. Wake up and live with me."

She sat very still in his arms for three heartbeats. And then his lips were against hers, gently at first, as if he were thinking, She's too sweet to hurt.

But it did not last; it couldn't last, not with Dion. His arms tightened until it made a delicious hurt and the kiss deepened demandingly. A heady ecstasy stole into it, threaded through with a sheer ruthlessness that made her heart spin off into nothingness and her pulses pound loudly.

She clung to him, holding her breath lest he stop. But he had no intention whatever of stopping. It was Michele who went limp, to bury misty eyes against his throat.

"Oh, Dion—"

He said shakily, "How did I ever get mixed up with a girl like you?"

"I don't know."

"When you were sixteen, such an aloof, remote little sixteen, I had the maddest impulse to elope with you. Did you know that?"

She whispered. "You've done it now, Dion." And she pulled his head down to hers again. It was a long while later that he spoke against her lips.

"Know something, Mike?"

"No, What?"

"This is a hell of a place to kiss a girl."

Her laughter was soft. "Do you know a better one?"

"Yes," he said, and reached for the starter.

Two hours, he had said. It was a little more than that, even the way Dion drove, before he stopped at the first city traffic light. Three o'clock in the morning, a clock on a lighted billboard said.

Dion's arm was around her. He murmured against her hair, "Sleepy, baby?"

"A little."

"A lot, you mean." He laughed. "If you'll give me fifteen minutes, I won't have to carry you to the elevator."

So there was an elevator. It must be a big apartment house. She did not know much about apartments, particularly city apartments. Aunt Amanda's house was a hideous old gingerbread mansion, set down in half a block of unkept lawn and overgrown shrubbery. Michele had gone on living there from habit, the last two months, while wondering if Johnny might not like to live there and fix the place up a little.

Johnny. She shrank a little from it but queerly, nothing happened. Her heart ticked along smoothly, and she was dimly conscious that the car was turning down a ramp.

What was it Dion had told her tonight? That it might have been her pride that was hurt when Johnny broke their engagement, instead of her heart? She had thought she loved Johnny. She had been so sure of it. He had never excited her as Dion had, but then, Dion was a young reprobate, while Johnny was what she had always wanted—wasn't he? Or was he what Aunt Amanda had always told her she *ought* to want?

Dion shook her gently. "We're here, baby."

Her lashes, feeling heavy, lifted. They were in a basement garage. A white-uniformed attendant was there, smiling. She stumbled out of the car.

HIS APARTMENT was compact, but airy, with thick carpets, lots of bookshelves, and a huge window seat five feet wide and ten feet long, scattered with pillows. There were twin beds, dinette space, and a glass door to the shower with the most fantastic mermaid etched upon it.

"Like it?" he asked softly.

She sat on the window seat and looked out at the night. Bright stars were above, with the tops of high elms making soft

silhouettes against the navy-blue sky.

She liked it, yes, and she liked him—too much, she knew. Hadn't she always known it? He could hurt her terribly, perhaps without ever realizing that he was actually doing it.

For a week or a month or a year. That was the bargain she had made, wasn't it? She should not have made it. She hadn't realized what she was doing. He was teaching her about life and love much too fast, lessons she would never forget, lessons that would change her whole life.

"Leave your dreams, Michele," he had said to her long ago and again tonight. "Leave your dreams and come with me." But when he was gone, she would not have even her dreams to go back to.

"Mike—" His hand was on her shoulder, resting there, sending a queer, warm excitement through her.

She turned slowly. His smile was tender, half whimsical, half rueful. She held her breath.

"You don't like it?" he asked softly, his hands closing over hers to draw her down to the window seat with him. They sat there, her hands in his, their eyes locked.

She could leave him now, right now, tonight, go back to her dreams, spend the rest of her life with them, maybe even marry Johnny. Because Johnny was a part of that quiet, bookish dream world.

Or she could stay here and let Dion break her heart. He would, she knew, irreparably and forever. But for a little while, one little beautiful segment of heaven, even if it were only tonight, no longer—

She whispered, her arms slipping around his neck. "Yes, I like it, Dion. Oh, darling, I love it!"

His mouth found hers, heady, sweet, demanding. This time, she thought mistily, he would not have to stop kissing her. He would never have to stop kissing her again until the day came that he wanted to.

Someone was knocking on the door. Her lips stirred a little under his. Dion said huskily, "They can go to hell and stay there."

"All right," she whispered.

He held her close, his words soft as the night.

"Would you ever in this world believe me if I said I loved you?"

Her heart shook a little. "Go ahead and say it. You told me if I couldn't tell the difference, I'd better learn."

His lips were against her mouth. "The things I said—" The words were indistinguishable, but she knew what he meant.

The knock came again, definite, impatient. Dion lifted his head for one still moment, and then swore fervently. Rising, he strode over and jerked open the door.

A man said in the hardest voice in the world, "You're hard to find, Shane."

And Johnny Robertson walked in.

It was long seconds before Michele realized there were a lot of things wrong with the picture. And it was Johnny's quiet, steely blue eyes, sweeping around the room and back to her, that were making her realize it.

She felt disheveled, not merely as if Dion had been making love to her, but as if she herself had been trying to be someone else for a little while.

Her gaze slid away from Johnny's, to take in the apartment. Suave, modern, like Dion, she thought numbly. Not at all like the Michele Carre who was quiet, studious, and sedate, living in an old gingerbread house near the center of town.

What was she doing here?

DION WAS watching her, his dark eyes still as death. He was watching her and waiting. She saw his hand slip into his pocket for cigarettes, and knew he did not even realize he was doing it. And then the cigarette dangled there, while he groped for a match, still watching her.

From far away she heard Johnny's taut,

hard voice. "At least a dozen people, within thirty minutes after you left, told me you'd gone off with Dion, Michele. It was so fantastic I didn't believe it, at first."

Fantastic. That was a good word for it. A crazy fantasy.

Her gaze went back to Dion like a helpless fragment to a magnet. Dark, slim, casual Dion who could wind a girl's heart carelessly around his finger.

Dion said quite steadily. "You can speak your piece, Robertson, but first I want to remind you of a couple things. You broke your engagement to Michele, which lets you out as far as I can see. You've no call to go shagging her down, no matter where she's gone or with whom."

"What I do about Michele is between her and me. She's a nice kid, Shane. Anyway, she was a nice kid before she met up with you."

"She's still a nice kid," Dion said evenly, "and before you get your fool head knocked off, I'd better tell you she's my wife."

Michele thought Johnny would laugh. She really expected him to laugh in utter disbelief at the thought of quiet little Michele marrying a man like Dion, or of Dion marrying a girl like her.

Johnny stood there, motionless. And after a long time, he said thinly, "So you pulled it. Candy said you would."

Dion's eyes narrowed. "Did she?"

"Like a fool," it came out viciously, "I laughed at her!"

He walked over to Michele, on his way sweeping her coat from a chair where Dion had carelessly dropped it. Drawing it across her shoulders, he stood there, rather pale.

"You're coming home, Michele. Now."

She whispered, "Johnny, I married him. It wasn't a mistake, and I wasn't being hoodwinked, or anything like that."

He said tautly, "You're coming with

me, regardless. You're going to see your aunt's lawyer, get this thing annulled and hope to heaven he doesn't take you for all you've got, in the process."

"Johnny—"

"I've been a fool, the biggest fool in the state. Stiff-necked pride, stupidity—I don't care what you call it, it's all true. But I love you, Michele. There has never been anyone for you but me, and there never can be."

Mistily she shook her head. "No, Johnny. I'm not going. I married Dion because that was what I wanted to do. I know why he married me, but I don't care. Pride is what you just said, Johnny, stiff-necked, foolish. I'm not proud. I want to stay with Dion until—until he tells me to go."

Johnny stared at her whitely. Then his words were harsh.

"You little fool, don't you know he's planning to get a settlement out of you for Candy Sutton?"

She smiled a little, not believing it, and then, under his icy scorn, her smile faded slowly.

"For Candy?" she whispered.

Her heart caught in her throat as she remembered the picture Dion and Candy had made dancing together. Pure romance it had been, with Candy's bright head snuggled securely against his broad shoulder, his arms tight around her.

"No—" It was a thin, tense sound. "Johnny, no—"

"He has been in love with her for years," Johnny said angrily. "You've known that, Michele. Dion and his girls, but he came back to Candy, always. You're just another girl to him, Michele. A girl with enough money to please Candy!"

SHE WAS white, and felt queerly sick, as if something had gone wrong with her. This is it, she thought. I knew it would come, someday. A week or a year,

I thought. But it wasn't even a day, was it?

Johnny's arm was around her, urging her toward the door. Dion. Where was Dion? Was he letting Johnny take her away like this, without saying a word in his own defense?

She stood quite still. Her voice was thin.

"Take your hands off me, Johnny," she demanded.

"Michele, darling—"

"You heard her," Dion reminded him softly.

He was standing by the window, hands rammed into his pockets, staring at the silhouette of the treetops against the dark starry sky.

Numbly Michele walked over to him. "Dion—"

He looked down at her with an odd expressionlessness. His face was usually alive with expression but he looked older, and tired.

She whispered, "Dion, just say yes or no. Is it true?"

"You want me to say no," he said, "while you're sure I ought to say yes. Mike, in your heart you damned me years ago. Why ask now?"

She said shakily, "If you tell me the truth just this one time, I'll believe it. Yes or no, Dion?"

He did not answer. There was a slight twist to his mouth that was a queer mingling of bitterness and amusement. Laughing at her, at himself. Even now, he could laugh in her face.

Johnny spoke furiously, "You're wasting your time, Michele! You know he's a heel."

"Do I?" she whispered, watching the dark lights gleam in Dion's eyes. He was not being expressionless now. They were dark danger, those gleams, dark danger that grew brighter with every moment that passed.

She said softly, "Do I know he's a heel,

Johnny? Or is it merely what you and Auntie kept telling me for so long? Which is it, Johnny?"

"Michele, you don't know what you're saying! You can't realize what you're doing. I tell you, Candy Sutton herself told me—"

Dion said with a deadly quietness, looking down at Michele, "Get out, Johnny. Get out before I throw you out!"

"Not without Michele. Darling, come with me."

She whispered, "Please go, Johnny. Now."

"Michele, don't let him make a complete fool of you!" he said, desperation in his voice.

Dion's eyes lifted, They were brilliant and his smile was dangerous.

"Will you get the hell out of here?"

Johnny left, suddenly and completely, slamming the door. The sound of it echoed in their ears for moments after he left.

Dion stood close to her, not touching her. And yet, better than touching, she could feel the heady, magnetic nearness of him, drawing her. She looked up at him, wanting his arms around her, and yet liking it this way, too. So tall, she thought dimly, so dark, with a breathtaking something about him.

She whispered, "Why did you marry me, Dion?"

"Not the money?" he asked, watching her closely.

She shook her head mistily. "Not the money."

His arms closed around her, drawing her tenderly close.

"I told you I wanted to elope with you when you were sixteen. You didn't have the money then, Mike. You were a sober little thing with wide gray eyes that looked

right through me. You wouldn't have had me with caviar."

She whispered, "How do you know, darling? You didn't try very hard to persuade me."

"I wasn't sure, myself. But all during the war I kept thinking, I want to go back to Mike."

"Why didn't you, Dion?" she asked, suddenly no longer shy.

"Because Johnny was so damnably right for you and I was all wrong. I had to keep out of the way. Then I ran into Candy when she came up for a shopping trip, and she wanted me to take her to this party. I didn't expect you to be there. And I hadn't heard anything at all about the money until she told me while we were dancing."

She said softly, "And the next thing you knew, there was Mike right in front of you, asking you to marry her. And you said yes without even once batting an eyelash."

"If I had refused, you might have asked someone else, then or later. Obviously you had no idea of the mess fifty thousand dollars could get you into."

"Oh," Michele murmured, "that! Dion, whatever shall we do with it?"

"I don't care," he said huskily, his arms tightening. "Put it in a trust fund for our grandchildren, maybe."

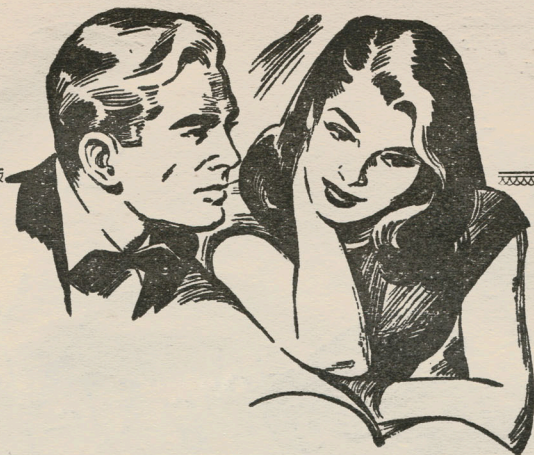
"All right. Let's," she agreed in a whisper.

His lips were against her hair. "Mike darling—"

"Yes, Dion."

He did not say it. Instead, his kiss brushed her temple, to trail down until it found her mouth. But Michele, clinging to him mistily under the poignant enchantment of it, knew what he meant. No words were necessary.





Arabian Knight

*Pumpkin, mice, and magic wand,
A fairy touch or two,
Made the lovely wonder
Cinderella knew.*

*Aladdin had a wishing lamp
To yield his slightest whim,
Ali Baba knew an oral charm,
But I don't envy him.*

*My heart is new with spangling song,
An echo made of dreams,
And gay and stormy sweetness
Is warm with rhythm gleams.*

*I have no need for wishing lamps
Or "Open Sesame."
You make a dreamland in my heart
When you smile down at me.*

—Gladys Martin

*"The boss has a crush on
you, but def!" the girls
said, giggling.*



♥
♥
♥

Kiss Tomorrow Hello

By HELEN LATHROP



It was easy for Letty to love Cy but difficult to trust him.

THE SIGN READ: Rehoboth Beach, 14 Miles. It was out of her way but the yellow-haired girl in the yellow jalopy slowed down, tempted. Letty had left New York early that morning, driving steadily south and, at two o'clock of a late June afternoon, the sun was warm in Delaware. She could do with lunch on a breezy beach.

She debated with herself only briefly. If she kept on driving without pause she could make the six o'clock Chesapeake

Ferry and be in Norfolk with her aunts by nightfall. But she was in no hurry to reach Norfolk and face the fond inspection and questions of her Aunts Lucy and Minerva.

Decisively she turned the jalopy in the direction of Rehoboth. The road that stretched ahead prepared her to like the town. It was smooth and white and intersected by a series of small bridges whose stone guard walls rioted with wild rambler roses, and Rehoboth lived up to its approach. It was a neat trim town. Its broad Main Street was lined with smart, freshly painted shops and ended at the boardwalk.

Letty parked the jalopy and climbed out to hunt an ocean front restaurant. She joined the throng on the boardwalk where she began to feel, and did look, a part of the summer scene. Wisely, she had dressed for the trip in a brief-sleeved yellow jersey blouse, long swing skirt of tangerine, bright yellow anklet pirouettes. An ocean breeze pleasantly ruffled her long fair hair upon her shoulders and whipped her skirt provocatively about slim bare ankles.

She chose her luncheon spot with deliberation, passing up a modernistic luxury hotel and restaurant from which a juke box blared. The *Blue Hen Inn* charmed her immediately. It was a small hotel, very white in the sunshine, and gay with a blue trim and blue awnings.

"Good afternoon, Miss. What can we do for you? Would you like a room?"

She was greeted cordially on the screened dining porch by a tall rangy young man, wearing a white sports shirt and khaki trousers.

"No thanks," Letty told him with an odd sensation of regret. "I'd like something to eat. That's all."

He led her to a table that had a sweeping view of the boardwalk, the umbrella-studded beach, and the sun-dappled Atlantic. Except for a party that was gathering up beach bags and sun glasses,

the dining porch, Letty noticed, was emptied of luncheon guests.

"I'm afraid I'm very late," she began.

"The regular lunch is off, but I'm an expert at whipping up a salad or slapping a sandwich together."

He gave her a friendly boyish grin that brought an answering smile from Letty Paynton, who had not smiled easily for a week. He was not handsome but he was attractive. A hard-muscled, self-reliant looking young man with thick brown hair and very blue eyes that were gazing, with some surprise, into Letty's.

Her eyes had a habit of surprising people. They were deep velvet brown, in complete contrast to the yellow-gold hair that fell about her small triangular face.

She became aware that they were staring at each other and said quickly, "A sandwich and a glass of iced tea will do. Don't go to too much trouble."

"It will be a pleasure," he assured her, then blushed. He explained, "I'm Cy Fenwich. Another ex-G.I. and I own this joint, and we aim to please. Suppose I fix you up a salad plate. It will be more filling than a sandwich."

SHE SMILED approval and he hurried off, leaving Letty to look around. Off the porch, she could see through open windows, the main dining room. It had a dance floor, raised band platform, juke box, and a bar which was deserted except for two plumpish matrons in play suits. Behind it, a stocky young man with sun-bleached blond hair polished glasses. He caught Letty's eyes upon him and nodded affably. She guessed that he was Cy Fenwich's partner.

Soothing recorded afternoon music drifted out to the porch. It was very peaceful. Letty's first instinctive desire to stay became an urge.

She dreaded going home to the maiden aunts who had raised her. They were intuitive where she was concerned, and per-

sistent. Inevitably, they would discover that Cleve Caldwell had gone back to his wealthy wife. There was going to be no divorce. If only, thought Letty, she had never told them about Cleve. But when she had run down to Norfolk for Easter, her mind and heart had been full of him. She had had to talk about him, although she had known that her aunts would be shocked.

"But you *can't* be in love with a married man, child," they had cried in chorus.

To no avail, Letty had explained that Cleve was separated from his wife. She had been out on the West Coast for six months and he was, daily, expecting her to sue him for a divorce. Aunt Lucy and Aunt Minerva had shaken their heads and prophesied disaster.

No good could come of it, they had insisted, and had been right, although nothing as dire as they anticipated had happened. Letty had kept her integrity and her good name, but she had been painfully hurt and shamed. She had had to face the amused pity of the other girls in the office, and the acidulous sympathy of Miss Nicoll, the personnel manager.

Letty had gone to work for Cleve Caldwell's advertising agency just a year ago, fresh out of a junior college in Virginia. She had a flair for words that she was determined to try out in New York. To her aunts' distress, she refused to follow the local pattern of a quiet coming-out party to be followed in a few months by an engagement party, then a wedding. The soft-spoken, easy-going Virginia boys did not impress her.

CLEVE WAS thirty-ish, tall, dark and handsome. Smooth and sophisticated. He had a clipped mustache and a clipped way of talking. From the day that he had hired her to be the assistant of an assistant copywriter, Letty had been fascinated by him. He was her ideal, the typical New York man-about-town.

The other girls had teased her about her obvious infatuation with their "beautiful boss," as they called him. Miss Nicoll had given her a frank warning.

"Cleve will make a play for you. He can't resist a new and pretty face, and yours is very pretty. But it's his wife's money that set him up in business. He knows it and she knows it. Occasionally, she goes off to teach him a lesson but she always comes back, and he welcomes her with open arms. The little girl with whom he's been amusing himself and whose brains he's been picking for ideas is forgotten. Think it over, Miss Paynton."

She had thought it over and decided, in her young arrogance, that Miss Nicoll was an old sour puss. She had an angular figure and a long bony face. She would never have a chance to be forgotten by a man like Cleve. And Letty was confident that if Cleve should make a play for her, she could take care of herself.

The play had come shortly after the Christmas holidays, when Mrs. Caldwell had gone down to Florida and then on to the Coast. It had been subtle. Cleve had asked Letty to have dinner with him and work with him afterward on a new and important perfume account that had just come into the agency.

"They're introducing a springtime fragrance," he said "And I thought that a girl who is the essence of springtime might give me both inspiration and ideas."

He was very clever. Letty was young and foolishly flattered. She had eaten with him and worked with him. Afterward they had gone out dancing. It had become a night after night routine. She had stilled her conscience with the excuse that it was business. They did not kiss for weeks; then it was with caution on his part, fear on hers.

She made a face, remembering those kisses, and a sympathetic voice asked, "Toothache?"

Cy Fenwich was standing beside the

table with her luncheon. The absurdity of his question made her laugh. She improvised a hasty excuse.

"I was just thinking about the long hot ride ahead of me," she said. "It's nice here."

"We think so, Bill and I," Cy said. "Why don't you stay?"

"I'd like to but—" She shrugged and changed the subject. "Why do you call it the Blue Hen?"

He explained, "Delaware's called the State of the Little Blue Hen. There's some story of Revolutionary times tied up with the name. Stick around and I'll dig it up for you one of these days."

With a promising grin, he went to meet a party of three that had just rolled up in a bright blue convertible. It consisted of two boys in bright plaid sports shirts and expensively tailored slacks, and a dark girl wearing a short green and gold mandarin coat over a green halter and shorts. She led the way into the bar with the boys trailing to look over Letty.

SHE DEVOTED herself to her luncheon with which Cy must have taken considerable pains. There was chicken salad and shrimp salad, crisp endive and thinly sliced cucumbers and tomatoes. The salad plate was accompanied by tiny hot rolls and thoroughly iced tea. Letty ate with relish and wished again that she could linger at the Blue Hen Inn.

But she could think of no excuse to give her aunts. She had written them that she was taking her vacation and, not knowing that it was to be a permanent vacation from the Caldwell Advertising Agency, their feelings would be hurt if she did not come straight home. They did not deserve such treatment. When a hurricane had orphaned her and her older brother, Jim, Miss Lucy and Miss Minerva had taken the children into their quiet home and lives. Jim and she must

have been a trial to the maiden ladies.

"Hello, Beautiful!"

Letty's thoughts were again interrupted, this time by one of the boys who had arrived in the blue convertible. She gave him a cool inquiring look. He was slim and blond, and very sure of himself.

"I'm Rupe Thaler," he said. "And I have a party here that's a little short on the distaff side. How about having a drink with us?"

Her smile was a masterpiece of polite refusal. "I've just finished luncheon. Thank you, no."

He saw that she meant it, and laughed. "You can't blame a guy for trying."

He went back to his party and was barely gone before Cy was pulling out the chair opposite her.

"Mind?" he asked.

She shook her head. She had automatically turned down Rupe Thaler's assured invitation, but she was tired of her own company. Cy sat down.

He said, "You gave Rupe a neat brush-off but it won't stick. He'll be back. He can be a pest."

"Who is he?" Letty asked.

"One of the Thalers from Wilmington. The pair with him are his cousins, Gordon and Liz Todd. All of them are rotten rich and rotten spoiled. They have a big estate down the beach a mile, where I wish they'd stay although—" Cy laughed ruefully. "—they bring us business."

Letty smiled understanding. "You're just getting started?"

"This is our second year," he said. "But the season is short, not beginning until June and ending with Labor Day. Of course, it's given Bill—Bill Burke, my sidekick—and I a chance to finish college, so we can't complain."

"What does young Mr. Thaler and his cousins do that bothers you?" she asked, enjoying the breezy conversation.

"Nothing much," Cy had to admit, "except swagger around, try to pick up

girls like you, and torment my cheesecake department."

"Cheesecake department?"

"Our waitresses, all young and pretty." He grinned sheepishly. "Bill and I picked them for their looks, thinking they'd be an attraction. And they are, too much sometimes. Guys like Rupe Thaler can run them ragged. They haven't got the know-how to handle his kind the way you did. You're pretty young yourself but you've got poise. I wish—"

He paused to give her a considering stare that Letty did not immediately notice. She was enjoying his offhand compliment too much. Recent experience had made her doubt if she had any know-how or poise.

Cy went on abruptly, "You said you'd like to stay here. I'd like to have you stay, if not as a guest as my top summer waitress. The salary isn't so much but the work isn't too hard, and the girls have fun. Would you consider it?"

She started to say, "Impossible," and hesitated.

"Unless you have another job," he said urgently. "Unless you're going some place that can't wait."

She was through at the Caldwell Agency, thought Letty. She had no other job. Her aunts would wait resignedly if she made them believe that she was taking an important hotel position. They had already convinced themselves that she was a "career girl", although they were vague as to what that might be.

"I'll see that you have an airy room and plenty of time for swimming and sunning," Cy said, his blue eyes eager. "Please, Miss—"

"Letitia Paynton," she told him. "Letty for practical purposes, though, Mr. Fenwick."

"All right, Letty, if you'll make it Cy." He grinned. "We're not formal around the Blue Hen, as you'll find out, that is if you stay here."

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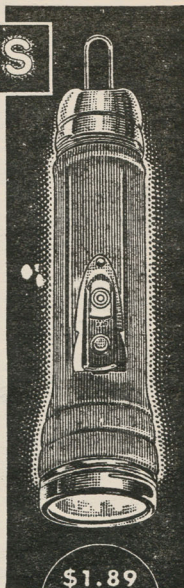
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HE WAS assuming, correctly, that she was going to take the job. It would give her a breathing space both from speculation in New York and the loving solicitude of her aunts. She would have time to make plans for the autumn. It was a natural.

Cy stood up, his face glowing. He said, "I'll have Bill mix us all a drink to celebrate, and come out and be introduced. You'll like Bill and you'll find your fellow females in slavery not too bad."

Letty believed him and was not disappointed. It would have been impossible to do anything but like Bill, who was hard-boiled in a kind way. Mary, Rusty, and Ima, the three waitress, turned out to be even prettier than advertised. Mary was a stately brunette appropriately. Rusty was a redhead. Ima was even more strikingly blonde than Letty. The three appeared for cocktail hour duty and accepted her with good-natured indifference.

Introductions over, Cy walked with her to get her car and luggage. He whistled at the sight of the flamboyant jalopy.

"A hot rod?" he asked.

"I've never given it a real try-out."

It had been her brother's before he went into the Navy and had been on blocks during most of the war, waiting for him. But Jim had come out with a wife and baby and was settled on the West Coast, working for an insurance agency. He had given the jalopy to Letty.

She laughed. "He didn't consider it a suitable car for a rising young business man with a family. Too conspicuous."

"He was probably right." Cy agreed, amused. "It will stick out in Rehoboth like a sore thumb, even more than Rupe Thaler's blue heap. Rupe will probably be jealous as all get-out when he gets an eyeful."

Cy put the jalopy in one of the hotel garage stalls and carried her luggage up to an ocean front room that would be

cool on the warmest of nights. He would not hear of her coming down to work that evening.

"Morning will be time enough to learn the tricks of tray juggling," he said. "I'll teach you myself. You might get scared if you start out when you're tired. And I don't want that to happen. I don't want to lose you now that I've found you."

His blue eyes held her dark ones as he spoke, and lent importance to his words. He left Letty to unpack, her slim body warmed by unexpected excitement.

THE HOTEL staff breakfasted at seven to be ready for the opening of the dining room at seven-thirty. Letty rose briskly refreshed after a dreamless sleep to the sound of the surf. She put on a sleeveless white sharkskin dress, having noticed the night before that the girls wore white of varied material and style. With her bright hair netted and topped by a blue bow, she went downstairs.

Eagerness to be on the job alternated in her, with fear lest she fumble orders and drop trays. But Cy was a good teacher, and the breakfast hour was easy. Many of the regular guests ate in their rooms and were served by two college boy bell hops. There was a rest period between breakfast and another after luncheon, when the girls usually took a swim. They invited Letty to go with them.

She had a new strapless bathing suit of black lasticized satin that she wore with a white cap, white bathing shoes and white terry cloth shortie. The girls were admiring.

"Too bad that Cy can't see you in that," said Rusty.

She broke off, giggling. Cy was threading his way between prostrate sun-bathers toward them.

"I thought it might be a good idea," he told Letty, "if I came along your first time in. The current out there is rough."

"You're very kind," murmured Letty quietly.

She was flushed. Mary, Rusty, and Ima were all giggling openly. Cy turned away to speak to a passing acquaintance, and Rusty's whisper came loud and mischievous.

"The boss has a crush on you, but def!"

Letty's flush faded abruptly, leaving her white and cold. She was reminded of the sly amusement with which the girls in the office had watched her and Cleve and felt something like nausea within her. It passed as quickly as it had come when Cy took her hand in his.

"Let's make a run for it," he said and raced toward the surf.

She did not care if the girls were laughing, and there was nothing sly about their laughter. There was nothing to be sly about. He had no wife, Letty judged and found out for sure a little later. They took a brisk dip and came back to lie in the sand and talk, uninterrupted. The other three girls had paired off with boy friends of their own.

Cy gave her a brief but concise personal history. He had spent three years in the Marines where he had met Bill. They had been in Iwo and in Tokyo together. Bill had inherited the Blue Hen from an uncle. Cy had bought in with his overseas pay and a G. I. loan. The first season had been a hard one but this promised to be better. Both boys had just finished a business course, specializing in hotel management. They planned to save and buy into more hotels until they owned a chain all the way down the Atlantic coast.

"Give us a few years and we'll be giving Statler competition," he said.

He laughed at himself but his blue eyes were bright with dreams that he was sharing with her. Letty felt a lump rise to her throat. It was touching and sweet, and right. It made her ashamed afresh of having listened to Cleve's shopworn ambitions that he must have confided to a host of

other pretty girls as well as his wife.

They went back to the hotel to get ready for the cocktail hour and dinner. There was something of a rush but Letty found her work not too difficult. Cy assigned her to guests whose orders were less apt to be complicated.

"Won't the other girls be peeved?" she asked, noticing.

"They know you're kind of special." Cy grinned and let her interpret that as she would.

A FIVE PIECE band came in at eight, and there was dancing. Letty had learned that the girls were not forbidden to dance with guests except at rush hours. But neither was the practice encouraged. She shook her head to Rupe Thaler when he joined her at the bar where she was waiting for four Tom Collinses.

"I can't dance with you and take care of customers," she told him. "I have an order."

"I'm a customer," Rupe said. "Come over to my table and meet the cousins. I'll have an order for you."

He sauntered off with Bill Burke scowling after him from across the bar. "Brassy young punk," observed Bill. "If he gets to be too much of a nuisance, just call on me or Cy."

Letty did not think that would be wise, or necessary. She took Rupe's order and met Gordon and Liz Todd. Gordon, dark like his sister, turned out to a rather vacuous young man, completely under Rupe's dominance. Liz was very pretty and amiable in a bored manner.

"We must get together outside sometime," she said. "What's this I hear about you having a hopped-up jalopy? All the help around here are talking about it."

Letty repeated what she had told Cy. The yellow jalopy had been her brother's car. She did not know its speed capacity because she had never tried it.

"I'd like to see it sometime," Lis said with interest.

"You will. We'll all see it, won't we, Beautiful?" Rupe caught Letty by the hand.

"You can see it any time. It's in the garage." She freed her fingers from his, smiling. "I'll bring your drinks."

"Still dealing them straight out of the deep freeze."

Rupe's wry comment and laughter followed her as she moved off to fill his order. She did not, however, have to return with the drinks. Cy intercepted her and took the tray from her. He brought it back to the bar but would not let her pick it up again.

"Sit on one of these stools," he ordered. "Rest, look and listen, while the great maestro, Cyrus Fenwich, goes into his nightly act."

Bill winked at her. "He's good, too," he said.

Letty did not know what either of them was talking about until Cy climbed up with the band and produced a harmonica. To a light accompaniment, he gave forth with *Four Leaf Clover*, which brought whistles and yells for "Encore!" He obliged with two old favorites, *Shanty Town* and *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes*, and fled the stand against the will of his audience.

"He is good," Letty told Bill. "He really sends you with that mouth organ. I've still got shivers going up and down my spine."

Bill laughed dryly. "That's what all the gals around here say."

DAYS PASSED with gay swiftness at the Blue Hen. The Fourth of July came and brought a holiday crowd. The hotel was busy but Cy and Bill never failed to see that the staff had its hours of rest and relaxation. Cy himself managed to swim every day with Letty.

Mary, Rusty, and Ima kidded her un-

mercifully about "love a-blooming". Letty no longer minded. She had ceased to compare what had happened in Cleve's advertising office to what was happening here in Delaware. Cleve seemed part of another lifetime.

The holiday-makers disappeared after a long and hilarious week-end, leaving Cy and Bill with a full till and a tired staff. Cy decreed a night off for everyone.

"But you and I first, Letty," he said. Then, a little doubtfully, "Is that being selfish, and am I taking too much for granted in assuming that you'll spend your night off with me?"

She shook her head, her dark eyes wide and startled. In a breath-taking flash she had discovered that she could not imagine wanting or spending a night off without him. Could she be falling in love all over again, so soon? Or was she really falling in love for the first time?

The questions were too important to be answered in a moment or even a night or day. She shelved them and made plans with Cy for a gala evening. They decided to drive own across to Maryland and dine and dance at the newest, swankiest hotel in Ocean City.

Letty laughed. "Busman's holiday!"

"But," Cy said, "we'll be the receivers instead of the senders."

She had brought along a super-duper evening dress which she had bought but never worn for Cleve. Before she had had a chance, Mrs. Caldwell had returned to New York to be met with orchids by a relieved husband. She and Cleve had opened and moved into their Southampton summer estate, and Letty's dress had remained in its cellophane covering. She was glad now that it was new for Cy.

It was a young romantic dress. Black chiffon, ankle-length, over rose-pink taffeta with a flirtatious flounce that swirled over rose-pink sandals. An off-shoulder neckline left her creamy shoulders bare except for her hair.

Before putting on her short black velvet evening cape, she showed herself to Mary, Rusty and Ima, and they exclaimed like magpies with admiration. Letty showed herself to Cy and he looked dazed.

He said only, "Not all for me?"

She nodded, then told him with a small laugh, "I rather like your looks, too."

Cy was wearing dinner clothes—white coat, dark trousers—and he wore them well. He and Letty started off in their festive array, in a festive mood. They decided at the last minute to take the yellow jalopy instead of his small sensible coupe.

"It will make us feel giddy," he said. "And I want to feel giddy tonight. Don't you?"

"I couldn't feel much giddier than I do," she told him.

IT WAS a wonderful night. Letty had never had so much fun in New York, never anywhere on a party. After dancing with Cy she wondered how she could ever have enjoyed dancing with Cleve whose steps were ten years more sedate than her own. Cy was a wonderful dancer, a young gay dancer. And she fitted exactly into the curve of his arm. She closed her eyes and felt as if she were floating on a cloud.

"Hi, pals, how about changing partners?"

Rupe Thaler's voice shattered the spell. Letty's eyes flew wide to find that Rupe, with Liz Todd in his arms, had danced up beside them. He was already releasing Liz and grinning at Cy who could do nothing but give a sickly grin back. He was too much of a gentleman to insult Liz by refusing to dance with her. The exchange was affected swiftly to Rupe's unconcealed glee.

"I've been wanting a dance with you and now I've got you," he said triumphantly. "Nothing could have stopped me after I saw you looking the way you do tonight."

She was silent, uncommenting, and he swung her into a fast rhumba that kept them both occupied for a few minutes. Rupe was an expert dancer, a near-professional, but it was not like dancing with Cy. She followed him through the rhumba automatically. Then the band changed to a dreamy waltz, and Rupe began again on his line.

"Why don't you give me a tumble?" he demanded. "I'm going ertsnay about you. What's the matter with me?"

Letty tipped back her shining head to laugh at him. "Nothing's the matter with you, except not getting what you want when you want it. And that's what's driving you ertsnay, not me."

"You could be right." He was arrogantly indifferent to criticism. "But if you are, it's cruel not to put me out of misery. Just a date or two might do it. You could be charitable."

"I could but I'm not going to be. I'm a busy woman," said Letty. "And there are lonely hearts clubs that would be glad to help you out."

He looked down at her, his fair spoiled face a study in bafflement and determination. He told her, "You're a hard-hearted wench, but you've got me hooked and I'm not going to give up trying to break you down."

To Letty's relief, the dance ended and put a stop to his protests. But there was no escaping his insistence that she and Cy join him and Liz and Gordon Todd in a drink. They sat in the bar and talked up and down to one another.

"Is that yellow jalopy outside yours?" Rupe asked Letty and, when she admitted ownership, he said, "I thought so, and looked in it. It's a hot rod all right. It's got the engine."

He turned to Cy. "You drive it tonight, Fenwich, and try it out?"

"I drove it but I didn't try it out," said Cy. "Hod rods aren't popular with the cops in this state."

"Speeding in any kind of heap isn't popular with the local Gestapo." Rupe grinned wryly, reminiscent.

"You should know," said Liz Todd sarcastically.

"Is that my dear cousin talking?" he asked ironically. Then he turned back to Letty to declare, "I'd like to drive that jalopy of yours some day. Would you let me?"

"What's the matter with that blue beauty of yours?" She was evasive.

"It's all right but I've always had a yen for a hot rod." His voice was plaintive. "And Dad would never let me have one."

"Mine Uncle Rupert has moments of sanity," Gordon observed and precipitated a family wrangle which gave Letty and Cy an opportunity to escape.

They did not dance again. It was late, and they did not wish to risk further entanglement with Rupe and his cousins. They went out to the yellow jalopy which Cy toolled homeward at a leisurely pace.

"I can't see what anyone wants to speed for," he said. "This is so much nicer."

Letty agreed. He was driving with his arm around her. She let her head fall to his shoulder and found it more than nice. That was a mild description of the emotion, which was half contentment, half anticipation, that suffused her.

CY DID not drive immediately to the Blue Hen. Instead, he turned down a dead-end street beyond the boardwalk and parked amid pines with untenanted beach and ocean in front of them. The surf broke tonight, gold-encrusted beneath a huge mid-summer moon.

They sat close, unspeaking, for a timeless interval. Quietly, they savoured the magic of their aloneness, the scent of salt and pine mingling. It was a moment to be prolonged but could not be prolonged forever. With every heart beat each grew more aware of the other.

"Letty—" Cy's arm tightened and his voice became unsteady. "I have so much to say to you that I have no right to say until the summer's over. But you must know how it is with me. Darling—"

She knew and turned her face to meet his. Their lips met, and she felt a brief wonder that she could ever have thrilled to Cleve's kisses. They had been only poor imitations of what a kiss could be. They bore no resemblance to Cy's that blotted out thought and, eventually, the moon over head and the trees around them. There was only his face above hers, his mouth pressing hard.

He kissed her with a fierce young demand that knew no caution, and Letty kissed him back without fear. This was right, this was inevitable. Her hands lifted to touch his cheeks. Her arms went around his neck. She felt that she must die of ecstasy if he did not stop, and wanted to live forever with his mouth on hers.

She sat back, love-drugged, when he released her to turn the car around and finish the drive to the hotel. There were no words in either of them. They rode, shoulders touching, and went in through the rear of the Blue Hen, hand in hand.

Lights still burned in the main dining room. Bill was adding up the night's cash intake. He glanced up at them quizzically and Cy made an effort to appear business-like and casual.

"Anything strange or unusual happen tonight?" he asked in his most brisk manner.

Bill gave him a grin that was faintly sardonic. "The Lady Called Lou," he said, "was in inquiring for you, but that could hardly be called strange."

Cy agreed with an embarrassed-sounding, "No." He went off to turn out lights while Bill put away the cash and locked the register.

"And who's the Lady Called Lou?" Letty asked.

"Mrs. Louise Hyatt," Bill, busy pouring himself a night-cap, answered negligently. "A dough-heavy dame from Baltimore who gets shivers down her back when Cy plays his mouth organ."

"Oh," said Letty. She whispered, "Good night, Bill."

She was conscious of a flat feeling that did not disappear until she was shut in her room with the memory of Cy's kiss and the sweet knowledge that she loved him and he loved her. He had told her with his lips and his arms, if not in words. They would come in time. Love was young, and they were young, and there were no barriers between them. She could afford to wait.

THE LADY Called Lou was blanketed from Letty's mind until she appeared the next afternoon. Letty came down at the cocktail hour to find Cy on the porch with an expensive-looking woman who might have been anywhere from thirty to forty. She wore a suit of pale gray silk shantung. A scarlet scarf at her throat was fastened with a diamond brooch and diamonds glittered on her red-tipped fingers. She was tall, striking rather than beautiful, with very black hair, long black eyes, and a narrow high-cheeked boned face. Her mouth was an extravagant scarlet that matched her scarf and fingernails.

Letty looked at her with curiosity that was touched by apprehension. Cy motioned her to the table and made introductions.

"Mrs. Hyatt, Miss Paynton. A new girl—" he said. "—and rather a special one."

"No wonder. She's prettier than any you've had before, and that's saying something." Mrs. Hyatt laughed a tinkling brittle laugh. "Cy, you should be running a model agency instead of a summer hotel."

"I'm no Powers," he said, sounding an-

noyed. He asked. "What will you have to drink, Lou. Daiquiris are your poison, aren't they?"

She agreed and Letty went off, with a tight-lipped smile, to fill an order for two. Bill looked at her keenly as he went about the mixing.

"I take it you've met our Lady Called Lou," he said. "What do you think of her?"

Letty was cautious. "I just met her."

"You don't like her," Bill decided. "And neither do I, but she helped us through a bad season last summer, and it won't hurt Cy to string along with her this year."

Letty kept her smile with difficulty. She wanted to ask just what he meant by "stringing along" but she was too proud. She carried the daiquiris back to the porch just in time to see Mrs. Hyatt pat Cy on the arm and hear her say, "Now, remember, pet, I'm counting on you. Don't let me down, even though I telephone you at the last minute."

Cy muttered something and tried to catch Letty's eye. She set the daiquiris down hastily and fled with gratitude to a couple who were beckoning for service from a nearby table. Desperately, she tried not to listen to a little bell that rang in the back of her mind, a bell that had a reminiscent chime.

LETTY DID not go swimming the next day with Mary, Rusty and Ima. She gave the entirely plausible excuse that she had mending and pressing to do. She did not want to risk being alone with Cy, not just yet, lest she reveal the distrust that was in her heart. She despised that distrust. It was not fair to be suspicious and jealous of him, because one man who had claimed to love her had put material gain ahead of love. Cy was no worldly, cynical Cleve Caldwell.

Striving for reassurance, she finished with her personal chores and decided to

walk uptown. It might help to get away from the hotel, and she had some small purchases to make.

Main Street was bright and shining in the afternoon sunshine. Letty did not hurry. She planned to stop in the first drug store and buy needed face powder and lipstick, and then turn back. But through the plate glass window, she saw Liz Todd at the cosmetic counter. Wishing to avoid her, Letty passed by quickly.

The next drug store was three blocks up the street, and it was crowded. It took time to get waited on. Even by almost running Letty could not make it back to the hotel for the start of the cocktail hour. She was ten minutes late and had to spend another ten minutes making-up her flushed face and combing her hair. Bill was glowering behind a crowded bar, when she put in her breathless appearance.

"I'm sorry," she began. "I—"

"Where have you been?" Bill cut short her excuses. "Cy has been looking all over for you. He stalled as long as he could, but Mrs. Hyatt had sent her chauffeur, and the guy was champing at his bit, or maybe his radiator cap."

"What did Mrs. Hyatt send her chauffeur for?" Letty's voice was low and taut.

"Naturally, to take Cy out to her beach shack with its twenty rooms and swimming pool." Bill seemed surprised by the question. "She's throwing a brawl tonight and needed Cy."

"I see," said Letty.

Bill's eyes focused upon her, then jerked away, as a slightly inebriated, impatient tourist called to him from the opposite end of the bar. Obediently, he moved to take care of his customer.

"He said he'd cut it as short as he could—" He threw the attempted consolation over his shoulder. "You don't think Cy enjoys that old bag's parties, do you?"

Letty's tender mouth curled. Cleve had

always claimed that he did not enjoy being married to his wife. It was just a matter of duty, waiting, letting her make up her mind. Numbly, she went about her duties.

Bill looked at her from time to time as if he would like to talk to her, but both were kept on the run. It was the height of the season and bar, porch and dining room were jammed with thirsty customers. In any event, Letty had no desire to hear anything that Cy's friend and partner might have to say.

She was listening to a voice that cried, "Fool, fool—"

Not once but twice had she let herself be deceived, or rather, deceived herself. Fatuously she had taken Cy's love for granted. He had not even said he loved her. It was plain now that, like Cleve, he had only been amusing himself while waiting for his Mrs. Moneybags to re-appear.

SHORTLY before midnight Rupe, Gordon, and Liz showed up and took seats at one of the tables that were beginning to empty. Letty went to take their orders with neither eagerness or reluctance.

"I hope," Liz said, "that we're in time to catch Cy's mouth organ act."

"There won't be any mouth organ act. Cy isn't here tonight."

Letty heard her voice come cold and stiff. Rupe leaned across the table to peer at her out of light sharp eyes.

"Don't tell me that the Lady Called Lou has him in her clutches again," he said.

Letty shrugged for answer, and he grinned like a mischievous monkey. "So the cats away." His voice was musing. "Maybe now the mice can play. How about it, Beautiful? I know a joint on the Wilmington that keeps open until three o'clock. Want to whip out there with us when you're through with your shift in this sweat shop?"

Letty's hesitation was almost imper-

ceptible. With a toss of her shining hair, she defied the world which had twice hurt her. "Why not?" she asked. Then, with a glance at Liz, smart in a sport dress, she murmured, "I'll be done here at one, but you'll have to give me a few minutes to change."

"Sure, honey child." Rupe, his way won, was expansive. "We'll wait outside for you, in my bus. Perhaps it would be just as well not to let Bill know what goes on," he added.

Letty concurred with him thoroughly. She wanted no arguments with Bill. They would be futile since he could not stop her.

As soon as the doors of the dining room were closed to more customers, she slipped upstairs to change her soiled working dress for the gay yellow blouse and tangerine skirt that she had worn on the day of her arrival. Throwing a brief wool coat over her shoulders, she fled the Blue Hen, by means of the back stairs and the exit used by the kitchen help.

Rupe and his cousins waited in the parking lot. They were huddled in conference.

"We've taken a vote," said Rupe gayly.

swinging out of the car to meet Letty. "And we've come to a unanimous decision. We'll leave my car here and take that yellow devil of yours. Any objections?"

Instinct warned Letty that what he proposed was dangerous. He would undoubtedly want to drive the jalopy, and she had been in town long enough to hear rumors that Rupe Thaler was a reckless driver. He would be a menace behind the wheel of a hot rod.

"It seems kind of silly—" She fumbled for words to dissuade him from his purpose.

"It doesn't to me," said Rupe. "It seems just dumb, unless you're in love with him, to let Cy use the jalopy and not let me."

That silenced Letty. Unprotesting, she let him back the little yellow car out of the garage and keep the wheel. They all piled into the front seat. Rup drove cautiously until they had left the hotel and the town behind. Actually, it was not until they were on the straight stretch that led to Wilmington that he began to press down on the accelerator and give the jalopy its head.

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LETTY HELD her breath and watched the speedometer climb to eighty, to ninety. Then, she dared watch no longer lest she scream. Liz, on Gordon's lap, was leaning forward gleeful over the mad speed. Gordon, however, did not seem to be enjoying the ride any more than Letty. He had hold of her arm and was gripping it so hard that she was sure his fingers would leave bruises.

It was he who said the one thing that could, and did, persuade Rupe to slow up. "Rupe, you fool!" His scream rose above the roar of the motor and the scream of wind. "This road is patrolled to high Heaven. Another arrest would mean your driver's license."

"Dad would certainly take my own bus away from me." Rupe's foot eased unexpectedly and blessedly on the accelerator. He added, "Anyhow, we're only a couple of miles from the spot."

He proceeded at the comparatively moderate rate of sixty per hour, until they came to a dirt side road which led to a gloomy roadhouse set among pines. Letty looked around her with surprise and distaste. She had pictured the wealthy Thalers and Todds as frequenters of glamour spots. This hide-out in the woods was shabby, dirty, and noisy.

A juke box blared at top pitch and made Letty's head ache. Rupe ordered high balls that tasted as if they had been made with cheap whiskey. She drank only half of hers. The other three had two apiece, and she danced once with Rupe, once with Gordon. Then, the boys and Liz were ready to go on.

Letty began to see that they were the kind of people who must always be on the move. She went out to the yellow jalopy with them, determined this time to do the driving, but Liz forestalled her.

"My turn!" she cried and slid behind the wheel before anyone could stop her.

Rupe seemed to contemplate removing her by force and to decide against it.

"Part way only, keed," he decreed and climbed in beside her.

Liz motioned Gordon and Letty to the tiny rear seat. "You two panty-waists sit back there," she ordered. "It makes me nervous to have you jittering up front."

Silently, Letty permitted Gordon to help her up. She was too tired to put up objections that she knew would go unheeded. Gordon settled himself, groaning.

"She's an even worse fiend of a driver than Rupe," he said unhappily.

Letty did not believe such a thing possible, but she was soon forced to change her mind. They had no sooner left the dirt side road than Liz came down on the accelerator with as hard but less firm foot than Rupe. The jalopy leaped forward. Gordon moaned. Letty prayed. The wind was torture in their faces. Looking for rescue, Letty was almost blinded. If she had not noticed the speed trap while driving down from New York, she would never have seen the police car hidden there.

Thankfully, she leaned forward to yell, "Cops!"

"And they're going to chase us!" Gordon seconded her. "Pull over, Sis."

The wind flung their voices back at them. Liz, if she heard, paid no attention. She had ears only for Rupe's wild exhortation.

"Give her all she's got, gal! We can lose any cop car with this little hot rod."

Letty and Gordon sank back, hopeless.

"Why," he wailed in her ear, "wasn't I born a Smith or a Jones?"

LIZ WAS extracting the last atom of power from the yellow jalopy, and it began to look as if Rupe might be right and she could lose the police car. Its lights were fading behind her, its horn growing fainter. Both lights and siren were almost gone, and Liz turned a corner. It was madness.

The jalopy skidded. At the speed that it was being driven, it could not hold the road. It zig-zagged crazily. Letty heard Gordon scream. She had a glimpse of Liz fighting the wheel, Rupe trying to help. Then Letty threw her arms across her face and saw no more.

She came out of a near faint to realize that she was sitting in an near-horizontal position, leaning on Gordon. Letty put her arms down and opened her eyes cautiously.

It was a miracle that she saw.

The yellow jalopy was tilted at a forty-five degree angle above a drainage ditch, but it had remained upright. And they were all alive and unhurt. No one moved or spoke for a long minute. Then Liz began to cry.

"Shut up!" Rupe snapped. "We've got to try to get out of this heap without tipping it and then we'd better think up a fast story to give the cops when they overtake us."

"As they surely will," Gordon added, "but fast!"

Gingerly, he and Letty crept from their precarious perch to solid ground. Liz and Rupe wriggled out of the front seat. The four looked at each other.

"And now what do we tell the cops?" asked Rupe.

"What can we tell them?" Letty said. "We were speeding. We can't deny that."

"No." Rupe frowned, then asked. "But who was doing the driving?" Letty stared and gasped, and he went on quickly, "Liz is a Thaler. She'll be fined the limit if they find out she was behind that wheel. She might even have to do a stretch in jail, since she's got a list of traffic violations a yard long against her."

Liz began to cry again but no one paid any attention to comfort her. They could hear the police siren plainly now. Rupe's voice raced against time.

"What's more, Dad's warned me that if there are any more police charges

against me or any member of our family, he'll take away the convertible. We won't have a car all summer, so we've got to stick together on this."

Letty interrupted bewilderedly. "On what? What can you do?"

"We're going to tell the police," said Rupe, "that *you* were doing the driving. We'll make it up to you later. If you try to deny it, it will be the word of three of us against one of you."

"Aw, Rupe—"

It was Gordon who protested. Letty was beyond speech with horror and terror at such an exhibition of ruthlessness. Dazedly, she saw the police car pull up beside them. Two state patrolmen jumped out.

"So you didn't break your necks," growled the tall one. "Too bad."

In the next breath, the broad-shouldered officer demanded, "Who owns this highway menace?"

Rupe pointed to Letty and, to this accusation, she could make no denial. Upon orders, she produced her ownership papers from her handbag with shaking hands.

Then both patrolmen were a grim chorus. "Who was driving?"

Again Rupe's pointing finger indicated Letty. His other hand held her cruelly fast when she tried to step up to the officers, crying, "No! I—"

"She's scared goofy," he said. "She doesn't know what she's saying."

"Maybe not, maybe yes." The tall thin policeman spoke thoughtfully. "But I know you, Rupe Thaler. And I know your cousins, at least, the female speed demon, and—"

"The way that jalopy was driven—" His partner finished for him. "—smells either Thaler or Todd."

"Prove it!" Rupe became his most arrogant. "Just try to prove it and make out the Thalers and Todds as liars, flat-foot."

"Shut up, punk," said both officers, again a chorus, and moved in unison as another car stopped at the scene.

It was a small sensible coupe. Letty recognized it with unbearable gladness. It was Cy's car.

She cried out his name, "Cy! Oh, Cy—"

THE NEXT instant, he had bound from the coupe and was beside her, holding her fast. "Darling, you're safe." His voice came hoarse. "Thank God! When I saw you leaving that roadhouse with Liz at the wheel of your hot rod, I died a thousand deaths. I—"

A patrolman's hand on his shoulder interrupted him, and pulled him away from Letty. The two officers began firing questions, one from each side. "Did you see Liz Todd driving? Sure it wasn't the blonde?"

"Is that what the heels are trying to say?" Cy raked Rupe and Liz and Gordon with a glance that was murderous. Then, concisely, he told his story to the police.

"I came back to the hotel tonight, found Rupe Thaler's convertible parked in the grounds, and Miss Paynton and her yellow job gone. It didn't take a genius to figure out what had happened and that everything that had happened was bad. I set out after them. I'd heard that Rupe and the cousins like that joint up in the pines. I was about to turn in, looking for Letty, when the jalopy came out. No one seemed to notice me, but I had a good look at them all. Liz was at the wheel, no question about it. Her brother and Miss Paynton were in the back seat."

The two officers exchanged glances. "I had an impression that there was a dark-haired girl driving," said the tall one. The broad one grinned maliciously at Rupe. "I guess we have the proof we need, punk. How about talking, one or all three of you? How about you, Gordon?"

He had recognized Gordon as the weakest, and Gordon broke. "It's just as Cy tells it," he said. "And I didn't like trying to put it on Letty in the first place. She'll bear me out on that."

Letty was incapable of bearing anyone out on anything. She had collapsed against Cy, too weak with relief from fright to stand. He spoke to the patrolmen who were herding Rupe and his cousins into the police car.

"Take her home," the officers said. "We don't need her any longer, and she's undoubtedly had the scare of a lifetime which—" added one, "—she deserved for going out with this trio. Why do you suppose they run around together?"

Cy told him, "Because they're too hard for any one but themselves to take!"

He half carried Letty to his coupe and tucked her in. The policeman came over to inquire what he intended to do about the yellow jalopy. Cy promised to have it towed into a garage to keep it in safe hands until its speed was toned down. The patrolman waved him and Letty on their way.

SHE LAY back, relaxing in the comfort of his nearness. Cy did not speak until just before they came into the town. Then it was to say, "I know I should take you straight home. But there's someplace I'd rather take you. May I?"

Letty's "Of course," was complete submission. She had no idea where he wanted to take her and did not care. Unbelievably, she saw him turn down a familiar dead-end street beyond the boardwalk. He parked amid pines, and again she saw the surf break golden beneath the moon.

"Cy," she whispered. "Cy—"

He put his arms around her but he did not bend to kiss here. Sternly, he asked, "Letty, how could you run out on me with Rupe Thaler? All that the patrolman and I said about him and his cousins are true. Money has made them so selfish and ruth-

less that they're dangerous to themselves and anyone who associates with them. They might have railroaded you to jail, they might have killed you."

His arm tightened as he thought of the possibility. She dropped her head down on his shoulder.

"I know," she said. "I think I sensed what they were like but tonight, with you gone to Mrs. Hyatt's, I didn't seem to care what happened to me."

He looked down at her wonderingly. "Don't you know why I barged over to her brawl?" Then, as her fair head moved in negation, he said, "I thought Bill had told you. I went over to play my harmonica for money. I did it last year for her and what I earned enabled us to hang on to the Blue Hen. We're not so badly in need of the extra dough this year, but I couldn't turn her down when she put it as a favor. Besides, I wanted a little reserve cash in case we had a hurricane

or some other disaster that cut into our hotel profits. I'm planning on a wedding, you know, yours and mine—"

"Oh, Cy." She was suddenly sobbing against his chest. "And I didn't trust you—"

"Why?" he asked.

"There was a man in New York," she began and stopped. Someday she must tell him about Cleve, but she hated to spoil this moment and this spot where they had first kissed.

"Later." He seemed to sense and share her desire. "Keep him out of here," he said. "This is no place for a man from New York. There is no room for any other man or any other woman from anywhere in our lives, from now on."

He swept her to him, and his mouth found hers in a kiss that knew no caution and aroused no fear. And the moon shone unseen and the pines whispered and the surf thundered unheard.



Can It Be Love?

*Can it be love, this wondrous glow
That brings such deep, sweet bliss—
Can it be love, this sudden thrill
That shakes me at your kiss?*

*Can it be love, this magic glory
Beyond all sane compare?
Oh, darling, take me in your arms—
I'll find the answers there!*

—Ann Tucker



*"You've met my sister
before, Chad?" Lucy said
in bewilderment.*

No Right To Love

One thing worse than not being the wife of the man you love is becoming his sister-in-law.

By

TUGAR DePASS



JUST AS Jill swung the tractor into the wide curve at the far end of the field beside the highway, the motor sputtered, coughed once, and died.

"Oh, darn," she muttered furiously.

A small, slim figure in blue jeans and a faded red plaid cotton shirt, an old khaki hunting cap cocked jauntily on her bronze-brown hair, she looked anxiously up at the late afternoon sky. Yes, there was no doubt about it; there would be rain before morning. She simply had to finish plowing this field this afternoon. The rain would make it exactly right for planting the oats.

With an exasperated sigh, she slid from the high metal seat to the ground. If only she knew a little more about machinery. Or, better yet, if only they could afford new machinery. But every time she had almost enough saved for a new tractor or a new harrow or some one of the other

things Ellwood Acres needed so badly, something was sure to turn up to make a disastrous hole in the family bank account. Like that beautiful cherry break-front Mom had spotted at an auction and recognized as the one described in Great Grandfather Ellwood's diary as having been stolen from Ellwood Acres. She really couldn't blame Mom much for bidding it in, even at the outrageous price she had had to pay. After all, the lovely old piece should come back to the house where it belonged.

Nor could she blame Lucy too much for setting her heart on that trip North last month to visit her school friend, Ellen Trent. Of course, that had meant new clothes besides the actual train fare, but Lucy did hate so living on a farm. A chance to spend a few weeks with the wealthy and socially prominent Trents in their New York penthouse had meant much to her.

Opening the tool box and trying to decide between a monkey wrench and a pair of pliers, Jill sighed again. She adored her vague, sweet little mother and her gay, lovely older sister, but she just couldn't seem to get it through their heads that Ellwood Acres was no longer the prosperous plantation it had been during her father's lifetime. After his death, while she and Lucy were still growing up, Mom had obviously expected the place to run itself. Old Jake, the overseer, had done his best, but, after all, Jake was used to having her father tell him what to do. And the war had finished what Mom's lack of good management had started. With the older hands flocking in droves to war plants and high wages, and the young ones drafted, the place had run down terribly.

"Oh, stop being a Gloomy Gus," Jill told herself impatiently, picking up the pliers and moving around to the front of the tractor. What was the sense in worrying about the past? She had been too

young to realize what was happening at the time. But now that she was twenty and had insisted on staying home to run the farm, instead of letting Mom put another mortgage on the house to send her to finishing school, things were much better. In another year or so, barring break-front secretaries and trips to New York, she would have it in fine shape.

"Having trouble?" a masculine voice broke into her thoughts.

JILL TURNED, her gray eyes surprised. There was so much traffic on the highway she hadn't noticed the sound of a car stopping. But there stood a dark green convertible parked off the pavement on the grassy bank of the road. A tall, sandy-haired young man in brown flannels and sports jacket was getting out of it and coming toward her.

A fine help you'll be, Jill thought ruefully. But his wide, friendly grin was contagious, so she grinned back at him as he stopped beside her.

"It just coughed once and gave up the ghost," she said, waving the pliers helplessly at the tractor. "And I've been so busy learning about important things like crop rotation and how to combat soil erosion I haven't got around to farm machinery yet."

"Well, farm machinery isn't much different from other kinds, I guess. Here, give me those pliers."

She handed them over, but she couldn't help glancing from his obviously expensive tailored slacks and jacket to the green convertible. He caught the look and laughed, his blue eyes bright.

"You needn't worry," he said cheerfully. "I'm not a professional mechanic, of course, but I'm a good amateur one. Nobody else ever touches that baby out there." He nodded toward the convertible.

To Jill's relief, he obviously wasn't exasperating. In no time at all, he had the

tractor running again and purring.

"Clogged fuel line," he explained casually, busily ruining a white linen handkerchief Jill guessed must have cost at least two dollars. He studied her for a moment, then, one eyebrow raised quizzically, he said suddenly, "I didn't know southern gals went in for this sort of thing."

Jill laughed. "You must be thinking of the stage version of a southern belle." She paused, her eyes clouding a little as she thought of Lucy. "At least, not many."

"I gather you don't approve of the breed?"

She started guiltily, feeling disloyal to Lucy. "Not at all," she said hastily. "There are just different types of girls in the south as well as anywhere else. And I just don't happen to be the belle type."

"Not the stage version certainly—" His blue eyes twinkled down at her. "But for my money, you're a real gal. You don't just sit back the way the gals in crinoline and old lace did and wait for nice things to happen to you. You get out and make them happen, don't you?"

Jill was amazed at the wave of pleasure which swept over her at the compliment. Lucy and Mom were both inclined to regard the time and personal hard work she put into running the farm with a humorous condescension, as though the whole

thing was a childish game of some sort, one she would tire of in time.

"Thanks." She held out her small, capable looking tanned hand. "Thanks for fixing the tractor and for boosting my morale, too."

What a nice, firm handclasp he had. Come to think of it, what an all-around nice guy he was. Not many strangers these days would have stopped to help her. And certainly, very few men, after a brief encounter like this, would have been as discerning as he had.

WHEN HE had driven away, Jill stood for a moment gazing after the green car. An odd, completely unreasonable feeling of loneliness swept over her.

It was so absurd, she laughed aloud as she climbed back up on the tractor. Good heavens, she didn't even know the man's name and almost certainly she would never see him again.

She finished the field just as the sun went down behind the pine woods bordering it, so it was almost dark when she trundled the tractor into the big red barn a mile away. There were more than the usual number of lights on in the house she noticed, and, as she drew closer, she saw that several cars were parked in the driveway. Of course, Lucy was having a dinner party tonight. She had forgotten all about it. What was the occasion? Lucy had been full of it at breakfast this morning,

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but, for the life of her she couldn't remember; she had been too busy mapping out the day's work in her mind.

Not that it mattered. She had finally convinced Lucy and Mom she was simply too tired at night to do anything but fall into bed. Funny, she didn't seem to feel nearly as tired as usual tonight. That nice young man must have given her quite a lift.

To avoid Lucy's guests, she entered the house through the kitchen. Mandy, who loved parties as much as Lucy did, glanced up from something she was stirring.

"You better hurry and get dressed, honey, dinner's almost ready."

Jill stared at her in surprise. Mandy knew perfectly well she always had a tray in her room when Lucy entertained. But before she could speak, the swing door burst open and Lucy rushed into the kitchen. Her silky blonde hair curled softly about the shoulders of her buffant blue net frock, and her thick-lashed brown eyes were wide with excitement.

"Jill!" she cried. "I'm furious with you. You promised me this morning you'd get home in plenty of time to dress."

"I did?" Jill looked blank.

"Oh, dear," Lucy sighed with exasperation. "You and your silly farm work—you didn't hear a word I said. Listen, Jill, you simply have to put in an appearance tonight. I can't possibly tell Chad my sister actually does the work of a field hand and is too tired to come down and meet him."

"Chad?" Jill still looked blank.

Lucy flung out her hands helplessly. "Honestly! I've been talking about Chad ever since I got back from New York, and you don't even know who he is. He's Chadwick Trent, Ellen's brother. I invited him down to visit us and he arrived this afternoon. The party tonight is for him, of course." She grabbed Jill's hand and hurried her toward the back stairway

leading up from the kitchen. "Come along, I'd better go up with you and see that you make yourself look at least halfway decent."

That remark was so totally unlike Lucy that Jill stared at her in surprise as she entered the big bedroom they shared.

"You are in a dither, aren't you?" she said thoughtfully. "This Chad must be pretty special."

"He's just the man I'm going to marry, that's all," Lucy announced, hurrying to the closet and yanking out the only two formals Jill owned, both of them several years old. "Heavens, what rags! If only you were tiny like me you could wear one of mine, but of course you can't."

"Oh, the yellow crepe will be all right," Jill said. No wonder Lucy was so snappish with her! She must have told her this morning that she was engaged to Chad Trent, and she hadn't even listened. A fine sister she was!

UNDER THE shower, with the cold water needling the tiredness out of her slim, tanned body, she shouted, "I'm sorry, Lucy, about not paying attention when you told me about Chad. Do start all over and tell me everything. What's he like? When did you get engaged to him?"

Lucy strolled to the door of the bathroom, her eyes dreamy. "He's wonderful, Jill. Just the sort of man I always hoped to meet some day. Simply oodles of money!" she shrugged faintly and laughed. "Only you've got one thing wrong. I'm not engaged to him yet."

Toweling herself briskly now, Jill said gently, "But you hope to be? You're in love with him, of course."

"He's the man I'm going to marry," Lucy said again, and turned rather abruptly back into the bedroom, calling over her shoulder, "I'd better go back down. Please hurry, Jill, and do the best you can."

She's afraid she'll be ashamed of me, Jill thought, more hurt than she liked to admit. But, of course, she shouldn't hold that against Lucy. It was only natural that she should want her sister to make a good impression on Chad Trent.

Jill dressed swiftly but carefully. Thank goodness, the pale yellow crepe was cut on such simple lines that it wasn't too noticeably out of style, and the color definitely did something for her. It was perfect with her tan, for one thing, and it deepened the bronze lights in her hair and accented the yellow flecks in her hazel eyes.

She brushed her wind-blown curls until they shown, then swept them up into a pert little top-knot held in place by a big, flat black velvet bow. She outlined her full, soft lips with a deep red lipstick Lucy had brought her from New York. And, as a final touch, she put on a topaz necklace and matching earrings her grandmother had left her. There! Lucy would be proud of her now.

For no reason at all, she caught herself wishing suddenly that the nice, sandy-haired young man with the bright blue eyes could see her looking like this.

Because that thought was still fresh in her mind when she entered the crowded living room a few minutes later, she was sure her eyes must be playing tricks on her because of it. That man standing there beside Lucy, his back partly turned, wasn't the obliging stranger who had stopped to help her today, of course.

When Lucy caught sight of her and drew the young man forward, Jill's heart gave a sudden, excited thump as his eyes met hers.

"Hello," she said dazedly. "Fancy meeting you here!"

CHAD TRENT looked at her blankly for a moment, then recognition sprang into his eyes, and he gave a low whistle. "Well, I'll be darned, if it isn't

the little farmerette. How you've changed since I saw you last." His eyes took her in from the top of her gleaming head to the twinkling bronze sandals on her feet.

Lucy glanced from one to the other of them in bewilderment. "You've met my sister before, Chad?"

Swiftly, Jill explained, and it wasn't until she saw Lucy's expression changing from bewilderment to annoyance that she remembered Lucy hadn't wanted Chad to know she actually worked in the fields.

"Honestly, I'm afraid Jill never will grow up," Lucy tried to gloss things over. "Mom and I simply despair of her sometimes, Chad. Imagine her slipping off to play with the tractor!"

Ordinarily, Jill would have let that pass. But she remembered the way Chad had looked at her today and she couldn't bear to have him to think she had merely been playing a childish prank.

She said quietly, "I don't think you'd call plowing a ten acre field exactly play, Lucy." And then she turned abruptly and walked over to where George Latham was sipping a highball, and staring glumly at Lucy. George, who owned the adjoining plantation, had been in love with Lucy practically since their diaper days.

"Hi, Jill," George greeted her sadly. "Looks like I've got some more competition. You'd think half the guys in the county would be enough, without bringing in a Yankee."

Jill looked at him thoughtfully. She'd never bothered her head much about Lucy's many casual heart interests, but, somehow, she had always assumed that Lucy would settle down one day and marry George. Somehow, she had always thought Lucy was fonder of big, quiet, retiring George than of anyone else.

"George," she said abruptly, "the trouble with you is that you're too easy. No girl, especially a girl like Lucy, is going to fall in love with a man who lets her walk all over him."

"Come again?" George blinked.

"Oh, don't be so stupid," Jill said impatiently. "You must know you let Lucy wrap you around her little finger. Listen to her right now if you don't believe me."

They both turned to follow the conversation. Lucy was saying to the room at large, "It's going to be a simply lovely day, I know, even if it does rain a little tonight. So we'll have a picnic over at the lake on George's place. George will cook us one of his super chicken barbecues and we'll swim and lie in the sun and just have a grand, lazy time of it."

Jill grinned at him. "See what I mean? It's going to rain tonight and you ought to get your oats in tomorrow. But Lucy wants you to go on a picnic, so on a picnic you'll go."

A sudden glint came into his eyes. "Is that so?" he growled, and stalked up to Lucy. "Sorry, Lucy," he said crisply. "You should have consulted me first. I can't possibly take time off for a picnic tomorrow. You'll have to make other plans."

"Why, George!" Lucy looked at him in hurt astonishment. "I never heard of anything so mean. I told Chad about your lake and I was counting on—" Her voice trailed off miserably.

JILL WAS suddenly ashamed of herself. Whatever had possessed her? That lake was one of the most romantic spots for miles around; no doubt, Lucy had been looking forward to a stroll through the pine woods to bring Chad to the point of proposing. After all, no matter what she had thought about Lucy's feelings for George, Lucy was in love with Chad. And besides disappointing Lucy, it had been absolutely cruel of her to hold out any hope to poor George.

She joined the group around Lucy and said swiftly, "Look, I've got an idea. There's no reason why you can't have the picnic, Lucy, even if George can't take

time off to cook for you. He'll be delighted for you all to go to the lake, of course, and I'll get up early and help Mandy fix a nice picnic lunch before I go to work. How's that?"

"Jill, you're a darling!" Lucy cried. Then, with a pretty pout at Chad, she added, "Jill knows I'd fix the lunch myself of course, but I'm just no good in the kitchen."

"A girl as pretty as you doesn't need to know how to cook," Chad told her cheerfully. Then he turned to Jill. "But couldn't you use an assistant tomorrow? I'd looked forward to doing a little actual farm work while I was here."

"You!" Lucy exclaimed, before Jill could answer. "Darling, what an idea! You don't know the first thing about farming. You'd only be in the way." She slipped her arm through his and fluttered her long lashes up at him. "Besides I couldn't possibly spare you."

Jill saw a bemused, adoring look come into Chad's eyes, and was glad dinner was announced at that moment.

She was glad, too, that she saw little of Chad that next week. Her days were spent in the fields, overseeing the hired help and doing her share of the work as well. Chad's days, of course, were spent with Lucy. From her mother, Jill heard excited accounts of the luncheons and cocktail parties, the dinners and dances Chad and Lucy were attending.

"She's certainly showing him a good time," Mom told her, her pretty, usually rather vague face alive with interest. "Oh, I do hope it turns out all right, Jill! Lucy has her heart set on marrying him, and just think how wonderful it would be for you and me. With Lucy provided for, I wouldn't hesitate to sell this white elephant of a place, and you and I could go to California and live with your Aunt Mabel. Of course, we couldn't get what the place is really worth but we'd get enough for you and me to live on."

Jill, who had been eating her early morning breakfast at the kitchen table sat there in stunned silence. Sell Ellwood Acres? Never! She'd always known Mom, who had been reared in a big city, had never quite adjusted herself to life on a farm, but she'd never dreamed Mom would think of selling Ellwood Acres.

She swallowed hard and tried to speak, but before she could find her voice Mom had jumped up and hurried from the kitchen, with a vague explanation about having forgotten she had promised to press Lucy's blue striped chambray for her.

PROBABLY IT was just as well she hadn't had a chance to say anything, Jill decided miserably. After all, the place did belong to Mom, so if Mom was unhappy here she certainly had no right to try to prevent her selling it.

For no reason at all, she found herself suddenly thinking of the infrequent moments she had spent with Chad. They had found so much to talk about, and, surprisingly, considering the difference in their backgrounds, had discovered an amazing number of common interests.


The most surprising was that Chad had a real and sincere love of the land. He told her about that late one afternoon when he'd wandered down to the barn to visit with her while waiting for Lucy to dress for a cocktail party.

"It's in my blood, I guess," he said dreamily, gazing out across the rolling fields to the woods in the distance. "All my mother's family were farm folk. And I used to spend every summer when I was a kid on my grandfather's farm in Vermont. I've always meant to buy a farm someday and spend the rest of my life on it."

Now, with an abrupt movement, Jill shoved back her chair and stood up. She must not, she simply must not dwell so much on those brief, scattered moments she had spent alone with Chad. There was no use trying to deny she liked him—liked him far too much. But she had to remember it was Lucy in whom Chad was interested. After all, he had come all the way down here from New York to see her, so, obviously, he was a great deal more than just casually attracted to her, even though he hadn't yet proposed marriage.

That day, the sixth of Chad's visit, everything seemed to go wrong. Jake misunderstood her and sowed an entire field with peas instead of the soy beans she had intended. One of the mules went lame and five acres of corn just ripe for plowing had to be left undone. And the tractor broke down again, and no amount of tinkering on hers and Jake's part could get it running.

By the time she trudged wearily toward the house at sundown, Jill was almost



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wishing she'd never tried to run the farm at all. Why hadn't she just let the place go to rack and ruin and gone off to school like Lucy? Then she wouldn't be wearing grimy blue jeans with her hair all mussed and new freckles on her nose, and Chad might have—

She brought that thought up sharply. Thank heavens, only two more days to go. Chad was leaving on Sunday, and, surely, before then he would have asked Lucy to marry him and it would be all settled. Then she could forget this foolishness and settle down to forgetting she had ever had crazy dreams about a sandy-haired man with merry blue eyes.

BUT CERTAINLY, she hadn't begun to settle down yet. Her heart proved that by leaping wildly as Chad appeared around the corner of the house and fell into step beside her.

"Hi, Jill, how goes it?"

She started to tell him exactly how things had gone that day, but caught herself in time. She wasn't the sort to weep on anybody's shoulder.

She said gayly, "Fine and dandy."

"Good." He grinned down at her. "Then maybe you're not so tired tonight. How about going to the Blakney's buffet supper with Lucy and me?"

"Oh, I don't think so." Jill kicked a rock with the scuffed tow of her brown oxford. Every moment she spent with Chad, even at a party like this, would make it harder to forget those crazy dreams of hers.

"Why not?" He insisted. "Mary Blakney is expecting you. I saw her at the cocktail party this afternoon and took the liberty of suggesting we bring you along tonight. She was delighted, said she and Dick never saw anything of you these days."

"Yes, I know. Mary and I were in high school together. She's really more my friend than Lucy's, but—" her voice

trailed off and she slanted a quick glance up at Chad's face.

Or, rather, she had meant it to be a quick glance, but their eyes met and held, and somehow, she could not tear her own away. For there was such an urgency in Chad's, such a boyish, almost pleading look that her heart stopped quite still for a moment, then began to race wildly.

Jill did not dare examine that look in Chad's eyes too closely. She didn't need to, she told herself. It was only friendship, only a natural desire that she should have a share in the fun he and Lucy were having.

And why not? she thought suddenly. Why shouldn't she snatch what happiness she could? There would be dancing after supper at Mary's and Dick's. At least, she would have the memory of Chad's arms about her.

She forced a gay little laugh, forced her voice to come out casually, "Okay, Chad. I think I'll take you up. After all, 'All work and no play' works the same for Jills as well as Jacks, I guess."

They had reached the house now, and Chad was opening the door for her. In the sudden blare of a radio turned on in the living room, she wasn't quite sure she heard him say softly, "Not for you, Jill. You could never be dull."

Upstairs in the big front bedroom, Lucy looked astonished when Jill told her she was going to the party. Astonished, and then petulantly annoyed.

"Oh, dear," she sighed. "There's a full moon tonight and I was hoping that riding home in Chad's car, with the top down, he might—" She stopped suddenly, a guilty flush staining her cheeks. Impulsively, she put her arms about Jill and kissed her. "What an old Meanie I am! Forget it, honey. There'll be other nights and other moons. Honestly, I'm delighted you're going with us."

She's sweet, Jill thought humbly, even if she is terribly spoiled. I really ought to

be ashamed of myself; I could easily change my mind.

SHE DIDN'T though. The thought of dancing with Chad, of spending an entire evening just in the same place he was meant too much to her. So she dressed again in the pale yellow formal and the antique topaz necklace and earrings, and went to the party.

Mary and Dick Blakney lived in an old brick house in town set far back from the street in a grove of huge, moss-draped oaks. As Chad stopped the car behind the half dozen others parked in the drive, Jill couldn't help thinking that if Lucy wanted a romantic background this was perfect.

The thought wasn't a pleasant one. It brought up too vividly a picture of Chad taking Lucy's slim lovely figure into his arms, of Chad's deep, warm voice telling Lucy he loved her, asking her to marry him. Jill blanked out that picture as quickly as she could, and walked into the house too swiftly.

George Latham was standing in the hall, talking to dark-haired little Mary Blakney. He greeted Jill absentmindedly, his eyes already searching over her shoulder for Lucy. For a moment Jill thought there was something decidedly different about George's eyes tonight, something less humble, but probably she was mistaken. For there George was, hovering over Lucy as usual, helping her off with her light summer wrap, asking her if she would like a drink, begging her for a dance right after supper.

After supper. That was the time Jill had both looked forward to and dreaded. Suppose when Chad asked her to dance, when his arms went around her, she gave herself away? She must not let that happen. She could bear almost anything, but having Chad know she loved him, having him feel sorry for her because he could never return her affection,

Naturally, he danced first with Lucy. But in just a moment or two, Jill saw George cut in on them, and then Chad was coming straight toward her. She had lingered in the dining room to chat a moment with Mary, so she had not started to dance. Mary's devoted Dick had, of course, swept her immediately away.

Standing there alone by the dining room doorway, panic suddenly swept over Jill. She couldn't risk it—she dared not. Swiftly, she turned and fled through the dining room and through the open French windows onto the side terrace.

It was no good. Chad caught up with her.

She said helplessly, "You ought to go back. Lucy will be furious."

He laughed, almost challengingly. "I don't think so. Lucy's much too busy being the belle of the ball at the moment to miss me." He led her on down the short flight of steps into the garden. A path, bordered with white petunias which looked silver in the moonlight, led away among the trees. They reached an ancient oak with a wooden bench circling its massive trunk. Without a word they sat down.

The silence stretched and stretched until Jill wanted to scream. This was all wrong, so wrong! They ought to be talking and laughing, easily, gayly, not just sitting here like this.

It was Chad who finally broke the silence. "You know, Jill," he said slowly, "I expected something entirely different when I accepted Lucy's invitation to come down here for a visit. She had told me she lived on a farm and I looked forward to things being the way they used to be on my grandfather's place. I thought I'd help with the chores, maybe even to do a little field work. Instead it's just been a continuous round of parties."

"I'm sorry you've been disappointed, Chad," Jill said carefully. "But I hope you won't blame Lucy too much for that.

She just doesn't understand. She can't help loving parties and fun and pretty clothes, and things like that. And, well, maybe she is a little selfish and spoiled. But underneath she's a very fine person, Chad."

HE TURNED his head and looked down at her, a funny little smile twisting his lips. "I'm sure she is, honey. She couldn't help being, since she's your sister. The only thing is, I—" He broke off abruptly, then said quietly, "I mean to try to lead up to it gradually, but that's no good. Listen, Jill, I didn't come out here to talk about Lucy. I came to talk about us. I'm in love with you, head over heels in love with you. And maybe I'm a conceited idiot, but I think you're in love with me, too."

"No, oh no!" Jill cried. "I'm not—I won't be. And you aren't in love with me, either. You love Lucy, you've just got to. Oh, Chad, Lucy loves you. You—we can't do this to her!"

Chad caught both her hands and held them close. "Listen, you blind, sweet, loyal little dope. Maybe I'm all kinds of a heel to say this, but I've got to say it because I've got to make you understand. Lucy isn't in love with me. If she loves anybody I think it's that nice guy, George Latham."

Jill shook her head violently. "She is in love with you, Chad. She told me the very first night you came that you were the man she wanted to marry."

"Sure she did." He laughed ruefully. "That's what I meant when I said I was a heel to tell you this. Lucy wants to marry me all right, but she's not in love with me. She just wants to marry me because of the things my money could give her."

"She doesn't!" Jill denied wildly. "Lucy's not like—" She stopped abruptly, a startled look in her eyes. What was it Lucy had said that first evening? "He's

wonderful, Jill. He's got oodles of money." She hadn't said, "He's wonderful, Jill. He's got sandy hair that will never stay brushed and neat, and laughter-filled blue eyes. And we laugh at the same jokes and like to do the same things." Most of all, she hadn't said, "I love him, Jill." She'd only said she wanted to marry him.

"There," Chad said softly, "I can see you believe me at last. Now you can stop worrying about Lucy." His arms went around her and his lips claimed hers in a kiss so tender, so sweet, so utterly everything she had known his kiss would be that she forgot everything else for the moment. She gave herself up to that kiss, her arms close about his neck, her fingers laced in his crisp, sandy hair.

But the moment was shattered by a stifled gasp which made them jerk apart. Lucy and George stood there on the path, staring at them. Lucy's eyes were wide with hurt, and rapidly filling with tears.

"Chad!" she wailed. "Oh, Chad, how could you? You let me think, you practically told me in New York that you loved me."

"I know, and I'm terribly sorry, Lucy," he said quietly, rising swiftly to his feet. Jill stood up, too. She wished she could slip her hand into his, but with Lucy standing there, the tears streaming down her face, she just couldn't. Oh, this was awful, simply awful! They must have been mistaken, she and Chad. Lucy must really love Chad to weep like that.

George, too, was staring at Lucy's tear-ravaged face. Then, abruptly he turned to Chad. "You heel! I'll pay you off for treating Lucy like this!" he shouted. And with that, he swung wildly.

JILL STARED. She could have sworn George's fist had barely grazed Chad's chin—but there was Chad, flat on his back on the ground, both eyes closed!

Lucy stopped sobbing, and gasped,

"Why, George! Why, George, you wonderful thing you! You fought for me. You knocked that double-crossing Yankee out cold for me!"

Jill's eyes widened even more. Something definitely had happened to George. He caught Lucy's arm and started marching her up the path. "And it's high time I beat a little sense into you, too, young lady," Jill heard him threaten.

"George Latham, you wouldn't dare!" Lucy gasped.

Just the same, Jill was relieved to hear George say firmly, as they rounded the curve in the path, "If the method I have in mind doesn't work, you'll see whether I dare or not. You're in love with me and you're going to marry me and soon."

"Sounds masterful, doesn't he?"

Jill jumped and turned to stare down at Chad. He rose lazily to his feet, brushing twigs and grass from his trousers.

"Humm!" Jill put both hands on her hips and stared at him suspiciously. "You came to very suddenly."

He grinned. "I was never out. In case you're interested, honey, I once won the Golden Gloves Boxing championship."

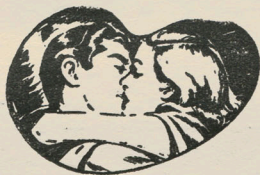
"You mean you deliberately let George knock you down?"

"I mean I deliberately pretended to let George knock me down. It seemed a good idea at the time not to."

"A very good idea." Jill's lips quirked. "If you'd knocked George out, he might have looked more like a doormat than ever to Lucy. As it is, he'll always be a knight in shining armor coming to her rescue."

And, suddenly, they were in each others arms, both of them laughing their heads off. But, after a little, they stopped laughing to continue the kiss Lucy and George had interrupted. The end was as satisfactory as the beginning, Jill decided.

She closed her eyes blissfully and thought of all the years and all the kisses to come. Chad would buy Ellswood Acres from Mom, and they would live there, of course. Mom would go to California to live with her sister, as she'd wanted to do for years. And Lucy would marry George and go to live at Latham Hall and have a lot of little knights in shining armor. As for herself, she'd settled for two boys and two girls—all of them with sandy hair and laughing blue eyes, she hoped!



No Other Dream

By Fan Nichols

This is a picture of a girl deliberately asking for heartbreak. . . . For Joanne, Marty O'Brien belonged in the category of the glittering unattainable. He was had the glamorous Elena Barry—and he had told her: "Stay away from me, Jo. I'm no good for you or any other woman . . ."

Yet, with his lips on hers, his arms holding her close, Joanne knew he was the one and only love in the world for her. Here is Fan Nichols' stardusty story of two rebel souls who had no other dream but the one that might never come true.

Vina Lawrence, Kathryn Keeley, Millie Breece and other romantic favorites also make this a bang-up July issue.





DORA DEAN, Hostess

TO JOIN—Write me a letter telling about yourself, your school or work, your hobbies and pastimes, in fact the sort of letter which will make readers want to write to you. Sign a nickname, but also give me your real name and address plainly written. You will be given a number under which you will find your letter published in Love Short Stories.

TO WRITE TO A PAL—Select someone who interests you, and write your letter, signing your own name and address so the reply will come direct to you. Put this into a **STAMPED ENVELOPE**, but **DO NOT SEAL THIS ENVELOPE**. On the corner of this envelope write the number of the Pal you wish it forwarded to. Put this envelope and your letter in another envelope, and address this one to Dora Dean, Love Short Stories, 210 East 43rd St., New York City 17. You may write several Pals if you wish, but be sure to enclose a stamped envelope for each.

Notify Dora Dean at once of any change in address, giving your number, old and new address.



L-3884 NOT SAVAGE OR CANNIBAL

Although I am a South African girl, I am not a savage, zulu or a cannibal, nor is my father a missionary. My friends tell me many Americans think we are because of the word Africa. I am five feet five, with fair hair and blue eyes. Would like pals my age who'll really write regularly. Will exchange snaps.

Mary
(5c postage)

anyone of good character from twenty-five to thirty-five. Will answer all promptly.

M

L-3886 MORE BRAINS THAN BEAUTY

A twenty-four year old widow from Sydney says nature endowed her with more brains than beauty. Have brown hair and eyes, am five feet eight. Interested in everything, journalism, music, sports, collecting songs and poems.

Mary

L-3885 WIDOWER

I am a widower in my early thirties, five feet eleven. I have a good job and a nice home and would like to hear from

L-3887 AWAY FROM HOME

Here is a thirty-nine year old man with dark curly hair, brown eyes, five

feet ten. Likes hunting, fishing, riding and outdoor sports. Am away from home in large city and lonesome. I would like many letters.

Curly

L-3888 LONESOME SOUTHERNER

Here is a twenty-five year old southerner whose wife died, leaving him with a two year old girl. I am five feet nine with black hair and brown eyes. I like to fish, hunt play guitar and dance. Will answer all.

Jack

L-3889 OLDER PALS WANTED

I am an unmarried woman forty years old with brown hair and eyes. I work in a dress factory and would like to hear from people my own age all over the world. I like the radio and the movies very much.

Vi

L-3890 CAN SPIN STORIES

An ex-soldier who spent four years in Wakayama and Nagoya, Japan, says he can spin some stories if some of you pals are interested. Am thirty-one, single, easy to get along with and live with my dad.

Charlie

L-3891 TELEPHONE OPERATOR

A telephone operator with brown hair and blue eyes, served in all parts of she would like to hear from other tall people everywhere. I get very lonesome so I hope you pals will write.

Tiny

L-3892 EX-SERVICEMAN

This twenty-seven year old Army veteran, five foot ten inches, with brown hair and blue eyes, served in all parts of Europe. Would like to hear from girls near my age. Will exchange snaps.

Whitey

L-3893 EX-USO GIRL

I am twenty-four years old with brown hair and blue eyes. Would like to hear from girls and fellows my own age. I like photography, dancing, swimming, hiking and movies. Also love to travel. I entertained with USO during the war.

Penny

L-3894 TALL, DARK AND 52

I am a farmer, free, white and fifty-two years old. Am five feet ten and a half with dark hair and blue eyes. Like

sports, baseball and horseback riding best. Will answer all letters.

Bill from Ky.

L-3895 BRITISH MISS

Here is a thirteen year old girl from London who would like to have some pen pals. My favorite lessons are essay-writing, arithmetic, and French. Like rollerskating, swimming and reading.

Patricia
(5c postage)

L-3896 BOYS TWENTY AND UP

This eighteen year old girl has large brown eyes and brown hair, and is of French descent. Like to ice skate, ski, swim, sing, dance and most everything. Would like to hear from boys twenty to twenty-five.

Brown Eyes

L-3897 WISCONSINITE

Here is a twenty year old girl who is now working in a small town. I am often lonely here. Have blonde hair, blue eyes and am five feet four. I like dancing, movies, sports and meeting people. I want to travel.

Ginny

L-3898 LONESOME EX-WAC

Just a lonesome ex-Wac who finds it hard to make friends and have always liked writing people. Am blonde, brown-eyed, five feet three and twenty-seven. I love to bowl, horseback riding, baseball and read, write and dance.

Mitzie

L-3899 OUT OF NAVY INTO BANK

I am a fellow, twenty-two with dark hair and brown eyes, five feet nine. Graduated from college and am a bank teller. Was an ensign in Navy for two and a half years. I take flying lessons, love to dance and like dogs. Was stationed in Chicago once, so how about some pals there?

Maxey

L-3900 HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

Here's a girl who just loves to write letters and receive them. Am seventeen, a high school senior. Have brown eyes and black hair. Like dancing, reading, good music. How about writing to me?

Polly

L-3901 WANTS PALS

I am a forty-five year old man, five feet nine and work every day but don't
(Please turn to page 93)



TONIGHT MEANT everything to Kim. Janet had to remember that.

She put her head on his shoulder as he drove through the moonlight out the curving beach road that dipped across the dunes toward Crescent Point. She told herself that she was wrong about Phil Sellen and tried not to think of the way Phil had looked at her or what he had said.

Kim's arm came around her and he slowed the car. He kissed her and held her close and she felt all warm and good inside with loving him. But she smiled and



parking with some girl than get ahead in the world."

He laughed with her and kissed her again. "Darling—"

Held in his arms like that, Janet momentarily forgot her worries over Phil and Francine and the doubts that had bothered her since Kim first told her about the party. But after a minute, she reluctantly tapped her fingers on his shoulders and gently held him away. "Crescent Point," she said. "Get rolling, mister."

He grinned and put the car into gear. It was a proud little grin, filled with the

Happy Ending

By
BILL
SEVERN

Is a secure future
worth the price of a
girl's love?

sat back. "We'll never get there if you keep stopping like this, Kim." Janet's soft laughter was husky. "The party started at eight. We're late now." She pressed her cheek hard against his arm.

"Wish we could park here and just walk along the beach," Kim said.

She wished that even more than Kim, but she knew how much he wanted the future Phil could give him. "That's a fine way to talk. No sense of responsibility," she teased. "Rather waste time

promises they had made each other. Janet was proud of him. There was no way she could tell Kim about Phil without hurting him. She wanted to believe with all her heart that tonight's invitation had nothing to do with Phil's interest in her.

"It means I'm in," Kim had told her. He had been asked to meet the big shots socially, the clique of top executives who ran the newspaper Phil Sellen had inherited from his father. Kim had been assistant city editor of the *Times Herald* for

*"You'd do almost anything
for him, wouldn't you?"
Phil asked.*



three months, ever since Phil had taken over active control of the paper. And now that Andy Johnson had quit to be with a news service, there was an opening for a new city editor. Kim had said, "Francine practically told me it's mine."

Remembering Francine, Janet's nerves tightened even more. Phil's sister had been put on the *Times Herald* staff as a reporter to learn the business she owned with her brother. Kim had helped break her into the newsroom routine. As far as he was concerned, she was only a girl who happened to be the sister of his boss. Janet was sure Kim had no more interest than that in Francine. If he had noticed the girl was beautiful, it didn't seem to bother him.

But it was something else with Francine. Janet had seen them together in the *Times Herald* restaurant where she worked, had caught the glances Francine gave Kim and watched the way Francine maneuvered it so Kim had to ask her to sit at his table to be polite. And Janet understood, as only another woman can, exactly what was in Francine's mind.

"Why so silent?" Kim asked now.

"I was thinking about us."

"What about us?"

"How much I love you, darling."

And thinking about Phil. How Phil had been on the make for her since the first time he had seen her in the restaurant. Leaving big tips on the table for her, cracking his suggestive jokes and always patting her hand, trying to coax a date. Janet hadn't known he was Kim's boss at first. She had told him off coldly and bluntly and ignored his passes.

But he had come in one day while Kim was talking to her and Kim had introduced him as the new owner of the *Times Herald*. After that, Janet had to pretend to be friendly, still keeping her distance.

"You really go for Kim, don't you?" Phil had asked when she waited on him day before yesterday. "You'd do almost

anything for him, wouldn't you, Janet?"

"I'm going to marry him."

"On what he makes?" Phil smiled.

"It would be enough if I could go on working here awhile."

"But he doesn't want that?" Phil put his napkin on the table and pushed back his chair. He got up slowly. "Kim's a good man. He's got news sense and works hard at his job. I've had him in mind for something really big." He looked right at her a moment, asking a silent question that was so direct Janet glanced down from what was in his eyes. "I can help him a lot."

"Kim's earned the chance. He deserves it."

"Sure he does." Phil put his hand on her elbow. "And I would be helping you, too."

IT WAS right after that Kim had told her about tonight's party. "Phil said to be sure to bring you. We'll have fun, Janet. But it means more than that." Excited and happy and holding her hands, he had explained, "The raise that goes with being city editor would be enough for us to get married right now. You'd be my full time wife. None of this business of slaving in a restaurant and paying half the bills on an apartment. We'd have a house and I could take you out of here for keeps. That's how I've always wanted it, darling."

Janet saw the huge Sellen mansion as Kim wheeled the car into the graveled drive. Whatever happened tonight, she wouldn't throw away Kim's chances. She could handle Phil without insulting him and she could look the other way if Francine made a play for Kim. Janet was as sure of Kim's love as she was of the stars.

He parked the coupe behind the other cars in the semi-dark square beside the terrace and with the motor quiet she could hear the soft wash of the bay's small waves on the shore below, the laughter of a

crowd somewhere in the distance. Janet turned to Kim and kissed him with everything that was in her heart. Smiling, she opened the door quickly and got out.

He cut the lights and rolled up the windows while she waited. There was a step behind her and a hand tapped her on the back. "Oh!" Janet jumped and whirled around. It was Phil. She pressed her lips tight and held back what she felt like saying. "You startled me."

"Hi, Janet." As he moved from the shadows, she saw he was wearing tan swim trunks. "Hello, Kim. Glad you kids could make it. I heard a car drive up and thought I'd tell whoever it was that everybody's on the beach." He nodded to the brick path. "I'll take you to the beach house and you can dig up something to put on."

Janet glanced down at her cloud-white formal gown. It had cost her a week's pay out of her savings to buy because she wanted to look her loveliest for Kim tonight. Now, nobody would see it. But she said, "That sounds like fun." She stepped around to put Kim between her and Phil. The beach house was halfway down the walk, a low stone building with two doors.

"Men on that side, Kim." Phil pointed and turned to Janet. "If there aren't any suits left on the bench, my sister has a couple in the closet next to the shower." Phil studied her, making the skin creep along her spine. "You're about the same build as Francine."

"We'll manage," Kim said. Janet caught the alert frown he gave Phil. "Isn't it a bit cold for swimming?"

"Water's warm enough. It was Francine's idea. Just follow the walk down when you're ready."

Janet went in. The small room had a window at the back and a row of clothes-draped hangers racked along the wall. Powder and hairpins had been spilled in front of the mirror and there was a swim

suit on the floor at the end of the bench. Janet picked it up and held it to herself. It was worn and faded and too small. She glanced around and opened the closet next to the shower. The only suit on the shelf was brand new and still had the tags on it. Francine might not like her borrowing that, but Janet had no choice.

Janet pulled off her dress. She straightened and listened a second, glancing at the open window. Shaking her head, she smiled at herself for being so jumpy and finished changing. Francine's new white suit with the big red polka dots seemed barely legal. It certainly had been designed to give a girl an all-over tan, but it wouldn't be much covering in the cool night wind. Janet looked for a robe, but there wasn't one. She shivered at the chill stone floor beneath her toes as she crossed to the door.

OUTSIDE, next to the scrub pines that bordered the walk, she saw the glow of a cigarette. "Kim?" She hurried over. "Sorry I took so long— Oh, it's you." She stopped.

"Had to go up to the house for another blanket," Phil said. "You might as well walk down with me. Kim will be along."

"Thanks. I'll wait."

"Whatever you say. There's no special hurry, Janet." He smiled as though his words had another meaning. "I wonder if you know how really beautiful you are tonight?" He stepped closer.

Her eyes lifted to his with a warning. "It must be the moonlight. Kim told me the same thing." She softened it with a little laugh as she looked away. "He should be out any second now."

"I might have something to tell him before the party's over." Phil took her hand.

Janet struggled against the impulse to tear her fingers free. She eased them from his lightly. "That's between you and Kim. I'd rather not know anything about his business until he tells me. I'm sure what-

ever your news is, Kim will be very happy. He's worked hard for the *Times Herald*. I guess it's important to keep that kind of loyalty, isn't it?"

"With you to help him, there shouldn't be anything to hold him back."

"I intend to help all I can—" She met Phil's eyes again. "—as Kim's wife."

"There are ways for a girl to get what she wants if she's determined enough." He smiled once more. "I'll tell you this much, Janet, we have two openings that would be good for a man like Kim. I think he'd jump at either of them. It's hard for me to make up my mind. As city editor, he'd be right here in town. But if I sent him to London for a year or so as a correspondent—"

"London?"

"I'm sorry." He shook his head. "Now I have let out my little secret, haven't I?" Phil laughed. "Oh, well, let's forget it for now. Good times come first tonight. If we can mix our plans with having a little fun, so much the better. Enjoy yourself, Janet. That's why I asked you here. No reason to act like an old married woman with a lot of worries about the future. You're not married yet." He turned. "I'd better take this blanket down before my guests wonder what happened to me."

Janet closed her eyes. Phil's meaning was all too clear; it was practically a threat. His words echoed in the night-held silence. "There are ways for a girl to get what she wants— If I sent him to London— You're not married yet—" Standing there, her breathing deepened and her heart went still. She heard the beach house door open behind her and she raised her head.

"Janet?" Kim called.

She looked around and made a smile for him, felt it draw until she thought her mouth would snap. "Slow poke. What kept you?"

"Couldn't find anything that would fit. I had to cut down a rope for a belt. These

are too big." He stared as though she had taken his breath. "You're not going to wear that?"

"There's nothing else." Janet touched herself. "Don't be so shocked, darling. It's not that bad, is it?" She went over to him. "Just like a man. If I didn't belong to you, I'll bet you'd be whistling instead of complaining. I thought I looked rather attractive."

"Too damned attractive."

Her laughter came full and she took his hand. "Stop making such a fuss." Janet kissed the side of his chin. "You're acting like a jealous old fogey. If Phil's sister can wear it, there's no reason why I shouldn't."

"You're not his sister." Kim pulled her into his arms and made the kiss real. "So I'm an old fogey?"

"I take it back."

He spanked her playfully and they started down the walk. There was a crackling driftwood fire on the beach, its salt-tanged smoke drifting up the sand toward them as she and Kim moved into the glowing red warmth that held the crowd close to it. Janet recognized some of the men as regular customers at the *Times Herald* restaurant. They were drinking and laughing while they toasted hot dogs over the flames and made a noisy moonlight picnic. She was surprised to see Andy Johnson among them after the way he had talked against the paper's new management when he quit as city editor to become a bureau chief for Amalgamated Press.

SHE MOVED closer to Kim as Phil got to his feet and came over. Glancing at herself, she wished the fire weren't quite so revealing.

"You all know Kim Lawrence," Phil said to the gang. "And this lovely young lady is Janet Allen. I won't bother making introductions all around." He patted Kim lightly on the back, still looking at Janet.

"Get yourselves something to drink and pull up a sand dune. Franks to eat and sandwiches if you want them."

"Kim, hello?" Francine hurried around the fire. "You're late." She had on a brief wisp of a black suit and she swayed a little as she stood smiling up at him, as if maybe she had taken one drink too many. But she was sober enough to give Janet a hard little look as she possessively slipped her hand beneath Kim's other arm. "Come on over here. I want you to meet somebody." Francine pulled him.

He winked to Janet and grinned as though he were asking, "What can I do? She is Phil's sister." Janet told him with her smile that she understood. She looked after them a moment as Francine took him away. Janet didn't want to be with Phil. She barely glanced at him. "Will you excuse me?" She went over and sat next to Andy Johnson.

"How's my dream girl?" Andy asked. "I sure miss those good blueplates you used to serve me, Janet." He was a short, stout gray-haired man who always made Janet think she would love to have him for a grandfather or an uncle. Homey and friendly and really nice. After Phil, it was good to know there were still men like Kim and Andy around. "I hear Kim's in line for my old job as city editor?"

"It hasn't gone through yet."

"I'll be sorry for him if he takes it."

"Sorry?" Janet turned. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, I know. It's big money for Kim and all that." Andy shook his head. "But he's too square to stand for much of Phil's way of doing things. It was different when the old man was still alive. The *Times Herald* was a newspaper then. Phil's loaded the staff with a lot of young punks like himself, most of them trying to work some petty racket with more crooked angles than a double pretzel."

She couldn't help laughing. "You, sir, are speaking of our host."

Andy swore. "Pardon me, Janet. But Phil does that to me. He asked me here tonight with a lot of puff about how it was my old gang and all. Figured he could give me a few drinks and I'd spill some gossip to help him fire the men he'd like to get out of the newsroom. Well, I'm taking his drinks. But I've got other reasons for being here. I'm on a little raiding party of my own to line up a couple of good newsmen for Amalgamated—"

Janet lost the rest of what Andy said as she looked across the fire at Kim. Her back stiffened and her fingers dug into the sand. She knew better than to be jealous, but the way Francine was sprawled over Kim was enough to bother any girl. Francine was lying with her head on his chest, laughing at him while she tickled his chin with a straw. Kim wasn't encouraging her, but he didn't seem to be objecting too hard.

A SHADOW fell between Janet and the fire. She glanced up and saw Phil. "Having fun?" He dropped himself beside her. "Kim looks as though he is. How about you, Andy? Another drink there, fellow?"

Andy gave an annoyed grunt and got to his feet. "Think I'll walk down the beach and stretch my legs."

"Relax, Janet." Phil put his hands on her shoulders to ease her against him. "You're sitting like a statue—the frozen maiden." His finger trailed down her back. "You don't feel frozen."

She pulled away. "Stop it, Phil."

"Oh, come now." He laughed. "You're not that touchy."

"Just keep your hands off me, that's all."

His face darkened an instant and his smile came back slowly. "Andy had a good idea. Why don't we take a little walk along the beach? You've never really seen the stars until you've been out there on the point. The whole bay lights up with

them like bubbles of champagne." He got up and held out his hand. "I'll show you."

"I guess you don't understand. Or maybe you don't want to." Janet looked right at him, looked through him. "I've tried to be polite. You're my host and Kim's boss." She stood slowly. "If you weren't, I'd slap you from here across town. In case you still don't get it, the answer is, 'No!'"

"I'm afraid you're the one who misunderstood. I only want to be a friend to you and Kim."

"Oh, sure. How dumb do you think I am?"

Phil returned her direct look. Quietly he said, "That depends on what you want." He turned. "Kim's coming over now. Do you think this would be a good time to tell him about London?"

"That's your business and his."

He lowered his voice. "He'll take it, Janet, and he'll go alone. The paper never uses married men for foreign service. Kim will do a good job, too. I've got nothing to lose. But you have. Don't be foolish. After all, who'll know the difference if—"

"Shut up!"

Kim heard her. He quickened his steps. "Janet?" Kim took her arm, glancing from her to Phil. His eyes came back to her again. "Darling, what's wrong?"

She looked down and shook her head. "Nothing, Kim. It was just-just a joke."

"Oh—" He was silent a moment, as though he were telling her he knew better than that, knew something had happened between her and Phil. She watched his frown tighten. "Francine wants to go swimming," he said. "I thought maybe we could all take a dip."

"I'm with you on that, fellow." Phil swung around and cupped his hands to shout above the babble. "Anybody else want to swim?" There was an answering chorus of groans.

Janet gave Kim her hand and squeezed

his fingers hard. "Let's race Phil and Francine." She pulled Kim with her, running from the others. When they were out of hearing, Janet whispered, "Kim, can we leave after we dry out? I'm terribly tired."

"There is something wrong." He stopped and turned her to face him. "Did Phil make a pass at you?"

She couldn't tell him. Whatever happened after tonight, Kim would still be working for Phil. She had no right to come between Kim and his future. And Phil might be bluffing; there could be a chance Kim would get the promotion to city editor. "It wasn't anything important," she said. "Nothing to make a fuss about."

Kim's fingers tightened on her shoulders. She felt his arms go rigid. "He would try that." The sudden anger she saw in his face frightened her. "I've heard he's that kind."

"Please, Kim. He is your boss."

Phil and Francine ran past them and plunged into the water, laughing and calling to them. Kim's eyes shut and the corded veins in his temples pulsed like whips lashing him. "If he comes near you again, I'll—"

"Take it easy, darling," she interrupted softly. "Let's swim."

THE WATER was still warm from the day's sun, but Janet couldn't enjoy it. She hardly knew she was swimming as she kept close to Kim, taking long strokes that matched his. They headed slowly for the float.

Francine climbed the ladder and went across the float to the diving board, splashed into the moon-white water directly in front of Kim. She came to the surface between him and Janet and paddled over to Kim. "I want to dive from your shoulders." Francine laughed. "Lift me, Kim." She put her arms around him and started to boost herself.

"Hey, wait a minute! Let me get my breath."

Janet swam to the float. Phil was reaching for the ladder, but he slid into the water again when he saw her. "I'll give you a hand."

"Thanks just the same."

"The other side is easier." His arm came around her abruptly and pulled Janet off balance. Before she could shift herself in the water, Phil gave a quick little kick that propelled them both into the shadows at the far side of the float. He pressed his hard mouth to hers, carrying them both under the water while he kissed her.

Janet twisted and kicked at him. She tried to pound him with her hands, but the water softened her blows. The breath went out of her. Her lungs felt as if they had collapsed beneath the awful pressure that spun a sudden red dizziness in her head and a ringing in her ears. She went down, down. . . .

Panic gripped her. With all her remaining strength, she tore free and fought to reach the surface. Her fingers touched the float. Her head broke from the water. Air swelled her lungs as she hung there, shaking off the fear that had seized her. With a lift that knifed pain in her arms and stabbed her chest, she dragged herself up over the side of the float and fell upon it.

She heard Kim call to her. Janet raised

her head, but it was a minute before she could force an answer, "Over here. On the float."

Francine's laughter came from the water and Janet heard Phil say, "It is cold." He hadn't followed her. He sounded worried now. "Guess I'll head for shore."

"How about you, Janet?" Kim asked, climbing the ladder. "Had enough? Janet!" He hurried to her, kneeled beside her. "What's wrong? Janet, are you okay?"

"I-I'm all right now." She sat up. "I went under and lost my breath."

"Darling." Kim held her and steadied her. "But Phil was with you, wasn't he? Didn't he see—" His voice died. Janet knew he realized what had happened.


"Kim!" She tried to catch his hand. "Kim! Don't do anything crazy!"

HE PLUNGED into the water, his head down, his arms blading through it as he raced after Phil. But there was another splash, an abrupt feminine scream. Francine!

Kim apparently had rammed into Francine with that wild dive. He was treading water, holding Francine, shaking her gently. "Did I hurt you?"

Francine didn't answer. She floated against Kim and clung to him. Her hands locked on his shoulders and she hung limply in his arms. Her eyes were shut and her head fell forward.

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Janet dropped into the water and swam to Kim. "Knocked out," he said. His anger seemed broken now, lost in his concern for Francine. He eased her around, keeping her head high. "I can get her in if you can make it alone, Janet. But maybe you'd better wait on the float."

"I'm okay. I'll help you."

"No. She's light enough in the water."

"I'll go ahead then and get some of the men."

"I didn't hit her so hard. Must be mostly shock. That and too many drinks, I guess." Kim swam on his side with one arm, holding Francine with the other. "Just get yourself in, Janet. That's all I'm worried about."

She reached the beach. "Andy!" she yelled. "Phil!" The whole crowd came running from the fire. "Francine almost drowned! Kim's bringing her in!"

The men went to help. Kim carried Francine from the water in his arms. "Take her legs," he told Andy.

But as Andy reached for her, Francine abruptly came to life. Kicking her feet, she threw back her head and the laughter bubbled from her as if it were the biggest joke in the world.

"It was such a wonderful gag, I couldn't help it." She hugged Kim and kissed him. She laughed again. "You're not mad, are you, my big strong hero?"

KIM TORE her hands from his shoulders and dumped her into the sand. He stood over her. "You and Phil! It runs in the family, doesn't it? Anything to have your fun and the hell with who gets hurt!" Kim grabbed Francine by the heels. Dragging her through the sand, bumping her down the beach while she screamed at him, he scooped her up again and flung her into the water.

"I don't blame you, Kim." Phil stepped in front of him. "Francine asked for that." He patted Kim's shoulder. "But don't lose your head. Take it easy."

Janet's breath caught as Kim swung at him. Phil grunted and staggered back. Kim leaped after him and slammed again, doubling him over. "That's for me." His right fist shot at Phil's jaw and straightened him, dropped him in a heap. "And this is for Janet."

He headed for the walk, Janet following him, taking quick little steps to keep up with him, her eyes filled and her face wet with tears. "I spoiled everything. Everything you wanted. Kim, I'm sorry-sorry for you that you ever met me. I made you lose your job, your future—"

"Janet—" Kim stopped. "Oh, darling, no." Gently, tenderly, he took her in his arms and kissed her. "All I ever wanted was you. I was the one who was wrong, asking for a marriage all tied up with pretty pink ribbons. We don't need that. As long as we have each other. I can do anything. I know that now. Phil couldn't give me a future, but you can, Janet."

"Hey, Kim! Kim Lawrence!" It was Andy, huffing as he came up the walk. "Wait a minute. I want to talk to you, son." Andy grinned and got his breath. "There are a lot of right guys in this town who would be willing to hand you a medal for what you did tonight. I haven't got any medals, but Amalgamated Press could really use a lad like you behind a typewriter." Andy winked to Janet. "Let's see. This is Friday. Three days to get a license and a week more for your honeymoon. How about starting to work for me a week from Monday, Kim?"

Janet laughed and hugged herself to Kim. "He hasn't asked me yet, Andy, but I think it can be arranged."

"You've got plenty of good moonlight to help you," she heard Andy say as Kim kissed her again. But if Andy said anything more, he was only talking to himself because what Kim was telling her with those kisses got all the listening Janet had. And all her heart could hear was, "I love you—"

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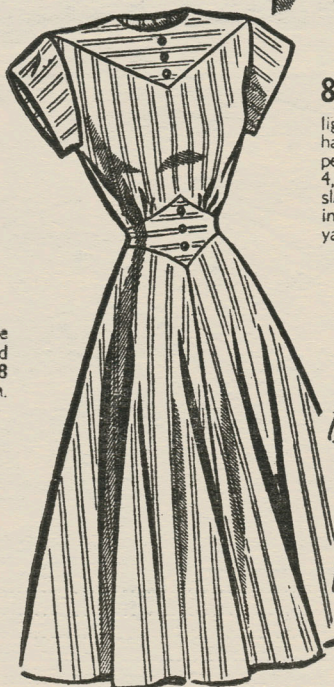
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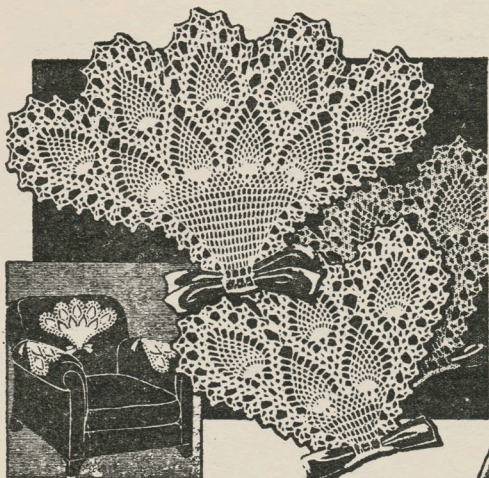
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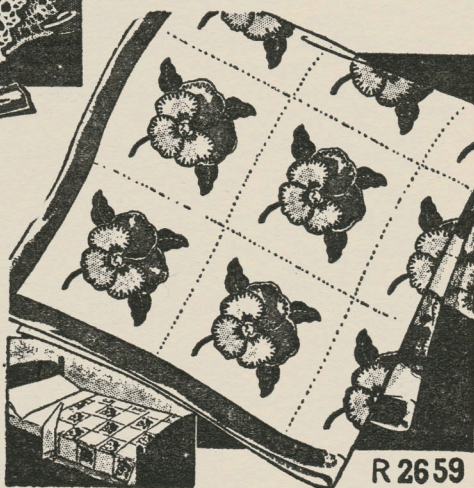
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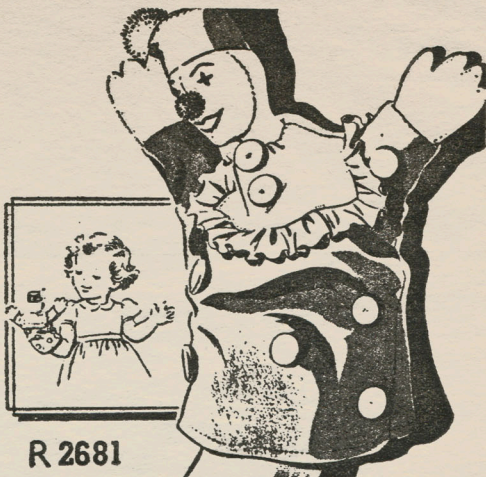


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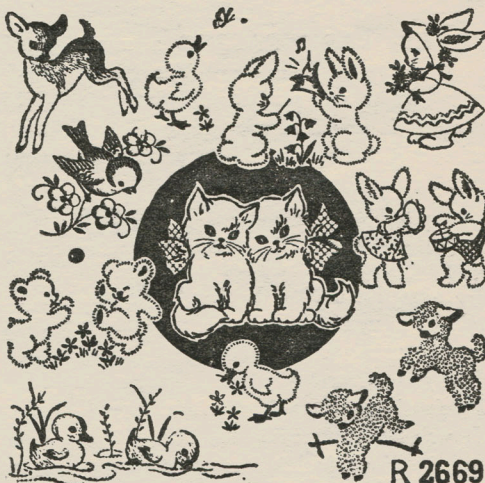
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Enchanted Interlude

By
ALICE
WARNER

Deb discovered that her glamorous job was a poor substitute for her lonely heart.

DEB WAS WEARING a smart white slack suit and her fifteen dollar red play shoes when she met him. It was a simple beach pick-up, but beach pick-ups were not frowned upon in a Florida resort hotel.

"That's quite a crab," the young man said with a grin, watching the fiddier scurrying past Deb.

"Moves like a New Yorker," she said wryly. "Fast, but doesn't seem to know why he's rushing."

The young man looked at her curiously. "Touch of bitterness in that statement."

It was her turn to look at him. Aside from the crook in his smile, the understanding in his blue-green eyes, his face told her nothing. She liked his leanness, the quiet strength, yet there was a wistfulness that seemed to cry out to her.

"Let's walk," he said, matter-of-factly starting up the beach.

If I don't follow, it won't really matter to him, she thought, and the thought frightened her. She wanted him to want her to follow. She was lonelier than she would admit. She had never gone on a vacation alone before, but this time she wanted to have a chance to get re-ac-

quainted with herself, to slow down and decide which course to take.

She took long strides to catch up with the young man. The cool salt air was refreshing to her face.

He said suddenly, "Your hair reminds me of the taffy pulls we had at home when I was a kid. You should let it grow down to your waist."

A warmth flowed through Deb. The tightness in her throat left for a minute. So different a compliment from anything Michael ever said, and this stranger seemed to ask nothing in return. She wondered if she should tell him she usually wore her hair high, sleek, every strand in place. Just like her life. Smooth, right—but all wrong for her.

"My name's Deb Thornton," she told him.

"I'll call you Taffy," he said. "Call me Bill. Bill Knight." He took her arm to help her over a jetty. "Why don't you gain some weight?"

"Work too hard." Or maybe it's because I'm worried about Michael and me.

"Work at what?"

"Advertising. I'm copy editor."

"I worked in the advertising depart-



"How long have you been lonely, Taffy?" he asked tenderly.

ment of our home town paper a while, a small town in Indiana. Now Dad and I have a law practice together. Are you tired?"

"A little. I'm not used to walking."

He led the way into the pavilion. They sat at a small green table and the man brought hamburgers and beer. Bill called the man Joe.

"This your wife?" Joe wanted to know.

"I haven't any wife," Bill told him curtly.

"Pardon me. I thought—"

"You thought wrong." Deb noticed the tightness in his jaw. "Let's take our food out on the beach."

He rented a blanket and they sank down on the sand.

"Tell me something about you," she said lightly. "After all, I am eating lunch with a strange man."

He grinned. "Is it really as bad as all that?" He began talking though, about his boyhood and the little town where he grew up. Deb watched the lights come into his eyes and she knew he was a trifle homesick. It filled her with a strange nostalgia she had been forcing into the back of her mind and heart for years now, ever since she had left Vermont just after college to go to New York.

SHE HAD always dreamed as a teenager of tackling the big city. She had listened to those friends who said, "You're too talented to bury yourself in this hick town." This little hamlet with its country store and its churches, its red schoolhouse, its fresh meadowland. Go to the big city. But she had been lonely at first, until the excitement caught on. Then she was curious and every day brought surprises. One of those days brought Michael. So many women were running up telephone bills over him that she couldn't help but be impressed.

Yet was he what she really wanted? She couldn't imagine him back in her

home town. He dressed so impeccably. He was such a stickler on etiquette. He loved night-clubs and the champagne set.

You'll never be going back home, so it doesn't matter whether he would fit in or not, she had told herself. Since her parents had died, she had no reason to return.

Yet when Bill talked about home she could picture his ivy-covered chapel, the tiny railroad station, his white rambling house, his parents.

Then he was telling her about his service days. He seemed hungry to talk. As he brought the conversation up to date he lost his enthusiasm. His jaw took on that stubborn set. Suddenly he lapsed into a silence that shut Deb out completely.

She felt she was no longer needed, so she stood up quickly. "I have to run along now. Thanks for the walk and the refreshment." She knew she was babbling, but she had to get away.

Bill glanced at her quizzically, but didn't try to stop her. "I'll stay here awhile, I think. Be seeing you," he said quietly.

She walked, kicking the sand savagely with her toes. She had come down here to get away, to think things out. She didn't know why this Bill person should upset her. It was obvious he was in trouble, too. There was a resignation about him that seemed to say, Nothing's any good. Why fight?

As she crossed the hotel lobby in rapid strides, the desk clerk beamed at her. "Was just about to send these flowers to your room."

In the quiet, four-wall emptiness of her own room she opened the box, knowing what she would find. Orchids and a card reading: "To my favorite career gal from her future husband."

Oh, Michael, she thought wretchedly, tossing the flowers in a chair and herself on the bed. They would have such a modern marriage. Two careers. Michael was a successful Broadway playwright.

A deluxe apartment. "No reason for you to stop working if you love your job," Michael had said. "I don't want you becoming a dull dreary housewife."

Dull, dreary housewife. Frilly aprons. Pots and pans to scrub. Babies drooling on their bibs. Marketing and cooking. Bridge games with the girls. Suburban life. Maybe Michael was right. Deb had worked hard to get where she was in the business world. She'd keep her financial security, independence, friends whose names read like *Who's Who*. Michael's playwriting was good but spasmodic, and she wouldn't be able to depend too much on his earnings.

SHE DIDN'T know how long she slept. The sky was tinted with long red streaks when she woke. Going to be a beautiful sunset, one of the hotel guests would announce, and everyone would stream onto the beach to watch. Then there'd be dinner alone. Then maybe bridge or bingo. One of the older men would probably suggest going to the Yacht Club for a drink or one of the young ones would want to drive someplace. Same routine for another week and then back to New York with a decision. What decision?

Bill, seated at a small table across the room, waved at her during dinner. Wearing a gray palm beach suit, a blue tie, he looked more suntanned than before. His crisp black hair was slicked down. He was reading a newspaper.

He's been eating alone quite a while, Deb knew. He's discovered it's easier to get through a meal with something to read. Disgustedly she reached for the best seller she'd carried for three days and turned to page twenty.

The hostess was scurrying about like an overwound top rounding up the guests for a swimming party. Deb flatly declined, knowing she was being anti-social. She started to her room, but couldn't

make herself open the door. She paused.

"Put on some old clothes," a voice behind her said.

Her heart turned over. "I haven't any," she told him with a laugh.

"You poor little girl," he said, but there wasn't any sarcasm in his tone. "I'll lend you something."

He disappeared into a room down the corridor and came back with a pair of faded blue slacks and a grayish white polo shirt. "I'd lend you some shoes, but I imagine they'd be too large."

Making a face at him she went in to change. A bandanna around her head, a brighter shade of lipstick. Your eyes look exceptionally starry, she told the reflection in the mirror. Take it easy or you'll be in the midst of a vacation flirtation that will lead nowhere.

Oh no, not with Bill. He's obviously insulated against women.

It was a warm still night with a million stars and a full moon. Deb felt that Bill was more aware of her tonight although there was an impersonal aloofness about him. They tramped in silence until he said, "Why don't you take off that bandanna and let your hair blow? You look so tied up."

Deb laughed. "Tied up in knots inside."

His mouth was a stubborn line as he gently released the bandanna and ran his strong fingers through her hair. "Worried about something?" he asked. Swiftly he pulled her to him, holding her so tightly her breath was choked back. The rough tweed of his coat hurt the side of her face, but she welcomed the pain. She wanted him to hurt her because that pain would stop. But it's not so. When you were so confused, you have a constant ache inside.

He pushed her away roughly. "How long have you been lonely, Taffy?"

There was a new gentleness in his voice.

"Since I left home, I guess, Bill. I've

put all my energy into work, but that's only a poor substitute for contentment." She stopped suddenly, realizing she was pouring out her story to someone she hardly knew. Or maybe she had really known him forever.

I'm being selfish, she thought. Bill needs help, too. She smiled up at him. "What's your trouble," she said softly.

He grinned, but she could feel him withdrawing, leaving her. "I thought I'd never be lonely again. Had beautiful plans, but the little lady changed her mind."

"You still love her? Oh, I know, Bill. It doesn't let you go."

"I'll forget her. Don't think I won't."

But where will I be, darling, when you do?

"We'd better go back to the hotel," she said flatly.

SHE PACED the room most of the night. She tried to read, to write letters but gave up. Bill's arms were around her again, his voice low and intimate.

We're both lost, she thought mournfully. Yet he's running away from me and I want to run to him.

The next morning she stayed in her room until noon. Instead of eating at the hotel she rode into town, took in a movie, shopped. When she arrived at the beach, Bill was driving off in a blue convertible. He waved casually and Deb's eyes stung with unshed tears. She didn't see him in the hotel the rest of the day.

On the following morning she put on her white swim suit and went out on the beach. Bill strolled over and sat beside her in a beach chair. His cool, impersonal conversation ripped Deb to pieces inside.

Finally he said, "I thought if I could hire a boat tomorrow I'd go fishing. It might do you good to get away from the hotel a while."

So he had been thinking of her. "I'd

love it," she started, then she caught her breath. A voice had distinctly called her name.

"Here you are, darling," the voice continued. She stared numbly at the tall heavy-set man strolling across the beach. "Michael," she said weakly. For a moment she knew she must be dreaming; then she realized this was too real.

"Michael, I'd like you to meet Bill Knight. Bill, Michael Martin."

Michael's smile was tolerant, almost smug. "Had to come to chase the wolves, Deb."

Bill was on his feet. "See you around," he told Deb flatly. To Michael, "Glad to have met you."

Bill! Deb's heart cried, but he was moving along the beach in slow even strides. She turned to Michael. "I came down here to get away a while. You shouldn't have followed me."

His blue eyes studied her face. "So you've fallen in love, my girl. Is he from Pottsville or Jenkins Junction and will you be married in the little ivy covered chapel in the valley?"

"Stop it!"

"Deb, you're kidding. He looks like a nice clean-cut chap but he'd bore you."

"It just so happens he doesn't bore me," she fumed. Then she sighed wearily. Why was she arguing so furiously when it was obvious she would never see Bill after she left Florida? "Forgive me, Michael. Tell me about your trip."

"I flew down. Have four days. I've rented a car and we can see the sights, starting right now."

FOR THE next few days Deb was on the go continually. Dog races, deep sea fishing, cocktails, dancing, a show. Michael was entertaining, attentive, amusing. They didn't mention Bill.

The third night Michael was there he went to visit friends in Tampa and Deb went to a movie alone. She returned to

the hotel about ten and walked out on the beach. Bill was sitting in a beach chair. Her first impulse was to run, but the desire to talk to him was stronger.

"Where's Michael?" he asked.

"Away."

He glanced at her curiously.

"You want to be left alone, Bill?"

"Damn it!" he muttered, pulling her onto the bench. His lips were demanding, unrelenting, his fingers grasping her arm, and a wild exultant warmth surged through her.

"Don't get any crazy ideas," he said huskily as he let her go. "You needed that and I happened to be around."

Deb slapped him hard across the cheek. "You're brutal, hard, hateful. Just because someone hurt you—"

She tore across the lawn and into the hotel, furious at herself for letting Bill's kiss affect her the least bit. He was becoming like a fever with her. She couldn't keep away from him. It was time her heart had some disciplining.

When Michael came in, she was waiting in the lobby. She had put on a bright coral dress and pinned a white flower in her hair. There was a dangerous calm about her. "Kiss me, Michael," she said lightly.

His eyebrow shot up speculatively. "With pleasure," he told her warmly, taking her into his arms. No shooting stars or glimpse into Paradise but the kiss was expert, sure, calculating.

"I'm leaving on the plane with you tomorrow," Deb told him quickly. "I have my reservation."

"Now you're talking sense," he said.

She packed wildly, trying to ignore the ache in her throat, the hollowness in her chest. Her mind argued frantically with her heart, and won. Back to New York, to the glitter and glamour, the sameness, the superficiality.

She was sitting in the lobby waiting to go to the airport with Michael when

she saw a tall figure stalking across the lawn and up the steps. Before she could get away Bill sank down on the sofa beside her. His tan shirt was open at the throat, his hair rumpled by the wind. Deb longed to lean over and put her head on his shoulder. Then she remembered the night before and looked away.

"Going to marry this Michael person?" he asked calmly, oblivious to the chill.

What could she say? No, because I'm falling in love with you—or, yes, because I'm tired of living alone.

But Bill seemed absorbed in thought. "He seems to be rich, attractive, witty. He knows his way around. I've been watching him. You two should make a good pair."

"Delightful," she said dryly.

He looked at her then, his eyes shifting from her eyes to her lips and back again. He took her hand gently between his and kissed her palm. "Deb, I wish I'd met you before I lost the faith a man should have when he asked a woman to share his life with him. I'm too confused, too bitter—"

"Bill," her voice was a sob. "I could help—"

She watched the light go out of his eyes, his jaw tighten. "It's something no one can help me with, Taffy. Marry Michael," he said tersely. "He can give you so much more than I could."

She stood up quickly, so he wouldn't see the tears. "I have to go now."

HE DIDN'T follow her. She wanted to lie down on the cool grass and cry, but instead she let Michael help her into the station wagon. She sat there in her smart blue gabardine suit and her chic white flower hat and let herself be driven to the airport. She knew she would never marry Michael though. She had come down to make a decision, and she had made it.

(Please turn to page 97)

Character Inklings

By SCOTT CARTER

How well do you know yourself? Few things are more fascinating than delving into the secrets of human nature. Handwriting indicates our innermost traits and qualities of character and personality. An analysis of your pen tracks will reveal many interesting facts about the real you.

DO YOUR emotions rule over you? Are you very nice nearly all the time, except for about once a week when your self-control slips a cog and then you are horrid?

Are you continually grouchy, pessimistic, or as perverse as a camel that can be neither stopped when it is going nor moved when it is resting, and keep all your reactions tightly bottled within yourself? On the other hand, are you so "highly strung" that you are likely to be somewhat hysterical over anything and everything that crosses your path, if and when you are displeased?

Of course no one would be normal if emotions were always strictly under lock and key. Being human, we are made to cry, to laugh, to feel and show our emotions when we are pleased and when disappointed, and it is natural to air our likes and dislikes. It is very important, however, that we express our emotions in ways that are acceptable socially. In other words, you will be doing yourself a favor by keeping a sane emotional balance.

What your chances are in this respect, and how emotional you are shows in your own handwriting.

You may argue that it is easy enough to "see" things in handwriting and that anyone can make a good guess. For example,

if the handwriting looks careless, the writer is a careless person. If the writing runs up hill, it shows a cheerful outlook. If it slants down hill, the writer is in a discouraged frame of mind.

These are applicable and they are also logical. Deductions of any kind and on any subject must be logical in order to assure accuracy and credence. The fascinating fact about handwriting is that it reveals many other traits in your make-up such as your real temperament, disposition, if you are a likeable, interesting individual, demonstrative or hard to approach and, last but hardly least, whether your emotions boss you around or if you are a balanced person. You can scoff and disbelieve all you like, but the proof is right there in your own handwriting.

Speaking of emotions, we all know there are helpful emotions like cheerfulness, happiness, optimism, sympathy and affection as against emotions that tear down rather than build up; emotions like fear, hatred, and anger are anything but helpful in anyone's daily routine.

It is by maintaining a fair balance between your emotions and impulses and your mind that you can be happier. You can achieve a great deal of personal satisfaction if you "think" with your brain rather than with your emotions. It is un-

fortunate that many of us are in the habit of doing the latter, but we can help ourselves if we try.

Emotional and mental confusion and lack of balance can easily be seen in the three different samples of handwriting in the first illustration marked Sample A. The word "confusion", by the way, is not meant to imply that there may be something radically wrong with your mind. Far from it. When used in conjunction with handwriting analysis it simply means that anyone whose handwriting indicates a wavering emotional balance is dominated more by his emotions than by logical and clear thinking.

Your own handwriting need not be an exact copy of any of these samples in order for you to determine whether or not you are ruled by your emotions. As a matter of fact, no two handwritings are exactly alike. But whatever the style, slant or size of your handwriting, if you lack emotional balance, the same signs will apply.

Anyone whose handwriting slants forward to the right is more likely to show emotional reactions than those whose handwriting is upright or backhand. This does not mean that backhand or upright writing indicates a lack of feeling. We all know that where human nature is con-

*Remember just at the back of about honey
I got love to pick fruit, dear. so first*
(1)
Will you please analyze
this handwriting, and give me
this. The study of handwriting
(2)
has always intrigued me and I
(3)
Sample A.

Persistent emotional instability shows clearly in the first two lines of handwriting, (1). Unfortunately, the saying "all heart and no brain" doesn't apply here because the writing is cramped, letters run into each other, and the congested appearance of the writing in general shows more desire for getting and keeping rather than to be generous. You can check for yourself the fact that some "emotional" people you know are generous and ready to lend a helping hand where they can, but if you look at their handwriting it will not be cramped.

cerned, we are all brothers and sisters under the skin. Some people, however, show their emotions more easily than others.

The first two lines show a noticeable forward slant. Combined with uneven letter formations and the haphazard appearance of the writing in general, all these pointers indicate a person who is likely to talk and act as he or she feels.

The short t bars that slant downward reveal the tendency to be easily irritated, particularly over trivial matters. These same t bars also reveal a make-up that

lacks even moderately-strong will power, and when there is varied pen pressure the writer is moody and cannot be depended upon because he is changeable, impulsive, and his emotions are always close to the surface.

When angry, disappointed or hurt, he may or may not try to "pay back" those who he thinks have taken advantage of him. More likely than not, he will probably limit himself to a few choice opinions and let it go at that.

If your handwriting contains all the above-mentioned signs, then no one need tell you that your feelings are too easily hurt, that you have a hard time making up your own mind, that your inclination is to be stubborn rather than flexible and open to reasoning, and that you are not as sure of yourself as you wish you were.

The second two lines (2) shows even more indecision. The first two lines (1) show a person whose actions and reactions run along a more or less constant pattern. The second two lines show a person whose pattern of behavior and emotionality changes noticeably at different times.

Whenever there are several different slants in one handwriting, the writer will act like one person one day, and almost like a totally different person at another time. He may be emotional and demonstrative, then assume a cool, distant and even unfriendly attitude that keeps you puzzled.

The spacing between lines and words in this sample (2) shows that the writer is not ungenerous, but the generous impulses depend on emotional appeal and response. When he is in an emotional mood, he wants to do nice things for other people. At other times, he may feel just the reverse.

The uneven size of letters, plus the varied slant and pen pressure that is not as regular as it could be also indicates that the writer is his own worst enemy where personal happiness and peace of mind are

concerned. It's no picnic to be torn this way and that by your emotions, and it detracts from the attractiveness of your personality. You may get by if you are "temperamental", but eventually your friends realize that they don't know what to expect of you. Your temperament really depends on your emotional attitude. Those who possess emotional balance have an even temperament, a sister-trait to a good disposition.

The third two lines of handwriting (3) show another type of emotional make-up. At first glance all the letters appear to be jumbled. Although indistinct to some degree, the strokes are not unrefined, and the pen pressure is fairly light and even. The loops in this handwriting are on the high side, and the lower loops of letters like y, g and f are long and show energy. But nearly all the energy evident runs toward "nerves".

This writer, a woman, is often plagued by indecision. Someone seems to be constantly hurting her feelings. Being something of a dreamer—light pen pressure, flying t bars and rather wide spacing between lines—she probably has the idea that it is everybody's fault except her own.

Since some determination is shown by the length of the t bars, she could train herself to become a better-balanced person emotionally and, in this way, be much more at ease not only with herself but with others.

Notice the tent-shaped i dots. They bring out a rather interesting side of the writer's make-up. Anyone who makes these i dots is likely to be critical, due mostly to a desire to have everyone do things to the best of his ability. Tent-shape i dot makers are also inclined to judge and weigh the value of things, and sometimes they are hard to please.

Three other types of emotional make-up are illustrated by Sample B. The first two lines (4) consist of buoyant letter

Living at a sustained pitch
 tension is injurious to both p⁽⁴⁾
 a small town. Not much
 live a very ordinary life⁽⁵⁾
 I know I yet have to
 learn about this subject⁽⁶⁾

Sample B.

formations, t bars made with a rapid stroke of the pen, firm pen pressure all through the writing and a definite forward slant.

All these signs reveal an emotional nature, but it is a nature that does not rule the writer through impulse. Handwriting containing the signs mentioned reflect a sympathetic, good-hearted individual. The writer may be tempted to follow the dictates of his heart, but common sense and rather good determination stand guard. These traits are evident in the steadiness and even size of the writing, clear letter formations, good t bars, and carefully closed a's and o's.

This writer, however, is not invulnerable. Appeal to his sympathy with sincerity and for a just cause, and he will do all in his power to help, but without being foolishly sentimental. He likes the straight-from-the-shoulder approach and lives accordingly.

The second two lines (5) show an emotionally well balanced person, although this handwriting indicates a generous, good-natured and warm-hearted nature. Note the rounded letter formations, forward slant, clear writing and firm pen pressure. It is not hard to as-

sume from these traits that the writer does a good deal of clear thinking and is not in favor of impulsive or uncontrolled actions.

Rounded or partly rounded handwriting reflects tactfulness. People who know how to be tactful in their contacts with others know also that they can get what they go after much more easily by not allowing their emotions to rule them. They use good, plain common sense; they think with their brains rather than with their emotions.

Neat, clear handwriting like this, with an even base line, shows a person who does not jump to conclusions, makes wild guesses or takes chances, at least not unless he or she has taken the time to think things over. Again, a balanced point of view.

The remaining three lines (6) reveal much emotion and an ardent nature. Observe the somewhat larger than medium size of the writing, pen pressure on the heavy side, determined and persistent t bars, and a general air of energy.

Because the handwriting is backhand, this writer is rather reserved at all times. On the surface, people who write this way adopt an attitude of sociability and friend-

(Please turn to page 97)

IF YOUR BOY FRIEND WRITES
LIKE PETER LAWFORD:

There is much dramatic ability in his make-up, mental, emotional and physical energy, determination to follow through, and will power to succeed in his undertakings whatever his line of work or profession. He strives for success at all times. And he usually attains whatever he sets his mind to go after.

He is extraordinarily warm-hearted, generous and demonstrative, always doing something nice for those he likes. Sensitive to people and surroundings, he likes to choose his friends and associates from among those with whom he has much in common, but he is agreeable, sociable and friendly with anyone. He instinctively knows what he wants, and his opinions and observations are direct and to the

point, and accurate. Being intuitive, he makes his decisions with speed. A little more caution in this respect might sometimes save him a headache. He often has to watch himself against being carried away by his enthusiasm. Due to the fact that he enjoys being active, he has no great love for too much detail. He possesses a vivid, interesting personality that is not easily forgotten, likes to plan ahead, and shows willingness and desire for new undertakings. He has courage, takes pride in his abilities and achievements, but is often quickly bored by anything that does not stimulate his imagination and continued interest. Despite his emotionalities, he has the mental and temperamental stamina to carry the strain of responsibilities, however serious or burdensome they may be.

*I wish I had more
to write something.*
Peter Lawford

HAVE YOUR HANDWRITING ANALYZED

Send a sample of your handwriting with this coupon, and ten cents (15c in Canada), and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope to—

Scott Carter, Love Short Stories, 205 East 42nd St.,
New York, 17, N. Y.

Name

Address

Street

City

State

(Continued from page 67)

seem to meet the people I'd like to meet. Like all sports and traveling. Would like to hear from women in the country.

Slim

L-3902 ALREADY HAS FRIENDS

This fifteen year old girl with black hair and brown eyes likes photography, music, baseball. I'd like to hear from fellows sixteen to eighteen; also girls my age.

Mickey

L-3903 LONELY VET

Lonely veteran, thirty-four, five feet nine, brown hair and gray-green eyes, would like to hear from ladies, please. I am a kind, considerate person with a smile for all.

Ben

L-3904 GEORGIA WIDOW

I am a war widow, twenty-three years old with brown hair and eyes, five feet five. Would like to hear from both men and women. My hobby is writing; also dancing, swimming and sports.

Shiral

L-3905 LIKES ACROBATICS

Here is a thirteen and a half year old girl with light brown hair and brown eyes who is in the eighth grade. Like record hops, movies, ballet and acrobatics. Would love to hear from some pen pals.

Lee

L-3906 SOUTH AFRICAN BLONDE

This young South African girl wants many pen pals. Am five feet two and a half, have green eyes and blonde hair. Like dancing, dressmaking and movies. I am a typist. Hope to hear from pals soon.

Pixie

(5c postage)

L-3907 STAMP COLLECTOR

I am a sixteen year old Minnesota boy and would like to meet some of you pals from other states. Like all sports except baseball. Do not like Sinatra but do like Crosby. Am six feet, with brown hair and blue eyes. My hobby is stamp collecting.

Moose

L-3908 NEWSPAPER GAL

Here is a girl twenty-one years old who would like to find some pals to write

to. I have deep brown hair and eyes, am just a little shrimp. Have a newspaper column, love to write, sing and draw. I like hearing from other folks and all about them.

Margie

L-3909 COLLECTS RECORDS

I am a twenty-seven year old girl who likes good books, music and all kinds of outdoor sports. Collect phonograph records and also pictures. Am very lonesome and would enjoy hearing from pals all over the country. Will answer all promptly.

Esther

L-3910 WANTS NEW YORK PALS

This sixteen year old boy would like New York pen pals, especially girls, my own age. I have brown eyes and hair and am five feet ten inches. Like photography, movies, music and dancing. Will answer all letters.

Davey

L-3911 CAPE BRETON GIRL

A lonely Cape Breton girl who loves writing wants to hear from pen pals around twenty-one years old. Am five feet four, have blue eyes and brown hair. Like all sports, and movies are my favorite pastime. How about some letters?

Blue Eyes
(5c postage)

L-3912 WOODSMAN

I am a young man nineteen years of age with brown hair and green eyes. Like hunting and camping and spend half my time in the woods. Also like dancing but would like to hear from girls who like hunting and camping. So come on, pals, let's hear from you.

Jack

L-3913 SECRETARY

Here is a nineteen year old secretary with blonde hair, blue eyes, about five feet six inches tall. Like sports, also love music and dancing, listening to radio and records. Moved recently and find it hard to meet people of my age. I would like to hear from boys.

Wandaful

L-3914 WOOD CARVER

A sixteen year old boy, five feet five inches tall, with brown eyes and hair, likes books and the comics, baseball, hockey and skating. Am a good skier, also play all

kinds of instruments. My hobbies are wood-carving and drawing. How about some letters Pals?

Shorty

L-3915 HAS INTERESTING WORK

Here is a thirty year old widow in South Africa, with two children. Am lonesome at times. Am five feet four, have hazel eyes and light brown hair. Love reading, sewing, walking and dancing. Am a matron in a hostel full of children. It's interesting.

Helen
(5c postage)

L-3916 IRISH

I am a nineteen year old girl with reddish brown hair and blue eyes. I work in a film plant. My pastimes are dancing and horseback riding. I am five feet six inches. Would like to hear from people all over the world.

Jerry

L-3917 WANTS NEW FRIENDS

Here is an ex-WAC, twenty-four years old, with dark brown hair and eyes, five feet three inches tall. Like reading, music and movies. Would like to hear from anyone between twenty-five and thirty-five. My friends call me

Peggy

L-3918 MICHIGAN LAD

A few lines to tell you that I am a young man of twenty-two, five feet ten, with brown hair and blue eyes. Am interested in all sports, games (especially golf and basketball) and anything interesting from most anyone in the ages up to twenty-five.

Bill

L-3919 LIKES SURPRISES

This nineteen year old girl has long brown hair, blue eyes and is five feet three. Like anything exciting such as dancing, outdoor sports, music and reading. Am a secretary. My hobby is writing to people and exchanging snapshots. I like surprises.

Wanda

L-3920 CHEERLEADER

This sixteen year old Miss, five feet two, with blonde hair and baby-blue eyes is a high school sophomore, also a cheerleader. Would like pen pals from all over. Love dancing, skating and don't like Sinatra. Bing is my favorite.

Dizzy

L-3921 BICYCLIST

I am a nineteen year old girl with brown hair and blue eyes, five feet two

inches tall. My pastime is bicycle riding when it's nice weather. Like dancing and a good movie now and then. So pen pals, please write.

Pauline

L-3922 COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN

Here is a twenty year old boy, five feet eleven inches tall with dark brown eyes and black hair. My work is "commercial fishing" in the summer time. Would like to hear from anyone, anyplace. Have no special hobby.

Frosty

L-3923 CANADIAN MISS

Am a waitress and find lots of time to answer letters. Am twenty-nine, five feet six, with brown hair and eyes. I like horseback riding, swimming, movies and good music. We don't have very much English speaking here, so if I can have some pen pals, it will give me some practice.

Margie.

L-3924 BOATS, BOATS, BOATS

This ex-GI has been on the water so much he used to think he was in the Navy. Now he works for a railroad. My pastimes are hunting, fishing, boating—speed boating. I dance and swim, but love to race speed boats.

Van

L-3925 LONESOME AND BLUE

I am a widow of thirty-nine years and would very much like pen pals, both men and women around my age. Am five feet two with dark hair and eyes. Love the movies and good books. I work every day from three to eleven, but am very lonesome and blue, so won't you write?

Tiny

L-3926 DIVORCEE

Am twenty-nine, five feet three with blue eyes and dark blonde hair. Like all kinds of sports and enjoy writing letters. Have been divorced and have two children, but get lonesome for friends. Would like to hear from pals my own age.

Fran

L-3927 TALL BOY

Here is a sixteen year old boy who is six feet one inch tall. I have plenty of time to write and will answer any letters I receive. My favorite sports are fishing, swimming, football and baseball.

J. B.

PEN PALS

L-3928 MIXES EASILY

I am a girl of sixteen, with dark blonde hair and blue eyes, about five feet three and a half inches tall. Love to get to know people and mix with them easily. Love to dance and would like to exchange pictures. Would like to hear from boys my age and over.

Lu

L-3929 OLDER PALS WANTED

Here is a widow, fifty years old who is very lonely. I am intelligent, well read, and would like to hear from gentlemen who might have something in common with me. I do not drink or smoke. Like good music.

Florence

L-3930 LIKES FARMING

This sixteen year old English girl, brunette, with brown eyes likes all outdoor sports, dancing and am interested in farming. Like collecting photographs of film stars. I would very much like to have some pen pals to write to, preferably boys over sixteen.

Marjorie
(5c postage)

L-3931 WIDOWER

A fifty-seven year old widower with dark brown hair and eyes, five feet four inches tall, works in a talc mill. Since my wife died two years ago I get awfully lonesome and would like some Pals to write to. I like hunting, fishing and swimming and fun.

Joseph Brone

L-3932 HOSPITAL WORKER

This nineteen year old girl with black hair and blue eyes, five feet one and a half inches tall. Recently started working in a hospital and find it lonesome when not on duty. Don't know anyone around here and would sure like pen pals my age. Like dancing, skating, reading and listening to the radio.

Tony

L-3933 NICE LOOKING

I am a young girl with brown hair and eyes and am considered nice looking. Have friends, but enjoy writing letters. Get lonesome sometimes, and thought of all those nice pen pals and hoped some of them would drop me a line. I wouldn't be lonesome anymore.

Bubbles
Susie

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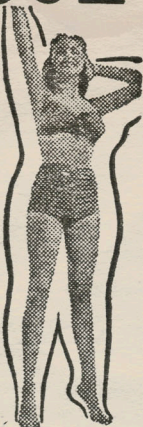
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LOVE SHORT STORIES

L-3934 ANIMAL LOVER

Here is a twenty-six year old man, five feet nine inches tall with black hair and brown eyes. I like all sports and animals. I have a very good job that I like a lot. The only nickname I can think of is what they call me at home.

Bad Penny

L-3935 BLONDE

A tall blonde with greenish blue eyes five feet seven, twenty years old, says she loves all kinds of sports, especially skating. I work in a film plant. I hope to hear from fellows and girls from all over the world.

Sherry

L-3936 LONESOME GIRL

I am a twenty-six year old girl, five feet six with dark brown hair and eyes. I enjoy all outdoor sports and music. My favorite pastime is dancing. Work in a plastic factory and would really love to hear from anyone who cares to correspond with a lonesome girl.

Helen Lou

L-3937 DRUM MAJORETTE

Here is a twelve year old girl with long brown hair and large blue eyes who is a drum majorette, cheerleader and a coronet player in the high school band. Love playing basketball, indoor ball, dancing and good shows. Want to hear from girls and boys my age and older from all over the world.

P. W.

L-3938 LOST MOTHER

This thirty-five year old woman's mother died recently and she is now living by herself and is very lonesome. Am unmarried, work and like to receive and answer letters. Like movies, radio, books, cooking, sewing. Have lots of time to write long, interesting letters.

Gertrude

L-3939 FILIPINO WANTS PALS

To hear from friends of other country is always welcome and I will answer promptly and trade photographs. Am five feet six inches tall, twenty years old with dark brown hair and eyes. Am high school senior, like music, sports, hiking, dancing and reading.

Pianing

CHARACTER INKLINGS

(Continued from page 91)

liness. They talk well, they don't pretend to look elsewhere when they see you coming, neither are they unresponsive if you take the first steps.

Handwriting that closely resembles this sample indicates an emotional nature which the writer can control almost at will. Inwardly, he may be boiling over, or feeling dejected and unhappy, but you would never know it. This naturally makes the writer lead a somewhat turbulent life at times, when the sailing is anything but smooth and satisfactory.

People of this type are emotional introverts. Their emotional responsiveness is quick but controlled. Although not as well-balanced emotionally as the writer of the two lines marked (5), they are better off than those whose handwriting resembles the types shown in illustration Sample A.

With the exception of a lucky few, nearly everyone gets involved in emotional tangles. That is human nature. But if your emotions are always getting out of hand, it is time to cultivate traits that will make yours a better balanced personality, and your handwriting can help you get the real lowdown.

ENCHANTED INTERLUDE

(Continued from page 87)

The plane was late. Deb didn't hear her name called until Mike tapped her on the shoulder. "You're wanted at the reservation desk," he told her.

The clerk pointed calmly toward the phone. Deb's fingers could hardly hold it after a deep voice said, "I realized when you drove off that I couldn't let you go that easily. Forgive me for wallowing in self-pity."

"Bill—"

"Don't say anything, darling. Just forgive me for hurting you. I think if you hadn't been so strong, so seemingly casual,



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I wouldn't have thought half as much of you."

"I'm not strong now. I'm getting ready to cry."

"Well, hold it. I'm leaving the hotel now. I'll bring an extra handkerchief. And, Deb, don't expect too much from me at first. I'll have to get used to believing in someone again."

"There's plenty of time, darling," she said breathlessly, knowing she was going to start living again as soon as she saw him.

SENATOR'S DAUGHTER

(Continued from page 23)

need with a reporter in your family?"

Senator Hamill laughed. "Penelope is looking at you as if she needed you, son. And I might remind you that the White House will need a press secretary."

Seth walked over to sit on the arm of Penny's chair and put an arm about her shoulders. She ignored him. Politics were no longer a riddle to her. She demanded to know what they said.

"What do you mean that Brandt's nomination is assured?" she asked. "If R. S. fights it—"

"R. S. won't." Seth grinned. "He's too busy explaining away and chastising a big-mouth son. He's ready to take the medicine that the Senator orders."

His arm tightened around Penny.

Homer coughed. "Senator," he said, "I have some agenda in my room. Perhaps—"

"Wonderful agenda," murmured Seth as the door closed upon them. Then, "Wonderful you, my wonderful you—"

"Wonderful convention," said Penny firmly. She lifted a face that questioned and invited. "Don't you love conventions, darling?"

Seth kissed her and his promised that every convention would be another honeymoon.

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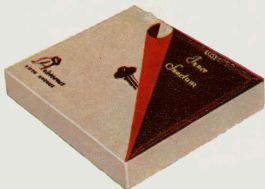
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