

SEPTEMBER

Spicy

STORIES

25
CENTS



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Stories By:

JOYCE CARROLL

KEN COOPER

GROVER GEORGE

BARNABY IVES

THAT WAS GREAT, DEAR!
LET'S MAKE THE NEXT
NUMBER "THE WEDDING
MARCH"

HOW A QUICK, EASY WAY TO LEARN MUSIC



changed my name from "Miss" to "Mrs."

LESS than a year ago I was friendless, lonely, unhappy. Then came the amazing event that changed my whole life.

Here's how it happened!

One evening I was sitting in my lonely room gazing from the window. From across the street came the sound of jazz and happy laughter. I could see couples dancing—others talking—all having a good time.

Everything seemed to center around the girl at the piano—Mary Nelson. How I envied her! She had friends, popularity, happiness—all the things I longed for—but didn't have.

The next afternoon I dropped over to see Mary—told her how lonely and depressed I felt. To cheer me up Mary sat down at the piano and played waltzes, jazz bits, sonatas. When she had finished, I sighed enviously.

"Thanks, Mary, it was wonderful. What wouldn't I give to play like that! But it's too late now! I should have had a

teacher when I was in school—like you!"

Mary smiled and said: "Ann, I never had a teacher in my life, in fact, not so long ago I couldn't play a note."

"Impossible," I exclaimed. "How did you do it?"

Then she told me about a wonderful new short-cut method of learning music that had been perfected by the U. S. School of Music. You learn real music from the start. When I left Mary it was with new hope. If she could learn to play this way, so could I. That very night I wrote for the Free Book and Demonstration Lesson.

I never dreamed that learning to play the piano could be so simple—even easier than Mary had pictured it. And as the lessons continued, they seemed to get easier. Although I never had any "talent" I was playing my favorites—almost before I knew it.

Then came the big night at Margaret Jones' party. What a moment that was when our hostess, apparently troubled, exclaimed: "Isn't it a shame that Mary Nelson can't be here to play the piano."

I spoke up. "I'll try to fill Mary's place—if you're not too critical."

Everyone seemed surprised. "Why, I didn't know she played!" someone behind whispered.

As I struck the first rippling chords of Naxos' lovely "Narcissus," a hush fell over the room. I could hardly believe it, but—I was holding the party spell-bound.

When I finished you should have heard them applaud! Everyone insisted I play more! Only too glad, I played piece after piece. Before the evening was over, I had been invited to three more parties. And it wasn't long until I met Tom who shortly afterward asked me to become his wife.

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Piano Accordion	
Italian and German	
Accordion	
Voice and Speech Culture	
Harmony and Composition	
Drums and Traps	
Banjo (Plectrum, 5-String or Tenor)	

Spicy

STORIES

Chuck full o' fun

SEPTEMBER

1936

or

VOLUME VI

NUMBER NINE

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A Poem by Felix O'Malley

SPICY STORIES IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE
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the return of unsolicited manuscripts.*

Between You and Me!

NOTICE:—No letter will be published unless the writer gives permission to print his or her full name and address.—The Editor.

Dear Editor:

Off and on in the last year or so I have been able to get hold of your publications. They are the goods all right and absolutely what the doctor ordered.

I have traveled quite a bit and have collected tons of really interesting experiences which I am anxious to pass on to any readers.

I suppose I must give some description of myself. Well, here goes. I am an Englishman of average height with (I am told) a lovable mouth and good chin. Eyes and nose not so good. Wavy brown hair going slightly grey over well-set ears. I am terrifically virile and have a keen sense of appreciation. Solid in build and as a doctor friend once told me—vulgarly healthy. One day I may visit your shores and then I hope the pen friends will help me to further add to my repertoire of experiences. Won't some of you folks write a letter? I promise one better every time that will tickle your fancy or something, and won't you dear Editor give me a really good American break by publishing this letter?

In anticipation, I am,

Yours faithfully,

Dennis Lyon

Port-Trust-Docks, Bombay, India

Dear Editor:

I am a new reader of Spicy. I will continue reading it.

I am a young man 28 years old, single, 6 ft. tall, weight 190 lbs., brown eyes and black hair. I am on my city Fire Chief.

I like all sport, especially dancing. I would like to have some of your readers write to me and would appreciate photos.

Please publish this letter in your next issue.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph Cabanas

Milanes 30, Matanzas, Cuba

Dear Editor:

As we are constant readers of Spicy magazine we take this privilege of boosting it. We

can truly say that it is a cure for anyone's ailments, and we readily recommend it highly, previous to any magazine on the market.

Editor, how's to printing two lonely soldiers' letters that we may obtain pen pals through your wonderful magazine. We are two pals, Jack and Jimmie. Jack is five feet seven in height, blond hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, age 21 years young, Jimmie is five feet ten inches tall, black hair, blue eyes, ruddy complexion, age 21. We promise to answer all letters, and will exchange snap shots. Come on and sling some ink this way. To the first ten girls who write, we will send a present to remember us by. Come on, who will be the LUCKY ten?

Well, here's hoping to see our letter in your next issue of Spicy.

Here's more power to Spicy. We remain yours forever.

Pvt. John H. Dougherty

Pvt. James P. Emory

Station Hospital, Fort Bragg, N. Carolina

Dear Editor:

I am a new reader of Spicy, and I think that it is wonderful. I have been looking for this kind of magazine for a long time. In the future I shall see that I will have a Spicy to read every month.

And now here is something about myself. I am a man thirty years of age, considered good looking, I am six feet tall and my weight is a hundred and sixty-five pounds. Shall exchange photos with anyone that writes.

I am working on a government irrigation project and am out in an isolated part of New Mexico. Does it get lonely for me? So, let's hear from you.

Won't you please publish this letter in an early issue, many thanks. Here's hoping for many pen pals.

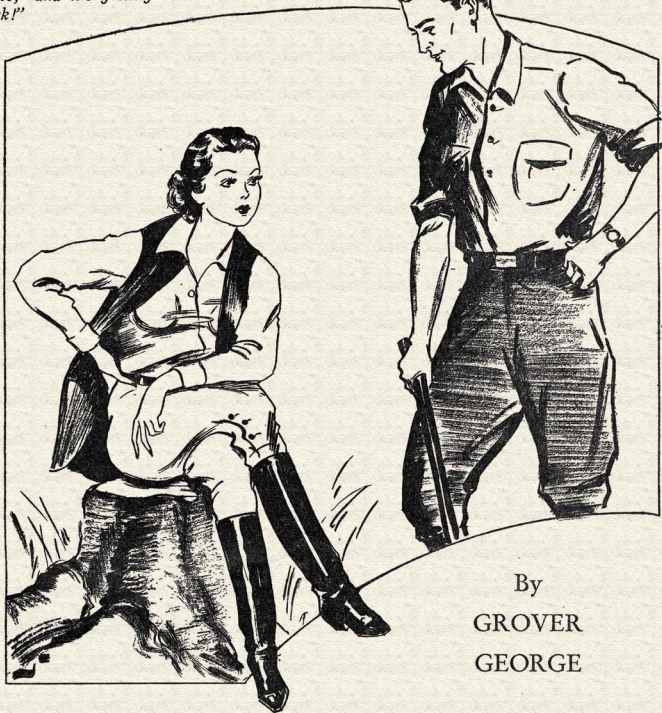
Respectfully yours,

Leonard Everett

Fort Stanton, New Mexico

(Please turn to page 54)

"I—I'm—I-lost," began Harriet in a small voice, "and it's getting dark!"



By
GROVER
GEORGE

He-Man For Harriet

HARRIET MASON managed the last few yards up the steep face of the mountain toward the little cabin perched at the top. She was panting heavily from the unaccustomed exertion, her deep breaths bringing into startling prominence the graciously rounded curves of firmly out-thrust cones. Beneath her loose blouse, open at the neck, the unconfined hillocks rose and fell rapidly. Fortunately, or unfortunately, de-

pending on how you choose to look at it, there was no one there to get a glimpse of that tantalizing sight.

Harriet turned, impatiently jerking at the reins of the horse which was limping up the trail behind her. As she bent forward, in order to get a better grip on the leather thongs, the superb white mounds almost popped out of their flimsy covering.

Turning towards the cabin again, she stum-

bled wearily up the rough trail, her riding boots, built for style, but not for heavy use, causing her to wince at every step.

Hopefully she knocked at the door. At once there was a response inside; a chair scraped, heavy footsteps sounded. The door was flung open by more than six feet of splendidly virile manhood, deeply bronzed from life in the open. Harriet found herself looking up into clear blue eyes, at a strongly aquiline nose and firm chin. Instinctively she compared the solid breadth of shoulder, and the rippling muscles under his rough blue shirt, with the physiques of the eastern visitors at the dude ranch where she was stopping.

"Yes?" said the man pleasantly in a vibrant baritone.

"I—I'm lost," began Harriet in a small voice. "It's getting dark, my horse fell and lamed himself and I saw your cabin here, so I thought I'd take a chance and see if you could show me how to get back to the ranch."

THE MAN LOOKED at her appraisingly. His keen eyes swept quickly but appreciatively over the unmistakable swells beneath her low-necked blouse, over the trim curves snugly encased in expensive riding breeches.

"You must be cold, wearing an outfit like that," he said. "Step inside and sit down before the fire. I'll take care of your horse."

"Thank you." Harriet brushed past him, his hard forearm pressing lightly against her round smooth shoulder. At the contact, a tiny shiver of delight ran through the girl. She drew up a chair before the fire, sat down and gratefully warmed herself before the cheerful blaze. Outside she heard the man going down the trail and speaking soothingly to the horse. A few moments later she heard him entering the cabin.

"What's your name?" he asked brusquely.

Startled, Harriet turned wide grey eyes up to him. "Harriet Mason. What's yours?"

"Not that it makes any difference," he said grimly, "but I'm Stephen Garland. I notice your horse carries the Lazy 8 brand insignia on a saddle blanket."

"That's right."

"I'm sorry, but I haven't time to waste on a gadabout from Pete Henderson's dude ranch. I'll show you the trail down, and you'll just have to take care of yourself."

"But I don't understand!" Harriet exclaimed. "I've heard a lot about Western hospitality, but the example you give me isn't very satisfying."

"I'm sorry," he said stiffly. "I've a serious purpose in life. I'm a mining engineer and I'm here on a surveying trip. You Easterners seem to think you can come out West here, act as you would at a country club, and get away with it. You're lucky nothing worse happened. I suppose your horse fell because you didn't know how to handle him."

"NATURALLY," SAID HARRIET cuttingly, "I couldn't expect to be as expert with a horse as you are." Angrily she rose, stamped to the door, her big riding boots making her look absurdly childish. For an instant she thought she detected a softening in the man's eyes, a tender glow, but when she looked again he was impersonal, distant.

"You'll have to leave your horse here for the night, and send some one up from the ranch for it. You can easily follow the trail down, and if it gets dark, don't be frightened. I'm sure you wouldn't want to worry Pete Henderson."

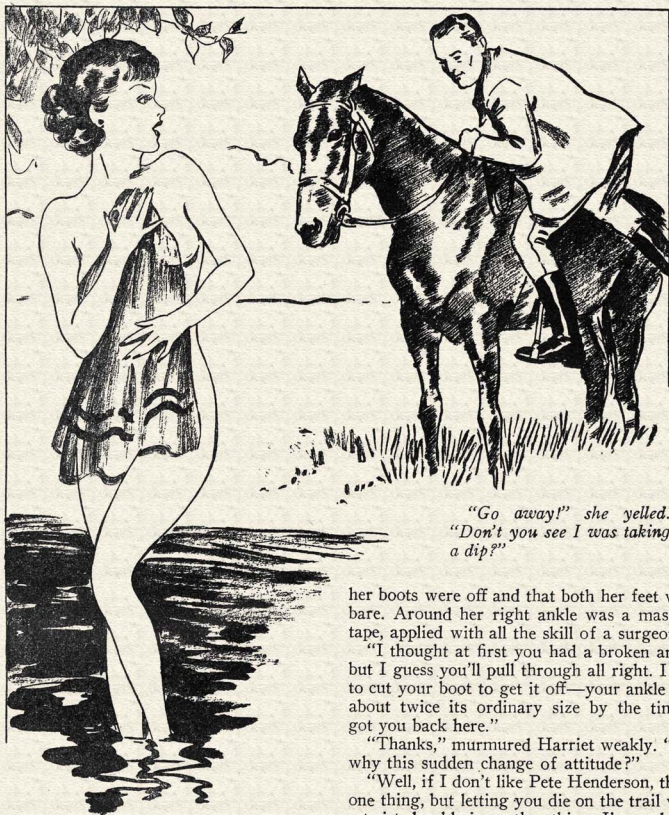
He pointed out a well defined path down the mountainside, in the direction opposite from the one Harriet had taken to come up to his cabin. Defiantly the girl started down, stamping her boots into the rough earth as though working off some of her annoyance.

"Thanks," she flung over her shoulder, "I'll send you a check for your services."

"Just what I might expect," he shot back.

As she continued down the trail, determined not to give the brute the satisfaction of seeing that every step hurt. She turned under an arch of trees that shut her from his sight, and at once she felt very small and lonely in the cool darkness of the mysterious woods. In the shadows she couldn't very well see where she was going. Before she realized what was happening, her ankle had turned on a loose stone. An excruciating pain shot up her left leg. She remembered that she let out one scream before everything went black. . . .

HARRIET STRUGGLED UP out of the mists of unconsciousness and looked around wonderingly. She found herself lying on a rude bunk against one wall, and a second glance assured her that she was back in Garland's cabin. But something peculiar was happening. Firm masculine lips were pressed lingeringly against her own. Muscular masculine arms were holding her tightly, but tenderly. In the moment it took her to collect her wits, Harriet found herself responding, almost against her will, to Garland's eager mouth on hers. In spite of



*"Go away!" she yelled.
"Don't you see I was taking
a dip?"*

herself, she knew that little shivers were chasing up and down her spine.

Garland, seeing she had recovered consciousness, drew back. Harriet pretended she was quite unaware of what had happened, and even managed the tried true expression, "Where am I?"

"It's all right," said the man soothingly. "You sprained your ankle going down the trail. Fortunately I heard you scream. I carried you back here and tried to fix it up as well as I could."

Harriet glanced down. She found that both

her boots were off and that both her feet were bare. Around her right ankle was a mass of tape, applied with all the skill of a surgeon.

"I thought at first you had a broken ankle, but I guess you'll pull through all right. I had to cut your boot to get it off—your ankle was about twice its ordinary size by the time I got you back here."

"Thanks," murmured Harriet weakly. "But why this sudden change of attitude?"

"Well, if I don't like Pete Henderson, that's one thing, but letting you die on the trail with a twisted ankle is another thing. I'm probably not as bad as you think I am."

"What makes you think I think you're bad?"

"NOT THAT I blame you if you do. Only you pampered Easterners are more interested in bridge, gossip, drinking and man chasing than anything else—even when you come out here, presumably for a vacation."

"Does that mean you think I fit that description?"

"You're a guest at Pete's ranch, aren't you?"

"You take an awful lot for granted, but I

suppose I owe you something for bringing me back here. It seems I'm occupying your bunk." Harriet attempted to rise, but sank back with a groan as she moved her foot.

"And you'll stay in my bunk all night, too," said Garland in a tone that allowed no denial.

"But what will you do?"

"Oh, don't worry about me. I'll either sleep on the floor or go to town and spend the night there."

"Afraid of me?"

"No—but I don't like the idea of those gossip hounds down at Pete's talking about us, especially if we stayed all night together in the same cabin. Knowing them as I do, I know very well what they'll say."

"But I'm not afraid of my reputation, why should you be?" asked Harriet.

"It isn't my reputation I'm afraid of. Besides, I expect to have you as a guest for a day or so, and I'll need more provisions."

HARRIET SAT UP carefully, leaning back on her elbows, the action throwing into bold relief the firm swells beneath her blouse, drawing Garland's eyes like a magnet. Slowly he approached the bunk. He sat down beside her, slipped one powerful arm about her waist. Contentedly she let her head drop on his shoulder, then raised it to meet his. Their mouths joined, fused, in a kiss that started around two hundred degrees Fahrenheit and went up to a thousand.

Steve's hand moved toward her. Then the muscles of his jaw bulged, he drew back his hand, and rose from the bunk.

"I'm sorry," he said, "I shouldn't have done that."

"Why were you kissing me when you thought I was unconscious?"

Steve flushed, a deep stain showing through his bronze. "If I'd known you were that conscious," he said, "I certainly wouldn't have done it. I'll see you in the morning. Good night." Abruptly he turned and walked from the cabin. Harriet looked after him, a great aching void where her heart should have been.

HARRIET AWOKE THE NEXT morning to find the little cabin filled with glorious mountain sunshine, the air sweet with dew and the odor of fresh growing things. Gingerly she tried to walk from the bunk. She found, to her delight, that her ankle wasn't sprained at all, but merely twisted, and that she could hobble about without too much difficulty, provided she did not put her weight on the injured foot.

She rummaged around, started the fire, filled the coffee pot and hung it over the flame. Then she limped from the cabin to a little stream that ran behind it. She bathed her face in the clear cold water, then looked around, and, moved by a sudden naughty impulse began to peel off her clothes.

In a moment her bathing attire consisted of flimsy panties and a bandeau that clung to her like tissue paper, and the dressing on her ankle!

If the water had been calm she might have been able to see the reflection of gorgeous white deliciousness, a mirrored picture of firmly rounded mounds, of delicately curved hips that quivered as she walked; of milky white thighs that curved downward to shapely calves.

The cold mountain air brought a rosy glow to her sweet white skin. Instinctively, as if to keep off the cold, she covered the roundness that comprised her shapely shoulders with tiny palms. Then, gritting her teeth, she stepped into the cold water.

At first she shivered, and her teeth chattered; then as she splashed around, she began to grow warm.

ABOVE THE NOISE of the stream, her ears caught the measured hoofbeats of a horse. In a panic she looked around. Off in the distance she could see a mounted figure riding slowly up the trail. Without a doubt it was Steve, coming back from town with provisions!

In a panic, Harriet scrambled out of the water, ran on to the bank, her twisted ankle slowing her movements. She remembered she had neglected to see that she had a towel, and as Steve approached the cabin she could do no more than cower on the brink of the stream, holding before her the sole garment she had removed.

"Don't come near here," she screamed. "I haven't got my dress on!"

Startled, Steve turned in his saddle, then seemed to reel back as the sight of Harriet, shielded by what she held before her, struck him. Harriet knew that the pink-tinted skin of her lovely form was right in his line of vision. She had a fairly good idea that he could distinguish her general outlines, if nothing more.

Garland laughed, held his hand over his eyes, and turned the horse's head.

"I won't let the horse look at you either," he said. "I'm going to arrange the provisions. I hope by the time I'm finished doing that you will be dressed again."

Five minutes later, damp from her plunge,

Harriet hobbled into the cabin in a state of extreme confusion, her milky white skin flushing scarlet, her eyes downcast. Steve shook her gently by the shoulders, tilted up her head, looked into her ashamed eyes.

"Don't be silly," he said. "I only caught a glimpse of you and what I did see was perfectly proper. Let's forget about it and eat."

HARRIET LEANED AGAINST him for a moment, delighting in the feel of his solid strength, then hobbled about the cabin in her bare feet pouring coffee and frying bacon.

"Guess you haven't got a sprained ankle after all," said Garland. "Pretty luck for you. Which reminds me—I brought a pair of easy shoes for you to wear." He rummaged through a pack, drew out a pair of soft soled moccasins into which she gratefully stepped.

"You're a dear," said Harriet. Impulsively she slipped her arms around his neck and raised her dewy fresh, provocative lips. Gar-

"Guess you haven't got a sprained ankle after all," said Garland.



land's head came down, his mouth closed over hers, his arms tightened about her rounded slenderness. For a long lingering moment Harriet forgot about the ranch, about her ankle, about everything except the fact that she was in Steve's arms and that their kisses were responding to each other.

Through her flimsy blouse she felt her firmly swelling bosom mashed against Steve's solid chest, the pressure sending little waves of delight radiating along her nervous system.

Suddenly Steve stiffened, pushed her away.

Startled, she looked up into his eyes, which had suddenly grown cold.

"I suppose," he said in a hard voice, "you would kiss anyone who did a little thing for you."



HARRIET'S FACE FLAMED. "How dare you! You're the most unreasonable brute I ever encountered."

"I'm sorry if I gave you any wrong ideas about how I felt," he said distantly.

"But this is so silly," said Harriet. "Why should you think—"

"Because I know Pete Henderson and the kind of crowd he has at his place. I forgot to tell you that I was down at the ranch this morning and that they are sending up an extra horse for you. You'll be able to leave sometime this afternoon."

"You had no right to go to the ranch! I want to stay here, and no one can stop me. I'll pay for my board and lodging!"

"That would hardly be possible," said Garland dryly. "Think of what people would say."

"I don't care what people would say," Harriet almost sobbed. "If you think that way about me, then what anyone else thinks doesn't mean very much."

"Does my opinion matter so much to you?"

"No," she flung back, "I was only trying to flatter you."

They ate their meal in silence. Harriet washed the dishes. She knew that Steve tried not to look at her, but nothing he could do could keep his eyes away from those delicious rotundities.

"I have work to do," he complained. "I have to go down in the gulch to examine some specimens of rock."

"Well, I'm not stopping you, am I? I just feel like staying up here on the mountain top instead of down there at the ranch. You go ahead with your old prospecting. Don't bother about me."

"I certainly will!"

WHILE HARRIET SUNNED herself outside the cabin door, bringing a light tan to her skin, Steve spent his time preparing his equipment for a prospecting expedition. Harriet watched curiously, asking no questions, as he assembled a pack composed of geological hammers, a pick, a shovel, rations, water, and various mysterious packages.

Steve stopped in the door. "I'm leaving," he announced. "You can prepare lunch for yourself, and Pete will send a horse for you this afternoon."

"Goodbye," said Harriet coolly. Steve looked at her, stood irresolute, then flung his pack to the ground. Before she knew what was happening, he had swept her up in his arms, crushed her against his chest and pressed his mouth savagely against hers. She felt her whole being responding to his virile love-making, delighted in the feel of her soft bosom crushed against his chest, in the painful tingle of his hard arms around her waist.

Steve set her down for a moment. "What's the use?" he groaned. "I'm only kidding myself. If I went down to the gulch I wouldn't be able to do any work anyway, because all I can think of is you."

Harriet started to say something, but found herself prevented from doing so in the most

delightful possible manner. Finally she managed to free herself.

"I knew it!" she exclaimed triumphantly. "You couldn't fool me. When you acted so nasty this morning, I determined to make you fall in love with me. Well, you are in love with me and when the horse comes this afternoon, I'm going back and you'll never see me again. I'll show you that even if you are a Westerner, you can't treat me like this!"

STEVE LOOKED STUNNED, then an angry gleam came into his eyes. He slammed the door behind him, advanced toward her menacingly. "So you think you'll get away with it, do you? You can't make me fall in love with you and then throw me over like this."

"Who says I can't?" demanded Harriet. "I've done it, haven't I?"

A sinewy hand fell on her shoulder, whirled her around.

Harriet found herself lifted, twisted, discovered she was being gripped on her shoulders by a pair of strong hands, the fingers digging into the fleshy part of her shoulders. Then all of a sudden, she was being shaken back and forth, becoming so dizzy that the room seemed to be spinning around and around. But at the same time she thrilled at the realization that she had, at last, found a man who could master her!

Steve finally picked her up and sat her down comfortably. There were tears in her eyes, but she smiled through them.

"Steve, darling," she said. Her arms went around his neck, even as his closed about her waist.

"I'm sorry, honey," he murmured, "but you just didn't know what you were doing to me."

"I don't care," whispered Harriet. "I just discovered that weak-kneed Easterners aren't to my liking at all."

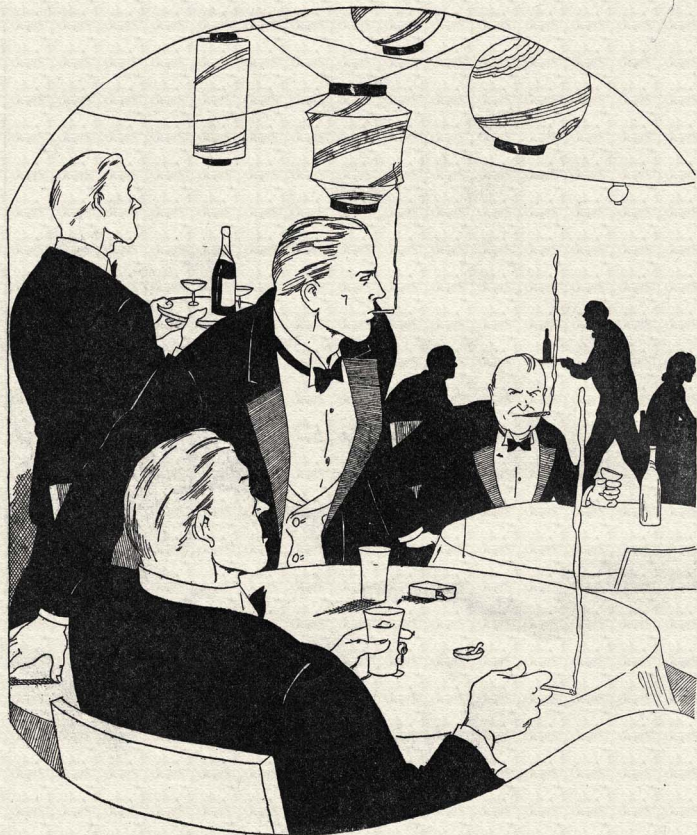
Steve laughed, walked to the door and threw the bar across it. Then he turned around and came back to her. She found herself returning kiss for kiss that Steve planted on her mouth, her throat, and in the deliciously shadowy hollows in her throat. . . .

OUT OF A rosy haze, Harriet heard Steve's chuckling voice. "That horse is coming this afternoon, honey. Do you still want to go back?"

"Don't ask such foolish questions," she murmured as she drifted off once more on wings of ecstasy. "Don't you know that a mountain cabin is the best place in the world for a honeymoon?"



"Is this what you call an audition?"



“STAR CHASER”

A full-length novelette complete
in this issue

By
BARNABY IVES



WENDY looked out rather impatiently. The receptionist sat entranced before a loud speaker, blondined head pressed to the drum. Outside the walk, lined on each side, were girls, eager girls, waiting to leap upon the singer who was keeping the receptionist off duty by his song.

Wendy's truly lovely mouth twisted. She couldn't get out until the receptionist came to and opened the door. The girls outside were the fourteen best reasons why the door into

the broadcasting station was kept locked. They were waiting, she supposed, to leap upon Jeffrey Winslow when he appeared. Then she scowled for over the heads of the girls showed one lone male.

Of all people in the world, Wendy had no desire to see that one person. She'd taken him over when she had taken the family home upon

She finished the dance near Jeff's table. "Hello," she said softly.

her shoulders and given up silliness forever, silliness such as waiting for singers to appear, as those girls were doing.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Miss Dawn." The receptionist had come to and was taking up her keys. "I can't get enough of Mr. Winslow's singing, can you?"

"He's good, I guess," Wendy said indifferently. "See here, can't you let me out some other door. There's someone I don't want to see out there."

"Why yes, you can take the door Mr. Winslow uses. See, under the stairway and it locks with a nightlock so all you need do is open it and slam it after you," the receptionist said eagerly, and turned back to her listening.

You could see even famous dancers like May Dawn often but you couldn't always listen to a singer like Jeff Winslow. Besides, it was the receptionist's private opinion May

Dawn wasn't so much. Why she was actually plain except for her body. The receptionist did concede she had a lovely rounded body with outthrust, pointed bosom but she certainly did not dress like a dancer who was the city's rave among the nightowls right now. Look at the plain ivory sharkskin sports dress, white silk anklets, white buck ghillies, even the white silk beret tugged down over her brown hair wasn't anything the receptionist couldn't afford if she wanted it.

May Dawn didn't wear a darned bit of color except the bright blue scarf twisted about her throat, and a girl wouldn't see that the blue was the exact shade of the big blue eyes under demurely lowered brown lashes.

WENDY, WHO AT night was May Dawn, rounded the corner and at the very door she bumped head first into someone hurrying from the other way. She forced a grunt from him so hard did she ram him and looked up to apologize and discovered it was the young man for whom the lines had formed on the front walk, none other than Jeffrey Winslow, baritone supreme.

"Oh, I'm sorry," she said contritely. "I was in a hurry. I was afraid. . . ."

"Don't worry," he said rudely, "you didn't let me escape. What is it this time? An autograph?" He looked at her exactly as though she'd been a rattlesnake, and his eyes were an angry brown.

Wendy grinned a thoroughly Wendish grin. "Oh, Mr. Winslow, how did you guess?" she cooed, and opened her purse and pulled out a pen and card.

He fairly snatched at the card and scrawled his name, looked out the glass, said something he never learned in kindergarten, and dashed down the hall. Some smart girl had discovered the rear door and now a number of beaming faces waited there.

Wendy went out there since there was no portly man in evening clothes waiting for her, though it was still far from evening. Trust Clarence to be forehanded. Well, if he thought he was going home with her and hang around while she dressed he had another think coming.

Wendy's car was parked in an alley, city ordinances to the contrary, and wedged in between it and a truck, was a tan roadster she recognized as belonging to the singer. Not only wedged, but her rear bumper was so securely locked to his front bumper she could not disentangle them.

She was staring at the roadster and scowling when Jeff Winslow appeared on a run, his fans in full cry far behind.

He gave the small coupe a look of resignation, Wendy one of fury, lifted the rear end of her car and thrust it ahead and fairly threw himself into his own car. Wendy had to run to catch up with her car.

"He thinks I did that on purpose to attract his attention," she grinned ruefully, as she drove out of the alley on two wheels, as Jeff rapidly backed his car the length of the alley, taking in two ash cans and a fragrant garbage can in his haste.

WENDY COMPLETED SOME shopping, still grinning over the picture of Clarence, her middle aged fiance waiting patiently for her to appear from the broadcasting rooms. Perhaps it was thinking of the big blond singer which made her turn her car into the family driveway without making the proper hand signal.

There was a rending crash as the car behind her tried to avoid hitting hers and wrapped itself around a tree.

Gasping, Wendy rushed over to the tangled mass and after removing two bags and an array of loose golf clubs, discovered Jeff Winslow under the wreckage.

He gave a groan that might have been from pain, when he saw who was at the bottom of his accident. "You've broken my leg," he growled.

Wendy's huge Irish dad appeared at this moment. "Now, Wendy, what you done now?"

"She's broken my leg," gritted Jeff.

Pat Doon leaned down and lifted Jeff bodily and bore him up the driveway to the family home crumbling beneath its mortgages. Jeff was no light load being an inch over a six foot measuring stick, but Pat Doon was as tall as that and weighed in at two ten so he deposited Jeff on the spare room bed with scarcely an extra puff.

"Who are you, son?" he asked, when this was done.

"He's Jeff Jones, dad," Wendy said hurriedly. "Get his car out of the street, will you? I'll call a doctor."

Jeff said nothing but he looked volumes that would have singed every book in the Doon library.

Through the open window he heard Pat's voice, "That fool kid of mine borrowed a friend's car and smashed it up. Give me a hand with drawing it into my yard, will you?"

"You're a fine family of liars, aren't you?" Jeff growled.

"Well, do you want the reporters down on you?" snapped Wendy, a trifle weary of his temper. "Want me to let anyone know?"

"No. I was headed north on a vacation and I think this will be a good place to spend it as Mr. Jones. By the time I'm fixed up you'll have learned a few traffic rules and be heartily sick of chasing me."

"Chasing you! You were hard on my heels, but let it go. Does it hurt terribly?" Wendy bent over to look at the dangling leg and Jeff gave her an angry once over.

SHE WASN'T A pretty girl even. Her nose turned up and her chin was stubborn. Her mouth was too big too, wide and bright crimson, and she wasn't tanned a bit for all it was summer. He liked girls with healthy brown skins and this one had a petal white skin which seemed even whiter on her smooth, shapely throat, which became revealed when her scarf had come untied.

"You might at least have been pretty," he grumbled.

Wendy's wide grin flashed. She did have beautiful teeth and her lashes turned up and were dusted with gold on the ends and revealed the bluest eyes he'd ever seen.

"Sorry, they left that out. I suppose you think it isn't a trial to me, being so homely men run into trees when they see me. Here's the doctor."

"Then you run out," Jeff said unkindly, and was obeyed instantly.

"Well of all the alls in sweet dispositions you take the prize cake," Wendy said, addressing the firmly closed door.

The doctor reappeared. "He has a badly cracked ankle and needs rest or it may affect his . . . er singing. I think he said he sang."

Wendy bent quickly and picked up a raveling to hide her grin. An injured ankle affect his singing! But that was part of her punishment for reckless driving, taking care of a grouchy invalid.

He was in bed in one of his own pajama suits when she returned to his room. He didn't look so ferocious now, with his sleek hair ruffled into blond feathers against the white pillows.

PAT FOLLOWED HER IN. "Got the wreck out of sight and we'll see to having it fixed. I'll take care of you nights and my daughter Wendy will do it daytimes."

"And why can't she take care of me evenings too?" Jeff asked unreasonably.

"Because I go dancing with my fiancé every evening," Wendy said sweetly, giving her father a fiery look of warning.

Jeff stared at her. "If you're engaged why run after a singer?" he asked.

"Didn't you ever get a crush on anyone?" Wendy demanded sweetly. "Your voice simply bowled me over and I had to get your autograph."

Jeff looked at her suspiciously. "I never get crushes. I was cured of girls early in life. I was engaged to a girl but when I gave up working in the creamery to sing, she washed her hands of me. I've had no use for girls since, so don't get any nutty ideas about me."

Wendy flushed. "I told you I was engaged." She thrust her slim white hand before his eyes and he blinked, for a four carat stone blazed on her ring finger. "His name is Clarence Dildford. Now I'll get you some supper because I have a date at nine." She dashed away.

"Wendy never ran after any man before," Pat muttered, looking at Jeff. "She's always been content with my choice of husband."

"So you chose him," Jeff said quickly. "Why?"

"Girls are apt to be silly," Pat said hurriedly. "Clarence now is fifty and crazy about her. He takes good care of her too. Takes all her worries off her shoulders. There he is now. I'll have to let him in."

Pat returned with a "pompous papa", as Jeff dubbed him at once. "This is the young man, Jeff Jones, that Wendy spilled, Clarence. Clarence Dildford, Mr. Jones."

Clarence scowled at Jeff who scowled back. "Why'nt you send him to the hospital? Wendy is too busy to bother with a hurt man."

"But she wants to," Wendy's voice said sweetly, behind him, and Clarence turned eagerly to greet her. He put a big arm around her and kissed her thoroughly, though on the cheek, for Wendy had turned her head at his onslaught.

JEFF SAW THE fat red hand clamp itself around one shapely upper arm as he held Wendy and saw Wendy grow scarlet and break away. Why she was just a kid beside that overgrown banker, for that was what Clarence was, he learned at once.

Jeff did not see Wendy go but he was awake when she returned as dawn tinted the windows. He had had an uncomfortable evening

because, strangely enough, he had resented her going dancing with the big man. Pat was good company too but that didn't matter.

Wendy came in softly and bent over Jeff. She had changed to an old, white wool robe which fell away from her white throat revealing a deep valley between firm breasts which were partly revealed too.

Jeff pretended to sleep. He was suddenly ashamed of his ill nature. Wendy seemed to be chief cook and bottle washer as well as his day nurse and he was fooling her badly. He knew as well as the doctor did, that his broken ankle was a fake. He had a bad sprain but nothing more serious. This had seemed a good place to hide until the reporters gave up trying to discover where the popular young singer was vacationing.

Strangely enough a week passed before he realized it. Everything about the place was genteelly shabby but Wendy was a good cook and good company too. Gay when he was cross, gentle when he was restless, but every night he was forced to hear her go away with the red faced banker and return in the early morning hours.

Always she came in with fresh ice water for him but he pretended to sleep because he had a desire to shout at her for wasting herself on an old man. For preferring to be with Clarence, when every other girl in the city would give her eyes to be with him, Jeff Winslow.

TOMORROW HE'D GET OUT. His car was repaired as good as ever, Pat had reported. His incognito had been maintained by the simple ruse of putting the license plates from Wendy's car on Jeff's while in the repair shop. There might never have been a popular baritone for all people knew, the way Wendy acted. For a girl who wanted his autograph, who had parked so close to him she had to wait to let him get her out, Wendy acted little like a baritone-struck girl.

Jeff was reading when Wendy came in in the early morning of the wakeful night in which he had decided to leave the next day. She was in the same old robe and hastily pulled it together when she saw that he was awake.

"Pain?" she asked gently, and he saw that she had been crying.

"Pain?" he mocked, flicking her wet cheek with his finger. "Sit down and talk to me, Wendy."

"I can't. I have to go to bed," she said tiredly, but sat down on the edge of his bed.

"You treat me like poison oak," he said discontentedly.

"What did you want me to do? Kiss you?" Wendy asked, with a flicker of her gamin eyes.

"Why yes, maybe I did. That wouldn't be a bad idea. No girl has kissed me for a week." Jeff's hand closed around her wrist.

Wendy gave a little tug, which only pulled her robe off her shoulder revealing dazzling white skin beneath. "I'm engaged. . . ."

"But couldn't you stand one kiss?" he asked, surprising himself, because it seemed interesting to think about kissing Wendy.

Wendy looked at him thoughtfully. "Yes, I could."

Jeff laughed and pulled her down into his arms and kissed her triumphantly. She was like other girls. She was all breathless and he could feel her heart thumping under the robe. He tightened his hold of her and it wasn't at all bad kissing a wide mouth, rather swell in fact, so he did it again and could not stop.

WENDY WAS TREMBLING in his arms and struggling to free herself then suddenly she gave that up and pressed eagerly against him and returned his kisses. Only half an hour ago she had struggled with Clarence, struggled against this very thing, his kiss smothering her, his moist unpleasant hands on her body. It hadn't been a pretty battle and when Wendy had won Clarence had delivered an ultimatum. It had consisted of this: that a week from today she'd be Mrs. Clarence Dildford or he'd know why.

That was why she returned Jeff's sweet, fierce kisses. Why she let his lips wander down her throat to the purple hollow at its base, and back to her lips. Why she didn't fight his cool hands upon her, so caressingly. Let him trace her straight, dimpled spine, the curving back. Let him wander here and there until Clarence was lost to mind and nothing mattered except Jeff.

A long, long time afterwards Wendy remembered and crept out of Jeff's arms to her own room. She didn't care. It would be hard to face him in day time remembering, but she would never forget. Never wanted to. Next week she'd belong to Clarence because Clarence owned the mortgages on the shabby home and Pat had brought her mother to this home and was back-hearted at the thought of losing it.

But Wendy slept late and wakened just in time to dress for dancing. Pat had tip-toed

about the house doing the things Wendy always did, surprised that she had overslept. Surprised that Wendy's patient was sleeping. It gave Wendy a good excuse for not seeing Jeff that day, she thought, as she bathed and dressed in the new evening gown of spun sugar in heaven's own blue. She had to draw a feathery wisp of it around her white throat because Jeff had put his mark there not once but several times.

"Oh! You came back to him," Wendy said inanely, wondering if she showed her desire to claw this sleek black cat-girl's eyes out.

"Oh that was a little misunderstanding. I didn't want Jeff to drag me all over the country while he sang but now he has a chance to make a picture in Hollywood this winter so we could have a real home. I came after him as soon as he wrote me the news and I'm taking him back home with me until he's all



She was coming down the stairs when a hatless girl came out of Jeff's room. A tall girl with sleek black hair and smart furs and cold black eyes. Her mouth was thin and scarlet and too small for beauty it seemed to Wendy, and what was she doing in Jeff's room?

"I'm Viola Wetherbee," she said coldly, as she looked up at the radiant young girl in delphinium-blue tulle, white gardenias nestled against her whiter skin. "Jeff Winslow's fiancée."

well. Whatever you think it was worth, to look after him, you can make out a bill for and I'll give you my check."

WENDY SHRUGGED. "He didn't tell you I smashed him up? He's only been here a week so we will call it square. He can be moved?"

Viola's laughter tinkled. "Oh, the bad boy. He just wanted a place to hide so he pretended to be hurt worse than he was. He only sprained his ankle. . . ."

"And let me wait on him hand and foot for that?" Wendy asked.

"Probably you were glad to. It must have been a real thrill to wait on a famous person," smiled Viola.

"What's all this about you waiting on a famous person?" came Clarence's voice behind them and he appeared in the outer doorway. "My dear young lady, don't you know May Dawn doesn't thrill over famous people because she's famous herself, or didn't Miss Doon tell you she is the famous dancer known as May Dawn?"

Viola's black eyes shifted and she looked scared about something. "Does Jeff know?"

"No, and you needn't tell him," snapped Wendy. "I'll tell him goodbye now, because I only have an hour before I go on at the Misty Roof." She went past Viola into Jeff's room.

He was dressed as he had been the morning she had bumped into him at the broadcasting building, and was strapping a suitcase. Pat stood by.

"Goodbye, Mr. Winslow. Hope you have a pleasant trip," Wendy said coolly, and nothing told him she was remembering his arms and kisses. "I can't stop to see you off because Mr. Dildford is waiting." She hadn't given him a chance to speak and didn't intend to. Somehow she got out of the room again and Clarence hurried her away.

"Always thought he was someone besides Jeff Jones," he said smugly, as his sleek car whirled them toward the nightclub. "Wonder you didn't lose your head over him along with half a million other silly dames."

"But I had you, Clarence," Wendy said lightly.

"And he has that Viola person," Clarence said, with great satisfaction. "Well, I've made all arrangements and you'll be Mrs. Clarence Dildford this time next week." He put out a big fat arm and dragged her close and kissed her long and greedily on the mouth.

FOR JUST A moment Wendy submitted. Maybe the magic would come back in Clarence's arms. If it only would . . . but when his hand touched her back and crawled along it she freed herself shuddering. It wasn't magic, it was awful.

"You won't do that next week," Clarence panted. "You'll make up for all your kittenishness then, I promise you that. I won't be easy either."

Wendy closed her eyes and drew back into

her corner of the car until the chauffeur opened the door before the nightclub. There wouldn't be any next week. If dad didn't want to lose his home let him do something about it besides trade her for it. She'd tell Clarence tomorrow. Tonight she wasn't up to battle. Tonight all she could see was Viola Wetherbee in Jeff's arms. Viola would give with both hands and she was beautiful. Jeff would love warming her coldness.

Jeff had said Wendy wasn't pretty, had scolded her and been rude and she'd fallen head over heels in love with him.

Pat was up when Wendy got home, which was unusual. "Got a cable from Ireland. The Doon men were both killed in an airplane crash. That leaves the estates to me. I have to leave at once. It means money, girl, and no more dancing. When your contract is up we'll live in Ireland like kings."

It was hurly-burly after that, getting her father onto the boat, writing a letter to Clarence who had been called away for a couple of days, so he telephoned some time during the rush. It gave her two days to move out of the house and she did.

Ireland, the devil as compared to a home with Jeff on this side of the water!

Wendy moved into a pretty apartment, storing the goods until her father should tell her what he wanted done with them. She kept the Jenny Lind bed where Jeff had spent a week pretending to be hurt. She didn't even hate him for that because he had paid her in the end for anything he had done to her. Memories weren't terribly satisfying but at least she had them.

CLARENCE HAD BEEN rather awful. He had raged and sworn vengeance, so Wendy had had to hire a maid, a fierce, grim woman who went with her to the nightclub and came home with her and stood guard in Wendy's dressing-room. So Clarence sat at a table every night as he had always done and glowered at Wendy but left her alone. He hoped her loneliness would drive her back into his arms and he grew quite purple in the face and short winded as he plotted what he would do when that time came.

"Jeffrey Winslow, God's gift to the fluffies, has become social minded, making all the hot nighteries," wrote a columnist. "He's usually with his bodyguard and very meek when girls swarm about him for his autograph. Quite a change from the autocratic young man who

took rear doors and freight elevators to escape notice. Meanwhile producers in Hollywood wait rather impatiently for him to sign on the dotted line."

Wendy tossed the paper down. Jeff was nuts if he thought he could keep the movies waiting like this. He wasn't even singing on

all about "Once there was a molliceman and a biddle lum, sitting on a stone curb, chewing gubber rum." Well Jeff was singing at a benefit for an orphanage, maybe that explained the silly song. The children would enjoy it.

His song was over and now he was talking to the orphans. "Once there was a little girl who loved to dance and she sang that song and



His voice was coming over the radio " . . . I wouldn't laugh now if I could find her. . . . I've looked everywhere. . . ."

the radio as he had. Tonight he was condescending to sing for a benefit which would be broadcast, but it was an exception. What had Viola done to him that he acted so? Once she had him back did she refuse to let him sing for money?

Wendy left her dressing table in the star's dressing room and turned on the radio. Jeff's golden baritone rolled out in, of all things, the silly song Wendy sometimes sang around the house though she hadn't any voice at all, as Jeff had more than once told her. It was

I used to laugh at her. I wouldn't laugh now if I could find her. I've looked everywhere for her. She loves to dance and goes dancing every night but she is never where I look. I'll take her dancing everywhere, if I can only find her, and I'll let her sing all day long . . . and now he was singing the silly song again and that was all.

IT WAS ENOUGH. Wendy's eyes were like stars. She turned to the grim dragon of a
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Nightly At Eleven

By

CLIFF CARRUTH

JACK CARTER opened the door of his bachelor apartment. He left the lights out and hurried through to the lounge room. Eager and excited as a bridegroom on a honeymoon, Carter lost little time getting to the window. Was she there? Would she appear later? Every night at eleven, so far, she hadn't disappointed. Would she—

Carter's heart leaped. He had hardly taken up his position before it happened. As if on signal the window of the apartment directly opposite across the courtyard yellowed into light. At the same moment a luscious blonde, statuesque and beautiful, wandered into view. Carter sighed with relief and settled back comfortably to enjoy the show.

And a show it was!

First, the blonde began to undress. Carter appreciated that. As a producer of Broadway hot spot floor shows he was used to having 'em disrobe. The difference was that when they did it on order it wasn't half as interesting as his nightly forbidden peeps. Carter lighted a cigarette and watched the willowy young lady opposite emerge from the evening gown that fell at her feet like an apricot-colored cloud.

She wore ravishing purple undies. The promise of a perfect 36 suggested by the frock was more than revealed in the lingerie. The room was her bedchamber. The girl liked to pose in front of the bureau mirror. Like most of her sex Carter imagined she thought she was tops. Anyway, she enjoyed strutting and posturing before the glass. It was all very Frenchy, very interesting and pulse-quickening to the onlooker.

Sitting there, Carter watched every move she made. After she had posed enough to satisfy her vanity some of the filmy purple articles of apparel swished over the back of a chair. The next minute she once more let the glass reflect her charms.

What charms they were!

Carter saw how beautifully her swan-like neck flowed into her shoulders. Her bosom was gorgeously molded, large and firm. Her hips were flat and ran into rounded thighs. For the

rest her legs were twin poems of symmetry and her feet tiny and high arched.

CARTER BREATHED HEAVILY. A girl like that would be a decided ornament to the new floor show he was putting on at the Cheerio Club. He wondered who she was, what she was. Evidently a person of some background and taste from the looks of her apartment's appointments. He didn't even know her name, knew nothing except that this was the fourth consecutive night she had disrobed in the lighted room with her shade up.

The blonde finally finished appraising herself. She disappeared from the window. When she came into view again she was robed in a filmy, transparent nightie. She pulled back the pale pink coverlet on her carved wooden bed, bounced in between the sheets and stretched out a slender arm toward the wall switch. Out went the light and the show was over.

Carter made himself a highball and drank it slowly. The girl was getting under his skin. He laughed at himself—he, the Broadway-wise stage director and producer, getting all het up over a girl who wore purple undies and posed in front of a mirror. It was ridiculous, absurd. It made him feel like a ten year old boy peeking under a neighbor's window shade. Yet, for what he had seen he had canceled two appointments to get back to the apartment at eleven o'clock.

"I'm nutsy as hell!" Carter told himself. Then he added: "But all the same I like being this way!"

After that he laughed, finished his drink and went to bed to dream all night about a blonde siren with round, soft curves and skin like glimmering marble.

For three more nights that went on. Finally, on the fourth afternoon Carter took a walk around the block. The apartment house that backed up on the court opposite his own bachelor suite, was an expensive building. It was all very *de luxe* from the doorman in livery to the elevator operators in gold-braided uniforms.



Carter got one of the lift pilots aside and slipped him a buck.

"Tell me something," he urged. "The rear apartment on the fourth floor—who's the tenant?"

THE ONE HE asked slipped the dollar in his pocket and grinned.

"I guess you mean Miss Cherry Mason. Blonde gal, swell looker, with big blue eyes, some of this and lots of that?"

"Correct. Tell me all you know about her."

The elevator operator thought hard.

"Well, she's been here for the last couple of months. She's a model—works downtown in one of them cluck-an-soot parlors. She's way back on the rent and I wouldn't be surprised if the landlord streeted her any day now. Anything else, mister?"

Carter shook his head.

"That'll do. Thanks."

At eleven that night the light in the bedroom across the court went on. Cherry Mason hove into view. This time she wore a negligee with very little underneath it. Carter knew that because at every step the thin covering parted revealing interesting disclosures. She was smoking a cigarette and she seemed tired and listless. She sat on the edge of the bed, her chin propped up in the palm of one pink hand. Finally she mashed the cigarette out and stifled a yawn. Then she began to comb the lustrous gold hair that glittered like a brazen flame.

There was a telephone convenient to Carter's reach. He dialed the number he had looked up in the directory. Distantly he heard the phone ring in the apartment he was staring into. The girl put down her comb and picked up the telephone on a bench near the vanity.

"Hello."

Her voice was quiet, rich with a silvery note. Jack Carter thrilled to the sound of it.

"Miss Mason?"

"Yes, who is this?"

Oddly, Carter felt his breath catch in his throat.

"Miss Mason, I wonder if I could see you tonight. It's on a rather important matter. It's also personal, can't be discussed over the wire. My name is Carter and I live in the apartment house directly back of you."

There was a pause.

"I'll be glad to see you at any time, Mr. Carter."

"Fine!" he yelped. "I'll be right over."

WHEN HE PRESSED her bell with an unsteady finger, and the door opened, he found she had changed from the negligee to a little blue silk dress. She didn't wear stockings but her feet were tucked in high-heeled slippers. At close range she was even more pulse quickening, exciting and desirable, than she had been across the well of the court.

"Won't you come in?"

Carter found himself in a small but charming living room. An interior decorator had undoubtedly been turned loose in it. Warm tones of gold and sepia blended artistically. They looked at each other curiously. Carter smiled.

"Wonder what I'm up to?"

She shrugged.

"Of course, I'm curious."

"I'm the original White Haired Boy," he explained. "I visit young ladies in financial distress and help them out of holes."

"Really?"

Her tone grew a little frosty. Carter grinned.

"For instance, if you were behind in your rent, all you'd have to do is give me the nod—and your back bills—and they'd be paid in the morning. Get the idea?"

Her blue eyes grew dreamy.

"I think so. And what would you want in return? I mean, how would I pay the debt off?"

"Suppose we have a drink and I'll tell you. I took the liberty of bringing over a couple of bottles of champagne. Glasses, please."

He opened and poured the wine. She lost some of her reserve after the first portion of the effervescent, straw-colored fluid.

"I love the grape," she confessed. "Now I am more in the mood to hear your proposition. You pay my back rent and what do I do?"

CARTER WENT OVER and sat on the arm of her chair.

"Let me drop in and see you once in awhile at eleven o'clock."

She looked up at him.

"Is that all?"

"Every bit. Simple, eh?"

"Too simple. Must have a string on it. Why do you want to see me once in awhile at eleven?"

"Because," Carter said, "I enjoy looking at beautiful things."

"You're an artist?"

"After a fashion."

They finished the bottle of champagne. Cherry Mason's cheeks glowed with warm,



soft color. She became more animated, stimulated. She went over to the couch on the other side of the room, stretched out among its huge, deep pillows and looked at him through half-closed eyes.

"That sounds like a fair deal. I think I'll accept it. You'll find my overdue rent bill in the drawer of that little desk over there."

Carter followed directions and put the bill in his pocket. Then he went to the couch and dropped down beside her. It might have been the champagne, or a change in the weather, but he suddenly began to feel warm. It was a delicious kind of warmth. It began in the vicinity of his heart and spread artfully through him, stirring his pulses and putting his nerves on edge.

Close beside her, he could see her intense loveliness and catch the subtle drift of her perfume. Her long lashes made shadows on her cheeks and he wondered if she had been named because of her lips. They were like two ripe, red cherries.

"You're the prettiest girl I've seen in months and months!" he told her huskily. "What do you do for a living?"

Her expression turned mocking.

"I'm a society deb. My real name isn't Mason at all. It's Claythorne, I'm Cicily Claythorne of the 400, Park Avenue, Bar Harbor and Newport."

CARTER NODDED and laughed.

"And I'm young Sonny Vandergould of Westbury, Tuxedo and Southampton. I own a dozen yachts and a string of polo ponies. I'm society's favorite bachelor."

They both laughed and Carter edged closer to her.

"How about that other bottle of sparkling water?"

She shook her blonde head.

"I don't think it would be wise. I think perhaps you'd better go. It's past my bedtime."

"I know it."

At that she sat up and peered at him.

"How d'you know—"

"It's a secret. Let it ride and tell me something frankly. Are you in love with anyone?"

"No. Why?"

"Because," Carter stated, taking her in his arms, "you're going to be in love with me beginning here and now!"

She struggled a little, but when she saw how strong and determined he was she relaxed with a sigh. She was wonderfully soft and tempting in his arms. She was as cuddly as a kitten and

as sleek. Her little half hearted struggle carried them both down among the cushions. It took Carter a couple of minutes to find and fasten his lips to hers.

The kiss was more intoxicating than any champagne he had ever tasted. It sent a stream of fire streaking through him. That was its effect on him, but on her it was entirely different. Instead of flaming madly to its magic, she went suddenly limp. With a throaty exclamation she sank all the way down on the couch, gazing up at him with half parted lips and eyes that were deeply lighted by an inner glow.

HER BLONDE HAIR spread out fan-wise and a pulse in her throat beat with quickened regularity. Carter urged himself closer to her. Her unstockinged legs were cool to his touch. Her dimpled knees trembled when his hand covered them. Still she made no protest, remained immovable when in a little frenzy of ardent emotion, Carter held her in his grip. Before his inner vision floated a picture—the same picture he had seen nightly at eleven. It was hard to believe he was actually there, beside her on the couch, instead of in his darkened lounge room, watching from a distance. Her charms were maddening temptations. He wanted to feast upon them like a hungry man at a banquet board. But how to do it, how to achieve his purpose in a swoon of kisses and embraces? He knew enough about her sex to understand love was like a game of bridge. You could lead your best suit but sometimes it was trumped.

"Cherry! Cherry, I love you!"

Her blue eyes opened like those of a child at dawn.

"Perhaps you'd better go now, Jack. There's a key on top of the desk. Take it and come back tomorrow night at eleven—"

"No, I want to hold and kiss you now!"

She pushed him away.

"Tomorrow night—"

Vainly he tried to capture the excitement and romance of the past moments. But she wouldn't yield or surrender. All she did was keep her lips shielded and his hands away from the expanse of her wonderful legs. Finally she slipped from his tight hold, hurried to the desk and brought him back the key.

"Here—take it—tomorrow night!" she said throatily.

CARTER'S THEATRICAL experience was sufficient to tell him the drama had ended temporarily. He put the key in his pocket, shook him-

self and leaned to kiss her. She stood on tip-toe, offering her scarlet mouth.

"Tomorrow night. Do me a favor," he pleaded. "Just one little favor."

"What's that?"

"Wear that gorgeous negligee instead of the dress."

Her eyes widened.

"How did you know—"

But Carter wasn't answering any questions. He laughed, kissed her again and reluctantly let himself out of the apartment.

The next day he went around like a man in a trance. At the Cheerio Club where rehearsals were in progress for the new floor show he was inattentive, thoughtful and retrospective. When the man directing the dance routines brought up a trio of pretty girls for his inspection he had to speak twice to get Carter's ear.

"I say, boss, how do you like the gambs on these fillies? Some assortment of daisy-stems, huh? And can they wave 'em."

Carter looked at them without much interest.

"Nice, very nice," he said absently.

"How about taking a slant at their shapes? If you want they can go inside and undress."

He grinned significantly, but Carter shook his head.

"Never mind. I can see they're very pulchritudinous. Put them to work, give 'em a job."

"The boss must be losing his grip," the dancing instructor murmured as he turned away. "Come on, gals. I won't disappoint you. He won't look, but I will. In here—"

To Carter the afternoon and evening seemed a hundred years long. He had dinner at the Cafe Two Arts and to kill time until eleven picked out the best picture on the stem and saw it twice.

IT WAS EXACTLY five minutes of the appointed hour when Carter's taxi whirled up to the front of the apartment where Cherry Mason lived. He flung the driver a two dollar bill, jumped out and went into the building. As the elevator took him up to the fourth floor he began to get last night's thrills again. They coursed through him, like tiny electrical currents that tingled bewitchingly. The elevator operator was a new man. He didn't speak to Carter and Carter didn't speak to him. The operator merely said: "Fourth floor," and slid open the fireproof door.

The key she had given Carter was like fire

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FINIS!

By

GRACE BENNETT

HIGH up in the Tyrol section there is a town called Inverness. A rambling inn glares at the surrounding country from its higher vantage point, and the town itself spills out over the mountainside. In the season, Inverness is lively with tourists. British tourists who come armed with overshoes and umbrellas; American tourists who laugh their way over the stern face of the Alps; French tourists who come with many children and much clumsy luggage; Italian tourists interested in intrigue and good cooking. Inverness is the meeting place for the adventurers of the world without being as blatant as Monte Carlo or as dirty as Cairo.

But even Inverness had never seen anything like the woman whose low powerful motor stopped in front of the Inn one particularly lovely day in early June.

The two men on the balcony watched her progress from the door of the car to the door of the Inn.

The younger of the two whistled under his breath. His companion looked at him slyly.

"Not for you, Carter," the older man advised. "Leave her alone. A woman as lovely as that is bound to have a very old, very jealous husband, and even the American consul can do very little in affairs of this type."

"But have you ever seen anything so beautiful?" Carter Wells asked his friend. "It's breath taking. It's—why it's positively phenomenal. Tell me, Julien, do you know the lady?"

"Slightly," Julien Roibeux murmured. "I also know enough to advise you to flee from those remarkable charms."

Even the ancient clerk widened his eyes as the woman approached the desk. "Yes, *Madame*," he was bowing and scraping for this was the wife of the great *Monsieur* Antoine Bruex whose fortune was as enormous as his face was ugly.

The woman's honey colored hair was all but hidden by the tight little hat she wore. She was gowned all in white, with the lines of her frock modeled so perfectly to the lines of her

figure that it was difficult to tell where one stopped and the other began.

TALLER THAN AVERAGE, she had a regal carriage with the rounded shoulders swinging clear of the rib structure, and the hips held firmly as she walked. Like most well bred Europeans she walked from the hips down, the upper torso being straight and motionless. This habit gave her a gliding appearance frequently seen in the strides of professional athletes or remarkable dancers.

The soft line of the breasts remained perfect as she walked, and not a wrinkle of her gown was discernible.

"I—I beg your pardon, *Mademoiselle*," Carter Wells stretched out a restraining hand. "My name is . . ."

She looked at him and her black-fringed grey eyes were coolly insolent. He saw she had the high cheek bones of the Slav, the tiny little chin and the ruby red full lips of her fellow-countrywomen. A breath-takingly lovely woman.

"I think you have made the mistake," she informed him. Her voice, while not accented, had a slight furriness around the consonants, but he could not place the intonation. German? He doubted it. Certainly not French. Italian? Not with that coloring. Of course—Danish. How stupid of him not to have known. "I do not know you, nor do I care to know you." She swept by him, but he was so enchanted by her loveliness that her rebuff scarcely registered.

"So you will not take the advice of a friend, *hein?*" Julien's mocking voice interrupted Carter's dreams. "But, since you seem to be so curious about the lady I shall tell you what I know. Come, we shall have an *aperitif*, and you can get whatever satisfaction you wish out of the story I shall tell you."

"The lady was not always so beautiful," Julien remarked when, at last, they seated themselves on one of the many terraces. "In fact, as a young girl she was more awkward than most. You know how these *jeune filles* are almost coltish in their stupidity. Her name was Dael Pavulo and she came of simple, honest

people whose only ambition was to some day get enough money to return to their native home in Finland. Dael was brought up in Lyons and later was sent to Paris where she was apprenticed to a very famous milliner."

"I know the rest of the story," Carter interrupted. "There she was discovered by a wealthy old man who made her his wife—and behold, she spends her vacations at Inverness."

JULIEN LAUGHED. "Not quite as simple as that. It is true *Monsieur Bruex* met her, fell in love with her—offered her marriage. But there was another boy."

"Enter the love interest," Carter murmured. "A poor but honest lad who wanted to do right by our Nell but couldn't afford to."

"More or less," the narrator mused. "The boy was wealthy, also, but he was affianced to another girl. Such a marriage would unite two of the largest fortunes in France. He did the next best thing, for he set Dael up in a magnificent establishment. There were motors, and cars, and jewels. The association lasted even after his marriage.

"But *Monsieur Bruex* is a clever man. He knew that one of two things would happen. Either Dael would some day be consumed with such an overpowering love for the boy that she would demand all his time—a thing he could never give her, for he knew his wife's family were essential to his business success; or she would tire of being tucked away in the background of his life. In either case, she would turn to *Monsieur Bruex*. This happened, of course. She left the other boy on the night his first son was born. Feminine vanity is a peculiar thing, is it not? She married *Monsieur Bruex*."

"Very interesting. And that's the secret sorrow of the Lady in White?"

"Three years ago she learned that the boy's marriage was desperately unhappy. We have had quite a time of it in Paris, you know. The vast fortune had dwindled to almost nothing, the child had proved to be a wastrel—although he is still but a little boy—the wife became acrimonious and sour. So, Dael, out of her huge resources attempted to straighten out the affairs of her former lover. The association, now reopened upon a basis of maturity and gratitude, quickly developed into a wild, passionate affair . . . and for five blessed days, Dael and her lover meet here. Five, little, short days in the course of every year. It is for this reason that you must not trouble her."

CARTER WAS STARING at the man. "You mean she has the nerve to come here—where everybody knows her—and carry on like that?"

"Like what?" Julien's brow wrinkled distastefully at the tone of the other's voice. "Have you seen anything unpleasant or cheap take place?"

"No, but she has just arrived. When does the boy friend put in an appearance?"

"That I do not know. He may be here now—he may come tomorrow. Nobody has ever seen anything other than *Madame* enjoying a rather quiet vacation—and the boy, tired and subdued, enjoying a typical business man's holiday. They nod when they pass. He climbs frequently in the course of his short stay. She lounges on the balcony. Sometimes, in the evening they take a short stroll. . . ."

"Then how do you know?"

"Because sometimes—when they think no one is noticing them—they look at each other. Across a dining room, across the lobby, across a counter—and in that look are all the answers to all the longing questions. Now, go away and don't bother her." Julien rose, and strode through the doorway. Carter's eyes followed him wonderingly. Crazy, emotional people, these French, the American told himself. Imagine getting all steamed up over a minor affair. New York reeked with that sort of thing, and nobody paid any attention to it.

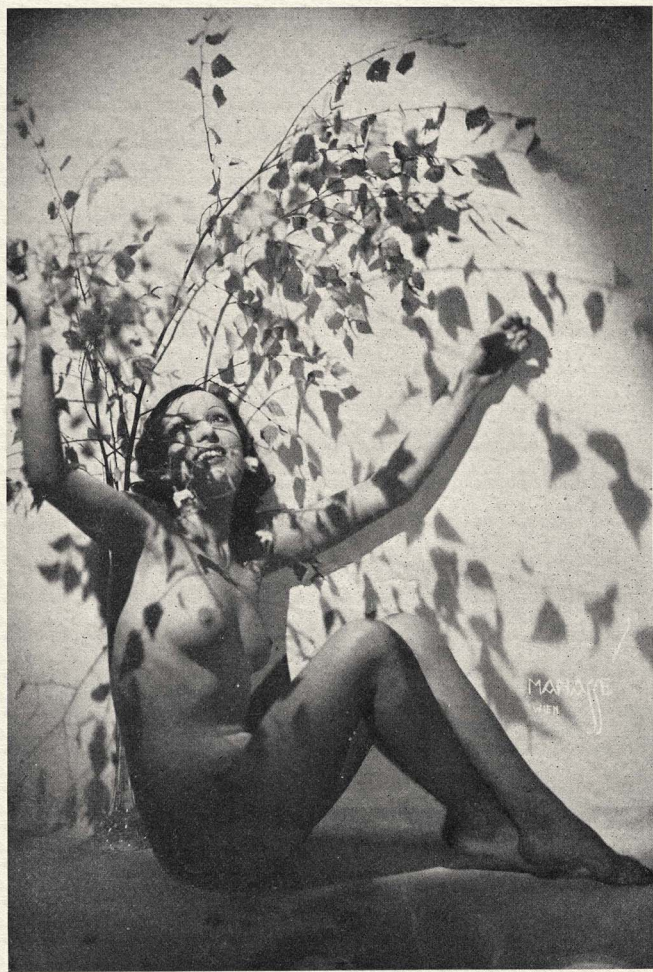
He had no intention of withdrawing from the lists of *Madame's* followers, of course. And now Julien's slightly misty sentimentality had added a certain interest to the affair. He would meet—and conquer—the icy Dael, and prove conclusively that love is pretty much a matter of financial expediency and geographical propinquity.

But this was easier said than done. The lady surrounded herself with a high barrier of silence. There was in her manner a complete indifference to the charms of the young American which he found more difficult to conquer than an active hatred.

SHE WAS SEATED in the summer house one afternoon when he joined her.

"You are very persistent, *Monsieur*," she told him gravely.

"You are very beautiful, *Madame*," he replied equally gravely. "I assure you I am not in the habit of thrusting my attentions upon any one who shows the disinclination for my company that you have shown. But I must know you. It is imperative."



"And now you are going to tell me that you have fallen madly in love with me, I suppose." Her voice was mocking, but her eyes twinkled with amusement.

He considered her statement for a moment. "No," he told her slowly. "I haven't fallen in love with you—but you are the most interesting woman I've ever met in my life, and I refuse to be snubbed."

"So I see. And is this common in your country—to annoy women?"

"I'm not annoying you," he protested. "Anyway, you are interested in me, and you know it."

She laughed, then. A light, carefree gay little laugh. "You are quite right," she told him ruefully. "But I did not expect such frankness."

He grinned at her admission. "Then, perhaps you will dine with me tonight?"

"But I cannot," she protested. "Tonight . . . however, I shall be free—shall we say about nine-thirty?"

It was a funny thing. He never saw her with anyone. If she were having an affair, he told himself bitterly, she must be doing it by remote control. She dined alone. There was no stranger in the hotel who could possibly be her lover. Sometimes she took a stroll with Julien—but she also walked with a funny little Englishman. And she was seen having tea with a dour Scot. Certainly none of the people there at the hotel were present because of a sentimental rendezvous. Maybe, and this idea had been growing in Carter's brain for some time, the man had failed her this year. Perhaps that was the reason that she was unbending in the direction of the visiting American. He shrugged indifferently. Whatever the reason, he felt a surge of victory at the memory of her promised appointment that evening.

PROMPTLY AT THE dot of nine-thirty, Carter presented himself at her door. Her low and husky voice bade him enter. Her apartment had evidently been furnished to order. A low-ceilinged room that was oblong in shape, and the wall opposite the door was comprised of six French windows. The low balcony beyond was banked with flowers, and beyond their moonlit leaves was the majestic glory of the Alpine peaks.

Dael did not rise when he entered, but permitted him to approach her. Her outstretched hand drew him down until he was seated on the hassock by her side. The *chaise longue* on which she reclined was upholstered in a deep

coral satin, forming a striking background for her own golden beauty.

"I cannot tell you how grateful I am . . ." he began, stroking one slim white hand. Beneath the diaphanous haze of her amber negligee he could see the delicate flesh tints of that perfect body, and the thought of that alabaster warmth sent the blood surging through his pulses.

She smiled, a slow, lazy smile as one smiles upon the antics of a rather dear but unimportant puppy.

"I am a frank woman, *Monsieur*," she told him simply. "And like all women, I have a price. . . ."

He looked at her curiously for a moment. But the expression in her eyes left no question in his mind. He felt a cold chill of shock at the mercenary words.

"You are jesting," he protested, running an index finger up the inner surface of a forearm. The skin was wonderfully soft to his touch. For a moment her fingers clung to his convulsively. Then, as though she were thrusting all other thoughts from her mind, she permitted those pink-tipped hands to relax in his.

"I am not jesting, *Monsieur*," she told him gravely. "People think I am a wealthy woman. That, alas, is no longer true. My husband, who arrives here tomorrow, has been more than kind and generous to me. Now he needs my full support. Ah, not money, you understand, but in time, in affection, in loyalty. This is the last time I shall have a vacation by myself. And this is the last night of my last vacation."

"I see." None of this made sense to Carter, but the fact that she did not pull away when he leaned over to kiss a silken shoulder lightly, thrilled him beyond words. "So, instead of taking leave of the boy friend, you call in the Marines—represented by myself—and scatter your favors. A last reckless fling, I take it."

HE KNEW HIS words hurt her, and he was glad. For she had besmirched a dream, the essence of which he would not dare admit. Had she been anyone else, had she been less beautiful, less intriguing, less glorious he could have forgiven her. But she was so absolutely what every woman should be, so completely the epitome of every man's dreams that he felt gyped at discovering the clay feet.

She winced, but her eyes met his bravely. "What you think is nothing to me," she told him, "but what you do is everything to me. This evening shall be yours—but I warn you,

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THE DOUGH BOY

By

KEN COOPER

IT was Mrs. Reginald Barker's theory—as it is the theory of every widow in reduced circumstances with a daughter to marry off—that a girl could just as easily fall in love with a rich man as she could with a poor.

"In fact, Elsa," she said, addressing the blonde, twenty year old object of Mrs. Barker's thoughts, "a wealthy man can give you all the comforts of life." She wagged a plump finger. "And let me tell you, nothing spoils wedded bliss so much as lack of comfort. Why, when your father—"

"I've heard that a dozen times, Mother," Elsa snapped pettishly. "Must I hear it again? I'll do as you wish. It doesn't really matter to me. If you want to go to Pineville for the summer we'll go to Pineville." She drew a deep breath, swelling the young, nubile breasts under the bodice of her dress. "But I warn you I won't be nudged into marrying some lispng son of a multi-millionaire oil magnet just because you want to lounge around wearing a French negligee and eating three dollar a pound candy! And that's that!"

Elsa tossed her blonde head, vanished from the living room of the modest Barker apartment. Mrs. Barker sniffled, dabbed at her nose with a handkerchief. Mrs. Barker was always sniffing and dabbing at her nose with a handkerchief when she wasn't eating chocolates and discussing reducing diets.

In her room, Elsa slammed the door shut behind her, sat down on the bed. "Pineville!" she grunted. "Mr. DePuyster-Puyster-Piff-sniffle and all the rest of the Piffsniffles!" She sighed. "Oh, what's the use?" Elsa leaned back on the bed, flexed her muscles. She looked down the length of her trimly curved body. Sometimes she almost wished she were flat-chested, knock-kneed and cross-eyed. Yes, and hare-lipped! Maybe if her breasts weren't high and round and her hips succulently curved and her thighs like polished ivory pillars, her mother wouldn't think she was such a swell prospect in the marriage mart.

ELSA CLOSED HER deep blue eyes, dreamed of a paradise uninfested by mercenary people.

Why was everything given a money value? Love, affection, marriage? Why couldn't her mother let her meet some nice boy in the natural course of things, have her romance, get the most out of it? No, it would be Pineville with its ultra-ultra rich, their lap dogs, their limousines.

And Pineville it was, as Elsa knew it would be the moment her mother mentioned it. Mrs. Barker had the munificent sum of \$900 in the bank, the last of the money Mr. Barker had left. Elsa had \$85 in a Christmas fund which she drew out at her mother's request.

"That makes \$985," Mrs. Barker said. "Of course, it isn't much but I think we can manage. We'll stay at the *Miramar*. It isn't the best hotel in Pineville but it's one of the best. They charge \$30 a day per person."

Elsa couldn't resist the opportunity. "You'll have to work fast, won't you, mother? Sixty dollars a day only gives us two weeks."

"Elsa!" reprovingly. "Please don't discuss it in that manner." Mrs. Barker began to sniffle, dab at her nose. "Why, when your father was—"

"I've heard that one, too, mother. Hadn't we better start packing?"

The train trip to Pineville was uneventful. Naturally, to maintain the illusion of grandeur (an illusion backed by \$985) Mrs. Barker insisted on riding in the parlor car. Fortunately for Elsa, her mother fell asleep over a box of chocolates and a movie magazine. Annoyed with the green plush and white head rests of the parlor car, Elsa slipped out of her seat, headed for the day coach smoking car at the end of the train.

THERE SHE SLID into a seat, curled her slim legs up, lit a cigarette, and puffed in something akin to contentment. She was admiring the rolling country side and thinking of how to avoid meeting all the stuffed shirts her doting mother was bound to dig up, when a voice sounded at her shoulder.

"May I have a light, please?"

Elsa turned, looked up into the smiling face of an exceptionally handsome young man. He

had bright gray eyes, a nice mouth and a firm chin. She held up her cigarette. He lit his, puffed in.

"Going far?" he questioned.

"Pineville," Elsa said.

"Really? So am I. Mind if I sit here? I always like to talk to people on trains. Funny that way."

Elsa moved over. She watched his eyes glance hurriedly down the front of her body, pause a moment where her bosom jutted provocatively. That didn't bother her. All men did that. It was part of their make-up.

"So, you're going to Pineville," he said. "Vacation?"

Elsa swallowed hard. "Er—no, not exactly."

HE CROSSED HIS legs. The trousers of his linen suit were well wrinkled. He didn't wear garters and his socks hung listlessly.

"Work?"

"Er—yes, sort of." That was strangely the truth. Fortune hunting was work—hard, detestable work.

"My name's Boyd Arnold," he said, apropos of nothing at all. "I didn't get yours."

Elsa smiled. "No, I didn't give it to you. It's Rose—Rose Smith."

"Swell place, Pineville," he said. "Lots of rich people go there."

"Do you like rich people?"

He scowled. "Not much. Most of them are snobs. Do you like them?"

"No!" decisively. "I detest them!"

"I'm going to the C.C.C. camp near Pineville," he said quickly. "Maybe on my nights off you and I could see each other, huh?"

Elsa liked his fresh wholesomeness. It was like eating cooling sherbet. "Yes, maybe we could."

HE MOVED CLOSER to her. His leg touched hers. "Where will you be? I could drop you a line and tell you when I'm coming in. Would that be okay?"

"Yes, that would be fine. I'll be at the Hotel Miramar."

"Working there?"

"Uh huh."

His face glowed. "You know, I was wondering what to do in Pineville—I mean at the C.C.C. camp. This sort of takes a load off my mind. Can I call you Rose and will you call me Boyd?"

"Yes, of course."

He touched her arm. "How about coming out on the platform? It's cooler."

Elsa agreed. She wondered what her mother would say if she knew this chance acquaintance was already addressing her by her assumed given name, escorting her out to the platform, holding her arm. Mrs. Barker would, in all probability, have a fit. And, Elsa reflected, her mother's fits were fits with a capital "F".

Out on the platform the C.C.C. recruit waxed loquacious. He was becoming a C.C.C. boy, he said, because there wasn't much else to do. Jobs were scarce and all that. Elsa agreed. Yes, jobs were scarce. Did he think he'd like the work? Yes, he thought he would, especially now that he had something to which he might look forward on his nights off.

"What does one do in Pineville of a night?" Elsa questioned.

"Oh, I guess there must be a movie house or maybe a place where they serve beer and you can dance. Or else, you can just walk around. Do you like to walk?"

Elsa nodded. "I do, quite a lot."

SUDDENLY THE TRAIN lurched as it went around a curve. Elsa went off balance, straight into the arms of the young man. He caught her, held her. The position was perfect for a kiss. Her head was thrown back and her red lips were parted, a bare inch or two away from his mouth. His arms circled her waist and her bosom seemed to bore into his chest. They held that position for a long moment. Then, quickly, as though opportunity was knocking and would not return again, he kissed her. Not just a plain, ordinary peck. Hardly. It was a full, warm kiss, with his arms tightening and pressing her curved body close to him.

When he released her they were both flushed. "I—I'm sorry!" he gasped. "I—I really didn't mean to, but—but—"

Elsa fiddled with a stray strand of hair. "I understand," she said quietly. If the truth were to be known she would have raised no objection if he repeated the presumptuous act. Yes, repeated it again and again. For the first time in all her life, she was tingling. Her breath was hard to control and her pulses pounded. A pleasantly warm wave rolled over her.

This was a nice state of affairs, she thought. Here she was falling in love with a good looking young member of the unemployed whose future was as nebulous as the Big Dipper on a cloudy night. Who, unless an economic miracle occurred, would be chopping trees and



building country roads until the end of time or the arrival of a Republican administration.

Very pretty, what with Mrs. Reginald Barker peacefully asleep in the parlor car, dreaming, no doubt, of diamond tiaras and sable coats and liveried chauffeurs.

IT WASN'T FAIR to her mother, Elsa decided. The least she could do was wait until they reached Pineville.

"I—I'll have to go now," she stammered. "It—it's been nice meeting you and you must get in touch with me."

He gripped her hand. "You aren't mad because of what I did, are you?" he queried, obviously worried about the turn of affairs.

"Mad?" Elsa would have liked to tell him just how she felt. To tell him how nice it was to have his arms about her and his lips on hers. Instead, she smiled and squeezed his fingers. "Don't be silly. Of course I'm not mad. Good-bye."

Mrs. Barker awakened as Elsa returned to the parlor car. She sat up with a start. "Where are we?" she gasped.

"On a train," Elsa replied. "On a train headed for Pineville."

THE TRAIN FINALLY arrived at Pineville. Elsa, fearful lest she might bump into her conquest, delayed the debarkation as long as possible. Fortunately, Pineville was the last stop on the line and they could take as long as they liked.

Elsa breathed easier when they reached the hotel and were safe in the suite of two rooms and bath Mrs. Barker had reserved at \$60 per day. They were nice rooms and a lovely bath, but Elsa could think of a lot of things \$60 might buy to better advantage.

Mrs. Barker tested the beds, saw to the view from the front windows, hopped about the place like a mother hen. "Isn't this simply too, too impressing?" she gurgled.

Elsa nodded wearily. It was too, too much trouble to do anything else. She stripped off her traveling clothes, stepped into the shower. That was one of Elsa's greatest pleasures—showering. She liked to watch the water cascade off her breasts, leaving little silver bubbles on the tight-skinned globes.

Refreshed, she stretched out on one of the beds, garbed only in flimsy panties. Her mother spied her, gasped.

"Elsa, haven't you any shame?"

Elsa grinned. "Do you see anything to be ashamed of? I'll name fifty women who'd give their birthrights for this body."

Mrs. Barker, exhausted by the effrontery of her one and only offspring, dropped wearily into a chair.

She wasn't so weary an hour or so later when she descended into the lobby. In fact, she was the essence of industry. So much so that at dinner she was able to present Elsa to Mr. and Mrs. Edmund DeKoven and their son, Morton.

ELSA SMIRKED AT Morton. He was tall, thin, anaemic and banjo-eyed. From entree to dessert he discussed polo ponies until Elsa thought she was eating them. After dinner, Morton invited her to stroll down to the tennis courts. She was about to refuse when a look from her mother warned her that refusal was suicide.

At the tennis courts, Morton did not talk about tennis. What did he talk about? You're right. Polo ponies. Later that night as Elsa and Mrs. Barker ascended to their room, the latter opened the door.

"Wait a minute!" Elsa panted. "See if there are any polo ponies under the beds!"

MRS. BARKER ADDED to her circle of acquaintances. In rapid order the following day. One by one, all eligible sons were dragged to Elsa for introduction. They were prize packages. One of them collected postage stamps. His father was a multi-millionaire gold mine owner. Within a short time Elsa was all ready to slap a couple of air mail stamps on his nose and send him to Alaska.

The following morning there was a letter from Boyd Arnold. "Will be in tonight," it said. "Looking forward to seeing you. Eight o'clock in front of the hotel."

Luck was with Elsa. That evening, Mrs. Barker was invited to visit the estate of a friend of the DeKoven's. Elsa shooed her off before eight, donned her cheapest cotton print dress and waited outside the hotel.

Boyd arrived five minutes later, attired in the same sack suit he had worn on the train. He took her hands, squeezed them feelingly.

"Swell to see you!" His face lit up and his eyes sparkled.

Elsa compared him with Morton of the polo ponies, Edgar of the postage stamps and Percival of the nothing at all. He was so different. Pauper or no pauper he had what it took to set Elsa's heart to beating frantically.

He suggested a walk. "The boys were telling me of a swell park near here. I think we can find it if we take a carriage."



Elsa objected. "Carriages cost money."
"I've got a little. Come on."

THEY HIRED a carriage, drove out beyond the town limits to what was part park and part rustic picnic ground. Boyd paid off the driver, took Elsa's arm.

The air was heavy with the sweet, pungent scent of honeysuckle. A faint breeze blew in from the East; just enough to kill the humidity.

"Nice here, isn't it?" he queried, breathing in audibly. "Swell scent."

Elsa was thrilling to the touch of his fingers on her bare arm. She wondered if he would move them just a few inches higher to where soft flesh curved out in a firm, gelatinous hillock.

"Yes, it is nice," she murmured.

They walked through the park for some time. Finally Boyd suggested resting on one of the rustic benches. Elsa sat close to him, her thigh almost touching his. He moved away. Something was wrong. She wriggled close to him again and he moved away.

"How do you like the work at the camp?" she asked.

He shrugged. "Not bad."

Elsa moved closer again. For a moment their thighs touched, then he moved away.

"What's the matter, Boyd?" she questioned.

He hung his head. "Nothing."

"You don't seem very sociable tonight."

HE LOOKED UP suddenly. His eyes were glowing. "I—I don't want to get in wrong!" he gasped. "I can't trust myself with you! I—I'm crazy about you and—"

The moon came up over the serrated edge of the horizon like a great silver ball. The night was pungent with sweetness. Everything was right for romance.

Elsa dropped her hand on his arm. "I won't be mad, Boyd," she whispered. "I—I won't mind if you kiss me and—"

She never finished the sentence. His mouth covered her lips and his hands raced over the curves of her body, making her quiver. Elsa touched his cheeks, ran her fingers through his brown hair. She went limp.

ELSA WAS READING in bed when her mother returned. Mrs. Barker was all agog. Her avoirdupois shook like so much jelly.

"Elsa, darling!" she gasped. "I met the most delightful people. The Wentworths of New York, Newport News, Pineville, Florida—"

"And points East," Elsa added.

Mrs. Barker ignored the causticism, went on. "And they have a son. He wasn't in tonight but I saw his picture. He's positively stunning! And, of course, the DeKovens raved about you as they naturally would. And so, Mr. & Mrs. Wentworth insisted that I bring you out tomorrow night to meet their son, Richard!" Mrs. Barker paused for breath.

Elsa's heart sank. She had made another date with Boyd for tomorrow night. He was going to sneak out of camp to meet her. She knew better than to buck her mother. It might be possible to make both. Boyd wasn't to meet her until ten.

AT EIGHT THE following evening, Mrs. Barker and Elsa (in a hired limousine) drove into the Wentworth estate. A lackey answered the door, escorted them into a sumptuous drawing room. Mrs. Wentworth, white-haired and fluttery, greeted them.

"Oh, you are beautiful!" she gushed at Elsa. "Richard will be surprised. I had such a time keeping him in tonight." She turned to the butler. "Tell Master Richard I wish to see him."

Elsa had a faint idea of what Master Richard would look like. He probably bred beetles. She sat on pins and needles waiting. Then the portieres parted and a young man stepped into the room. Elsa's eyes bulged. The young man's eyes bulged. But they both understood. They both knew why each of them had practiced subterfuge.

"Hello, Rose," he whispered when they were introduced.

"Hello, Boyd," she replied.

THEY WERE MARRIED within the week. Mrs. Barker was lit up like a lighthouse. She had gutten her dough boy for Elsa and all was quiet on the matrimonial front.

RAWHIDE KISSES

By

BOBBY BARNES

THE thing was incredible. They didn't beat men like that in this day and age. But it went on, the whistle of the rawhide thongs wrapping themselves around a slim straight figure in the courtyard right beneath her windows.

Suzy couldn't stand it another minute. Although she'd been shut in her rooms two days now, rather than meet Rod Fane, she had to get down and make him stop the whipping of the prisoner.

She tore open the office door and rushed in and leaned against it panting.

Rod Fane, sheriff of Fane's Cut, saloon-keeper and owner of everything in the tiny village huddled in the valley, looked up from his ledgers and grinned unpleasantly as he took in the sweet young figure huddled against the scarred old door. A dude girl, she was, this Suzy Alcott, and never had he had such a one in his clutches.

His flaming glance swept over the rounded figure tricked out in fringed buckskin shirt, thin silk blouse drawn tightly over straining, young breasts. Shining, soft kid boots showed bare knees between their tops and the white fringed buckskin skirt.

Brown curls, redlighted, tumbled about her face and stayed down the collar of her blouse, one curl even hid in the sweet white valley of her bosom.

"Make them stop that awful beating, Mr. Fane," gasped Suzy, wetting her trembling red mouth. "What has he done?"

"Only killed a banker at Painted Post who refused to lend him money," drawled Fane. "He hasn't confessed yet, but I reckon he soon will or die."

SUZY CLEARED THE SPACE between them and leaned over the desk. "You've got to stop it. You can! Let them take him to Painted Post and get his confession. I can't stand it having him beaten right under my window."

"Rawhide kisses, we call them, sweetheart. There's a kind I'd swop them for," smiled Fane, his gaze wandering over her figure.

"You mean?"

"I mean you ride out with him tomorrow night to Painted Post and he doesn't get beaten any more. It'll cost you one kiss tonight and plenty tomorrow night."

"Oh, I couldn't," wailed Suzy.

"No? Excuse me and I'll tell them to let up a little on the lashes, make them farther between so he'll last all night," Fane drawled, rising.

"No, you wouldn't be so brutal," gasped Suzy.

"I reckon I would, to get your promise to let me kiss you," Fane said coldly, but the coldness did not extend to his eyes. They were hot and Suzy's clothes seemed to sear and shrivel and fall off one by one until she stood nude before that stripping, burning glance.

"All . . . all right. I'll be what you want me to be," whispered Suzy. "I can't stand any more. He's so young."

"And I get the kiss now?"

"As soon as you tell them to stop beating him and that they are not to do it any more. And will only take one kiss tonight," Suzy said faintly.

"I could take all I want, but I won't. You can't say I took you by force if anyone comes snooping. You'll ride out with me peacefully then you can't get me in trouble saying I assaulted you or any such truck. Fane keeps his skirts clean."

"Yes, yes, get out there before they kill him," panted Suzy.

Fane went outside where his men had a young fellow roped to a post. "Quit it now; the girl gave in," he said grinning. "Take him inside. I'll ride out with him tomorrow night and I don't ride alone," he added, with a leer.

"We did a good job. She never got wise we hit the post more than him," laughed one of the men, stooping over the unconscious figure huddled at the foot of the post. "The first whack put him out but it didn't hurt him . . . much."

FANE WENT BACK in, straight to the girl at the window. He gathered her into his arms

and dragged her hard against him as she tried to strain back. His thin mouth swooped over her red one, pushing, enveloping, smothering her.

Suzy went faint at his kiss but something brought her back. Fane's hand pushing back her curls, going after one that had strayed too far, and forgetting to bring back his hand.

The office door crashed open and, swearing, Fane had to let Suzy go.

She staggered back against the dirty window her hands flying to her torn blouse.

It was the deputy with the prisoner. "You didn't say what to do with him," whined the deputy, quailing beneath his boss' blazing look.

"Take him up to the third floor and lock him in!" roared Fane.

Suzy gathered up her trembling legs and sped past the two men. "See you tomorrow night," she flung back, and started up the stairs as fast as she could go, all weak and sick as she felt.

It was the first good look she had had at the prisoner, but he was worth what he cost her.

His hair was like palest gold and waved on his temples like a baby's, but he was tanned and his mouth, while tender, was firm. He hadn't uttered a sound from the first blow. The blow that had knocked him down and showed to one side of his temples, a dark, ugly ridge.

He was the young owner of the Silver Cup mine and had ridden in with Fane's deputies early this morning.

Suzy gained her room and locked the door. It had a bar on it too and she dropped that. Oh, Fane protected her all right. He meant no other man to have the girl he wanted.

She looked at the cruel slash in the mountain which made the valley a tiny, half mile cup, with frowning mountain cliffs all around it. It was the only way out or in and she had come in searching for her brother, and Fane had seen to it that she hadn't gone out. His men guarded the Cut and let in and out just those their boss allowed to travel.

Fane hadn't dared take Suzy by force but he had done his best to weaken her resistance and now he had won by having a prisoner beaten under her windows.

TOMORROW NIGHT SHE would apparently go willingly with Fane, out of the Cut, and when people came hunting, if they did, there'd be witnesses enough to swear she'd gone of her own accord.

She heard the deputy fling the prisoner into

the next room. It, too, had barred windows like hers and strong locks.

The deputy rapped on her door. "Keep an eye on him, miss. Fane says you're to be the new missus and might as well begin helping him by guarding the prisoner. If he makes a move, call down to the office."

Suzy opened the door. "Give me the key and I'll dress his head."

"Aw, I can't. I'm riding to Painted Post tonight to tell them I've got their prisoner for them and I have to turn in the keys to the boss."

"Supposing you forgot? He's mighty excited over getting me, he may forget to ask you till you're gone," wheedled Suzy.

"What's it worth to me to give them to you?" the deputy asked bluntly.

"A . . . a kiss?" asked Suzy, reflecting nothing could be worse than Fane's kiss.

The deputy stepped into her room, his face eager, and Suzy went meekly into his arms, her hands closing over the key. Well, it wasn't much better than Fane's, but she didn't scrub her mouth till she had pushed the deputy out the door. "When you come back . . . if you haven't told . . ." she hinted.

Ear pressed to the door, she heard him clatter out the door then ran to the window and, far below, she saw him jump on his horse and ride away. He hadn't told, for not half an hour later she heard Fane come up the stairs and try the door to the prisoner's room then go away swearing.

"Well, he can't get out till Derby gets back," she heard him say, "and he's served his purpose. Suzy!"

"What is it? I'm going to bed," Suzy snapped.

"Thought you'd like to help celebrate," he called back.

"No! I want to be rested for tomorrow night," Suzy said, more gently.

"Then give me a kiss," wheedled Fane.

"Tomorrow night," Suzy said firmly, and heard him swear but he went downstairs.

HIS CELEBRATION WAS going hot by ten o'clock from all sounds then at eleven she heard his men on the floor below, putting him to bed before they went back to their liquor.

Suzy sighed with relief, took the key and let herself out of her room, locked the door after her and unlocked the door next to hers.

A lamp burned low and she made out the young man stretched on the bed and went over to him, and put a soft cool hand on his head.

"Suffering much?" she asked.

He wakened with a start. "What? No, not at all. What are you doing here?"

"A fellow prisoner," Suzy said bitterly. "I came to see if I could do anything for you."

"No. I'm not hurt except the tunk over the head. Strange, they didn't seem to hit me at

flogging right under my windows. I was a sucker."

"Yes, you were. He wouldn't have dared hurt me much. He'll pay for this much!" said the young man, gingerly feeling of the ridge on his head. "But you . . . what are you doing here?"



all after that first hard blow." He sat up and found his cigarettes and lit one, watching Suzy through the smoke.

Suzy started. "Why no, of course they didn't! It was all a beautiful show for a sucker. I'm the sucker. You see Fane has wanted me but he hadn't the nerve to take me by force, so, knowing me for a softie, he faked that

"Came in through the Cut hunting my brother and Fane has kept me here on one excuse or another, claiming to be hunting him. Last night he admitted he hadn't searched at all, that he wanted to keep me here. Tonight I promised he could take me out to the Cut tomorrow night. There's no J.P. here and he does mean to marry me," Suzy said bit-

terly. And then she heard:

"And you gave in because of me?" the young man asked incredulously.

"Yes, I never could stand suffering. Fane found that out when I made one of his men quit beating a puppy the other day. This gave him an excuse."

"Now what? Escape?"

"There isn't any escape. Besides I promised to ride out with him and I keep my promises. You can't get away because his men guard the Cut."

"I don't want to get away. Tomorrow there will be officers here to tell Fane what he already knows, that I didn't kill the banker. You can ride out with us."

SUZY SHOOK HER head. "I can't. I promised, even if he did make a sucker out of me. I couldn't live with myself afterwards if I broke a promise."

"Why, you soft little sap!" blazed the man, taking her by the shoulders and shaking her. "He was mauling you plenty too when the deputy brought me in."

"Yes." Suzy looked sick. "What's your name? I can't keep on calling you 'say' all night."

"Quinton Leslie. But, all night? You mean you aren't safe in your room?"

Suzy shook her head. "No, I didn't mean that. I'm quite safe because he's been getting himself dead drunk ever since I promised. He's out like a light but . . ." she hesitated, getting scarlet. "I thought . . . well skip it!"

Leslie took her hand and drew her down beside him. "Let's clear all this up. Supposing I make them bring you to Painted Post? Save you in spite of yourself?"

"I'd come back and keep my promise. You see my family has been a bunch of quitters. I swore I'd see anything through that I started. Brother got in a mess and ran away. I cleaned that up and came after him to make him face the music after this. Dad shot himself when he got in debt. Mother had run off with another man . . . couldn't face losing her lover even for her family. My big sis married a rich old man, rather than face poverty . . . well I'm facing everything, keeping my promises no matter what it costs."

"Why you swell little kid, you," Leslie said softly, putting his arm around her shoulders and giving her a hard hug. "What I wouldn't give for a girl like you."

"That's it," Suzy said, very low. "I came . . . I thought you might like me enough . . .

and afterwards, when I was married to him I could shut my eyes and make believe it was someone nice . . . like you." She looked down, color staining the back of her neck where the curls fell away each side of her face and strayed down the inside of her blouse.

"I get it. You want someone decent first. But that will only make it worse afterwards and I might . . . well I might disappoint you and not be nice. You're a lovely little, wild rose . . . what is your name?"

"Suzy Alcott."

"Well, you're pretty sweet, Suzy, and I might forget myself and not be so sweet," Leslie said gravely.

Suzy sighed. "I've been pretty brazen, have I not?" I'm not usually that way. It was the thought of Fane when I've dreamed of . . . well, skip it. I'll go back to my room."

"Stay here and talk." Leslie pushed her head down on his shoulder. "I'd like to kiss a game little sport. . . ."

"All right." Suzy's long lashes fell and excitement flamed in her eyes. Maybe she could pull it off yet.

HE BENT AND gently touched her lips and found them warm and eager and responsive. They clung to his in an exciting way, even though they were slightly parted so his kiss deepened and became something of fire and madness.

He bent his head to kiss her throat and found the inquisitive curl in the way and swept it aside and saw revealed gleaming white skin and kissed it instead and felt her shiver in his arms then clung closer.

Already Leslie had forgotten he had not meant to take the gift offered him. The silk blouse fell with the faintest whisper of regret at leaving such loveliness, and the creamy buckskin skirt followed and Suzy's body shimmered and glowed through the silk and lace chemise like a pink vase.

Slim, shiny boots fell with a thud that should have wakened the drunken Fane, but didn't. Suzy's heart was beating so hard it seemed everyone in the sordid building must hear it and Leslie's was thudding against hers even harder. It seemed as though his heart beats bruised her soft flesh but she hugged the hurt harder to her as Leslie's lips flamed against hers. His hand traced the rounded curves and made intriguing discoveries that led to the lamp spluttering out with a final outraged puff that filled the room with kero-

sene reek but the shadow on the cot never noticed.

It was morning but there were no stirs in the halls when Suzy freed herself and began dressing. Leslie was in the first heavy sleep and did not hear and not until she was dressed all but her boots did she stoop over and press her mouth lingeringly over his. He stirred a little at that and reached for her but she slipped out of reach and unlocked the door and locked it again.

In her own room she slipped between cool sheets that hugged her tired body agreeably. Exit heaven, and enter hell, but she'd have to-day to dream.

Now she knew she'd been a fool to think Leslie's caresses could make Fane's agreeable. That she could shut her eyes and believe it was Leslie in whose arms she was.

She thought fleetingly of death. That would be easy but she was an Alcott who saw things through so she'd make Fane a good wife and pray he'd tire of her quickly and kick her out for another girl. He'd had plenty.

THERE WAS A LOUD pounding on her door and Fane's voice, and she wakened from a delicious, mad dream to see the sun sliding rapidly down the western sky.

"You little devil, wake up," Fane's jovial voice said. "We're riding out in an hour. Come down and eat, you can't live on love. Come ready to ride."

Suzy dressed and packed her saddlebags for the first time in six weeks. She was a slim boy today in riding breeches, boots and pullover sweater and she also huddled on a big leather coat before going downstairs.

Fane was eating a belated meal and making poor work of it after his drunk. He grinned as his glance licked over the bundled up figure. "Good girl, all the more exciting for me. Anything I dote on is having to strip a girl of a lot of bungling clothes."

Suzy sank hastily into a chair, cheeks scarlet, and began eating and found she was half starved after a day's fast.

"Say, you're a good sport, Suzy," Fane said admiringly. "I'll be good to you, I swear. Well, get the fellows ready, Derby, and we'll be on our way." Fane strode to the door. "Your horse is waiting. Come as soon as you are through."

Suzy finished, choking over the last bites but downing them, for she was going to need her strength. There was no escape for her now. Leslie's friends had not come, as he ex-

pected. He couldn't prevent her from keeping her word if he wanted to.

Leslie was on a horse that was tied at the hitching rail, and his wrists were manacled and a chain fastened the cuffs to the saddle. Suzy's eyes flashed then she went all weak for he looked up and saw her in the window and his whole soul was in his smile.

Hurriedly Suzy went out, snapping the strap of her sombrero under her chin.

Derby, the deputy, stopped her. "You promised me plenty when I got back and I find you riding out to get spliced to Fane," he growled.

"Can I help it?" Suzy asked scornfully. "I'd have kept my promise to you if Fane hadn't forced me to go with him."

"Yeah, I guess you would. I know how he fooled you into promising. Well, maybe you'll get sick of his maulings." Derby went out and sprang into his saddle and jerked the reins back over his mount's head.

SUZY WENT OUT too and let Fane lift her to the saddle. He straightened her feet in the stirrups and drew a slow hand up her calf, his eyes burning over her face as he did so. She sat like a statue, looking straight ahead and Fane, with a laugh, got into his own saddle and started the little party out, he and Suzy in the lead where the road was narrow, the deputy and prisoner behind.

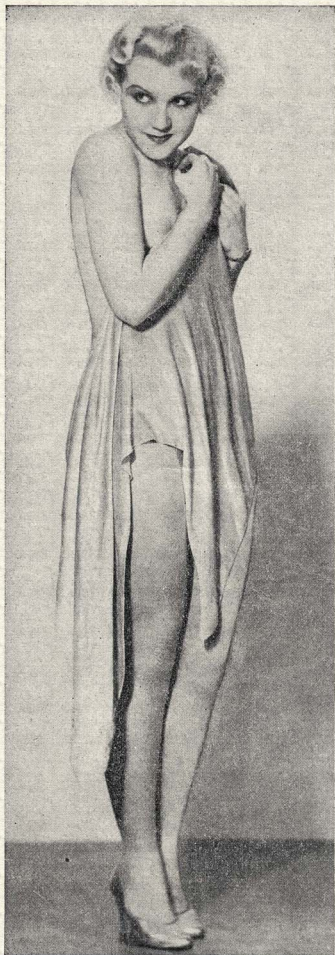
They went through the Cut at a lope and Suzy shivered when she saw the fast sliding sun. They'd be at Painted Post in another hour and Fane wouldn't wait till morning to hunt up a J.P. to make her his.

Leslie was looking at her when she looked back once and she did not look again for fear Fane would notice something and do hurt to her sweetheart.

Fane rode close to her side and lifted Suzy out of the saddle up in front of his. "I saw him looking at you," he said softly, threateningly. "I wanted to spill him down the cliff for it. I will if he doesn't look out. It'd make things a lot easier. I'm likely to go up as it is for false arrest and beating him. I've a good notion to crowd his horse off the trail."

"Silly," Suzy tried to say lightly. "Let him live and we'll go so far away he can't catch up with us." Of her own free will she settled back in Fane's arms and when his hand slid over her shoulder and followed the line of her throat she restrained the shiver and said nothing.

He was breathing fast now and bent and kissed her hard, his hand closing on her soft



upper arm. Suzy grew faint under that kiss. "Posse coming, boss," growled Derby in warning.

Fane swore and put Suzy back on her own horse and glared down the trail. "Women with them," he muttered, then swore more wildly than ever. "I never thought they'd track us to the Cut, Derby."

DERBY LOOKED AND SWORE too at the sight of the two women riding with the sheriff of Painted Post, then he swung his horse about and beat it back up over the hogback, and Fane, after that identification, did the same.

"What ever?" gasped Suzy.

"Looks as though their ball and chains had caught up with them," gritted Leslie, spurring up beside Suzy. "I could kill you for letting him touch you."

"He was going to shove your horse over the cliff's edge," Suzy said sickly. "I had to get his mind off that."

The two hard looking dames, after a yell, spurred their horses after the vanishing men.

"Those women are the deserted wives of those two tough hombres," grinned the sheriff, hunting and finding the key to Leslie's shackles. "Reckon that's the last we'll ever see of the sheriff of the Cut and his deputy. Who's the little lady, Mr. Leslie?"

"Miss Alcott, Suzy Alcott, my future wife," Leslie said proudly.

"Pleased to meet you, ma'am. Mebbe you're some kin to young Don Alcott who made a little strike up our way and telegraphed for his sister."

"He's my brother," Suzy said joyously.

"Well, it'll be a right pleasant reunion. It wasn't much of a strike but he's the kind will make others and if he has a sister like you, married to the owner of the Silver Cup mines, it don't need to be much of a strike," beamed the sheriff.

"Why not ride back and tell Alcott his sister will arrive sometime tomorrow forenoon," hinted Leslie. "Tell him she's been hunting for him."

"Why land of Goshen, Mr. Leslie, just ride along and tell him yourself. Er . . . er . . . maybe the young lady is tuckered . . . come to notice she does look meachin'. I'll leave my pack pony with stuff and blankets so's you can make camp and have some grub to last you till you get in. Want I should go after Fane and fetch him in for making a false arrest? Wonder why he did it."

"He needed me to help him along some of

his own deviltry. No, let him go. He's probably on the prod two leaps ahead of those dames," Leslie said generously.

THE SHERIFF WHEELED his horse and set out after his posse and the two watched him cut out and hobble a pack horse and leave him behind.

"What did you tell him we'd be in tomorrow for?" Suzy demanded. "I want to see my brother and . . ."

"In a hurry?" Leslie asked, coming to her side and sliding his arms around her and lifting her from her horse. "Tomorrow there'll be so much excitement what with my adventure and your coming and our wedding, we'll hardly have a free minute till dark, but now here's a nice green, secluded canyon, food, horses, solitude. Tonight there'll be plenty of stars and here's thick pine needles just made for meachin' young ladies." He pulled Suzy gently down on the warm brown needles, his smile daring her to rebel.

Suzy sighed, "Good-bye, freedom," she said sadly, and lay back, her arms under her head, young red mouth smiling.

Leslie leaned over her and coaxed out of its hiding place the fat curl which always usurped the sweetest kiss spot and put his mouth there, then trailed his lips further up Suzy's throat to her mouth.

Suzy found she didn't need a pillow half as much as she needed to put her arms around Leslie's neck and when he began counting off the buttons on her breeches, "Rich man, poor man, beggarman, thief, doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief; tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, rich man," and the last button was rich man he thought he was rich indeed to find so much sweet skin hidden by the buttons.

The soft green canyon became a place of caught breaths and soft sighs and a pinon squirrel came out to see why it was so quiet. There was no doubt about her being an old maid for she whisked back with a chatter of shocked fury.

SECRETS

Your face is an oasis
In the desert of my heart,

Your words are tinkling music

In the discord of my life,

Your eyes, your lips, your laughter,

[Each is idolized apart----

But I wouldn't think of telling
you

Because you are my wife!



By Felix O'Malley

TOO MANY BLONDES

By

CLINTON HARCOURT

AT eleven o'clock the Queen of France—Havre to New York—arrived at Pier 101. At twelve o'clock young Jerry Porter, one of the ship's most entertaining passengers, had his first drink on Broadway for a year. At one o'clock Jerry telephoned the Abbey Apartments and at two o'clock he stood before the front door of a penthouse suite there.

"Is Miss Mathis in, Miss Helen Mathis?" he asked politely. "In case she wants to know who it is just tell her her fiancé is back from Paris. She might be interested."

Five minutes later Jerry got up to greet Helen. For a year he had thought about her—dreamed about her red, tempting lips, visioned her ebony dark hair, mentally ran eager hands over the curves and contours of her lush young body. In his Paris studio, where he had studied art so diligently, his one thought had been of the girl he had left behind in the States.

"Jerry!"
"Helen!"

They faced each other and Jerry's heart dropped like a safe pushed out of a sixtieth story window. Alas, was this the fair maiden of his dreams! Something had happened to Helen. Spectacles, horn-rimmed and enormous, were perched on her nose. The ebony black hair was combed severely back from her high forehead and the ripe curves and contours of the figure he had fondled in fancy had become even riper. Helen must have tipped the scales at at least a hundred and eighty.

"Ye gods!" Jerry exclaimed silently, awestruck.

The big, bouncing girl beamed on him.

"It's so nice to have you back, sweetheart," she cooed. "I've thought about you so much. Now we can set our wedding day like we planned. Aren't you simply thrilled?"

Jerry sat down limply.

"Er—yes, I suppose so. Er—how about a drink? How about two, three or four drinks? That sea air, you know. I've a thirst like a family of camels."

HELEN SHOOK HER head decidedly.

"That's one thing you've got to correct.

Liquor is absolutely banned now that I've become a charter member of the Purity League."

"The—which?" Jerry managed to gurgle.

"Purity League. A great change has come over me since you've been away, darling. All sexy, exciting and stimulating things are taboo. I've come to realize the true meaning of the flesh and the devil. I hope, in time, to impress my teachings upon you. After all, dearest, sin is ever present. Satan lurks everywhere. We must be continually on guard so good can triumph over evil."

She sat down opposite, carefully pulling her skirt so it concealed a pair of legs that might have held up a piano. He noticed that her chins had become so popular they had gone into a second and third edition. She beamed on him while, he tried to figure out what it was all about.

"I think I'd better go," Jerry murmured. "I—I have an appointment with my doctor. I—I don't feel so well."

"Poor darling!" She went to the door with him, her arm linked with his. "You haven't even kissed me! But never mind, if you're not feeling yourself. We have years and years for love making, haven't we?"

Jerry peered up at her.

"But is that okay with your League?"

Helen laughed.

"Of course, so long as we're married. It's only on unmarried sin that the organization frowns. Silly boy!"

Dazed, Jerry reeled into the street, fell in a taxi and was deposited in the King Midas Room of the City Hotel. He lapped up two Side Cars so quickly he exceeded the speed limit. Then, for a chaser, he had a couple of shots of rye. After that he went back to his old studio in Greenwich Village, threw himself down on the couch and stared at the ceiling.

His dream girl had become a white elephant. His Paris imaginings were like ashes in his mouth. What could he do? A gentleman could not very well break an engagement simply because the girl of his choice had doubled up on her meals. Neither could he give her the air, with the excuse that the Purity League

offended his aesthetic sense. Probably the organization did a lot of good in the world.

ALL THAT WAS artistic, delicate and ethereal within Jerry cried out. He could no more think of leading Helen to the altar than he could of battering down the Empire State Building with a feather. But what to do and how to do it?

Jerry groaned.

After awhile he got a drink—then another—and another. He began to feel better. After all, he wasn't licked—yet. There were always ways and means. Alcohol sharpened his wits and dulled his disappointment. When he finally slid out of his clothes and into bed he was smiling. There was a song on his lips, a little song of the Paris ateliers to the effect that

*Susi was a naughty girl
Really, very shocking,
Showed her lingerie and such,
Filled a pretty stocking—*



For the next week Jerry was a model fiancé. He called regularly on Helen. He took her to a morning musicale. He made social visits with her and even attended one of the League meetings.

He supposed he'd be bored stiff but Jerry got quite a kick out of it. The subject before the Committee was entitled "Should We Abandon Rumble Seats?" The matter was de-

bated at great length. All the evils of petting and parked-car love making were dragged pitilessly out of the moonlight and into the glare of fierce publicity. Jerry was really shocked when he discovered what pernicious, iniquitous things rumble seats were.

"Like it, darling?" Helen asked, when the meeting was finally over.



"Why, Dora!" he exclaimed. "I thought you went home hours ago!"

"I enjoyed every minute of it," Jerry said truthfully. "Er—how about stopping off somewhere for a nice pineapple soda?"

A couple of days after that Jerry called her from the Greenwich Village studio.

"Busy tonight, sweetheart?" he asked.

"No, darling."

"I wonder," he went on, "if you'd like to come down here and have supper with me at the studio. Just we two. I've learned some of the Parisian culinary secrets. I'd like to see what you think of my cooking."

"Oh, that would be lovely," Helen cried. "Tonight? What time?"

"I'll be busy painting until six," Jerry said thoughtfully. Better make it about seven-thirty. Can I come and get you or do you think you'll be safe in a taxi with a strange driver?"

AS HE TIDIED up the studio, Jerry whistled happily. He had gone to great pains to make his plans perfect. They were elaborate and entailed a great number of things that he fully expected would forever end his engagement. Now it was up to Helen. When the doorbell tinkled he took off his chef's apron and let his fiancée in.

"At last, I've been counting the minutes!" Jerry cried.

Helen's nose lifted. She sniffed the appetizing aromas drifting from the kitchenette.

"Yummy-yum-yum! Doesn't that smell divine! Oh, Jerry! I think it's sweet of you to have me down here. It's so cosy and intimate and everything. And I just love good things to eat!"

Jerry looked at the spare tire she carried around her waist.

"I'll bet you do," he smiled. "Make yourself comfortable and I'll serve the first course directly. By the way, I've covered up all my nudes so you won't be offended. I'm doing a picture called *The Modern Three Graces*, but I don't think I'd better show it to you."

Jerry's first course was Latin Quartier soup. It was rich brown and had a touch of garlic to it. Helen waded into it with vim and vigor. "Spoon all dripping with onions," she cried softly. "How would you like to be my wrist-watch?"

The next item on the menu was filet of sole. It was no ordinary fried flounder. It was crisp, delicious fish with lemon-butter sauce that was a masterpiece. Helen almost wept tears of joy when she got a sample of it.

"My, this is grand! Jerry, love, did you go to cooking or art school? I never tasted anything so heavenly. When we're married you can prepare all the meals!"

But Jerry wasn't listening. The first part of his plan was about ready to go into effect. He coughed and a minute later a strange thing happened. Framed in the bedroom door a very

blonde, very beautiful and very undressed young lady appeared. She rubbed her eyes sleepily, yawned and seemed utterly oblivious to the fact she was partially unclothed.

HELEN SAW HER and dropped her fork. Jerry jumped up.

"Why, Dora!" he exclaimed. "What in the world are you doing here? I thought you'd gone home hours ago!"

Dora smiled languorously.

"I was so tired. I just stretched out on your bed for forty winks and I've been there ever since. Oh, I didn't know you had company."

"This is my fiancée, Miss Mathis. Helen, this is Dora, one of my best models."

He watched Helen closely. With an effort she closed her mouth, mumbled something unintelligible.

"Umm, I'm famished," Dora declared. "Do you mind if I pull up a chair and join you?"

"Not at all," Jerry said, pushing a chair up to the table. "Sit down and fasten on the nose bag. Plenty for all."

Dora took her pink skin, her cobwebby garments, her willowy young body and curvy figure to the table. Jerry went into the kitchenette to get an extra plate and the meal continued.

With deft skill he served a roast of lamb and what a roast it was with its touch of spicy mint and delicate seasoning.

He coughed when he carved the chops from it and another strange thing happened. Once more in the doorway another blonde girl appeared. Like Dora she was attired in nothing but a smile and some lace. She carried a large towel with which she vigorously rubbed her golden hair.

"Why, Flora!" Jerry cried. "Haven't you gone home yet?"

The second blonde widened her blue eyes. "I—I took the liberty of using your bathtub, making ducky-wucky. Then I caught the smell of cooking and it drove me out here."

"Swell idea," Jerry said generously. "Plenty for all. Here, sit down and fall to."

He got a new set of table tools and a plate. Flora joined those at the banquet board. Jerry stole a surreptitious glance at Helen. He expected dismay, indignation. Instead, there was only a smile of vast contentment on her round face. With a sinking heart Jerry saw his elaborate scheme wasn't half as good in effect as it had been in theory.

The plump and prudish Helen was more in-

terested in what he had cooked than the two beautiful young ladies!

WITH A LOW feeling Jerry went to fetch the salad bowl. That was positively his *chef d'oeuvre*. One of the greatest of the master chefs in Paris had imparted the secret of the

"Why, Laura, what are you doing here?" Jerry asked, but faintly this time, with no vim and vigor.

Laura's vivid lips parted in a shadowy smile. "I got interested in a book and forgot to dress. A few minutes ago I heard sounds of dinner going on and thought I'd better look in. Can you give a poor girl a bone?"

Jerry made the introduction and waved her into a chair. With an effort Helen moved her gaze from the salad bowl long enough to murmur:

"Pleazedtomeetcha."

Out in the kitchenette Jerry kicked himself. What a chump! He had been certain that unveiled charms, dazzling skin, swelling breasts and gorgeous hips would be sufficient to make Helen hurl the diamond engagement ring in

"Tell me all about Paris, Jerry," she said. "How do they make love there?"



dressing. It was piquant and tantalizing, wonderful beyond words. Helen sighed luxuriously when she tasted it.

For the third time Jerry coughed and for the third time a somewhat unclad blonde and beautiful young lady came into the studio.

his face and stamp stridently from the studio. Helen, with the contrariness of her sex, was talking in friendly fashion with the three fair models. He could hear her telling them what a swell meal it had been, how much she had enjoyed it and how she was going to let him do

all the cooking when the nuptial ding-dongs were through echoing.

"Nut!" Jerry hissed. "Dope! That's what I am!"

He grabbed a bottle of Scotch, took a swig and didn't even bother to pop a clove into his mouth. He got out the freezer with the Boule Miche' Mousse which had taken him an hour to prepare, dumped it into sherbet glasses and distributed it.

When everything was all over Jerry said:

"All right, scam girls! You've fed your faces so lam."

HE DID THE dishes while Flora, Dora and Laura got dressed and departed. Helen sat in

*"Listen, gals,"
he said finally.
"This studio is too
small for four."*



the big studio chair gazing serenely into space as she thought about the dinner she had consumed. In the kitchenette Jerry wrestled with the pots and pans, cursing his hard luck and overstimulated imagination. He doubted that Helen would have been interested if he had framed up some amorous love scene between himself and the models. His big mistake was giving her anything to eat. That had complete-

ly gotten her mind off the teachings of the League.

He put the last dish away, washed his hands, turned out the kitchenette light and hung up his apron.

"Jerry, love."

"Coming."

"I want you to know how much I appreciate your invitation," Helen said. "It was so sweet of you."

"That's okay," Jerry mumbled. "I'm sorry about those girls—"

"Oh, that's all right, I didn't mind them in the least. They seemed awfully nice. Besides, going around without clothes is their business. I'll bet that at heart they're just pure and good."

"I'll bet," he nodded dismally.

Helen transferred her bulk to the studio divan. She stretched out comfortably, turning on her side. Her dress caught under her and crept up to her knee but she didn't seem to mind it. She held out a plump hand.

"Come over and sit with me. I've hardly had a chance to see you since you returned, sweetheart. Just think, a whole year."

Jerry approached the divan gingerly. He sat down on what little space was left. Helen took off her spectacles and laid them on the table. She smiled at him coyly before she caught his fingers in hers and drew him toward her.

"Sweet boy, do you realize you haven't made love to me in months? I feel so contented, so perfectly happy. For the last ten minutes a curious emotion has come over me. I simply don't know what it is. It makes me want you close, so close, Jerry. Here, put your head on my shoulder and tell me how much you love me."

WITH A SIGH and death in his heart Jerry followed her instructions. Her bosom was like a soft feather pillow, large and comfortable. He brushed away a souvenir of the salad and relaxed a little.

"This all right?" he croaked.

She stroked his rough, tumbled hair.

"Jerry, tell me about Paris. Is it as wicked as they say? How do they make love there? Teach me—"

As she spoke she took his hand. She moved over on the divan. Her skirt went further up so that Jerry saw an expanse of white skin above the stocking top. He began to feel faint, worried and troubled. From the looks of things Helen had completely forgotten the oath of allegiance she had given the League.

"How about a picture show?" he suggested.

Her breathing was quick, uneven. She caressed him as she urged herself still closer.

"Put your arms around me, darling. Remember we're going to be married soon. You must demonstrate how you're going to make love to me when we're married!"

Jerry went cold all over. There was no mistaking her intentions. He tried to gently but firmly get out of her embrace. It was like trying to break out of Sing Sing with a toothpick. She smothered him in her arms, draw-

ing him to her, closer and closer. Her lips were wide now and her eyes dreamy and half shut. He could feel the heat of her ample body and abruptly, like a bolt of lightning, Jerry found the answer to his problem.

He sat up, broke her tight grip and stumbled away from the divan.

"So this is what you are!" he cried. "Oh, how thankful I am I've found you out in time! Helen, do you realize what—"

Something in his strident tone dampened her ardor. She blinked, straightened, pulled her skirt down and put on her spectacles.

"Jerry! I'm sorry! I didn't realize! I—"

"Not a word! I realize everything!"

SHE STRETCHED OUT imploring arms.

"Forgive me, Jerry! I don't know what came over me! I never felt that way before! Jerry! You must—"

He shook his head firmly.

"Not a chance! Our engagement is over! You've showed me exactly what you have in your mind and heart! Oh, Helen, to think you are like this! You—the girl I dreamed of in Paris—the girl I could hardly wait to see once more!"

She wiped her nose, got up unsteadily and took off the engagement ring. She handed it to him unsteadily.

"You're right. I must pay the penalty! I don't deserve your love!"

Jerry put the ring in his pocket.

"But we can still be friends," he said magnanimously.

She grasped at the idea eagerly.

"Of course! And maybe you'll have me for dinner again."

Resolutely Jerry suppressed his happy smile.

"I'm afraid not. To be candid, I'd never trust myself alone with you again!"

He telephoned for a taxi, said good-bye to Helen forever and mixed himself a drink in the kitchenette. He carried it into the studio, put out all the lights except one and relaxed in the big chair.

After a minute he heard a cough. He looked up and there was Dora in the bedroom doorway just as she had been at dinner.

"Why, Dora! What are you doing here?" he demanded.

She pattered across the studio and perched herself on the arm of his chair.

"I didn't have any place to go so I came back, got in through the rear door. Listen,

(Please turn to page 56)

GORGEOUS LITTLE BRAT

By JOYCE CARROLL



*The water fell in
an icy cascade over
her body.*

DAN MORGAN scanned the *Help Wanted* column of the morning newspaper. He'd been doing just that every day since the Dean of Strathmore University had handed him a sheepskin diploma, shook his hand, sent him out into a world that was waiting to be conquered.

"Your college education will be your card of admittance to success," the Dean had said in his graduating address.

For that reason, Dan always started his scanning of the *Help Wanted* columns by looking under the "C" list. Today, for the first time he spotted an ad that started: *College graduate wanted*. He read on:

College graduate wanted. Young, firm-willed young man with some knowledge of psychology. One who can drive car. Compensation commensurate with ability.

*For reply please call Wedgemere 4850
after seven-thirty P.M.*

Dan clipped the ad. He had no intentions of waiting until seven-thirty. Evidently the employer wanted all calls to come to his home. Down in a drug store phone booth, Dan went to work. He discovered that Wedgemere 4850 was the private phone number of Wellington Cornwall Dewey, the financier. He discovered, also, that Mr. Dewey's offices were in the Statler Building.

A straight-haired, thoroughly efficient secretary came out to see Dan at Mr. Dewey's suite of offices. She was sorry, but if he had no appointment, Mr. Dewey could not see him.

"It's a matter of life and death," Dan protested. "I must see him!"

Wellington Cornwall Dewey had white hair and a perpetual sour face. He looked up as Dan entered his sedate, walnut-paneled sanctum sanctorum.

"I read your ad in this morning's paper," Dan blurted.

THE FINANCIER ALMOST choked. "And is that what you call a matter of life and death?"

"Sure. My life and death. If I don't get the job I'll starve!"

The thoroughly efficient secretary almost fainted. The reason for it was the smile on Mr. Dewey's face—an admiring smile!

"You're hired!" he announced. "Without any further questioning. That is, providing you'll take the job."

"I'll take any job," Dan said. "Dean Ackerson of Strathmore University said the world was waiting to be conquered."

"Sit down," Mr. Dewey invited. Dan sat. The financier leaned forward. "I'm going to Europe," he said. "I'll be away for two months. I have a young daughter—a brat. She doesn't want to go to Europe. She doesn't want to do anything normal people want to do. Now she's in love with the chauffeur. I'm firing him. Tomorrow she may be in love with the butcher boy. Your job will be to act as chauffeur and yet keep a weather-eye on Ruth. I don't want her to suspect that you're a guardian. I'll pay you fifty dollars a week for the two months I'm gone and give you a bonus that will amaze you if you succeed in doing something with the brat. Do you want the job?"

"Yes," Dan said.

A LEAN-FACED BUTLER answered the door at the palatial Dewey town house. Dan stared at him. The butler's right eye was black and swollen.

"I'm the new chauffeur," Dan said.

The butler nodded. "Yes, Mr. Dewey called. Step right in."

Dan stepped in. He had seen some swell interior layouts, but this topped them all. Wine colored plush hangings and inch-thick Oriental rugs. It was sumptuous with a capital, italicized "S".

"Run into a door?" Dan questioned pleasantly, indicating the black eye.

The butler scowled. "No! Miss Ruth presented me with this little memento."

Dan whistled. This Dewey offspring must be a hellion. "Is—she home?" he queried, a trifle apprehensively.

"Most assuredly. If you'll step into the drawing room I'll tell her you're here." He dropped his voice to a confidential whisper. "I should advise you to be very subservient."

The drawing room was the size of a barn, its walls hung with expensive tapestries. A balcony surrounded it, off of which were duplex bedrooms. Dan was admiring a full-length Gainsborough when he heard a feminine voice. He looked up. A girl in peach panties and a flimsy brassiere was standing against the balcony railing. Her flame-colored hair fell almost to her shoulders in a long bob. She posed arrogantly, hands on hips, shoulders squared.

DAN'S EYES WIDENED. Surely this couldn't be Ruth—the brat. He had anticipated a pig-tailed child of thirteen or fourteen. The girl on the balcony was twenty if she was a day; mature as any woman. Her rounded bosom made mock of the brassiere cups as a covering or shield. Her hips were smoothly curved under the panties. Her full, sensuous mouth had its share of carmine lipstick and her eyes were carefully made up.

She leaned over the railing. Dan could see the white tops of her bosom and the cleft dividing it. "So, you're the new chauffeur," she said.

Dan remembered the butler's warning. "Er—yes, Miss Dewey," he murmured.

Her eyes flashed. "Don't 'Miss Dewey' me! What's your name?"

"D-Dan M-Morgan."

She walked along the balcony, came down the plush-carpeted steps. It was amazing how unashamed she was of the brevity of her costume. Her bosom swayed under the brassiere



and her hips seemed to swing rhythmically. Dan's eyes raced up and down her figure. She was gorgeously proportioned. Nice firm white thighs and a plane-flat torso.

She reached the bottom step, paused. "Do I pass muster or would you like me to remove the brassiere and panties for a complete inspection?" she snapped sarcastically.

DAN COLORED. "I—I'm sorry," he mumbled.

"You should be." Now it was her turn to examine. She did, carefully. There were long moments of silence. "You're not bad," she said. "Where did Father find you?"

"I—I found your father."

"He told you I'm boss around here while he's away, didn't he?"

"Er—yes."

"Be sure you understand that. Wilkins will show you to your room on the third floor. The cars are in the garage. You might look them over." She turned, started up the steps again.

Dan watched her departure, particularly the gelatinous movement of her sensuously fashioned hips. He was thinking how much she needed a few good whacks in punishment for her outrageous conduct; thinking that maybe he would be the one to administer the punishment.

Wilkins, the butler, not only showed Dan to his room, but attempted to show him the light.

"She's a wildcat if there ever was one," he said. "I don't know how long I'm going to stand it with the master away. You know what she needs?"

Dan knew. He said so, in no uncertain terms. Wilkins agreed.

MR. WELLINGTON CORNWALL DEWEY left for Europe on Monday night at eleven. No sooner had the liner nosed out into the river, than Ruth returned to the limousine and began giving orders.

"Drive to the Kit-Kat Club," she said.

Dan hesitated. Mr. Dewey had given him voluminous instructions prior to sailing. "It—it's rather late, Miss Ruth," he said.

"Do as I say!" she screamed. "And wait for me!"

Dan did as she said and Dan waited. At four in the morning, two men-about-town carried Miss Ruth Dewey out of the Kit-Kat Club and attempted to get in the car with her.

"We spotted this dame climbin' out a window," one cop said.

Her dress was hanging on by barely a thread. Even her brassiere was slightly askew, enough to bare a goodly expanse of curved white flesh.

Dan knew he had a job on his hands. He slid out from behind the wheel, ejected one man-about-town by the scruff of the neck, the other by the seat of the pants, and proceeded to the Dewey residence.

Both Wilkins and Ruth's maid were deep in the arms of Morpheus. It resolved upon Dan to see that his charge got to bed. He carried her up to her room, proceeded to prepare her for retirement. Fortunately (for him) the men-about-town had done most of the undressing in the Kit-Kat-Club.

His fingers trembled when he reached dangerous territory. It was a new experience for him, and one not without its emotional effects. He was only human, and observing beauty such as she boasted, could not be impersonal, for all his self-control.

Finally, he managed to get her under the covers. The temptation to sample her moist red lips was too great. He leaned over, slipped his hand over one warm, silken shoulder, kissed her mouth.

It was fully an hour before he stopped tingling.

DAN FOUND OUT, soon enough, what it was to be run ragged. Night clubs, teas, bridge parties, Greenwich Village parties. Rare was the morning when he got in before three.

It had to come to an end sometime. A party in Westchester ended in a riot. The police were called. Ruth and a dozen of her young cohorts were arrested. The story got into the papers. A week later there was a cable from Wellington Cornwall Dewey to Dan:

STOP THAT BRAT STOP

W. C. Dewey

Dan didn't mention the cable to Ruth. But that very evening, when she called for the car, he marched into her bedroom without knocking. She was standing before the dressing table, applying lipstick to her mouth. She caught his reflection in the glass, wheeled.

"What do you mean by entering my room this way?" she demanded.

Dan tilted his cap back. "How did you want me to come in, on roller skates?"

Her cheeks pinked and her body tensed. "You—you—you—" Words failed her.

Dan shut the door. "You're not going out tonight," he said.

The second shock almost prostrated the girl. "What do you mean?" she gasped.

AT ANY MOMENT Dan expected her to fly at him and treat him to the same type of shiner she had given Wilkins, the butler. But he had gone this far and there was no retreating.

"Just what I said, baby. You're staying in tonight."

She lunged at him. Dan side-stepped, caught her arm, whirled her down on the sofa. She hit it hard, bounced up, hit it again, bounced again. By the time she stopped she was wild with indignation. She sat erect, glared at him. The unexpected exercise took her breath away. She was panting, her round bosom rising and falling rapidly.

"You're fired!" she screamed. "Get out!"

Dan grinned. "You can't fire me, sister. Just calm down and behave like a human being. You're spending this night at home. It's about time you read a book."

She leaped up, came at him again. Dan snaked an arm about her waist, pinned her close against him. He caught both her wrists in his hand, held them behind her back. She struggled valiantly, but to no avail. Dan tossed her back on the sofa, began ripping off her dress.

Anyone entering the room at that precise moment would have imagined the worst. With ruthless disregard for her expensive satin dress, Dan tore it off her body.

HE STEPPED BACK, surveyed his handiwork. If Ruth Dewey had been stunning in clothes she was a knockout this way. Her body was an harmonious symphony of curves from coned bosom to dimpled knees. Dan retreated to the door. He knew it would be dangerous to remain. Dangerous for more than one reason. He jerked the key out of the lock, opened the door.

"Good night," he grinned.

She bounded up again. "Don't you dare lock me in!"

But Dan had already closed the door, turned the key from the outside, slipped it into his pocket. He sighed as he walked up to his room, thinking how easy it would have been to let himself go with Wellington Cornwall Dewey's daughter. There was certainly a gorgeous little brat. It took a long time for Dan to forget her pink and white curves.

He was just about dozing off when he heard the shrill blast of a police whistle, a hoarse

shout, a high-pitched squeal. He jumped out of bed, slid his trousers on. Someone was pounding on the front door. In the hall, Dan met Wilkins.

"What—what is it?" the frightened butler blurted.

Dan stepped to the door, threw it open. Two policemen were standing there, each holding one of Ruth Dewey's arms as she struggled to release herself.

Dan gaped in amazement. She was dressed in panties and a brassiere and white sports shoes.

"We were coming by in the squad car and spotted this dame climbin' out a window," one of the cops said. "She claims she belongs here."

"She does," Dan admitted. "Thanks a lot, officers. You see, she's not feeling well and—"

ONE OF THE cops grinned. "Sure, we understand." They shoved Ruth into the foyer. Dan lifted her in his arms, carried her up the steps to her room. En route, she pummeled his head and shoulders, shrieked madly. In the room, Dan dumped her on the bed.

Ruth Dewey was still uncowed. "Don't you dare lay a hand on me!" she shrieked. "Don't

*"Do I pass
muster?" she
snapped.*



you dare touch me! I'll have you arrested!"

"Touch you?" Dan smiled. "No, you brat, I wouldn't soil my hands with you. I have another little trick up my sleeve." He stepped out of the room, closed the door. Wilkins was on the landing, shaking like a leaf in his long nightgown.

"Oh, this is terrible!" he moaned. "What will Mr. Dewey say?"

"He'll probably give us both Medals of Honor. Now, listen, Wilkins, fill up every available pot in the house with ice cold water. Bring them up here. If you hear any violent screaming, don't pay any attention. In case the police come, tell them Miss Dewey is ill and having a fit. Now, make it snappy with that water."

Dazed but obedient, the butler hurried off. He returned in a few minutes carrying two aluminum pots of cold water. Dan took them.

"Okay, keep them coming. I'll toss the empties out into the hall. Fill them as fast as you can."

BRIMMING POTS IN hand, Dan stepped into Ruth Dewey's bedroom. She was sitting on the edge of the bed, defiantly. Dan walked forward.

"What are you going to do?" she gasped.

"This!" The contents of one pot poured over her. She screamed, spluttered, gasped. *Swish!* The contents of the second pot hit her full in the face, fell in an icy cascade over her body. Wilkins was at the door with two more containers. Dan took them, gave him the empties. The third potfull of water soaked Ruth, made tissue paper of her brassiere and panties. She looked like a drowned rat when the fourth poured over her.

Dan got some of the splashes. The water was certainly cold. He grinned as he watched her shivering in a pool of it, trying to wipe her damp hair back from her face.

At the tenth pot of water, Ruth broke down, began to cry. She buried her head in the soporific wet pillow, sobbed convulsively. Dan decided she had had enough.

"Wilkins will bring you clean sheets and blankets," he said. "Turn the mattress over. Good night."

He couldn't go to sleep. For a long time he paced the third floor hallway, smoking. Something peculiar disturbed him. No matter how much he tried to sweep it from his mind, he found it impossible to discard the attractive picture of Ruth in her wet panties and bras-

siere. The firm roundness of her bosom and the rest of her curvy body kept looming up before him.

HE TIP-TOED downstairs, stood for a moment at her door. She was still sobbing fitfully. Dan opened the door softly, entered the room. Ruth hadn't moved. The bed was still soaking wet. Dan snapped on the light.

"You little fool! I told you to change those sheets! Do you want to get pneumonia?"

"Y-yes."

"Very smart, aren't you?" Dan stepped to the bed, lifted her in his arms, carried her to a couch. In ten minutes he had the mattress turned and the new sheets and blankets on. "All right, get into bed. Take off that brassiere and those panties."

She sat up, eyes blazing. "No!"

"I said take them off!"

"I won't!"

"Then I will!"

Before he reached her Dan saw something happen to her eyes. They softened and the pupils dilated. Her red lips parted and her bosom rose and fell rapidly. He understood—and stopped short.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" she panted.

Dan was struck dumb. He stared at her, watching her breathing fast. Suddenly Ruth leaped into his arms.

"Are you blind?" she cried. "Can't you see anything? I know who you are. I sneaked up to your room and saw your diploma and the instructions Dad gave you. I've just been doing all this to egg you on!"

WELLINGTON CORNWALL DEWEY came down the gangplank. Ruth flew into his arms, kissed his cheeks full of lipstick. When he recovered some measure of composure, he said to Dan:

"Well, young man?"

Dan blushed. "I—I'm afraid I've been untrue to my trust, Mr. Dewey. We didn't cable you for fear the shock would be too much. I—I married your gorgeous brat yesterday."

Wellington Cornwall Dewey beamed. "I promised you a bonus if you succeeded in doing something with her. You've done the best possible thing—taken her off my hands. You'll get the bonus and a job in my office. You can have anything you wish." He sighed. "Ah, what a splendid homecoming!"

Off to one side, Ruth glared at Dan with

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mock severity. "Am I still a brat?" she muttered.

He grinned. "No."

"Am I little?"

He looked at her ample curves. "No."

"Am I gorgeous?"

His arms swooped her up. "Yes!"

Between You And Me!

(Continued from page 2)

Dear Editor:

I am a U.S. soldier stationed in Alaska. I am 5 ft. 9 in. tall, dark red hair, fine build and have light brown eyes and am 22 years old.

I would appreciate it very much if you would publish this letter in your next issue. I will answer all letters and exchange all photos.

Yours truly,

Robert H. Cribbs

Co. F, Chilkoot Bks., Alaska

Dear Editor:

Just a word about this person, Barnaby Ives. He's one of my favorite Spicy authors, and from the stories he writes, it's very obvious that he's certainly been around and knows his stuff. His latest, the one that appeared in last month's issue, "She Saw The Sea" is the best he's written so far, and he's written some top-notchers, all right.

How about persuading him to let you publish his picture. Several of my friends and also myself, are dying to take a squint at what he looks like? Here's to better Ives yarns!

An Ives fan—

Beatrice Martin

Forest Hills, L. I.

Dear Editor:

We thought you might be interested to know that your excellent magazine goes over with a bang 'way out here in California, with our group of girls. We came out here to Hollywood to make good, but so far our ship hasn't come in. Occasionally we get jobs here and there as extras. We call ourselves The Happy Six, and in between jobs entertain ourselves by reading the stories in SPICY.

A couple of us have answered several of the letters on your "Between You And Me" page from some of your interesting readers and have struck up many valuable correspondence friendships.

We each have our favorite authors, but all

(Please turn to page 56)

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Between You And Me!

(Continued from page 54)

agree that the best one is Phyllis Hoerner. Hope she never stops writing those wonderful stories.

Good luck to SPICY.

The Happy Six

TOO MANY BLONDES

(Continued from page 47)

big boy. How about a relative of that glass you're holding?"

THERE WAS ANOTHER cough and Flora came through the dimly lighted room, her white skin gleaming like marble.

"I had to come back," she announced. "I was so lonesome."

"Fine, I'll make you both a drink in a minute," Jerry told them.

"And don't forget me. Make it three," Laura said, joining the group. "I'm so thirsty I could drink a reservoir through a straw."

So Jerry made drinks all around and looked at the blondes. One was as perfect as the other. He frowned thoughtfully.

"Listen, gals," he announced finally, "this studio is too small for four but all right for two. See, I'm going to tear three strips of paper into various lengths. The one who draws the shortest—"

After a minute Dora laughed excitedly. She displayed the shortest strip of paper and smiled joyfully.

"Goodnight, girls," she cried, linking her arms around Jerry's willing neck. "Be seeing you—in the morning!"

FINIS!

(Continued from page 27)

you will pay the price by losing a dear friend."

"Look," he began reasonably. "In my language, you would be called 'nuts'. How can staying with you lose me a friend. You have your problems, they're none of my business . . . and I have my desires—which are your business. Come what may—I stay here!"

The gray eyes lost their moody film of sorrow, as they shook hands on the bargain. "Yes, come what may," the girl promised . . . and Carter bent over to meet her demanding lips.

Her body was burning. He could feel the warmth of her through the robe. His fingers fumbled clumsily with the jeweled clasp at her neck, but not even his clumsiness could detract

from the thrilling demands of those luscious lips.

The gown parted slightly, and Carter caught his breath lest the beauty which met his eyes disappear at any moment. Her flesh was creamy, like the softness of an inner magnolia petal, and the swift rise of the bosom formed twin peaks of the most delicate pink. The soft violet shadow between was as fragrant as it was warm.

Carter ached with the desire of the moment. His hands, trembling and warm, searched over that vibrant whiteness as though they would grasp their full beauty. His lips, trembling like those of a school boy's met her demands with counter supplications.

It was terrifying—it was supreme. It was all the life, and death, and glory and passion of the accumulated ages. . . .

SOME SIXTH SENSE warned him. He glanced over to where Dael was, her gleaming hair spread fan-wise over the coral tapestry. One arm, as white as milk, had fallen until the hand hung like a crumpled blossom, the fingers just clearing the soft taupe of the carpet.

Beneath the amber glow of the lamps, she was a picture in gold and marble. He could see the line of the thigh, long and curving, as it was outlined sharply against the color of her gaping robe.

But some noise had awakened him. A footstep pausing by the door—a light hand turning the handle gently. . . . Carter sprung to his feet, scarcely knowing what the slowly opening door would reveal.

And then a bombshell went off inside his head. He glanced at the clock. Three-forty! Could Dael's husband have arrived? Could this be the boy friend? Certainly it was no mere servant!

"Carter!" It was Julien. It was Julien, whose ashen face and unbelieving eyes were staring at him madly. It was Julien, whose body seemed to crumple before his startled gaze. And in that moment, Carter saw the spirit, the hope, the life itself die in his friend—leaving only the dull material body whose functions went on as usual, but whose main-spring was forever destroyed.

He whirled around to blast Dael for her perfidy, but what he saw in those tortured eyes made the words freeze on his lips. "The loss of a friend," she had said. But it was really a double loss, for he saw on her grief-stricken face the complete loss of a beloved lover. That he had been merely a foil to effect this tragic

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break, he realized now very clearly. The motivation was still hazy . . . but the bleak majestic ethics which made this woman give up the only man she had ever loved—given him up in the only way she could—freed him completely, by destroying his trust in one who was still trustworthy—that was the thing which made Carter's heart bleed.

He walked from the room, slowly, like a man who has seen too much and comprehended too little. He heard the door close after him. He heard the key turn in the lock.

Sleep was not for him that evening. He took up his stand beneath her balcony. Hidden there, in the heavy foliage, he tried to fathom the events of the evening.

Soon two figures appeared on the balcony. Two figures, who drifted together, and became one—even as the moon slipped behind a cloud, as though even Luna would not intrude upon that final, sorrowful farewell. The sound of a low sob reached Carter's ears. Which one it came from he could never tell, but the sound was like the sob of a sorrowing animal whose hurt has gone too deep for healing.

HE NEVER SAW Julien again. He heard that he and *Madame* Julien had taken a small cottage, far away from Paris, and that *Monsieur* had developed a peculiar phobia against Alpine country—especially the Tyrol region.

But he did see Dael. He caught sight of her in the Bois one afternoon during the winter. She was in a motor, and with her was the ugliest, grossest man he had ever seen. The bulbous nose was red, and the hand on the wheel was cruel and grasping.

"What a beautiful woman," he remarked casually to a fellow diner. "Certainly that cannot be her husband?"

"Indeed it is—and it is quite a story, *Monsieur*." The fellow almost licked his chops with the morsel of gossip. "*Madame*, it is said, had a secret love affair. And *Monsieur* feigned an illness in order to arouse all her gratitude. She gave up the lover, thinking that her husband required all her attention and affection—is it not a droll story. *Monsieur* is as well as he ever was—but *Madame*—ah, she has paid heavily for that little escapade. It is also rumored that *Monsieur* threatened to kill the lover, but everyone says *Madame* got rid of him just in time. A strange couple, *c'est vrai*."

And as Carter watched the motor pass, he saw one of those great paws rest heavily on her silk-encased shoulder. The fingers curled

in, cutting into the flesh, but the woman did not draw away. She smiled, and patted his hand—like one who scarcely feels anything and so can afford to be generous, knowing that the motivating dream of a life time is protected forever against the grossness of reality.

NIGHTLY AT ELEVEN

(Continued from page 23)

in his fingers. He had some difficulty getting it into the lock. At last he opened the door and stepped into the velvety darkness. At the same moment a clock chimed softly the hour of eleven in the shadows.

Carter went cautiously forward. A couple of chairs sprang out and snapped at his ankles, but he hardly felt them. He struck a match for a guide, found the hall that led to the bedroom and pressed on. Naturally, as she expected him, she wouldn't be putting on the charm parade before the mirror. She'd probably be in bed, curled up like a kitten, snug and comfy. Carter banged his nose on the bedroom door, got it open and lit another match. It flickered long enough for him to locate the light switch. He switched it on, took a look at the bed and felt his burning emotions drop from fever heat to zero.

The bed, like the room, was deserted!

Carter peered around with unbelieving eyes. At length he discovered something pinned to the pillow. This something was a note addressed to him. With shaking fingers he unpinned it and took it to the lamp beside the bed. He swallowed, moistened his dry lips and opened the note.

In another minute he was reading:

Dear Jack:

I'm so sorry, but it was all a frame-up. You see, I'm to be a member of the Omega Epsilon Sorority and the nightly show at eleven was part of the initiation. I wasn't kidding when I told you my real name is Cicily Claythorne. Please forgive the deception and thanks for paying the rent. They didn't think a hard boiled, Broadway guy like you would ever tumble.

Farewell and thanks for everything.

THE LETTER WAS signed with her scrawled initials. For a long time Carter stared at them. He began to smile.

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"Just a well directed kick in the trousers," he said out loud. "I had it coming to me and I—"

He broke off abruptly. As he spoke he had turned the sheet of notepaper over in his hand. Suddenly more writing caught his eye. He held the missive closer to the lamp while the thermometer of his emotions climbed out of the sub-zero temperature and went up to the boiling point again.

It took him a minute to decipher the few words she had added.

They said:

Butterfield 8-6734. Call me up when you get over your disappointment!

"STAR CHASER"

(Continued from page 17)

maid. "You go to the telephone and call this number. It isn't in the directory, it is Mr. Winslow's private number. His man will get hold of him wherever he is. Tell him you know a girl who sings that song around the house and her name is Wendy and she is dancing at the Misty Roof tonight. Don't say any more."

The dragon obeyed without question. "He shouted at me," she reported, "but I hung up on him. Now what? You'd better rest. You only have five minutes before you have to dress to dance down the glass staircase."

But Wendy wasn't going to rest. She couldn't. All she could think of was Jeff, shy, elusive Jeff broadcasting his appeal to her to let him know where she was. Tomorrow the hounds of the press would be snapping at his heels.

Jeff was coming into the nightclub with his bodyguard as Wendy appeared at the top of the glass staircase, down which she was to tap dance on her toes. He wasn't looking at her, he was looking around the nightclub. He had seen Clarence sitting alone and glowering at the featured dancer, and at last he had followed Clarence's glare at Wendy, half way down the stairs on her toes.

The Wendy in gingham house pajamas or slacks, her brown hair tied back with a girlish ribbon, was not at all like this glamorous creature in silver mist, poised on silver toes . . . not like, except, as he glanced away, her hands, slim, expressive hands. So he looked again and Wendy was almost down now and smiling at him.

The nightclub became a chaos of sound as

she finished the difficult dance not three feet from where Jeff sat. "Hello, Jeff," she said softly, then began her difficult way back up the glass stairs and out of sight.

At the door of her dressing room when her dance was over she found Jeff confronted by her dragon maid.

"It's all right, Sarah, he's a friend," Wendy said quietly.

JEFF SHOOK HIS head. "No, I'm not. I came to ask why you didn't laugh at me while I hid at your house. You must have laughed at my daring to think you, May Dawn, were chasing me. You, whom men chase. Why they wanted me to sing in a picture opposite May Dawn. You weren't after my autograph that day, you were running away from people too, weren't you?"

"Yes, I was, but afterwards I treasured your autograph," Wendy said quietly.

"You parked in the alley for the same reason I did, not to force me to speak to you. Why did you wait on me and let me growl at you knowing all the time you were far more famous than I, a mere radio singer? Especially after Viola told you I wasn't hurt at all, merely hiding."

"Oh, yes, Viola . . . how is she?" Wendy asked coolly.

"She doesn't count, never did. Your father sent for her, I didn't. He wanted you to be safe for Clarence. Anyway Viola wouldn't have me now. I gave up everything to find you; radio, movies . . . just a dub chasing a star. . ."

"Jeff, stop being so silly. I'm not a star and if I had been I would have wanted you to chase me," Wendy said softly. "I thought you didn't even like me. You said I was homely and scolded me. . ."

"Never mind all that. All this time I actually thought I could take you away from that fat banker. I thought I had youth and position and something girls seem to want. Instead I find you have everything, that you took Clarence because you wanted him, not through lack of money. It's your turn to laugh." Jeff turned on his heel and was gone so swiftly Wendy had no chance to stop him or even run after him. A chorus of strip dancers got between but Jeff had vanished.

"Well, tie that," Wendy said softly, as she went back to her dressing room. "And he actually believes I'll let him get away." She began undressing. Not waiting for Sarah. "You clear up here, I'm taking a taxi to his

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rooms. I found where they were the other day."

"But Mr. Dildford," protested Sarah, "he might get smart. . . ."

"He's given up," Wendy said carelessly, and crammed her beret down on her head and ran out and down the stairs to the stage door. She flung herself into a taxi which came up promptly, and gave Jeff's number. Not until the door slammed and the taxi drove away did she realize she wasn't alone. Clarence Dildford sat in the shadowy corner.

SARAH STARED AFTER the taxi and her lips thinned as the street light showed Dildford's head against the rear glass as the taxi spun down the side street. She ran to the next taxi. "Follow that one and don't lose sight," she snapped.

Wendy wasn't frightened when she saw Clarence sitting there. Already she was at Jeff's room, arguing with him, showing him he was being a fool once more in giving up so tamely.

"Sorry, didn't know this taxi was occupied. Drop me at the corner and I'll get another," she said carelessly.

"I heard the address you gave. Nothing doing. He's a down and out singer without a job," Clarence said blandly. "This isn't a taxi, except externally. I've hired it every night for just this chance. We're on the way to my cabin on the river. Tomorrow you'll be begging me to make you Mrs. Dildford but maybe by then I will be over my desire to make you mine, because I will have gained that end."

"Why, you fat fool, you can't get away with this," snapped Wendy. "Let me out of here before I scream the police here."

Clarence flung his arm about her and clamped his hand over her mouth. "Scream ahead, my dear," he crooned, and pulled her onto his knees. He jerked the shades down with his free hand then snapped on the light and laughed unpleasantly.

"Seven solid months I've waited and you've held me off." He gave her suit coat a jerk that pulled it off then clawed at her satin blouse. "Pretty swell," he gloated, his little pig eyes roving over Wendy, as he held her head jammed against his shoulder.

She bit his fingers viciously and he pinched her soft arm till she felt her head spinning. Clarence Dildford had given up his dumb worship of Wendy and Wendy knew it too late.

"So you were going to see the singer, eh?"

Well, he won't want you when I get through with you, my lady. No man wants second hand goods."

"Then you don't want me," Wendy said sullenly, rubbing her aching arm.

"What's that?"

"You heard. I'd be second hand goods to you, after Jeff Winslow, so laugh that off!" Wendy was reckless now. Clarence had gone berserk and she was lost anyway, but he'd pay dearly for his actions.

"I don't believe it. You're too smart yourself," Clarence said scornfully.

"But once I wasn't. The night you forced me to agree to marry you the next week. Nothing mattered then. Nothing, you hear? I loved Jeff and I wanted to be made love to by the man I loved."

"Why you . . . you . . . little hussy," roared Clarence, shaking her viciously. Her bobbing bosom caught his eye and his anger left him. "It doesn't matter even if you aren't lying," he said thickly. "What the hell . . ." as the taxi swayed violently then crashed into some obstruction.

WENDY WAS FLUNG from his arms to the floor as the taxi tilted then went over on one side.

Clarence's chauffeur was swearing as he pried open the door. "Hurt, sir? A taxi driver side swiped us. He . . ." his voice died in a gulp as he was flung to one side. Wendy was lifted up and out the door which had become the roof over her head. The other taxi was right side up, though one fender was slightly damaged. Sarah stood beside it and Jeff had Wendy in his arms. He carried her to the taxi and put her inside.

Sarah got up beside the driver and the taxi was off, followed by Clarence's screamed threats and the shouts of the chauffeur.

"I saw that fat thug make off with you," Sarah's voice floated back, "and grabbed a taxi and this gentleman was sitting in it. We followed you and took a chance on side swiping you."

"I'll take up from there, Sarah," Jeff said, and pulled down the curtain shutting the front seat off. He wrapped his topcoat around Wendy, who was shivering with excitement as much as the cold. "I was waiting there to see you come out and join Clarence, when your maid flung herself in with me and told me she'd been hired to protect you from your banker friend. By then I knew I'd been forty kinds of a fool to give you up. Seeing you

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rush out and get into Dilford's taxi told me that. I was blind with jealousy."

Wendy waited breathlessly. She was no longer cold. Maybe it was because the way Jeff was holding her brought his hand against her bare flesh.

"I haven't even a job, but I'll get one if you'll marry me . . ." he said, when she didn't speak.

"Oh, jobs aren't important. They want me in Hollywood to dance in a picture and said if I'd come I could have my say about a leading man . . . and I wouldn't leave here because you were still here. Aren't we a pair of fools?"

"Blissful ones." Jeff's hand slid down her spine searching out the dimples while his mouth came down on her mouth and lingered.

WENDY BEGAN to get breathless and liked it. Liked everything Jeff was doing.

"Where to, buddy?" came the driver's voice.

"Turn down this side road . . . there's a lane. I never went there myself but my other lady used to tell me about it. Then park and relax," said Sarah's voice.

"Aw, I don't feel like relaxing. Say you got a nice smile when you use it. How about us cuddling a little if they've got things on their minds?" asked the taxi driver.

"We might. It's likely to be dull sitting here two or three hours," said Sarah's slightly breathless voice. "Say, who said you could get so personal? . . . Well, if your hands are cold . . . fresh!"

"Why, babe, you wear a girdle! Tsk! Tsk!"

Wendy smiled as the taxi driver's voice faded. She felt Jeff's lips curl into laughter, just before they burned a path down her throat.

The taxi rocked to a stop because the driver needed both hands to convince Sarah of certain things. Wendy didn't know it had stopped. She didn't know anything except that well remembered thrills were following Jeff's hands over her body.

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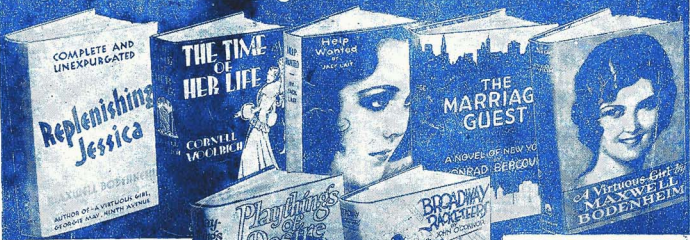
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