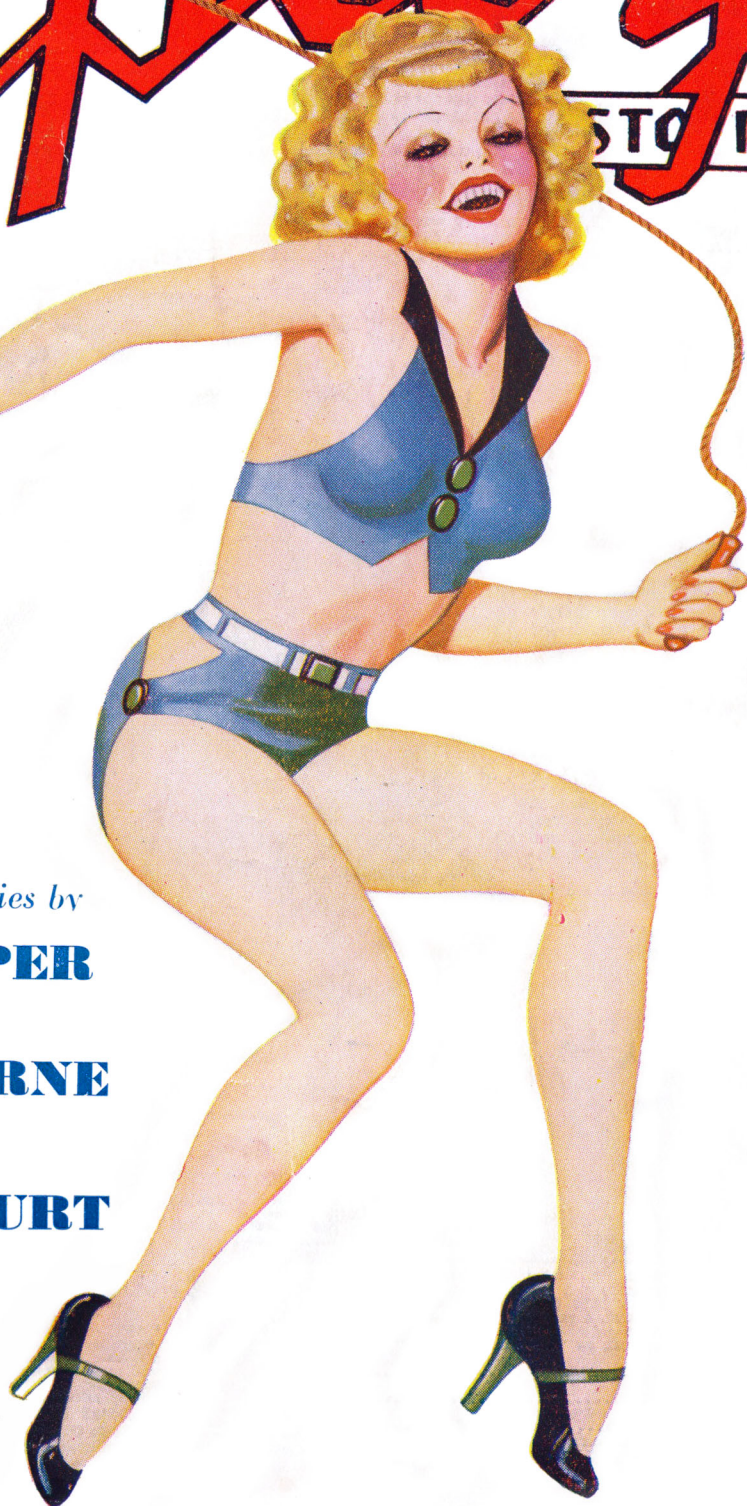


JULY

Spicy

STORIES

**25
CENTS**



In this Issue:- Stories by

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Spicy

STORIES

Chuck full o' fun

JULY

1937

VOLUME VI

NUMBER 10

PEPPY STORIES

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SPICY STORIES IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE
D. M. PUBLISHING CO., INC., DOVER, DEL.

Between You and Me!

Dear Editor:

I am a constant reader of your magazines. I read all of them, but believe I enjoy *Spicy* the best.

I am a widow of 29 and would like to hear from some one who likes to write.

I have been here on a vacation but will be home by the time this letter is printed.

I have blonde hair, blue eyes, weigh 125, height 5 ft. 2 in. Hope some one will write, as I get so lonesome.

10 Maple St., Hornell, N.Y.

In hope,
Nellie Van Dusen.

Dear Editor:

I have been reading *Spicy* for a long while and enjoy it very much.

I would like for you to publish this in the next issue of *Spicy*.

I will answer all letters received, so come on girls and boys, and I will send you my picture.

I am 22 years old, six feet, grey eyes.

Sincerely,
J. F. Leacock.

New England, N. Dakota.

Dear Editor:

I have been reading your publications for some time and want to tell you that I enjoy them very much.

There is only one thing wrong with them. The mags. are not large enough and they do not come out often enough, but I do enjoy what there is to them, so here's to larger and more mags.

From a Steady Reader,
Herman Motter.

Fargo Aggri. Camp, Met. Water Dist., Indio, California. c/o P.M.

Dear Editor:

I have been a constant reader of your maga-

zines for a long time and I find them very interesting, and I hope that the good work will continue. I hope that you will find space in your magazine for this letter.

I am six feet tall, weigh 145 lbs, blue eyes, brown hair, and am 20 years old. I have travelled a great deal and can tell of my many thrilling experiences which I had while on the road and while working on tramp steamers. I promise to answer all who write me. Will also exchange photos.

Hoping to see this in your next publication, I remain

Yours truly,
John J. Kennedy.

333 Summit Ave., Schenectady, N.Y.

Dear Editor:

May I congratulate your magazine on the continued interest it has given the public. I am a regular reader of *Spicy* and I would like you to place my request for pen pals. I am 18 years of age, 5 ft. 5 in., 128 lbs., and very fond of sports. Anyone from anywhere, please answer this plea for pen pals. There is lots to say in Hawaii.

Aloha,
Robert Kobayacki.

2223 Beretania Street, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Dear Editor:

I want to thank you for publishing my letter in *Spicy* recently. It was a great favour to me and I really appreciate it. I'll always be a reader of your publications as long as they are available, especially if such writers as Diana Page, Barnaby Ives, Mason Johns, and a few others continue contributing to your publications.

I've saved up all my "Pep," "Spicy," etc. and have quite a large collection of them now. I wouldn't part with them for anything.

Wishing you all the success in the world, I remain,

Very sincerely yours,
E. G., Buffalo, N.Y.



Exit One Man-Hater

PENELOPE rose from beside the box of puppies and stretched, arms above her head, breasts straining under the thin jersey she wore. She made a beautiful picture there in the old stable, the

sun sifting in across her thinly clad body, touching up hair the colour of the tawney gold spots of the setter mother watching her so anxiously.

"It's all right, Lady Love. Guess

the Dunreath setter papa'd these, but be more careful next time," Penelope said, yawning. "It's a great life if you don't weaken, but why be strong?" she mused aloud, deciding she was lonesome for people. Being a man-hater wasn't so hot when there were no men around to hate.

"Why, indeed, be strong; it is so much more delightful to be weak," an amused male voice said, and she saw a young man watching her from the doorway and since he wasn't a tramp she wasn't alarmed. When one lived alone in the middle of a hundred ruined acres it paid to be careful.

Penelope studied her caller, mouth sullen, eyes sultry. Just the sort of man she liked, lithe, virile, handsome in a rugged way. Probably he'd strayed from the Dunreath house-party down the hill a mile.

"I suppose you are Jim Arden's new wife," continued the young man. "I heard he was to marry again."

"No, I'm not his wife," Penelope said, curtly. "We . . . we quarrelled, Jim and I," she yawned, though she felt far from bored now. "Of course, you understand I have a right to call myself Arden." Penelope's lips twisted derisively. "I'm not sure though I want to."

"Then you don't think he owes you marriage?" the young man asked sternly, angry lights in his red-brown eyes.

"My feeling for Jim Arden is as dead as that moth," touching a dead moth on the window sill. "Shocked?"

"No, glad. I'm rather at loose ends myself." He came closer and looked down at her, eyes beginning to burn. "Lordy, girl, you're gorgeous! I don't blame Jim Arden for running amok and deserting his wife and kids for you."

His burning glance flamed over the girl's lovely tanned face, sulky red lips, sultry gray eyes, slipped down her throat where the zipper on her jersey was undone, revealing that the sun tan ran down as far as eye could see and that was over the half moons of a firm bosom.

Penelope flushed under his glance and her hands came up over her bosom, fumbling at the zipper, but he leaned forward swept her hands down, holding them.

"Don't, you are . . . you are perfect," he said, his arm going around her waist to strain her close.

"See here, you can't act like this," spluttered Penelope, striving to free herself from the virile body and only succeeding in making him tighten his grip.

"But I want to. There's something about you . . . the minute I saw you, stretching like a tawny cat there in the sun's rays, I wanted to hold you like this." He put a big brown hand over the curve of her upper arm and felt her breath increase. "You see? I affect you exactly as you affect me."

"Aren't you forgetting Jim Arden?" said Penelope.

"No, you're all washed up with him, I can tell, even if you hadn't said so in so many words. Right this minutes there's just two of us in the whole world, Bayard Dunreath and you . . . ?

"Penelope," breathed Penelope. So this was Jim Arden's friend, the man who had been so furious when he had left his family for his lovely secretary. Bay Dunreath's picture had stood on the mantel in Jim's bedroom. That was why he seemed as familiar as his other self.

"We can't go on like this, you know," Penelope declared, as Bay did not speak but continued to embrace her, his glance burning.

"No, we'll have to stop or go farther," he said, breathlessly, and leaned forward to press his mouth down on hers.

Penelope's legs gave way under her and it was apparently what he wanted, for he let them gently down on the sweet new hay in the manger, continuing the kiss without pause.

Penelope struggled as she realised what it meant. His kiss was sweeping her far beyond safe moorings, out on a sea of sensation, of which she had no real knowledge.

"Don't struggle, Pen," he begged, freeing her lips to look into her lovely flushed face.

"This is madness . . . you're mad . . . I'm mad to permit you," panted Pen, trying to snatch back her beautiful balance and good sense. Never before had it deserted her, but never before had any man so taken her by storm.

"Permit?" he laughed amusedly. "You are fighting like a baby tiger, my beauty, and I love it." He began draining the sweetness of her throat and Penelope surrendered with a moan and crushed his face to her.

To-morrow she would hate her-

self and hate men even worse, but now she didn't hate anyone. So Bay Dunreath found her mouth ready for his, ready for kisses as eager as his.

The sun had long set when Bay freed Penelope, and walked with her back to the ruined stone farmhouse where she lived alone.

"You shouldn't live here alone," he said, awkwardly, looking at Penelope's pale, subdued face. "It's a wonder Jim's ex-wife doesn't object."

"I forced Jim to deed Birchways to me," Penelope said, somewhat sullenly.

She knew suddenly that it was all over. Bay was through with her. He was probably hating himself for giving way to the warm, sunny stable, the beautiful girl and their aloneness. He was the type who did not take strange girls as a rule. He had been carried off his feet just as she had and he was smarting under the fact. He was looking flushed and sullen.

"But . . ." he scowled. "But I understood it was to go to the Arden girls . . . Lilace and June. You certainly stripped Jim, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did my best." Penelope's smile was mirthless. "You know his girls?"

"I am halfway in love with Lilace. She is at my place now. She sent me over to see if you and Jim were living here. If you weren't, we were going to pic-nic here. I have a large house-party at my place."

"Oh!" Lilace would. She was the type. And men always fell for her frail, blonde beauty. She wasn't so helpless with her own sex. In

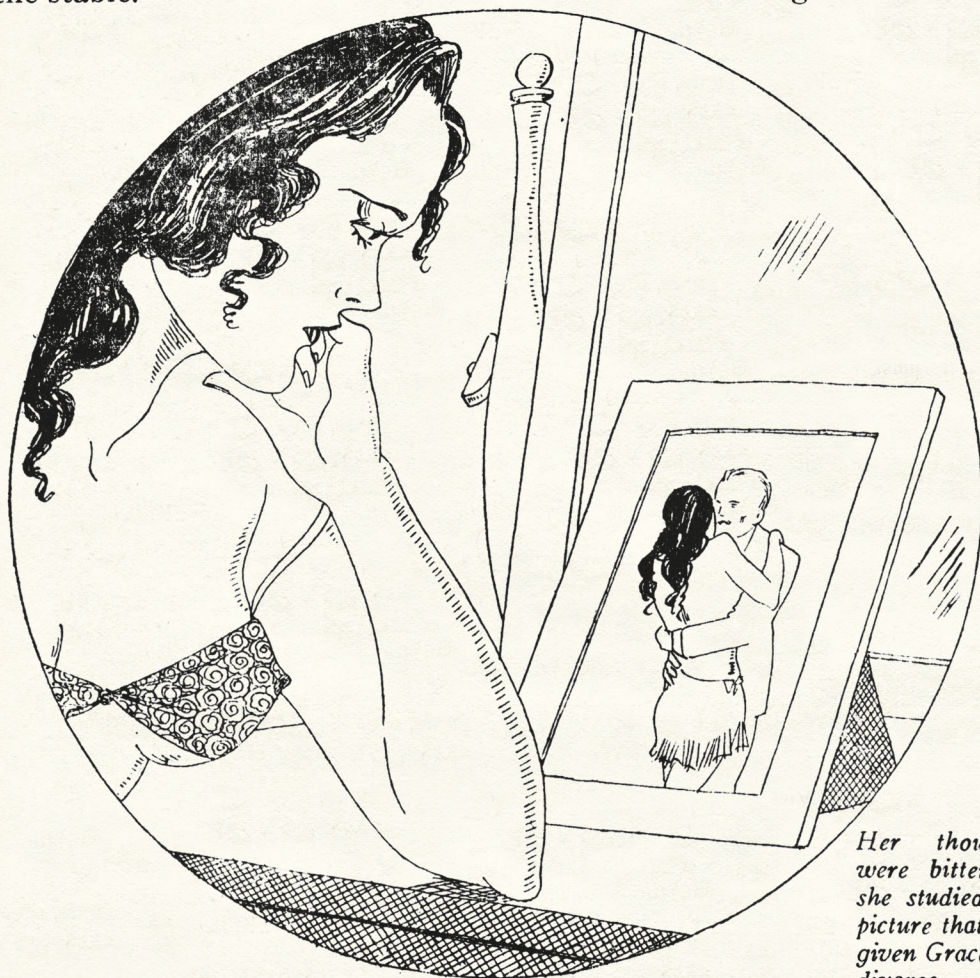
fact, she helped herself to everything she could.

"You are so beautiful, Penelope. I wonder why you fell for Jim Arden. He's years older than you and you should marry him, you know. Your affair is pretty well advertised over the country. Men will shy from you." Bay was scowling, furious at himself for the interlude in the stable.

meant something to him, it had to.

But it didn't apparently, for, watching from the window, she saw Bay call his setter to heel and stalk down the lane towards the red roofs of his own home.

She didn't want any supper, so she stretched out in the room she had made weather-proof and habitable out of the entire ruined farmhouse. Her thoughts were bitter,



Her thoughts were bitter as she studied the picture that had given Grace her divorce.

"Don't worry yourself about me. Good night!" Pen turned and left him abruptly and went inside, slamming the farmhouse door.

Surely he'd call back. All this

and to keep them bitter she had a framed snapshot on the dresser, a thin, wiry man, with a narrow, intelligent face and passionate eyes; eyes like her own, gray and hot. In

his arms was an almost nude figure, hair hanging to her waist, hiding her face. It was the picture which had given Grace Arden her uncontested divorce, but the girl in Grace's husband's arms was not Penelope, though Penelope had been in Jim's arms often enough. Jim was Penelope's dad, and they had been great pals.

Funny mistake for Bay Dunreath to make, taking her for Polly May. She'd never tell him the difference now after their madness.

He wasn't the only one in Penelope's love life. There'd been Gray Mercer first. Before they could be engaged, Pen had gone on a camping trip with her father and Lilace had caught Gray in her small greedy hands.

When Gray had had all he wanted of Lilace, found how shallow she was when passion was dead, he had come back to lovely, wine-brown Penelope, to find she would have none of him. About then the scandal of her father and Polly May had crashed the headlines and Penelope had fled to the farm to hide like a wounded animal, twice hurt by men she had loved.

Loved . . . Pen laughed because she had not known what love was when she had imagined herself in love with Gray. Or maybe this afternoon's delirium hadn't been love. Maybe that was why Lilace was so greedy for men, rushing from man to man, like a hungry bee. Maybe they were all alike at moments like those. Penelope was too green to know.

She was walking with her handsome setter far above both Birch-

ways and Dunreath when the Dunreath hunt streamed past next day. She watched them from her hiding place. Lilace rode at the head with Bay, Lilace, golden and lovely in her tight blue pullover and jodphurs.

To Pen's dismay they let the hunt pass on and dismounted close to her covert and Bay held up his arms for Lilace to dismount. The fool, couldn't he see the shallowness of her eyes . . . her cheapness?

As Lilace slipped down into Bay's arms she stayed there looking up at him and smiling, pressing her young body to him eagerly, offering a ripe red mouth to him. Pen tried not to look as Bay bent his head and took what she offered. Then, careless of discovery, Penelope crashed away farther up the hill.

She'd give them the privacy they would want in another five minutes of Bay's dangerous kisses. She was shaken with jealousy as she crashed down the other side of the hill to the farmhouse. Lilace had everything. She wouldn't throw Bay away as she had Gray. Bay had money besides looks, poor Gray had only his looks.

Pen lay in the swing at sunset, still fighting jealousy, when she heard a car stop and a tall, blonde young man came up the path. She sat up, staring. What was Gray doing here?

"Hello, June," he said, eagerly. "Your dad wired me to find out if you were at the farm. I was glad to come. It's been hell with you lost. He didn't let on he knew where you might be till his wire came."

Pen rose and gave him her hand, honestly glad to see him. "I've been here since before the divorce case, Gray."

"I believe you're glad to see me, June."

"I'm Penelope here. That's what dad always called me, you know." Pen left her hand in Gray's clasp.

His blue eyes roved over her longingly. She had on a thin dress linen dress which left her arms and back bare, fitted snugly over her hips and flared to show bare brown legs, anklets and ghillies.

"All right, Pen. Are you glad to see me?"

For a moment Penelope's glance strayed beyond him to the gate. She started, then said sweetly, "Terribly glad to see you, Gray. I guess I was a terrible prude when we went together. You needn't act so afraid of me. I don't mind if you kiss me." you kiss me."

Gray's arms encircled her eagerness to find her mouth, then captured it, lips trembling in his greediness.

So it wasn't the same, Penelope thought. She was shivering inside to her very toes but just as long as Bay Dunreath leaned on her gate staring, just so long would she stay in Gray's arms and endure his caresses.

His hands slipped under her arms. A little ripple of feeling went over Pen. If he'd stop kissing her it would be all right. He slid her garment straps down a little way and his hands closed greedily over creamy white shoulders.

"You beauty . . . you beauty," he mumbled, guiding her toward the

swing, with his fingers digging deep into her soft flesh.

Pen let him push her among the pillows, knowing that the vines would hide them from Bay's angry sight. She saw him wheel and stride away down the lane, and fairly tore Gray's hands from her body and pulled the straps back up.

"Sorry, Gray, you see we had an audience, a young man who needed a lesson, or maybe I needed one. The lesson is ended, now you'd better trot on home."

Flushed and angry and bewildered, Gray stared at Pen, then grabbed her close and fairly jerked the dress from her body. "You won't play that with me, you beautiful little devil."

Penelope discovered two things: that she was no match for Gray and that she had driven away, by her actions, her only source of help. Yet she fought against Gray's caresses.

"See here, Pen, if you're willing, go ahead, don't mind me, but by jove, if you mean that fight you're putting up, I'll throw him out!"

It was a dry voice, a once much-beloved voice, her dad's.

"I do mean it. Make him go away, Jim!" Pen's voice caught in a sob, and Gray Mercer released her and rose to his feet, his face losing its purple flush.

"She brought it on herself," he said, sullenly.

Pen was pulling on her dress. "Let him go, he's partly right . . . I was playing Lilace, only I found I couldn't go through, with him."

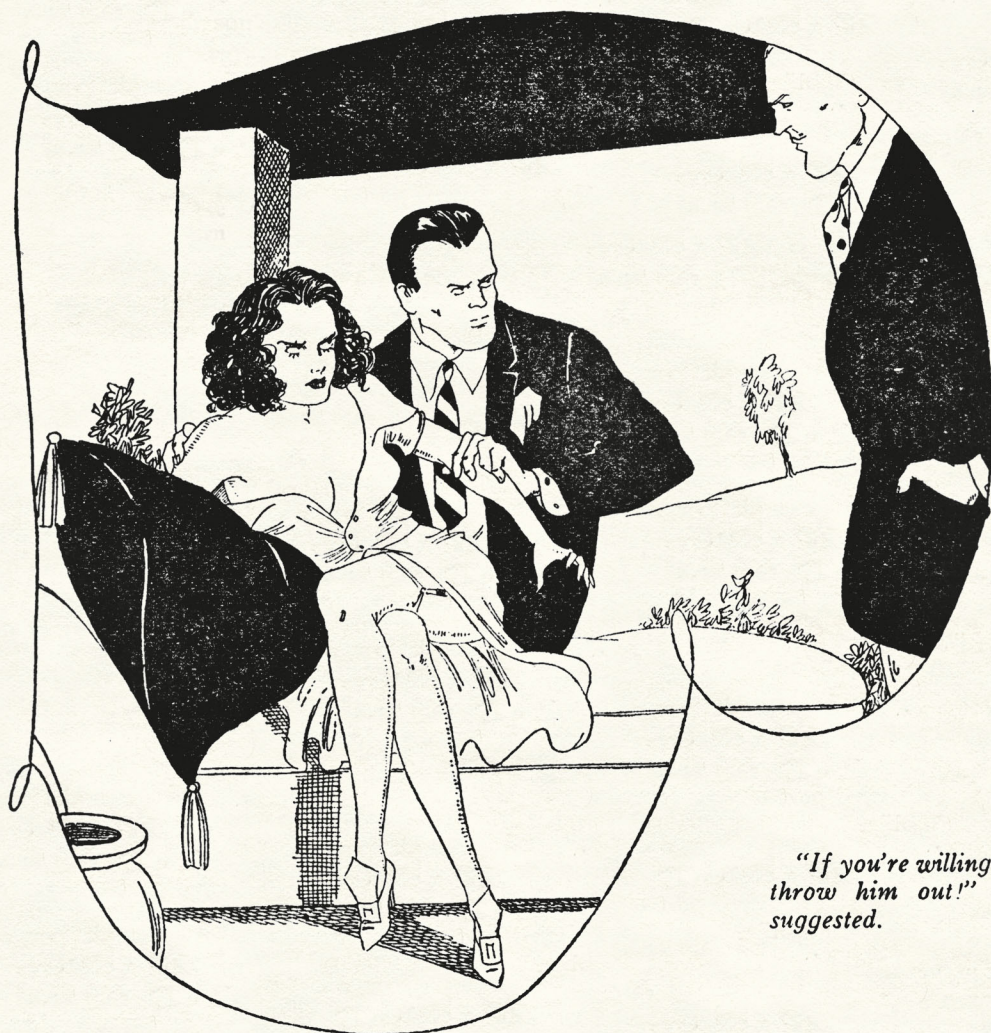
Gray stamped off and Jim Arden

sat down beside the daughter who had disowned him.

He was a thin, tanned man with burned out grey eyes. "Your mother sent me after you, Pen. We're going back together. That

and the fellow sold the picture to your mother."

"I believe you, Jim," said Penelope, and knew she did. She'd had her minute of madness, too, on a pile of freshly cut hay she'd sickled her-



"If you're willing, I'll throw him out!" he suggested.

fever of mine has passed and she's forgiven me. It won't be all right until you do. You're too white a kid to know what a minute's madness can lead you into. There was only the one time that mattered, with Polly May, and that was the time the hidden camera caught us

self. She understood her father's madness for the first time, and her hand went out to grasp his.

"Gosh, Pen, it seems good to be friends with you again. Lilace never mattered so much. She's a little tart and always has been . . . the worst part of me cropped up in

her . . . but you've always been like a clean boy."

"Hungry?" Pen asked abruptly. "I haven't had any supper but I believe I could eat now. I shot two rabbits to-day and have them cooling."

"Lilace is at Dunreath," Jim observed after supper, as he lighted their cigarettes. "She intends to marry Dunreath, more fool he. She'll probably succeed if she can keep up her goody-goody pose that long."

"I know, but maybe he doesn't want her to be good," Pen said, bitterly.

"You haven't explained about Gray and you. How come he ever got you where you were licked? I thought you washed him up when you found him in Lilace's room that morning?" Jim said, disgustedly.

"I did. When he came after me I thought it a smart idea to let him see what he'd lost by playing around with Lilace. He was stronger than I suspected."

"If you ever got like Lilace I'd want to shoot you," muttered Jim. "No mistake about her, she's a little tart . . ."

"I'll thank you to keep your dirty tongue off Lilace, if she is your daughter!" came Bay Dunreath's furious tones, and he stepped into the sunset lighted room. "You're lower than even I thought. You're also dumb if you believe Pen's explanation about her little scene with Gray. She's two-timing you right along!"

"Hold on, hold on, what's the wind coming up for?" Jim asked, confusedly.

"Never mind him, Jim," Penelope said tiredly. "You're intruding, Mr. Dunreath. Jim and I are awfully busy making plans for a trip up Hudson Bay for a month. We're friends again, you see."

"You mean you're going?" Bay asked, his anger dropping like a cloak.

"Of course."

Bay turned on his heel and strode away, followed by Pen's low laughter.

"What in the devil is it all about, Pen?" Jim asked in bewilderment. "Doesn't he think you should take me back?"

"Looks like it. Well, that's that. You'll have to stay in town, Jimmy. There's only one room with a decent roof and I'll be darned if I'll be routed out of my own bed."

"I was planning on that. So will you take a trip with me? Your mother hoped you would."

"Let's talk it over to-morrow, Jim. I'm dead tired and there's a lot I want to talk to you about, concerning Birchways. It needs so much done to make it a decent place to live."

Penelope watched her father drive away finally and slumped once more into the swing. Good thing Jim didn't know what Bay thought, that she was Polly May. He must have forgotten Polly's first name was Polly, not Penny.

She felt unsettled, restless. Her experience with Gray hadn't been too good for her. Why had she fought him, anyway? Look at Lilace. Every darned man they knew had fallen for Lilace, and she

picked off a darling like Bay . . . because he was a darling, if he had fallen for a stable and a beautiful girl.

"Pen . . . are you alone?" Speaking of the devil you heard the clatter of his hoofs.

"Yes, what is it? More lectures? Pen tried to say lightly, as Bay loomed in the darkness.

"No." He sat down beside her in the swing. "I've been rushing about for the past two hours half mad with jealousy. I went home but I couldn't stay for thinking of you here with Arden. Pen, Pen, what has he that I haven't? I have more money, youth . . . he's a burned out, middle aged man."

"I wonder why you are saying all this, Bay?" Pen asked tiredly. "Aren't you marrying Lilace?"

"No I'm not. I want to marry you, Pen. I don't give a rap about your past with Arden . . . well, yes, I do care, but we'll never speak of it again. I've been trying to forget you ever since I found you there in the stable with the setter puppies . . . there was something between us . . . had to be."

"You nut," Penelope said softly. "You'd marry me?"

He pulled her into his arms roughly. "Yes, if you will!"

Pen drew a stormy breath of relief, and wound her arms around his neck. "Then listen to me," she said gaily, "I'm June Penelope Arden. "Does that mean anything to you? I never was Polly May and when Jim went berserk I made him give me Birchways. When Polly May found out that mother and I to-

gether had stripped him of all he had but his job she threw him over . . . not you don't."

For Bay furiously tried to free himself from her clinging arms.

"I tricked you," she admitted, holding him tightly. "I hated every man, when you came into the stable, but you—did things to me." Pen stopped for breath for Bay was still trying to free himself.

A strap broke in the struggle and star light poured in through the vines over Pen's soft gleaming skin. Bay's hands caressed her tenderly and lingered, and Pen pressed lovingly against him.

"Darling," she crooned, "don't be angry any more. Don't let's fight, either . . ." She buried her face against Bay's tanned throat.

"Not too much so, Pen," Bay said grimly. "I tried to tell myself I was the first one you'd ever loved, but there was the damnable proof of Jim's divorce suit . . . that picture . . ."

"Poor boy, I'll make it up to you . . ." promised Pen.

"You're damned right, you will." Bay tumbled her over against the pillows.

"Bay, you darned nut, what are you going to do?" spluttered Pen. "What's the matter with you men?" I had a terrible scrap to keep Gray from . . . getting me all mussed up."

"I don't know what it is. It's Pennitis and it comes on me suddenly, in sunny stables filled with new hay, or in the starlight with the vines all full of flowers."

"Must be a form of hay fever," she said, derisively.

(Please turn to page 54)

Sir Walter's Sally

By NONA BENFORD

WHEN a man reaches a certain age he's going to do one of two things ; either he'll go to seed or he'll sow a bumper crop of wild oats. This stage usually comes when an ordinarily sensible, sane business man hits up around forty-three.

was a little blonde bit of lusciousness, whose honey gold hair was as silky as the negligees she affected. She had a baby voice and eyes that said, "I dare you."

Every evening Claire Rene would sing a lusty chorus and wiggle a trusty hip for the benefit of the cash



"I have loved you for so long, why not let me settle this problem for you?" he suggested.

Sometimes he is the type that sends his wife to Europe during the siege, and sometimes he develops an ostrich-like quality of thinking that that which he ignores nobody else sees.

Walter Danton belonged to the latter group. After eighteen years of double harness, Walter began to feel coltish. The filly in question

customers at the "Palais d'Or" supper club. And every evening Walter would watch her from his ring-side table, torn between pride of possession and a torturing jealousy at having to share her charms with fifty other cash customers.

"But just remember they only see me," she would protest, when he would storm at her angrily after the

last show. "After all, there's no harm in just looking, is there?" Her words were so reasonable they infuriated him. He wanted so hard to believe her, but he knew what looking at her did to him—and he assumed the other spectators had the same reaction.

Even now, as she stretched out on the ridiculous blue and gold divan of her apartment, things were happening to him.

"Don't look at me like that," he would say. And she would pout her pretty red lips until they were like twin cherries—and Walter was lost.

In her arms there a stormy satisfaction composed of equal parts of hope and despair. Her white body had a creamy tint to it, and the undulating curves were as provocative as a cocktail to a jaded appetite.

A single slender thigh was disclosed when the fluffy negligee she wore opened, and upon its whiteness was pilhouetted the intricate design of the lace panties which clung to that warmth as though they too, would embrace such beauty.

"Ah, but I love you so much," Walter would murmur, almost sobbing out his torture in those deliciously fragrant curves.

She would laugh, then, pretending to be coolly disinterested in his words, but his eyes bright with begging tears, and his promises, buried deep in her golden curls, would melt this mood, and she would fling herself upon him.

It was victory, and life, and passion, and adventure, and all that Walter had ever wanted ever since he had been a faltering young man

trying to convince his first love of his sincerity.

But many years had elapsed since that first love, and Mrs. Danton, whose name was Evelyn, had occupied most of them.

As is frequently the case, Evelyn had retained her youth to a greater extent than her husband. At forty-one, she was a taller-than-average woman, whose slimness had the grace of a girl without sacrificing the curves of maturity. Her dark hair was flecked with white near the temples, but the face beneath the thick waves had the vivacity and charm of a child.

"It isn't as though it were a 'grande passion'," Evelyn protested to Brook Kateridge, family friend, who combined the role of lawyer with that of confessor. "But it's one of those tawdry affairs. She's a little girl, about twenty-five. You know the kind, grabby hands and greased eyelids."

The man groaned. "She probably goes into hysterics if people don't consider her a great artist. Well, my, dear, there really isn't anything you can do about it except to sit tight and wait until the affair dies a natural death."

"But what caused it in the first place?" Evelyn wrinkled her brow in worryment. "If Walter were unhappy with me, or bored or even henpecked I could understand it. But he isn't, Brook. The man has everything he wants—will you please tell me why he jeopardises the respect of his associates by this nonsense?"

The man's keen eyes rested upon the dear face of the woman before

him. "Does it ever occur to you that it may be your fault?" he asked slowly. "After all, you're always just where Walter expects you to be. Whenever he comes home you're here. Whenever he telephones, you're here to answer. When he has a cold in the head you give him aspirin. It's all very good—but does it ever occur to you that while Walter captures a little show girl by his money, you could have any man of any age, just because you're an interesting, lovely woman?"

Evelyn stared at him as though she were trying to decipher a foreign language.

"You're crazy," she told him flatly, and hated herself for flushing. For what she saw in his eyes could not be denied, and mirrored in his eyes she saw all the admiration and affection which she had long suspected were to be found in that quarter.

He watched her confusion with an indulgent smile. Her stature, despite its height, was neither rangy nor awkward. She had the loose grace of an athlete, the wide, lovely shoulders were straight and beautifully proportioned as those of a statue. A long upper torso, with the flat line separating the high, conical breasts from the lower torso was as lovely as that of a professional model. Affecting long, trailing gowns, the folds of silk seemed to caress her grace as a lovely vase enfolds the delicate stem of a single flower.

"Evelyn," the man leaned forward, capturing one of her slender, long-fingered hands in both of his trembling brown paws. "I have

loved you for so long. Why not let me settle this problem for you? Let me show you the phase of life you have never seen. Let me prove to you how lovely you really are. Even if you decide, later, that you don't want me, let me show you that all men are not as stupid as Walter.

She looked so worried he was almost sorry he spoke. Yet she allowed her hand to remain a willing captive . . .

"No!" she breathed almost sharply, as he took her into his arms. "Brook, you must be mad—stark crazy—what are you doing . . ."

But the sensation of her nearness, her soft, lovely, pliant body so close to his own aching heart, made it impossible for him to do anything but press his lips closer and closer to her own, until they seemed to fuse into a unit.

His heart sang as he felt her resistance yielding to his embrace, and when she finally flung back her head, it was as though all the happiness of the ages were his in one binding flash of victory.

Walter frowned heavily the following morning. Seated across from his wife, he regarded the bit of charred toast on his plate with an expression of distaste.

"It seems to me we might have a decent breakfast now and then," he remarked, rather testily. The strain of Claire was beginning to tell on him, and his neuritis did not disappear under the diet of welsh rarebits and cocktails which he was eating.

"I say it seems to me . . ." he re-

to be an undemanding wife. How stupid women were, to be sure. But, of course, Evelyn was getting on in years. Let's see—she must be—oh, fully forty-one—soon forty-two . . .

As though his thought transmitted itself to her lips, she smiled at him gently. "Doesn't it seem strange, Walter," she mused, "that we are in the forties. Just think,



peated sharply, and then stopped as he realised Evelyn had not heard a word. She seemed to be lost in day dreams—day dreams which were very happy ones. Her security irritated him, goaded on as he was by his own unhappy situation. He looked at her sharply. She was a very pretty woman, he had to admit, an extremely attractive woman. She made a charming hostess for his friends, and had proved

"After all, there's no harm in just looking," she thought as she sang.

you'll be forty-four next birthday."

He snorted angrily. How like a woman to bring up such a ridiculous topic at the breakfast table. "Naturally," he told her, sharply, "do you expect me to remain twenty all my life?"

"No, but I'm wondering if you are losing sight of the fact that a perennial adolescent is a tragic thing."

She rose and sauntered out of the room, leaving him to stare after her. What tommy-rot the woman was speaking! "Perennial adolescence" indeed. As though he didn't know that. As though he were not getting younger—he winced as a twinge of pain shot through one shoulder. Claret to-night, instead of sauterne, he promised himself. And perhaps a simple salad instead of filet mignon . . .

Evelyn dressed slowly and carefully that afternoon. It was some time since she had dressed for the delight of a man whose eyes lit up when she entered a room. Her lithe body needed no confining girdle, and the lacy bandeau she donned was more in the nature of a decoration than a necessity. For the lovely mounds stood as firmly as those of a young girl's. The lace of their gentle prison seemed to caress them as softly as Brook's lips met the mobile mouth of Evelyn.

The slim chiffon panties were so sheer the delicate flesh tones of the thighs gleamed like marble through the silk, adding a lustre to the inanimate material which was magical in its effect. Scorning a slip, Evelyn wriggled into a deep green gown, the long lines of which outline the graciousness of her form as an artist's brush catches the grace

of a fleeting inspiration.

The little hat, with its gay plumed tip, sat high on her lovely hair, disclosing the soft wavy tendrils which curled around her gay face. At last the last bit of powder



Walter had a sudden shock-business. "Here, take it!" he

was applied, and the last bit of lipstick was on—and Evelyn regarded herself in the cheval glass of her dressing room.

She looked just like what she was. A delightfully interesting woman on her way to keep a delightfully interesting appointment.

She dismissed the cab at the door

of the hotel. Her step was light, and her heart was gay as she glanced around the lobby. In a moment she saw him; his handsome head high above the crowd, his broad shoulders swinging freely as he walked towards her.

Hands outstretched in greeting,



ing distaste for the whole said.

he allowed his eyes to take in the loveliness of her for a moment. Then, "I'm so very glad you decided to come," he said, simply, and his voice was like the low note of a cello.

He guided her to one of the elevators, and they were whisked up to his apartment, where the spicy odour of the old fashioned flowers

greeted them.

"How very lovely," Evelyn touched one of the blossoms gently. "Oh, how very, very lovely—and what trouble you have taken . . ."

Brook smiled as though he were begging her indulgence in his whimsy. "But let me show you the rest of the apartment."

The adjacent room was fixed up room. The low, deep-cushioned as a combination library and bed-divan was drawn before the ceiling-high windows, which opened out on a broad balcony. Far below them the city spread out, bright in the brilliant sunshine of the beautiful day.

"It is more lovely than I can tell you." She turned to him, her eyes bright. "How patient you are, Brook, and how ungrateful I have been."

"But I do not want gratitude, sweet," his lips were close to her ear, his mouth pressing sweet kisses in the warm spot below one lobe. She was seated now, and he was on his knees by her side. His head bent over her hands as he peeled off each pressed his lips in the fragrant palm of each uncovered hand.

It was vain to tell herself to leave. Every gesture the man made, every word intensified the hunger she had lived with for so long. She was a woman built for deep and abiding love, and chaos reigned when her emotions were not fed.

"I must let you know—let me show you—how much you mean to me." His arms were strong about her throbbing body, and she thought she would cry aloud with the tantalizing uncertainty of the

moment. But then his lips were demanding her own, and his fingers, fumbling clumsily with the jewelled brooch at her gown, were succeeding in unfastening its catch.

He swung her high in his arms, and carrying her, as one carries a child, he bore her triumphantly to the lounge where the bright sunshine picked out the flawless beauty of her gleaming skin.

She sighed at the relief of being in his arms, at the feel of his throbbing body close to her own, at the thought of his mad caresses enveloping her, dulling her senses to everything but the one in her arms.

Walter growled angrily at his secretary. "But Mrs. Danton does not answer. The maid says she is out."

"She is not out," Walter thumped a heavy fist down on his desk. "I'll tell you she is never out. Try again."

It was imperative that he reach her, for he wanted to tell her there would be an important conference at the office, and he would not be home for dinner. After all, it was Wednesday, and he always dined home on Wednesday. But as luck would have it, Claire had shown signs of being very generous this particular evening, and, fortified by a flexible diamond bracelet she had long admired, Walter had decided to attend the early show at the cafe, spend the few hours between the show with her, sit through the late show, and then perhaps join her at her apartment, where the important business of the evening would, in truth, take place. And if it wasn't business in the conventional sense of the word, it was business in the unconventional sense.

Up to the time he had to leave the office, Walter was unable to get in touch with Evelyn. Het felt an unreasonable rage against her lack of consideration. Just like a woman to go shopping all day long—with never a thought for her husband's convenience.

He jammed on his hat, and stamped out of the office in a vile temper, and Claire's greeting didn't help matters any.

"But I have changed my mind," she pouted when he at last called for her at her apartment. "I cannot see you this evening . . ."

"But you are seeing me this evening," he insisted. "And look here, I've a surprise . . ." He brought the long jeweller's box out of his pocket. She gave a little cry of pleasure, but he whisked it out of her grasp. "A price, dear lady, first you must pay a price . . ."

She wrapped her arms around his neck, but the gesture was so automatic, so perfunctory, that Walter had a shocking distaste for the whole thing.

"Don't," he said sharply, "Here, take it. He almost flung it at her. He sat down suddenly, as though his knees would no longer support him.

"Papa wants a little drink," Claire cooed, her sharp nails busy at the catch of the box. "Soon as mumsy gets the little present she'll get honey boy a little drinksy-winksy."

"Oh, stop it," Walter felt his stomach heave at the palpable falseness of the words. He looked around the room. Gold cupids leered from everywhere. There

were mirrors, and lace cushions, and baby-blue hangings. There were gold tassels, and pastel walls, and where there were not long-legged dolls, there were beribboned dogs. The room gave him the jim-jams, and with a sudden revulsion for the bad taste and shocking vulgarity of the display, he reached for his hat.

Claire had opened the box, and her gasp of amazed delight would have charmed him a few evenings previous. Now it merely bored him.

"I—I'm not feeling so well. I believe I'd better go home," he rose to his feet, but her arms were around his neck and her lips were moist against his ear.

"No, Walter. Please, Walter, darling, I want you to stay. Please, your little Claire will be so lonely."

It was too obvious. The tentative appointment she had made was not worth keeping, after the bracelet. He saw so clearly that just as he had wanted to be blinded before, now he wanted clarity and truth.

Automatically his arms tightened around her body. She was painfully thin, he felt, and then was amazed at himself that he had not noticed this before. Unlike Evelyn, Claire had tiny bones, poorly put together. He tried to remember the last time he had held Evelyn in his arms—and could not. With Claire's lips glued against his own it was difficult to remember anything. For the first time he was aware of the amount of lipstick the girl used. a lubrication, he thought to himself, and then wondered if he had ever gone home bespattered with lipstick . . . ah, yes, he must have done that very thing, many times.

Evelyn was no fool.

"Now, my dear, you'll have to get to the club on time, you know," he was disengaging his arms gently, but she was shaking her head vehemently.

"Not going to the club to-night," she informed him blandly. "I'm staying at home—we aer staying at home. Just you and I, and a nice quiet evening. Would you like that?"

Walter sat down while she ordered the dinner. Then he heard the door of her boudior close. He felt slightly annoyed that there was no evening paper handy. He had left his in the taxi. Romance is surely dead when the beloved's absence is not nearly so annoying as the absence of the newspaper.

The waiters set up the table swiftly, and the steaming dishes were there, waiting for the two diners. Walter ate slowly, thoughtfully. He scarcely watched the girl opposite. She was wearing a new gown, low cut and revealing—yet in revealing so much it lost all semblance of subtlety and therefore defeated the very purpose it had set out to achieve.

She bent forward to pour sparkling wine in the goblet before him, and as she did so, he could see the purple shadow between the young breasts. He felt rather indifferent, and paused to consider the excellence of the sherry sauce in which the veal was cooked.

"You are displeased with me," she pouted, and her words came to him as from a great distance, for he was wondering where Evelyn was this evening. Despite the fact that he

had scarcely noticed what his wife wore for some time, he found himself remembering quite well the quiet smartness of her dinner gowns, and the impeccable beauty of her as she sat across the conjugal board.

The waiters, having been dismissed, Claire rose and crossed to where Walter was sitting.

"This is really very fine endive," he remarked. "I always liked roquefort dressing. A bit more paprika, perhaps, would make it perfect."

"Aw, honey," Claire's voice was almost whining when she coaxed. Her complexion was white and drawn. He was amazed to see the little fan-like design of lines etched from the outer corners of her eyes. Strange he had never noticed that before.

He put down his endive reluctantly, and devoted his entire attention to the little girl on his lap, and the gesture annoyed him. It always annoyed him to have his hair rumpled.

"Is *ums* tired, honey?" she moaned, brushing her slenderness against him. He had a hunch she was going to leave powder all over him, and he didn't like it. Had all this been going on all this time—and had he been carrying little tell-tale marks of powder and lipstick home to Evelyn?

"Stop that damned chatter," he told her petulantly, angry with himself for being angry with her. For his intelligence told him that she was merely play a role which, at one time had pleased him. The fact

that it now bored him was his fault, not hers.

She began to cry softly, and her tears ran down his neck. She sniffled in his collar, and he felt frightfully uncomfortable about the whole thing. Now that the magic was gone, he had no way of comforting her. He patted her on the shoulder and spoke in what he hoped was a comforting voice.

"There, there. Now just don't cry. See—see the pretty bracelet?" He held it up as one holds up a watch to a sobbing baby. He felt like a fool, and had a nasty impression that she saw through his gesture.

"Oh, so that's the way it is, huh." In a moment she was on her feet, her eyes blazing, her face horribly distorted with rage. "Think you can buy me off with jewellery, huh. Well, I want you to know that it'll take more than that . . ." Her sobbing voice reached an hysterical pitch, and the cords on her neck stood out like lavender cables. He was shocked at her changed appearance, even while his intelligence told him the wisest way of settling this storm.

In a moment he was on his feet. His arms were around her, and his hands, drifting over the lovely form, were as comforting as though he were moved by sheer love instead of expediency.

"My dear little girl," he folded her close to him, despising himself for going through this act, yet hating her more for being taken in by his cool insincerity. "My dear, dear child."

He picked her up in his arms and

cradled her fondly. Her lips were burning as he kissed her. He could feel the heat of her throbbing body through the inadequate gown which she wore. The maribou accented accented neckline was not a bit softer than the flesh beneath it. He parted the robe gently, and stood aside, as though he were better able, thus, to feast his eyes upon her loveliness. Then, bending down, he kissed the trangle at the base of her neck.

No longer blinded by infatuation, he was coolly possessed of all his senses. Cleverly, analytically, he permitted his palms to drift over the form of the girl by his side. Impossible that any woman could be taken in by such flagrantly false love-making—but Claire's breath was coming in short gasps, and her lips were parted to drink in his kisses.

Never in all his life had he felt so degraded, as when the girl finally cuddled down in his arms. Drugged by emotional exhaustion, and drowsy with the liquor of the dinner, she smiled a little, and then fell into a deep sleep.

Walter's eyes were wide and his brain was sorting things out, and his life was passing before his eyes and horrifying him with its stupidity. Again and again his thoughts turned to Evelyn. It was strange, but while he had felt no infidelity towards his wife while he was with Claire, he now felt a great sense of disloyalty to Claire for the thoughts of Evelyn which now kept crowding in upon him.

He disengaged his arm gently. Rising, he tiptoed across the room. At the door he glanced back, but

the girl had not stirred. She whimpered slightly and then buried her head in one of the stupid little cushions. He smiled wryly and felt a deep wave of disappointment that the illusion had not lasted longer. Reality was always such a disappointing element in an affair of this sort. Thank Heavens there were no letters, no mutual friends—nothing he had to fear. He had successfully avoided a tantrum and a nasty scene—and he knew as he closed the door that he closed the association definitely.

Evelyn was sleeping when he arrived home. He stood by the side of bed for fully a moment. Then, tentatively, almost apologetically, he called her name.

"Evelyn, I must speak with you—now."

She buried her head deeper in the pillow, and he could see the sharp contrast between the white of the pillow-case and the dark hair.

"Evelyn"

"Uh, huh. That you, Walter?" Her voice was sleepy, and she did not bother to open her eyes. That alone showed him how far he had gone. There had been a time when she would not retire unless he were home. His heart sank as he began to realise an irrevocable loss.

"Not now," she protested. "In the morning, maybe. I'm sleepy, now."

"No!" His voice was sharp. "It's important."

Then, to his complete astonishment, she gave voice to a thought which had been brewing in his mind
(Please turn to page 62)

Three Little Words

KEN COOPER

GREGORY ADAMS knew better. You don't reach the comparatively mature age of 25 without knowing how to handle the tactical manoeuvres of "amour." It was just a slip of the tongue in Greg's case. Call it over-enthusiasm. If he had kept his mouth shut, this story would never have been written. But Greg Adams didn't. He talked at the wrong moment.

It was the right moment for everything else. You probably haven't ever seen the Wautacket Country Club. Not unless you mingle in the smartest sets and boast a lineage going back to Adam and Eve by direct descent.

The Wautacket Country Club's five thousand acre tract of land off the coast of maine, combining the best features of sea and wilds and dedicated to the pleasures of the idle rich. Here you may fish in the morning and hunt in the afternoon. Here, you may dine and wine at the Beach Pavilion or wine and dine at the Mountain House. Here, you may plight a troth on the white sands or keep a tryst in a sylvan setting.

Greg Adams was doing the latter when he made the horrible faux pas. It was a perfect night. A high, silvery moon and just the least bit of a refreshing breeze. The spot Greg had chosen was particularly

conducive to romanticism. It was the porch of one of the Club's hunting lodges, deep in the woods. The moon flickered through the delicately filigreed pine needles, created a gorgeous pattern of light on the ground. Fireflies flickered in the darkness. A cricket, evidently calling to its mate, chirped its high-pitched song.

And to cap the climax—for what good is a setting without the gem?—Greg had persuaded Fran Mercer to accompany him to this enchanting retreat rather than to dance at the Mountain House or watch the water pageant from the beach.

It was no simple trick to lure Fran Mercer away from the mob. Fran liked the mob and the mob adored Fran. Unanimously, every male in the Club of appreciative age regarded her as the most beautiful creature ever to enter the gates of Wautacket, if not the most beautiful creature ever to enter the gates of life.

She was tall, a spun-gold Nordic blonde with deep blue eyes, a straight nose, stunningly swollen lips that were habitually blood-red and moist and a firm, viking chin.

Even the female club members conceded Fran Mercer an "unusual" face. Some even went so far as to say she was "singularly attractive." They stopped here. It is expecting too much of a woman to heap praise

on another woman's figure. The male members, however, started where the catty females left off. When Fran Mercer appeared on the beach in one of her many silk lastex bathing suits, the bees flocked to the honey pot in buzzing, pop-eyed swarms.

There was good and sufficient reason. Venus and Juno were back numbers when the Mercer torso made its appearance. Especially encased in a silk lastex bathing suit, tight as a Scotchman's pocketbook clasp.

When first he laid eyes on Fran Mercer walking along the beach, Greg Adams refused to believe anything so perfect existed. For a long, long time he stared at the high, arched breasts. It was a bosom beyond description and comparison. And, to make the picture more perfect, the flat waist, lyred hips and milky-white thighs were equally as perfect.

When Greg recovered from his emotional shock, he set about pulling wires incidental to an introduction. You didn't just barge in on a stranger at Wautucket. It was all done according to Hoyle. That night, at the Beach Pavilion, Greg got his introduction. He went to work immediately, making a big play for the gorgeous, starry-eyed blonde. He wasn't alone in this pleasant task. Two dozen other males were on the make and they went to it, hammer and tongs. A month later, Greg found himself just one of the mob. He had made absolutely no progress. By that time, too, Fran Mercer had a reputation. No, not the kind of reputation you find hanging around

smart country clubs. Just the opposite.

"I tell you, Greg, she can't be touched," Lars Farnum stated definitely. Lars had wangled a moonlight sail with the beauty.

"That's right," Bobby Sanford chimed in. Bobby Sanford had gone riding with her.

"I couldn't get near her with a ten-foot pole," Ralph Leed sadded. "I tried to kiss her and she gave me a cold shoulder that sent chills up my spine."

Greg heard, saw and wondered. Could it be humanly possible that a girl with Fran's hot eyes and voluptuous lips was cold? It seemed insane. She took every opportunity to display her figure. Women did that to attract the opposite sex, not to ward them off. Why, even when she played tennis her outfit consisted of a halter that was just purposefully too small for her bulging breasts and a split skirt that managed to parachute up and reveal plenty of gleaming white skin.

Greg did a little investigating. He discovered that Fran Mercer was a California girl, now living in the East. Her father was something big in oil. She owned two yachts, a summer place at Belgrade, a ranch in Arizona, and a Swiss chalet or three.

"Money?" echoed Roger Denham, chairman of the Club's Committee on Admissions. "Why, she's buried under it! You, with your paltry two-million dollar inheritance, are just a pauper. You should be asking alms."

Greg didn't ask alms. Instead, he asked for a date with the evidently

impregnable Fran Mercer. One didn't just ask for a date and get it. It was only after exhibiting his prowess off the high dive, on the tennis court, on the golf links, in a sailing sloop and on the dance floor that Greg managed to get anywhere. And even then, he was forced to be content with a split evening. Fran dated with someone else until ten. On the stroke of the hour, Greg claimed her.

Fifteen minutes later his powerful roadster had climbed the hill to the hunting lodge. The stage had been well set. There were cool drinks ready—tall, cool rum punches. Fugi, Greg's silent, ubiquitous Jap house boy, had seen to that and made a hasty retreat. Fugi was well trained.

"Isn't it lovely up here?" Greg queried, as he watched Fran's stunning profile in the light of the moon. She was wearing a low-necked white chiffon gown with very little but human skin under it. Greg could see the lush outlines of her bosom, scarcely concealed behind the misty material. He caught flashes of intriguing pink, together with the alabaster hue of the globes.

"Yes, it is lovely," she said, her voice low and throaty.

Greg, at that moment, would have offered odds of 10-1 that Fran Mercer was love's own handmaiden. Her voice and her limpid eyes and the too rapid movement of her body all seemed to indicate a nature as voluptuous as Circe's.

Greg proceeded slowly. One just didn't rush a girl like Fran Mercer. He recalled a few lines of Shelley and a smattering of Keats. He re-

cited them with all the eloquence at his command.

Fran was seated on an upholstered glider, her long, graceful legs crossed, her skirt falling away from her limbs. After the smattering of Keats, Greg moved from his chair to the glider. To his amazement, he found himself with his arm coiled about her waist a bare ten minutes later.

"I think you're about the most beautiful girl I've ever known," Greg said softly.

She laughed. That was all—just laughed. But that laugh spoke volumes. It said: "Trying to pull the same hackneyed line on me, aren't you? Well, forget it. I've heard that from every man who got me alone in this club."

to anticipate her. "I know you've

Grey tried again, endeavouring heard that before, Fran, but I mean it. I've been knocking around a lot since my Dad died. Europe, Asia, South America. I've seen a lot of women. None of them compare to you. There's something—"

"Look, a shooting star!" she cried.

"Fran!"

"Yes, Greg."

"I'm slightly nuts about you."

His arm tightened and he drew her close. Daringly, he brushed his lips across her throat. According to all reports, he was due to be repulsed at this very moment. Greg held his breath, continued the delightful business of touching his mouth to Fran's velvet-smooth throat. No repulsing came. Instead, she lifted his head and offered her red, parted lips.





Greg would have pinched himself if either hand had been free. Pinched himself to see if he was awake or dreaming. Either way, there was only one thing to do. He did it, sweeping her into his arms and pressing his mouth to her lips.

From that moment on it was a romp. His fingers wandered over Fran's delicious curves while his lips drank all the warm sweetness of her own, quitting them only when one shoulder of her gown slipped down, offering a heart-quickenning expanse of silken flesh to which Greg paid immediate homage.

Everything was moving along in apple-pie order. Greg, nervous and fumbling now he was near the goal which was supposed to be unachievable and unattainable, forgot himself in the sublime ecstasy of the moment. Just at the moment when Fran was sighing softly, Greg forgot the primary rule of amour: "Actions speak louder than words."

He placed his lips close to her ear, strained her tight against him. "How about it?" he gasped.

It was as though the strings of a marionette had been suddenly cut with a sharp knife and the little wooden figure crumpled inanimately. Fran stiffened, relaxed, then jerked herself out of Greg's arms. Too late he realized the spell was broken. Instead of atmosphere of remance, the air was surcharged with indignation, crackling with resentment.

"How about what?" Fran snapped.

Greg made matters worse—much worse. "You know what." He

smiled.

Fran's blue eyes sparkled—to put it mildly. Actually, they flared like twin flames. Her open hand whizzed through the air, struck Greg's cheek like a rifle shot.

The blow stung. Before Greg could recover from the shock and amazement, Fran Mercer was behind the wheel of his roadster. The tyres screamed as she swung it around. Greg shouted, but too late. The low, streamlined car roared down the hill.

It was a three-mile hike to the Mountain House. Dog tired, Greg dragged himself by the guard at the gate, trudged the last few hunyards listlessly. His car was standing in the driveway—untenanted.

A half-hour search of the grounds produced no gorgeous blonde, but elicited the information that Fran Mercer had left the Club. Greg dropped on a hammock on the huge stone porch of the Mountain House.

"Nice going, Adams," he muttered. "You had it all sewed up and you couldn't keep your mouth shut! Three little words ruined your little party."

Just as he finished calling himself down, the twin headlights of a car swung over the slight rise on the driveway, blinded him as the car came forward, swung in and drew to a screeching stop before the porch steps. The doorman hurried out but the car's driver, a wild-haired girl, was evidently too impatient to wait for his assistance. She bounded up the steps like a rubber ball.

"Would you know where I might find Miss Fran Mercer, doorman?"

she questioned.

Greg sat up. "Miss Mercer's left the Club."

The girl peered at him in the semi-darkness.

"Is Mr. Adams around? Miss Mercer had a date with—"

"Greg rose. "I'm Greg Adams." When he got a closer look at the girl her tousled hair didn't matter so much. She was as entrancingly dark as Fran Mercer was light. Her eyes were black pools and her lips were a carmine slash.

She smiled. "You are handsome, aren't you?"

Greg tried to match her smile but he could feel the attempt was pitiful. "I—I never really thought so."

"Fran said you were but I didn't know whether to believe her or not," the girl went on. "You see, she wrote and told me she'd be dating you to-night and that we were to meet at the Club. I just drove in from the Thousand Islands. I've been there a month. I left Dad in Tulsa with Fran but I had some friends at the Thousand Islands and —"

Greg held up his hand in traffic cop fashion. "Stop and take a deep breath. After that, you might introduce yourself."

She laughed. "Oh, don't you know who I am? I'm Bobby Mercer, Fran's little sister. Hasn't she even mentioned me?"

Greg looked her over. She was wearing a closely knitted sweater and a crumpled linen skirt. While not blessed with the superb physical development of Fran, her figure was nothing to pass by without a second

glance. She had nice, small breasts set high on her chest. They perked up with youthful vivacity. Her hips were boyishly slim. Greg's appetite was whetted.

"No, she never mentioned you, Bobby."

Bobby's pert nose wrinkled. "Afraid of me, I guess. Afraid I'll steal her boy friends."

Greg came closer, looked down into the youngster's expressive eyes. If he couldn't get places with one Mercer, he was certain he could with another.

"Here's one boy friend who is willing to be stolen, Bobby," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"Fran gave me the cold shoulder."

"Really?"

"On the level."

"Where is she now?"

...Greg shrugged. "I suppose she drove back to Belgrade."

Bobby took his hand. "Come on, let's go."

He held back. "Where?"

"To Belgrade."

They were in Bobby's speedy coupe, whizzing along the macadam road. "What's the idea of this?" Greg queried. "Fran slapped my face. She doesn't want to see me."

Bobby grinned. "I want her to see you with me! She's always made me take a back seat. This is one time I'm up front." She gave him a melting glance. "Why not move closer, Greg? I won't bite."

Greg moved closer. He finally slipped his arm about the heady

brunette's slim waist. The miles rolled by under the speeding tyres of the coupe. It was a good hour from the Club to Belgrade. A lot could happen in an hour.

Bobby leaned her head back, snuggled up against Greg. "Watch the road!" he warned.

She swung the car to the side of the road. "Why watch it? Aren't there better things to do?" Her foot stepped on the brake pedal, brought the coupe to a stop. Ignition and lights went off. "Aren't there, Greg?"

Breathing deeply, she came into Greg's arms, lifted her mouth appealingly. Greg was only human. He had yet to recover from the divine voluptuousness of his brief session with Fran. These young, red lips were too powerful a magnet to refuse.

Greg found, in short order, that Bobby had more than just lips. He felt her firm, rounded bosom against his chest, her body close to his. She was almost on his lap, both warm arms twined about his neck, her mouth doing blood-stirring tricks.

And yet for all the ardent, panting emotion of Bobby's embrace, it somehow left Greg cold. There was none of the feeling he had experienced when Fran was in his arms. His pulses didn't rush and his heart didn't crash against his ribs. It was just another necking party.

He did a strange thing. He moved away. It was probably the first time in the history of love that a man had refused.

"I—I can't do it, Bobby!" he blurted.

"I—I can't kiss and pet with you. I—I love Fran. I'm sorry."

She shrugged. "I knew it was too good to be true. Second-fiddle Bobby—that's me." Her eyes flashed. "You can still do me a favour. Give Fran the impression I hooked you. It might even make her jealous and help your case."

Greg consented unwillingly. He had never played at intrigue with a woman. Either they fell or they didn't. But it was different with Fran Mercer. She was worth doing anything to get.

At the immense Mercer mansion at Belgrade, Bobby led Greg into the drawing room. "I'll be right down, honey."

Greg was distinctly not at ease. "He started when he saw plush portieres part. He turned white when Fran Mercer entered the room."

"Why did you follow me?" she demanded angrily.

Greg swallowed hard. "I—I didn't follow you. I—I—"

"You most certainly did! You knew I was driving home from the Club. It's quite evident that you followed me! You're here, aren't you?"

It was too much for Greg. He was in this deep and there was no reason why he shouldn't go the whole hog. He stepped forward, faced Fran. ...

The ghost of a smile played about her lips. "Why follow me?"

Greg came out with it. "Because I love you!" The last word had scarcely passed his lips before he had her in his arms, kissing her
(Please turn to page 62)

Save The Sponsor

By RAY BUCKLEY

AND so, boys and girls, we conclude another episode in the Adventures of Little Orphan Fannie. Greasy Tooth Mulligan and his desperate gang have kidnapped Fannie and are going to force her into a life of crime! What will happen next? Don't forget to tune in to-morrow evening at this same time . . . Good-night, kiddies!"

As the announcer at the desk cut in to advise the listeners that this was station WFXP, Neil Thorpe turned from the microphone and sighed distastefully. He cursed the day when he had been demonstrating the range of his falsetto voice for the benefit of some friends. Unfortunately, Horace J. Winthrop, manager of the WFXP, had overheard. Neil, who had been doing odd jobs around the studio, was recruited to impersonate the parentless ether lass. He also portrayed other characters in the sketch, but it was playing Fannie that hurt.

Neil stepped into the elevator and descended the twenty-five floors to the ground. Then he went around the corner to a place described on the window with gilded letters as "Milady's Beauty Salon."

There was no one in the front part of the shop, so Neil walked softly to the rear and parted the curtains which divided the shop. Behind them was standing a luscious morsel of womanhood. Not

too tall, blonde, voluptuous curves in the right places, age perhaps twenty. She was standing with her back to Neil, puttering about with some curling irons. He had entered noiselessly. Suddenly, he put his arms around her and kissed the back of her smooth, white neck.

"Well, if it isn't Mr. Ted Husing in person! I didn't know it was so late . . . Must be closing time if Fannie's over."

She did not appear to be exactly overwhelmed as she turned and released herself. But there was a devilish gleam in her blue eyes, and a provocative curve to her perfect lips which indicated that if a masculine caress were to thrill her, it would be well worth the effort.

Kitty Wayne knew she was ravishingly attractive to men, but not many had been permitted to revel in the sweetness of those inviting lips. Kitty was hard to thaw, but when she did thaw—she positively sizzled!

"Yeah," said Neil. "I got Fannie over—for to-night anyhow. I've got kidnapped, and I'm hanged if I know what to do with her now."

"Sorry, but amusing kids is a little out of my line."

Neil took her in his arms and drew her close to him.

"How about dinner now, and a

ride—or something?”

She looked at his imploring eyes, his tousled hair, his eager, sensitive mouth, which was very near to hers.

“Sure. Why not? . . . I haven’t anything better to do.”

After dinner they went dancing. Neil was not particularly brilliant with his feet, but if not an accomplished dancer, he was a decidedly amorous one. There was somewhat more virility than precision in his movements. Daringly, his strong arms, almost crushed her palpitating body.

The orchestra pounded out irresistably contagious rhythm. Brass instruments moaned and throbbed tantalizingly. Kitty’s restraint began to melt. His aggressive lips moistly possessed her quivering ones in burning kisses, and her mouth clung to his as her arms tightened about his neck.

Afterward, they went for a ride in the park. The night was cool and clear, and the soft breezes whisked delightfully through her golden hair. She snuggled close beside Neil in the roadster, now and then teasing him by blowing cigarette smoke in his face.

Finally he found a secluded spot and parked. With characteristic frankness, his arm at once encircled her. His hand rested vaguely on a soft curve. His lips pressed the milky whiteness of her neck and cheek, then sought the scarlet loveliness of her mouth. She willingly permitted several kisses.

When his eager hands became more intimate, she pushed him away.

“Gee, Kitty,” he panted. “Sometimes I think you go for me in a big way, and then all of a sudden you freeze up!”

She regarded him with warm, sympathetic eyes.

“I really like you an awful lot, Neil, but—I’m thinking of the future.”

“You know I wan’t to marry you —”

“It isn’t that. You know I’ve always had to make my own way. Well, when I marry, I want something better . . . A lot better.”

“I know. It’s Fannie.”

“But, Neil, you’ve been doing that for three years. If you only had some ambition to get somewhere in radio—to do something better. I know you could do it!”

He smiled at her and said: “Okay, baby.”

As they drove back, he was outwardly nice enough. Inwardly, he was feeling a little resentful. Not because of her candidness, but because he knew there was something else behind her periodic coolness. Namely, Dan Travers, WFXP’s “Maestro of Swing.” Dan, who was devastatingly sleek and handsome, presided over the popular Goldfinch Golf program . . . He knew she was going with Dan, and he smarted under the realization that Dan was undeniably what she considered a “success” in radio.

There was a crowd at the cafe Holland; Neil had dropped in for a drink after taking Kitty home. He sat at a table, smoking a cigarette, drinking a Holland Gin Special, and glowering at everybody in general.

As a couple glided past his table, he sat up with a start, and looked around. ...

It was Dan Travers, and the lovely, dark-haired number who warbled on his show, Sonya White. It was rumoured about the corridors and studios of WFXP that there was something more than business between them. Indeed, it seemed so to Neil. She was fervently clinging to Dan, and they danced as if glued together.

When they moved around to where Neil could observe them without dislocating his neck, he saw them drift into a dark corner. There, their lips met in a long, scorching kiss, and Sonya squirmed in evident delight.

Neil angrily crushed his cigarette, and downed the remainder of the Gin Special in one mad gulp.

Kitty had thought it was rather infantile when Barbara Stanton, her associate in the beauty shop, had written to WFXP's Voice of Wisdom, unburdening a love problem. But the Voice had uttered some sage counsel, and Barbara had landed a rich broker, and was soon to lead him to the altar, hook, line and sinker.

So Kitty, her faith in the clairvoyant powers of the Voice greatly quickened, decided to take the plunge herself. She tried to state her problem with sincerity: Mr. A, suave, successful, charming, ardent, offering her what she had always wanted. Mr. B, handsome, impetuous, not much ambition, but terribly in love with her.

For those not wishing the publicity of hearing his personal advice

over the air, the Voice of Wisdom magnanimously promised a reply by letter in return for the small sum of one dollar. Kitty enclosed a bill, and signed herself "Undecided."

Two days after she was standing under the shower, anticipating a date with Dan. The cold water invigorating her as it ran down in little rivulets down her enticing body. She closed her eyes and imagined that Neil's—or were they Dan's—hands were about her.

Stepping out, she surveyed herself in the full length mirror, as she wielded a large luxuriously soft towel about her. Modestly, she decided that the mirror revealed a perfect poem in voluptuousness . . . Small, pert nose, deliciously red lips, eyes that were languid pools of blue; all framed in a gorgeous abundance of yellow hair that right now flared in glorious abandon.

Lithe, resilient young body, a picture of vivid buoyancy. Firmly perched hillocks, tapering legs with those maddening eye-filling curves which made men stop and look back.

Back in the room which she shared with Barbara Stanton, she applied a vivid perfume to glorify her very desirable charms. Then she slipped into a wispy, almost transparent dance set, and donned a gown which magnificently accentuated the lines of her flawless figure.

Dan appeared at eight-thirty. Always a good dresser, he was wearing a dark blue shirt, light grey sports coat, white flannels and shoes. And a rich yellow tie. Kitty was nearly overcome. He had some

flowers for her and when she thanked him, he took the opportunity of kissing her. Dan's kisses were fervently intense, and always sent her temperature skyrocketing.

"Let's not go out for a while, Dan. I want to ask you something." She led him to the studio couch.

"Sure."

"Dan, you're in love with me, aren't you?"

"There's nobody else?"

"Say, why are you asking me—"

"I knew you were going with Sonya White, your singing start."

"Still am. I told you the way I feel about you, Kitty, but until you make up your mind, I'm not going to sit around reading a book!"

"You were with her Tuesday night?"

"Yes, but who—?"

She meekly confessed having consulted the Voice of Wisdom, and hesitantly handed him a letter. Dan unfolded it and read :

" . . . and my counsel to you, Miss Undecided, is to try to forget A. Have faith in B. He loves you and is trying to make good. After all, what does all the glamour and success A offers you mean with out love?"

"As a matter of fact, Undecided, A is a double-crossing two-timer. Ask him where he was Tuesday night!"

Dan tossed it aside and exploded with laughter.

"What's so funny?"

"George Hetrick—the guy who does the Voice of Wisdom feature—hasn't been near the studio for

a week," chuckled Dan. "He's sick."

"Who wrote this?"

"I can guess—"

"Yes," said Kitty. "I'm afraid I can, too . . . Why, the worm! The insufferable cad!"

"It is sort of hitting below the belt, isn't it?"

"It's cheap and cowardly! I'll show him! I'll—I'll—"

Dan had become hypnotised by her stimulating perfume. He suddenly and impulsively pressed his mouth to her provocative lips. Kitty's arms wound round his neck, and she surrendered in reckless abandon to his flaming kisses. Then she held him away for a minute.

"Dan, darling—we'll be married soon, won't we?"

"Kitty, you little devil, we're practically married right now!"

Neil appeared at Kitty's shop the next day at his usual time. He tiptoed behind the curtain and again kissed the back of her neck. This time, Kitty whirled abruptly and delivered a resounding slap to his cheek.

"Well, Mr. Voice of Wisdom, Little Orphan Fannie, Public Four-flusher Number One, I'm going to marry Mr. Dan Travers. What do you think of that?"

"Gosh, Kitty—it was only a gag!"

"Fine sense of humour ! Knifing another man in the back !"

"Well, if that's the way you feel—"

"That's just the way I feel," she said icily. "Now please get going. I'm busy . . . and as far as you're concerned, I'll be busy for the

next ten years! So long, Fannie!"

Mr. Ambrose Goldfinch stalked into the office of Mr. Winthrop, manager of WFXP. Goldfinch was the station's most valued sponsor. Right now he was in a lather. His bushy eyebrows crowded each other for space, and his huge black cigar was rapidly being reduced to shreds.

"Winthrop, I want to talk to you!"

"Yes, Mr. Goldfinch?"

"Winthrop, our program is terrible." He pounded a large paw decisively on the desk. "It's not only terrible, it's rotten, lousy, and punk!"

"But Mr. Goldfinch, Dan Travers' band is nationally known! Sonya White is one of the best torch singers on the air; the comedian—"

"That's it!" interrupted the sponsor. "The comedian! He's putrid. Travers is all right, but I want something new—novelty!" He hesitated until Mr. Winthrop seemed properly impressed.

"Our program has three weeks to run, and if you want another contract from us, you pirate, you'd better dig up something better."

Winthrop eyed his client nervously, and remembered that he was already beyond his budget.

"I'm sure we can arrange something to suit you, Mr. Goldfinch. We're already getting a lot more fan-mail since we changed your spot to eight-thirty. I'm sure that'll catch more people—before they go out for the evening, you know."

"The way the show is now, you can count on their going out!"

"We'll get something together,

and call you," soothed Winthrop.

"All right. But it'd better be good! Change the commercial, too; it's stale. Work it into the comedy better . . . Good-bye, Winthrop, and remember three weeks!"

His teeth viciously descending on his cigar, Goldfinch stamped out. Horace Winthrop sat back and sighed weakly, at the same time taking a stiff shot from the bottle of whisky that was in his desk.

His verbal bout with Kitty did not improve Neil's disposition, and it did not improve the Fannie sketch. The latter with still kidnapped, with nary a rescuer in sight.

Neil was sitting in a restaurant drinking beer, and pondering Fannie's problem, and his own. He was on his fifth bottle . . . Funny, for three years he had gotten his precocious little brat into and out of every imaginable situation. His mind had always seemed to click. Not, it wouldn't even go to bat! It kept dwelling on Kitty's golden, straming hair, her taunting lips, her delectable charms . . . His imagination pursued the subject farther and he began hungrily licking his lips. Then the vision faded, and reality rudely intruded.

She was a vapid little numbskull, anyway, he thought. What the hell!

Neil walked around awhile and dropped into another place for one last glass of beer . . . thought better of it and drank three bottles. He decided he might as well drift round to the studio and try to wrestle tomorrow's episode out of his typewriter . . . Dan, Sonya, and the Goldfinch Varieties would be rehearsing about now. . . . He swal-





lowed hard at the thought.

As Neil made his way the three blocks to the studio, he felt his heart pounding wildly, not with passion but with alcoholic rage. He never got the breaks . . . He probably wouldn't even have his job when the kids got tired of Fannie's being kidnapped . . . He had been tricked and ruthlessly jilted . . . He felt a wild desire to raise hell.

He was definitely pie-eyed as he looked through the glass partition of Studio A. There was Dan, impeccably dressed, oily and self-confident. Under his waving baton Sonya was gurgling at the mike.

Swaying uncertainly, Neil grasped the door and pulled it open. He staggered in. The baton paused and Dan frowned, frantically gesticulating to Neil to be quiet. This was quite remote from Neil's present intentions.

His knees wobbling perceptibly, he strode to the centre of the studio and grabbed Sonya firmly by the wrists. Before she knew what it was all about, he had embraced her and kissed her savagely. She struggled, but her arms fiercely drew her closer. Her breasts flattened against him, and he forced her lips again to his mouth.

Dan leered indignantly, and took a step forward.

"What's the big idea?" he demanded.

"This is it!" snarled Neil, swinging his left arm wildly. His fist missed Dan, but it struck Sonya, who stumbled over the microphone wire and landed in the clarinetist's lap.

Dan swung swiftly, and his fist collided loudly with Neil's face. Neil, purpling with rage, snorted and leaped. He fell over the mike and then picked it up and brought it crashing down in the direction of Travers. But Dan had stepped back quickly, only to trip and go sprawling in the brass section with a deafening clatter.

"Boy, what a swing!" exclaimed Neil, with mounting exuberance.

Then he discovered that Sonya had a firm grip on his scalp. He swung round, carrying Sonya with him. Her feet met the mid-sections of the announcer, the comedian and the cellist respectively.

But the formidable figure of Horace Winthrop was taking shape before Neil's bleary vision. Winthrop loomed in the doorway.

Thus occupied, Neil didn't see the drummer creep up behind him.

When next conscious, Neil was in a supine position with a large drum draped over him. He looked up and saw the expression of unholy fury in Winthrop's eyes. Kitty was standing beside him.

"Ha," he growled at her. "I guess I mauled up your—hic—boy friend." And to Winthrop, "And I suppose I'm fired? Well, I—hic—quit anyway! But I fixed your darned re—hic—rehearsal!"

Horace Wonthrop's face was the colour of a sun-burned beet. He seethed and snorted and tore his hair.

"Rehearsal!" he thundered. "Ye gods, this is a broadcast!"

"Sure," interposed Kitty. "This show's on an hour earlier now."

The manager strode around the room delivering unprintable epithets in every direction.

"Of course, Mr. Goldfinch'll be listening in," he moaned. "Might as well call him now and get it over with. . . . The phone! . . . Somebody give me the phone! . . . Hello—hello—hello! What! Mr. Goldfinch left a few minutes ago. Holy cats! . . . No, never mind—"

Winthrop was at his desk, sobbing, and waving a bottle of whisky from which he took periodical gulps. Violently he chewed cigars and pencils. He was waiting for the inevitable. . . . A matter of minutes now!

It came. Goldfinch burst into the office like a tornado.

"Just a minute now, Mr. Goldfinch—I can explain everything—"

"Explain hell! That show was magnificent, colossal, stupendous! It was terrific! Winthrop, you're a genius. That new comedian was a wow—a riot! My wife laughed herself sick." He panted for breath.

"Shut up, Winthrop. I want that fellow singed up for the season. What was that he said—'Boy, what a swing!' That's it, Winthrop, that's our slogan—'Boy, what a swing—to Goldfinch Golf Clubs!' It's sensational! . . . Don't argue, Winthrop. You can name your own price. I'll be over in the morning to sign the contract."

But Mr. Winthrop did not hear the last. He had slumped over his desk in a dead faint.

Mr. Winthrop beamed over his

desk at the now thoroughly sober Neil. Kitty was at his side.

"You'll sign, of course, Mr. Thorpe?"

"On one condition. Find a spot for Kitty in the show. She can really sing—honest!"

"Okay. I'll have to drop Sonya, then. I hate to do it, but Goldfinch will strangle me if your name's not on the dotted line. Here's a pen. For Heaven's sake sign!"

Neil scrawled his name, then turned to Kitty and took her in his arms. Their lips met in a flame of ardent feeling.

"Hereafter, I guess you'll listen to the Voice of Wisdom, damn you," said Neil.

Just then Miss Sonya White came in with a queenly air.

"I heard every word," she said, fiercely.

"Yes," said Dan Travers, behind her. "It'll be bad enough working with this punk Thorpe, but you can't kick Sonya out like this!"

Horace J. Winthrop lit a huge cigar and puffed it blissfully. He leaned back leisurely in his swivel chair and smiled broadly.

"I'm not going to kick her out, Mr. Travers," he said, exultantly. "Beginning to-morrow evening, Miss White is going to take over our nightly feature for the bra the kiddies. Sonya is going to be Fannie!"

Mixed Motives

By FRANK ROBERTS

BEE BANNING, looking very lovely as she sat at her typewriter, glanced up to behold Harry Marland boyishly entering the office.

A shaft of warm Hollywood sunlight streamed in through the open window, creating the illusion of an angelic aura about Bee's blonde, fluffy hair; and a vagrant finger of breeze stirred the loose silken blouse that clung to her firm, pointed breasts. All of which Harry Marland was swift to note.

"Hello, Gorgeous," he smiled engagingly at her.

Bee smiled back, thereby displaying twin rows of even, white teeth and a rougish wraith of a dimple. "Good morning, Mr. Marland," she answered.

For two months now, Bee had been Harry Marland's private secretary in this recently established Hollywood branch of a New York theatrical casting agency. And Bee had enjoyed every minute of her association with the tall, good-looking Harry Marland. Somhow, when his eyes met hers, a thrill always danced through her heart.

Of course, he'd never made the slightest overtures to her. He seemed to regard her in a purely professional light; seemed to think of her only as an efficient—and darned pretty—secretary. But often, in the privacy of her boudoir,

when she had retired for the night, Bee gave way to idle dreams in which Harry Marland held her in his arms and kissed her on the lips.

Such thoughts, however, were always banished from her mind when morning came. Harry Marland wasn't interested in her personally, she told herself. They were just good friends—business friends. As such, they worked on a basis of mutual understanding; love never entered the picture.

Which, perhaps, explains why Bee was so startled at Harry's abrupt question on this particular morning. He looked down into her cool blue eyes. "Bee," he said, "I'm going to ask you something—and if you want to hand me a punch in the snoot after I've asked it, help yourself."

Bee was puzzled. "What on earth is this question?"

"Well . . ." he hesitated. Then he squared his shoulders. "Look here, Gorgeous. I've always had the impression that you're . . . er . . . well, virtuous. Are you?"

Bee drew a sharp breath that thrust out her high, firm bosom. "Why—I!" she started to exclaim indignantly. Then she thought better of it. Harry must have a darned good reason for putting such a query to her, she reasoned. He wasn't the fresh guy type. So she

smiled through the sudden blush that stained her peachbloom cheeks. "Virtuous?" she repeated. "Well—yes, I am, if you want the truth. Why do you ask?"

He looked relieved. "Gosh, I'm glad."

"Glad I'm pure?"

"Yes. And glad you took my question in the right way. I didn't intend to be insulting, or inquisitive, or nosey. But I—I had a reason for asking."

"And what was the reason?" Bee felt a little sorry for him, he seemed so confused. At the moment, she would have liked nothing better than taking him into her arms and pressing his head against her breasts.

He smiled sheepishly. "I'll tell you my reason in a minute. But first—tell me something. Have you ever been in love?"

Bee's eyes clouded. "Once," she admitted. "It was back in my home town in the middle west. The boy's name was Jerry Lanigan. But he—well, he turned out to be the sort who kisses, runs away and then . . . tells about it later. Folks started gossiping about me. That's why I left home. I went to Chicago and worked for a year, then came out here to Hollywood. I got this job with you—and now you know the story of my past!" she finished lightly.

Harry's face grew grave—almost expressionless. "Okay, sweet. Now I'll whistle the patter. Have you heard about the latest sensational New York stage star, Holcombe Hall?"

Bee nodded. "Yes, he's quite a matinee idol, isn't he? I've never seen him, but I read of his recent successes in the New York theatre. What about him?"

"He's here on the coast!" Harry stated.

"No!"

"Yep. At the moment he's vacationing at Arrowhead; he's got a cabin up there. A lot of studios are fishing to get his name on a contract."

Bee looked thoughtful. "So what?"

"So I just got a letter from our New York office. The boss instructs me to sign this Holcombe Hall guy to a ten per cent agent's contract and then land him with one of the big picture outfits. If I succeed in getting Hall tied up with us, I get a raise. If I fail, I get canned."

"You mean—you'll be fired unless you nail Hall on the dotted line?"

"Right." Harry Marland seemed troubled. "The worst of it is, a dozen other agents are after him, too. I'm up against tough competition. That's where you enter the picture."

Bee felt bewildered. "But how on earth can I help?"

"Plenty. You see, I wanted to be sure you could spend a night in Holcombe Hall's cabin without falling him."

"You—what? Did I hear you correctly?" Bee demanded.

He nodded, and a rueful smile came to his lips. "You see, it's the only scheme I can think of to make Hall sign up with my outfit. My idea is to take you up to Arrow-

head, put you in a motor-boat and have you capsize the craft near Hall's place. Then, all wet and bedraggled, you'll seek his hospitality. He's quite a ladies' man, I understand; and he'll be only too tickled to have you as his guest. In the morning, I'll appear and charge him with every sort of offence against you—"

"I get it," Bee said slowly. "The old badger game, huh? Blackmail him into signing you as his agent?"

"That's about it."

Bee felt a tinge of puzzled disappointment in her breast. It had never struck her that Harry Marland would stoop to such methods. Moreover, it hurt her a little to think that he would ask her to risk her reputation that way. It just went to prove that Harry didn't care a snap of his fingers for her—except in a business way. Somehow, she felt forlorn and disillusioned. The whole plan didn't match up with her conception of Harry's ethics.

For a moment she lowered her eyes to mask the hurt that leaped into them. Then she forced a wan smile. After all, Harry's job was at stake, and she liked him too well to jeopardize his future by refusing his request. So she looked up at him bravely. "Okay. I—I'll do it!" she decided.

Unexpectedly he swept her into his arms, pulled her from her chair. He planted a moist, tingling kiss upon her mouth. Then, abashed, he let her go. "Sorry, honey. Guess I forgot myself a little. I just wanted to thank you."

A queer flutter grabbed at Bee's

heart. He had kissed her! She could feel the impact of his mouth against her lips, and for an instant she was in paradise. Then, at his apology, she recovered her poise. The kiss hadn't meant anything. It had been just a friendly gesture.

That afternoon, Harry drove her up to Arrowhead and rented twin cabins. Then, while Bee prepared herself for what was to follow, Harry went out and rented an outboard motor-boat.

At dusk he explained its mechanical intricacies to her; showed her exactly how to gun the engine and twist the tiller so hard that the tiny craft would turn turtle and throw her into the lake. Then he pointed out, through binoculars, the secluded cabin occupied by Holcome Hall, on the other side of the water.

"You understand what you're to do?" he asked anxiously.

Bee nodded. "I'm all set."

"Then . . . good luck darlin'." There was something almost plaintive in his tone.

But Bee disregarded it. Squaring her lovely shoulders, she perched herself in the motor-boat and sallied forth. It was practically nightfall when at last she reached the opposite shore. She saw Holcombe Hall's cabin, set amidst fringing trees; saw a light gleaming in its front window.

Grating her teeth, she opened the throttle of the outboard motor and headed straight for the sandy bank. Then, just within hailing distance, she swerved the rudder with brutal sharpness. The roaring, racing craft spun sideways, skittered across the

surface, hesitated—and turned over in a spew of foam.

Bee went sailing through the air. She gasped as she hit the cold water. She went down . . . down . . . down . . .

Desperately she kicked off her shoes, unfastened her impeding sports skirt and struggled out of her clinging sweater. Then freed of hampering clothing and clad in nothing but panties and a gossamer fluff of brassiere, she struck out for the shore.

"He-e-elp!" she called.

She saw the cabin's front door punch open; saw a man's form silhouetted in the framing light. By this time she had gained safety; felt solid ground beneath her bare feet. Pretending to stagger, she hauled herself out of the water.

"Oh-h-h!" she moaned weakly.

In the darkness the man from the cabin raced up to her. He grabbed her and held her.

"What the devil happened?"

"My b-boat turned over! I was d-drowning; had to peel out of my clothes. And n-now I'm c-cold . . ."

"Come inside! I'll give you a nip of Scotch and put you by the fire to dry you out!" the man grunted. He lifted Bee in his arms and carried her toward the cabin. And she could not help noticing that, in carrying her, his arms tightened around her as if he were embracing her.

At last he took her over the threshold; set her down on a rustic divan before an open, glowing fireplace. Then, deliberately, he leaned over and kissed her on the mouth!

Bee tensed; stared up at him. Then her face went pale. "You! Jerry Lanigan!" she gasped.

It was true. It was Jerry Lanigan! Jerry—the boy from her home town in the middle west—the boy with whom she had once fancied herself in love! The one who had kissed . . . and told.

He was grinning at her. "Yes. Jerry Lanigan. Stage name, Holcombe Hall!"

"But—but—"

"Listen, baby. Ever since you pulled a run-out powder on me back in the old home town, I've dreamed about you. That's why I went to New York, blasted my way to stage success. I thought maybe you might fall for me if I turned out to be a matinee idol. And now . . . I've got you in my arms! Gosh, you're delicious!"

His eyes licked over her hungrily as his hands reached out to touch her . . .

Bee leaped to her feet. "No! D-don't! I d-don't want you to—"

"Oh, cut it out!" he grinned, meaningly. "We're all alone here together; and I'm going to teach you the meaning of . . . love!" He grabbed her again, in an embrace so tight that her bosom was flattened and crushed painfully upon his chest. His lips were close to her own. She tried to fight him off.

"How dare you! I'm not that kind!"

"The hell you're not," he laughed, mockingly. "You upset your boat for the chance to meet me here again. Don't deny it."

"H-how did you know that—?" she panted.

"Hell, kiddo,' I arranged it! I went to your boss, that Harry Marland guy, and told him all about us. I hold him I was the guy you used to run around with back home; told him how I'd finally trailed you to Hollywood. I made him a proposition. I told him that if he arranged for you to meet me in my cabin, I'd sign him up as my agent. So he agreed—and here you are!"

"You mean—Harry Marland deliberately tricked me? He knew by sending me here that you'd . . . make love to me?"

"Sure. And why not? He'll probably give you a raise—if you're nice to me."

Scalding bitterness flooded through her heart. To think that Harry Marland, whom she secretly loved, would pull such a trick on her! It was almost too much to bear. A thought came to her. If Harry Marland didn't care any more for her than this, what did it matter what happened to her? What difference would it make . . . ?

She forced a smile. "Okay, Jerry. I guess y-you w-win. I'm here; and I'll stay as long as you want me to."

"That's more like it!" he exulted, gloatingly. This time when he kissed her, she listlessly responded—or at least, she made no struggles to prevent his mouth from closing over hers.

But when he pushed her back on the divan, all her innate cleanness and decency arose in revolt, rebellion. Suddenly she pushed him away; beat at his face with her tiny, ineffectual fists. "No—no!" she whimpered. "I can't go through with it! I h-hate you—"

"Nuts!" he grunted. "It's too late to back out now, baby! I've got you where I want you and I won't let you go—!"

He was strong; overmasteringly strong. There was nothing she could do about it. His weight was a smothering whelm, pressing her down among the cushions. His hands were seeking her curves.

Bee tried to scream. He laughed at her.

"Screaming won't do any good, kiddo. There's not a soul within miles to help you now . . ."

Then from the doorway, a voice said: "The hell there isn't, you rat!" And before Bee could fully understand what was hapening, Harry Marland leaped into the room. He grabbed Jerry Lanigan, spun him around and sent a crashing fist to his jaw.

The actor went down—and out.

Bee stared. "Harry — Harry Marland—!"

He came toward her, contrition in his eyes. "Darling little Bee! I love you so much!"

Her eyes widened. It was the first time he had ever spoken such words to her. A bitter scorn curled her lips. "You say you love me . . . and yet you would have allowed me to . . . to stay here with that . . . beast . . . all alone."

He shook his head. "No, my sweet. I owe you an explanation, and you shall have it. In the first place, I've been in love with you ever since the first day you came to work for me. But somehow, I was afraid to tell you how much I cared. You seemed so cold,

so formal, so distant and business-like."

Bee remained silent.

He went on. "Then, the other day, this Holcombe Hall fellow called on me while you were out to lunch. He told me his real name was Jerry Lanigan; and he said that he was looking for you. He told me that you had been his sweetheart back in the middle west; and he wanted you back again."

"Y-yes. G-go on—"

"Well, I was jealous of him. I knew I loved you. But I couldn't speak of my love until I was sure, in my own mind, that you never cared for this other man. Then he told me of a scheme he had in mind—a scheme to get you back. It was this plan of getting you into his cabin to spend some time with him."

Bee's eyes misted. "But why did you agree . . . ?" she whimpered, miserably.

Harry's lips became a grim line. "Because I wanted to throw you together with him once more. I wanted you to have a chance to meet your former sweetheart. If you still loved him, I was willing to step out of the picture and give you up. On the other hand, if you didn't

love him I intended to come sailing in and claim you for my own—which is exactly what I have done."

"Y-you mean—"

"I mean that I was hiding outside all the time. And when you fought against Jerry Lanigan, I realised you didn't care a hoot for him. Then I saw his trying to force himself on you. I—I guess I lost my head. I hit him pretty hard. But he deserved it."

"Th-then . . . you did all this . . . just to make sure it was you I loved, instead of Jerry Lanigan?"

"Yes."

"You would have given me up, if—if I had wanted him instead of you?"

Harry nodded mutely.

"Oh, Harry . . . darling!" Bee whispered, happily. "You must really love me, or you wouldn't have willing to step aside in favour of another man!"

"I do. I love you with all my soul, so much, darling . . ." His hands started towards her smooth liting body.

She held up her lips for his kiss. "Let's go back to our own cabins, darling!" she whispered, ecstatically.

And they did.



STAND-IN

By CLINTON HARCOURT

HOLLYWOOD'S newest greatest and most colossal night rendezvous was called "The Pink Poodle." It was frequented by all the motion picture stars and studio executives. You couldn't get a drink under eighty cents if you used a gun, but the band was hot and swingy, the decorations were grand and, of course, the crowd was tops all around.

Betty Shaw looked the gathering over with a pair of kindling brown eyes. It was the first time she had ever entered "The Pink Poodle" and probably it would be the last—if her plan failed.

It was the carrying out of this idea that had brought her from her cheap little furnished room to the expansive spread of the great cafe.

Then, another fact was that the best way to meet the important Mr. Maddox was through his boozin' friend, Cal Winthrop, the expensively paid scenic artist, costume designer and painter, who did all the detail work on the epics ground out by the Zenith Film Corporation. She sat obscurely at a table in one corner, feeling like a castaway marooned on a desert island. And there she viewed all the greats and near-greats while the musicians hot licked the tune, "I Wanna, Wanna, Wanna." Betty's mind kept time with the melody. She certainly did wanna, wanna, wanna. In her case

what she wanted was a real job on the payroll of one of the motion picture companies.

Betty, a former Chicago artists' model, had decided one day the big was all on the Camera Coast. Inspiration seized her. With hardly more time than it takes to say "Clark Gable" Betty put on her clothes, packed her bag and grabbed the first train, Pacific-bound, from the Windy City.

Three weeks had taught her much. A girl without friends and a studio-in had the same chance of knocking down a talkie contract as she did of calling a taxi to take her to Honolulu. Many came but none were chosen.

Pretty soon Betty discovered she would have to use her wits. She listened to a lot of talk around the cheap restaurants where the last of her savings went into hamburgers and tea. Out of the chit chat she picked up a few pure gold statements. She learned that if any ambitions young lady could please the eye, fire the imagination, and soothe the senses of a certain Wheeler Maddox she had an excellent chance of being screen-tested and, later, handed to the great American public on a platter.

Betty filed that away for future reference.

When Cal Winthrop presented some sweet little thing to Wheeler



One by one she took off her garments and placed them in the valise

Maddox the first step on the road to fortune had been taken.

But Betty was after Maddox and Winthrop only played a minor role in her scheme. She thrilled from the blonde top of her softly waving hair to the tips of her lacquered toes when she realized that, in "The Pink Poodle," upstairs in a private room, Maddox the Mighty was having his champagne and toast with a couple of willowy charmers. Betty had sneaked a glance at him when he had surreptitiously sidled in and taken an elevator to the floor

above. She knew Maddox from his photographs—he always dodged around as nimbly and inconspicuously as possible, so that thousands of picture-struck girls couldn't buttonhole him in public and cry on his shoulder for a job.

Betty looked at her watch. The hour was growing late and her plot was about ready to operate. She settled her check and walked toward the side entrance that opened into the parking space. Slim, rather, small, with her bright yellow hair, her brown eyes and high

exotic colouring, she was a girl to command attention anywhere. However, few at the "The Pink Poodle" bothered to take their eyes off the glittering celebrities who were either hoofing out on the floor or making secret love in the dim alcoves off the dining room.

Outside, Betty went swiftly into action. She leaned behind a bush that was part of the shrubbery bank and fished out the valise she had hidden there. She took from it the folded white coat with the fur collar she had packed in it an hour earlier. Then she checked back on Wheeler Maddox's automobile, found it where she had seen him alight from it and made sure his initials were on the door before she opened it and stepped into the delicately scented, gorgeously appointed tonneau.

With a little breath of excitement Betty laxed on the soft upholstery. She left the valise open and then she did rather a strange thing.

She began to undress!

One by one took off her coral coloured evening gown, her lacy brassiere, frilly panties and the narrow satin garter belt. One by one she folded the articles of apparel neatly and placed them in the valise. For a minute she cuddled against the upholstery. Its tufted softness felt good to her glowing skin. She stretched out on it, her mind alive, alert and filled with the most min-ute details of her subtle scheme. Then she donned a lacy scanty.

Finally she put on the white coat, took the valise and returned it to its hiding place back of the bush.

Then, again, she popped back into the car, prepared to wait until the break of dawn, if necessary.

Minutes turned to half-hours and hours. The band jammed away in "The Pink Poodle." The crowd thickened as the hour latened. Presently Betty's eyes closed and she drifted off to sleep.

She was aroused by the slam of the door beside the car's driving seat. Someone had got in, switched on the headlights and instrument panel was kicking the starter. Betty was able to see a head and shoulders, the jut of a cigar. The next instant the motor roared, cinders cracked under the fat tyres and the car rolled out of the parking space and into the street beyond.

Betty's heart almost stopped seating. Her luck dazed her a trifle for Maddox was alone, but, at the same time, she began to feel qualms of apprehension. Suppose her plot wasn't as airtight as it had seemed? Suppose instead of landing in the studio she wound up in the hoosegow? Suppose what had seemed one hundred per cent. perfect in imagination turned out to be the sorriest kind of a flop when put to the test?

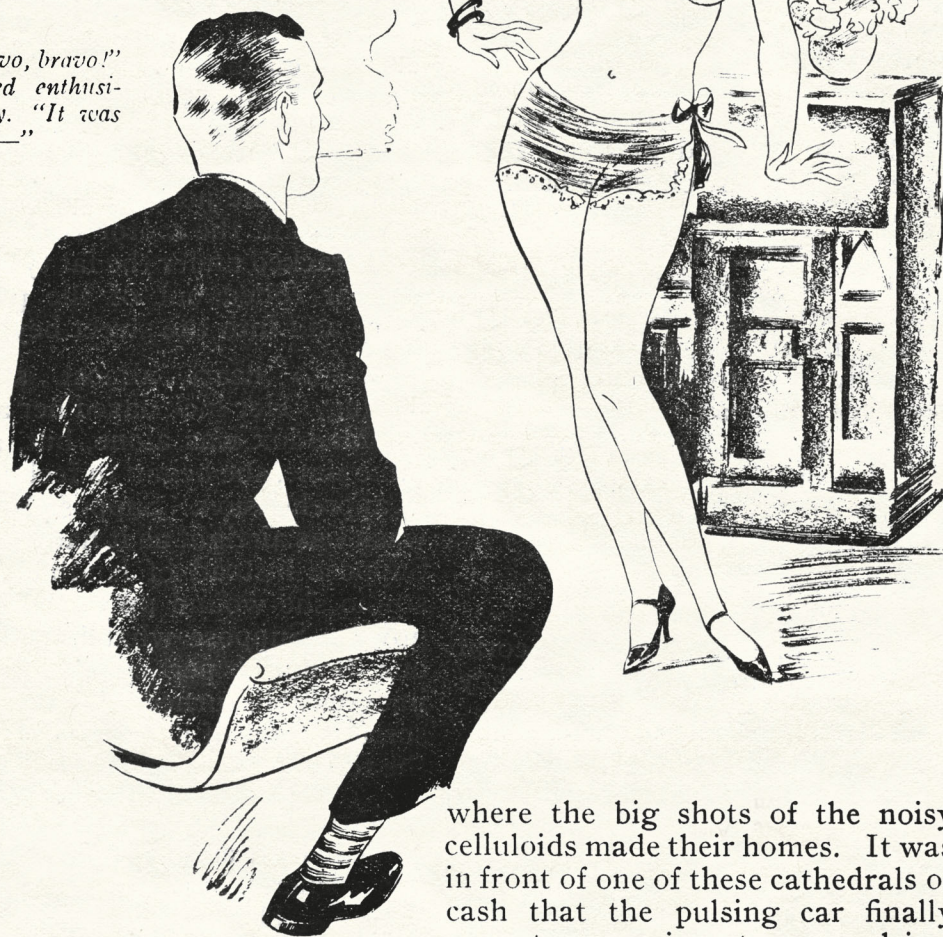
Hardly daring to breathe, Betty made herself as small as possible in one corner. Maddox drove like a demon. The car rushed along at about sixty. It took the corners and curves on two wheels, the angle of the cigar never losing any of its jauntiness enroute.

"What a man!" Betty thought.

She had ample time to study the great director's profile. She rather

liked Maddox's looks. He was evidently in the early thirties and he was both attractive and interesting. He had a keenly intelligent face. Betty rather wished that he'd shaved off the small black moustache on his upper lip. It didn't help his appearance any, it was sort of effeminate and silly looking. For

*"Bravo, bravo!"
he cried enthusiastically.
"It was perfect—"*



the rest, she liked what she saw. No wonder her sex made such a play for Maddox and such fools of themselves into the bargain!

Beverley Hills!

Even in the starry darkness Betty was able to recognize the area

where the big shots of the noisy celluloids made their homes. It was in front of one of these cathedrals of cash that the pulsing car finally came to a purring stop on a driveway made of thick red cement. Maddox opened the door, slid out from under the wheel, threw his cigar away and turned on the ceiling lights.

When he did so his gaze, surprised and startled, fell on Betty.

"What th—"

She gave him the most appealing glance she was capable of. Her ruby-red lips parted, revealing the white glimmer of her perfect teeth. She crouched into the coat, looking at him with wide, ingenuous eyes.

"I—I'm sorry. I—I can explain," she stammered.

Maddox's face was no barometer of his thoughts or feelings. He nodded abruptly.

"Yes. I think you'd better. Come inside," he invited crisply.

Betty got timidly out of the car. He stood aside and let her walk up the broad front steps of the villa. Beside her, he fished out jingling keys, inserted them in various locks and finally pushed with the huge, brass-bound front door.

As the door opened soft lights automatically gushed from the ceiling of the circular foker foyer they entered.

A touch of a button opened the door of a small electric elevator. Betty got in and the car rose noiselessly. One storey, two—another door opened and the foved out on to a deeply carpeted corridor.

"In here!"

Maddox opened still another door. Again lights came on. Betty found herself in a small but beautifully furnished study. On a huge desk was a gold-framed photograph of Doris Delight, Zenith's ace tear jerker. Photographs of other stars were around the room. The desk was heaped high with blue-backed, typewritten scripts.

Maddox shut the door and waved her into a chair.

"Now," he began, his tone less brittle, "you will please be so kind as to tell me what you were doing in my car."

"It's a long story," Betty murmured, "and I hardly know where to begin."

Maddox walked to a mahogany cellarette. The front of it swung open to disclose a completely stocked miniature bar. He made two drinks, added ice from a tiny electric refrigerator and handed her one of the glasses.

"It's always a good idea," he suggested, "to start from the beginning. What's your name?"

Betty told him and drew a breath.

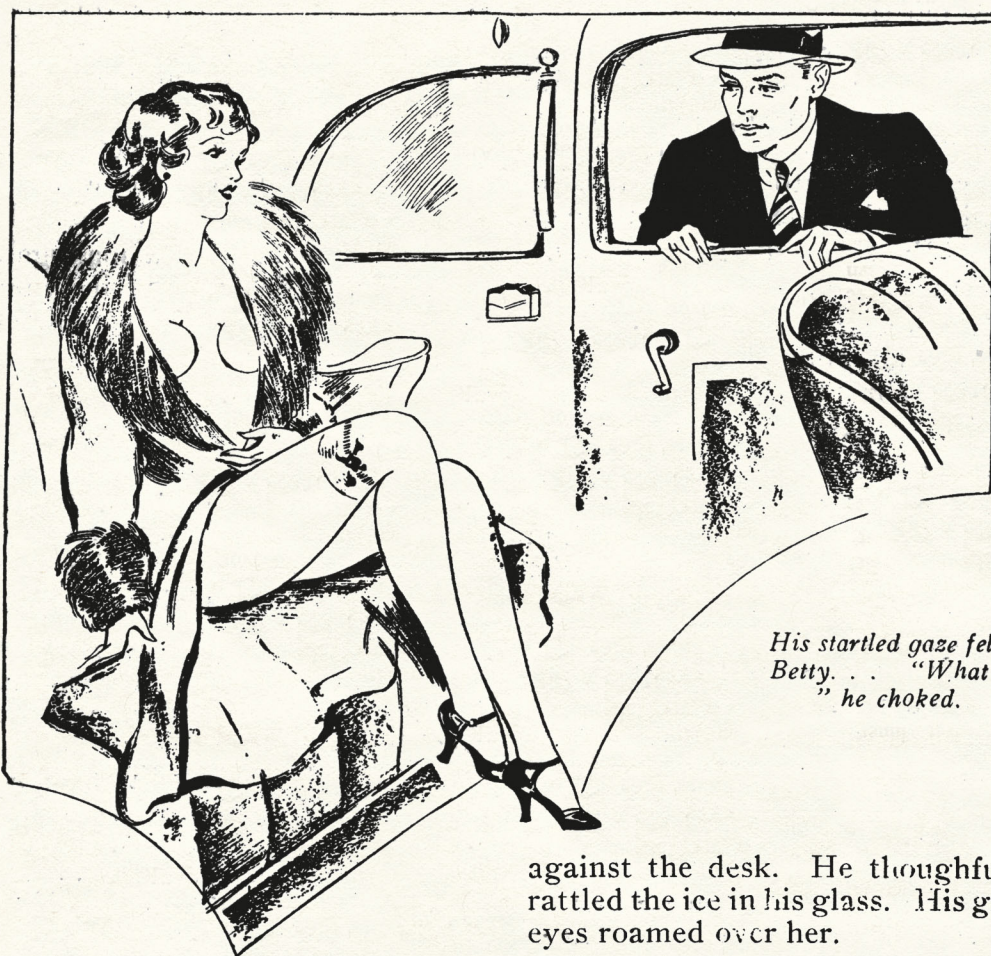
"I came to Hollywood from Chicago. I've been a model, working in the nude. I thought there was wealth and fame for me out here on the Coast. For weeks I've been trying to interest someone in my ability."

She paused. Maddox nodded.

"What else?"

The drink was smooth, pleasantly potent and good. Betty felt herself warming to her subject.

"Yesterday," she continued, glibly, "I met a man—a Mr. Martin—who claimed that he had influence with the casting directors at the studios. He lives across from 'The Pink Poodle' in an apartment. He told me to undress—that he had to see my figure in order to know if I could fill the requirements as to shape and so forth. When I came out of his bedroom he tried to take me in his arms, make love to me. I repulsed him, caught up my coat and ran out in terror."



His startled gaze fell on Betty. . . "What the" he choked.

Maddox, listening intently, inclined his head again.

"And my—car?"

"Panic stricken," Betty went on, "I ran into the parking space of 'The Pink Poodle.' It might have been my imagination, but I had an idea Mr. Martin was close behind me. Suddenly I conceived the idea of hiding from him in a car. I pulled open the door of the nearest one and climbed in. I guess must have fallen asleep," she added, "because the next thing I knew the car was moving and you were at the wheel. That—that's all."

Maddox propped himself up

against the desk. He thoughtfully rattled the ice in his glass. His grey eyes roamed over her.

"Poor kid," he said sympathetically, "it's a shame—what you've had to go through to-night. Imagine any man trying to take advantage of you—the beast."

"And all," Betty put in artfully, "because I tried to get a job."

She finished the drink and he replenished her glass.

"Do you mean to say that you haven't a dress on under that coat?" Maddox asked.

"No—just a scanty," Betty told him.

He studied her quizzically.

"You know," he said after a pause, "I might be able to use you.

It so happens that I'm going to need a girl for a dancing picture—a pagan, colourful, exotic sort of thing, and you might fill the bill. Would you mind taking off the coat?"

Betty made herself stare doubtfully at him.

"If—do you—I'm—"

He made a gesture.

"You have nothing to fear from me, my dear. Please—this is all for your own good."

Betty stood up. She loosened the buttons one by one. She looked at him askance, shyly. She knew she had to be maidenly reserved about it. Finally she pushed the fur collar back over her shoulders. With him standing there it was a real effort to take the coat off.

"If you wouldn't look—for just a minute."

Maddox promptly turned his back to her.

"You can tell me when I may turn again."

Like a swimmer launching into space, Betty wriggled out of the coat. She let it drop to the floor, stepped from its white, clinging folds and retreated into the shadows beyond the lamp's golden puddle.

A mirror opposite caught and reflected the ivory gleam of her. For a minute she stood in a defensive pose.

"Ready?" Maddox inquired, softly.

Betty could feel her heart thumping. All at once she forgot her plotting, forgot everything except he was there, she was there and that

her beauty was so revealed, so much an open secret.

"You—you can turn around—now!" she said in a voice she could hardly recognize as her own.

Slowly, Maddox turned. He peered at her, his attractive face colouring as if what he beheld was of supreme interest and admiration.

"Beautiful, beautiful!" he cried, approvingly. "I have a phonograph here—records. Suppose you dance."

Betty swallowed the breath trapped in her throat.

"If you wish—"

He went over to a walnut cabinet, put on a record and touched the switch.

"I do. I want you to attempt something insinuating, something Oriental, something to express the wild, barbaric madness of the East. That will be in my picture, crowded with glamour."

From the phonograph came the thump of drums and the blare of brass. Betty caught the mood. Her hands dropped to her sides, then moved up in front of her like twin-ing white serpents. The rhythm of the record entered her blood. Slowly, her thighs gleaming, she began to move in the unhurried lissome measures of a pagan dance.

Faster and faster she revolved as the tempo of the music increased. Her breasts, firm and full, swayed fascinatingly, her hips undulating, writhing and twisting, as she circled the room.

Spellbound, Maddox watched every move with utter fascination. Finally, cymbals crashed in a concluding climax, the brasses blew blasts of brazen discords and it was

over.

"Bravo, bravo!" he cried enthusiastically. "It is perfect—absolutely unequalled! My dear, you are exactly the person I want! Here, let's drink to it!"

Never had an icy drink tasted so good to Betty. She drained half of it before she set the glass down and smiled up into his eyes. She knew she should have felt a great sense of triumph but somehow she didn't. At that moment she had all the emotions of a cheat, a thief—one who had attained something by false pretences and under false colours.

That knowledge kept happiness at bay. He was so nice, had been so kind and she had deceived him so completely.

"Thank you," Betty said, in a small voice.

He leaned closer to her.

"Something queer has happened to me. I can't explain—it's in my heart. I've fallen in love to-night—fallen in love at first sight—with you!"

Betty shrank back on the divan. She felt herself tremble inwardly. His eyes blazed above her and his handsome face was dark with colour and emotion. At that moment something seemed to open in her own heart and let in light, a flood of dazzling illumination. That was why she felt so ashamed of her perfidy, so humiliated and embarrassed. At last she understood—she, too, had fallen for him!

His hand touched her arm. He drew her a little to him.

"Betty! I know this sounds ridi-

culous, but, if there's anyone else—"

"There isn't," she whispered.

"Then all I ask is a chance! Let me make you feel what I feel! Let me teach you to care my way! Oh, Betty—"

Magically, she was drawn into his arms. His breath touched her hair and face. She fit herself snugly against him, caressing his cheeks with her tapering fingers, half parting her soft, velvety lips for the kiss that flamed upon them!

For a long moment Betty half swooned in the ecstasy that flooded her so rapturously. She could feel the palpitations of his own heart while the kiss lingered. Then she sat up in his embrace and, by slow degrees the room ceased to whirl about her fantastically.

"I—you don't have to teach me—I guess I must have fallen in love with you the minute I saw you!"

"Betty!"

Once more their lips joined necromantically, Betty avidly drank in his kiss, quivering under its poignant sweetness.

"Life is strange," she heard herself murmuring. "A few hours ago I—you were only a name. Now you're in love with me, I'm in love with you, and I'm going to dance in your new picture! I'm going to tell you something about that sometime—sometime when I have more courage. Now it's too miraculous, too wonderful. To think that I'm really in films!"

His hands gripped her arms tighter.

"Films? I don't believe I understand. The picture I want you for is one I intend to paint!"

(Please turn to page 61)

“CALL ME EVE!”

By PEPITA DERNE

BELOW the edge of the cabin porch the lake shimmered like molten silver in the moonlight. There was a beautiful silence, though Hugh, stretching himself blissfully, as though to soak up the blessed quiet, the coolness, the fresh fragrance of the pines after the long months in the roar and the grime and the clutter of the city.

Suddenly he sat erect and stared before him, frowning. Were his eyes deceiving him—or had he really seen a glimmer of white behind the tall pine at the left? Breathlessly he waited—and then he told himself that he was seeing things. There wasn't another soul within miles—there! There was no longer any mistake—he had seen something white that had darted behind the pine and out of his sight. This would bear looking into, he told himself, grimly.

Silently he left the verandah and circled the cabin, and came up at the back of the group of pines where the glimmer of white had caught his eyes. He all but held his breath as he crept forward—and then he stopped stock still. For there before him, facing the cabin in a listening position was a girl! And what a girl! The silver-white moonlight glimmered on the glorious white body! There was a shoulder length mass of tawny curls that glittered like molten gold in the

moonlight.

She was watching the cabin tensely and her body was presented to him in profile. His eyes, started and incredulous, dwelt, enchanted, on the warm outward thrust promontories of well shaped breasts, rounded hips, exquisite flowing thighs. After his eyes had become accustomed to the darkness he could detect the fact the she wore some extremely scanty, skin-fitting bathing suit.

The sight of that superbly mounded feminine figure there in the moonlight, miles from any other human being, made Hugh's blood leap. Yet at the same time he felt his scalp prickle just a little. Was she real—a creature of flesh and blood? Or some shining, exquisite fragment of a moonbeam? Some figment of his enchanted imagination? Was he dreaming of her—and what a dream! Or—

So caught by the beauty, the incapable lure of her, that he forgot to be cautious, he took a step forward. The girl flung herself about at that sound. For a moment he looked into a white, terrified face. Caught a glimpse of big, dark eyes, of the loveliest mouth in the world. And then she turned to flee. Hugh flung himself forward, tried to catch her. His hand brushed her arm. Cool and firm and satin-smooth.

And then—she was gone.

It was absurd, he thought, that a girl of flesh and blood—for even that fleeting touch on her arm had told him that she was!—could simply disappear into the moonlit night. He thrashed about for an hour or more searching for her, but at last, swearing, bewildered, his senses too deeply aroused to allow him to think of sleep, he returned to the cabin, unwillingly convinced that the girl had been merely some fantastic figment of his overcharged imagination. Because no human vanished like that.

He sat on the porch for a long time, his eyes straining into the darkness, laced with silver moonlight, that surrounded the cabin. Now he cursed his refusal to have the undergrowth removed from the woods. His friends who had summer cabins five miles away had laughed at him for a romantic idiot.—now he was willing to agree that they were right. If there had not been all that undergrowth, she would have had no place to hide—yet he had thrashed the undergrowth—he knocked out his pipe at last and with his brain still bedevilled by the exquisite picture she had made outlined there in the moonlight, he went to bed. And, at last, to sleep.

He had no way of knowing how long he slept, but he was suddenly awakened by a wild, terrified scream. A woman's voice caught with an almost unspeakable horror. It lifted him off the bed almost before he was awake and he reached the door of the cabin just as a white vision fled through the woods and flung itself upon him. His arms

closed automatically about her and he drew her into the cabin, kicked the door shut and still with one arm about her, lit the lamp on the table. The girl still clung to him, sobbing wildly, and he felt her body shaken with little gasping sobs.

It was, of course, the girl he had seen earlier in the evening. But now the white bathing suit clung to her in fragments, torn and stained by the undergrowth through which she had sped. As he looked down at her, he saw, that one shoulder strap had completely given up its task and had snapped, sliding down to bare one lovely, tantalizing shoulder.

"It—it was— awful," she sobbed, still shaken by terror as she clung to him, pressing her body against him, so that he was dizzyingly conscious of her in every fibre of his being. "I—I was—almost asleep when I heard it—a dreadful, hideous cry—right over my head—"

Shuddering, she pressed still closer against him until Hugh's blood began to riot even while he assured himself sternly he was a cad and a cur to feel so about a girl who had run to him for protection from some terror of the night.

Suddenly, from outside, there came a long-drawn, shuddering cry, half-human, half-animal, yet eerily neither. She gasped and wailed,

"There—oh, it followed me—what is it?"

Hugh chuckled. He couldn't help it.

"A terrible thing—it would probably tear you limb from limb," he answered gravely, his eyes twinkling. "It's about the size of your fist and it can't see in the day time.



She gave herself into his embrace

and the poor thing is simply calling to its mate to offer her a share of its supper that it's just caught. In other words, it's what the natives call a 'screech-owl'."

The girl lifted a white face and wide, incredulous eyes.

"You mean—a bird made that—horrible noise?"

"Of course—didn't you ever hear a 'hoot-owl' before? demanded Hugh, his eyes feasting themselves on the loveliness of her, sweet and exquisitely shaped, the sight of her doing odd, delightful, exciting things to him.

"Of course—haven't you ever been out in the woods before?" demanded Hugh.

"No!" she told him firmly. "And what's more, I never shall be—again!"

The owl hooted again derisively



and flapped away.

In the silence that followed the girl became aware of her scanty garb. Of the fact that she was still pressed hard against Hugh, and that his arms were close about her, her own holding him so close that her ripe, delicious bosom was

crushed against him, the pain of that pressure doing a good deal to make her conscious of what was happening to both of them.

Blushing—Hugh watched that blush with delighted amazement, for it covered her throat and even crept down a little farther where there was a long scratch that looked red and angry against the milk-white, blue-veined satin of her skin—she drew herself from Hugh's arms and stammered,

"I'm—I'm sorry to have—I mean—well, but I was so frightened—"

"Of course—I'm delighted you chose me in your fright—how about a little drink? suggested Hugh, hospitably, releasing her with concealed reluctance.

"That's a grand idea," she answered gratefully.

And so they had a drink. And then they had another. By now Hugh's blood was racing madly in his veins and he felt reasonably certain that the girl was not completely untouched. She had made a little modest gesture of attempting to conceal some of her exposed, but hadn't succeeded very well. Sitting opposite her so that he could feast his eyes upon her, Hugh told himself that she was by all odds the most exquisite thing he had ever seen in his life. He was so bedevilled by the lure of her, so enchanted with her that he quite forgot to wonder what she was doing here in the woods, who she was or what it was all about. All he wanted to know was if she was going to be friendly with him.

The clock on the mantel-piece pointed an accusing finger to half-

past one.

The girl said, half-heartedly, when she had finished her second drink, "I really ought to be going."

Hugh put down his empty glass and sat down beside her. His eyes were caressing her and said things his lips did not dare utter as yet. He leaned close to her and a faint delicious fragrance crept up to him from her sweet feminine body.

"Do you want to go?" he asked, very low, and added, with a twinkle in his eye, "The owl is probably still out there!"

The girl shuddered prettily. She looked at Hugh with a faint smile and let him gaze, for an instant, deep into the blue depths of her lovely eyes before her eyelids dropped and she said, softly,

"I'm terribly afraid of—the owl."

"But—not of me?" pleaded Hugh, his voice threaded with a note of urgent, crying need that made her blood beat faster and that delicious blush spread invitingly downward.

She looked up at him for a moment. She was smiling faintly, her eyes brilliant and her voice was low, a note in it that matched the urgency in his.

"But not—of you," she answered, low.

She swayed a little towards him as his arms went about her. She gave herself into his embrace, taking his eager, ardent kiss, relaxing a little as his hands crept over her. Her eyes were brilliant, glowing, a lovely little smile curling her red mouth.

Her breath was coming in small ecstatic gasps now. Her hands were

upon him, clinging. He had never known such delight, such heady ecstasy. Never a response that ran so fleetly, so sweetly, to meet and fulfil his own. Women he had known, of course, for he was young, good looking and very rich; but never a girl like this!

When he awoke in the morning, a bright flood of sunlight lay across the tumbled couch. He caught a faint whiff of fragrance that he had coming from her sweetly perfumed hair.

Terror poured over him in an icy flood. He had lost her! The most divine, the most exquisite instrument of love he had ever known. She had come into his arms for a brief hour—and now she was gone. And never so long as he lived would he find another who could give him the perfection of bliss to which he had risen with her.

When the door into the kitchen opened and she came into the room, he was dazed and weak from the shock of the relief. Then she hadn't gone! He was breathless before the delight of that.

She wore a pair of his slacks fastened about her waist with a piece of twine. Her round, delicious breasts were lost in the sweat shirt she had drawn over her upper torso. On her feet were a pair of his own bedroom slippers and she had to shuffle, rather than walk, to keep them on. She looked cute as the dickens in this amazing and grotesque outfit and his heart beat almost painfully as she smiled at him, blushing—despite the sweat shirt and its concealment, he felt he could see the course of that blush down

its lovely path.

He caught her close in his arms and said passionately, "Darling—I thought you had gone."

He did not see the little ghost of fear and desolation that for a moment peeped from her eyes. The next moment she was laughing at him, assuring him that breakfast was ready, making a little game of it.

He remembered something as they sat together at breakfast.

"I don't even know your name!"

A shadow touched her face for a moment and then she said, "Call me Eve!"

Hugh laughed. "O.K.—and you call me Adam!"

She laughed at that and they were very gay. They went fishing later, with their lunch of sandwiches and a thermos of coffee in a knapsack over Hugh's shoulder. There was another day, another perfect, never-to-be-forgotten night—and on the third morning Hugh awoke to find himself alone. This time he laughed and turned towards the kitchen door. But this morning there was no fragrance of coffee, of crisping bacon. No sound of shuffling feet—on the table a sheet of paper propped against the lamp. It read simply:—

"Dear Adam,

It's the loveliest thing that's ever happened to me—but now it's over. You mustn't try to find me—you'd hate me when you knew the truth—and I could not bear that—after what fun we've had together. Goodbye—I'll love you always.

Eve."

He went back to town a few days later, looking grim and haggard, so that his friends felt his vacation had done him little good. He plunged into his work, making another million to pile on those his father and his grandfather and those before him had piled up to leave him.

He had almost begun to believe that that glorious interlude back there beside the lake had been some lovely dream when, unfolding the newspaper one night at dinner his eyes were caught by the words, "Cale me Eve!" Startled, he read further. A new play by that name was opening to-night. The star had just returned from a week spent alone in the wilderness, which she had entered alone and armed only with a hatchet and a box of matches and clad only in a bathing suit. The idea was to prove that the so-called "weaker sex" were at heart as rugged as man. It had been a good publicity stunt and the newspapers generously gave it plenty of space since they had been forced to believe that the star, Ann Landry, had really spent that week alone in the wilderness.

Hugh stared at the picture that smiled up at him from the newspaper. Eve herself—hair smartly dressed, pearls at her throat, orchids on her shoulder. But the same Eve he had held in his arms.

He pushed back his chair and hurried out into the street. A taxi took him to the theatre. A sizeable bill pressed into the hand of stage doorman got him past that spot to the door with its small silver star tacked upon it. He knocked and a maid opened the door. Beyond her he saw a girl with golden hair seat-

ed before a dressing table. The girl, brushing powder from her make-up with a small soft brush, looked annoyed—and then she caught her breath and gasped, incredulously.

"Adam!"

"Hello, Eve," said Hugh.

There was a tiny silence and then she stammered, "Oh—I knew you'd hate me when you found out the truth—"

"I feel like turning you across my knee, with the business end of a slipper in my good right hand, for the way you ran out on me—otherwise, I'm too busy loving you to have any thought about hating you. Why did you run away, Eve?"

She drew a long, uneven breath and answered, honestly, "Because I was afraid. You see, the press agent knew where your cabin was. It was a wild, lonely place. He thought that if I disappeared into the woods, and then emerged a week later, nobody would ever know I had spent the week hidden in your cottage. You see, we didn't dream that you'd decide to go up there the same week. And I was afraid that when you knew that it was just a cheap press agent stunt—and that I was just a—well, not a very good actress—I'm not, you know—I get by chiefly because they write plays for me in which I wear practically no clothes and I'm supposed to have—well, rather a nice body—and—people pay money to see it—"

Hugh had her in his arms now, tinglingly and delightedly conscious that beneath the diaphanous folds of her negligee there was nothing save Ann herself, and was

kissing her passionately. (The maid, scarlet, confused and not a little envious, had fled).

"It's the most glorious body in the world—but you're not going on revealing it to the bald heads who are willing to pay \$6.60 to see it!" he told her firmly. "You're going to let your understudy go on to-night, and you and I are going to find a justice of the peace and have him marry us. And then we're going back to the cabin and finish our honey moon. Take up where we left off—remember where that was?"

She blushed and Hugh's enchanted eyes followed the blush into the folds of her negligee, where it vanished. It was all the answer he wished, or that she could give. They clung together, wordless, glowing, enraptured.

STAND-IN

Betty's mouth opened.

"P-p-paint?"

He laughed under his breath.

"By Jove, I believe I understand. You think I'm Wheeler Maddox, Zenith's big director!"

Betty's expression was one of incredulous amazement.

"Well, aren't you?"

"I wish I were—if you want me to be. No, I'm only Cal Winthrop. I've often got girls jobs with him, but I certainly wouldn't introduce him to the one I love—"

"But your resemblance to the photographs of Mr. Maddox!" Betty exclaimed.

Winthrop reached up and removed the small moustache from

his upper lip. He tossed it over on the table.

"Oh, that. It fits in with this house of his, the car and all the rest. Wheeler has a small apartment in town where he works. Women bother and annoy him—screen-struck girls, all looking for jobs. Occasionally, when he can't stand it, I step in volunteer to help out. I look something like him, with the moustache and his lawk, I can get by with those who don't actually know him. I'm really a stand-in, as they call it in the studios. Betty, does this make any difference?"

For a minute longer her brown eyes held his. Then she laughed, and it was a happy, care-free, excited laugh that held a note of huge relief.

She cupped his face in her hands and offered her red lips.

"It doesn't," she whispered, "make the least bit of difference, sweetheart."

Cal Winthrop whispered, "I'm so glad."

"EXIT-ONE MAN HATER"

"You were kissing Lilace yesterday up in the hills, Penelope said accusingly, quite some time later.

"Yes, and does she know to kiss," said Bay, teasingly, then grew serious. "That was why I came back to you to-night, and found you in that fellow's arms . . . she knew too much about kissing and other things."

"And don't I?" she asked coyly.

"No—but you will!" he promised, thus completing the cure of one man-hater.

SIR WALTER'S SALLY

for some time. She was wide awake and she sat up in bed. He caught his breath when he saw the loveliness of her. The sheer peach nightgown caressed her firm flesh eagerly. Her hair, tousled around her head, made her seem like a dear child. But her eyes were stern as they met his fearlessly.

"Nothing you have to say interests me—either now, or at breakfast—or three weeks from now. For months I've been unhappy and miserable. And now you are not going to disturb me. Please go away now—because—because . . ."

And her voice broke. He was by her side, his arms around her, his head buried in the warm spot between the neck and shoulder . . .

"Evelyn, Evelyn," he begged. She knew him so well, he realized, that mere words were unnecessary. Years of association had taught them both the needs of the other. She knew he was tired, ashamed and confused. That this was a cry for comfort, for the secure, the known, the familiar . . .

And her arms embraced him. She was not fond of him as she was fond of Brook. He did not have the power to stir her to frenzy as Brook had. She did not have the ability to move him to madness as Claire had. But there was the element of habit—of fitness—of security.

And as he sank back in her arms, closing his eyes as his lips rested gently upon his own, he cursed himself for being all kinds of a fool for ever jeopardizing such happiness. Still, there was that little titian haired cocotte. He had seen her once or twice in the park—and there was a certain look in her eye.

Yet, Evelyn's hands were warm and soft, comforting his tiredness—and Evelyn's kisses—ah, Evelyn's kisses . . .

He could not know, of course, how dispassionately Evelyn regarded him. Even while her bosom rose and fell in tempo with the beat of his heart, she was planning the costume she would wear the following—when she and Brook . . .

THREE LITTLE WORDS

frenziedly. She beat her tiny fists against his chest, struggled fruitlessly. Greg had made up his mind to get while the getting was good.

"I love you!" he gasped. "I love you, love you, love you! I want to marry you!"

She suddenly went limp, responded to his avid caresses. "Why didn't you say that earlier to-night instead of those three nasty words?"

"What three nasty words?"

"You know."

"I know three others, but maybe we'd better get out of here before your sister, Bobby, shows up. You see, I drove here with her."

Fran smiled. "It wasn't my sister, Greg darling. It was my personal maid. I sent her to get you. I slapped your face. I knew you were the one man I wanted, but I was too proud to admit it." She snuggled close. "What are the three words?"

"Marry me quickly!"

Fran led him to a divan. "I'll make it four if you turn out that lamp."

Greg obeyed, plunging the room into darkness. Fran came into his arms.

"Yes," she murmured.

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A Tourist Who Envied The Natives Of South America Tells How Everyone Can Almost Overnight Have Power And "Pep."

(A True Experience)

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All of my life have I despised the scrawny, skinny, unhealthful, undeveloped man—all my life have I admired men of giant strength with power of a hercules and a might of Goliath, and beautiful women.

For years did I myself yearn for big, broad shoulders, large sinewy arms like the old village blacksmith had and strong powerful legs—I wanted the physique that men, and women too, admire. Little did I think when I embarked upon a journey to South America that I was going to discover a secret which would permit me to realize the ambition of my dreams.

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Nature and appreciated her better than we do, did I learn a way of having health, strength and endurance.

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