THREE MEN IN HER LIFE
A Complete Love Novel
By HELEN AHERN
HONEYMOON ISLAND
By VIRGINIA BRIGHTMAN
"ONE BITTERLY COLD NIGHT, my radio went dead," writes Mr. Gipson. "Suspecting that the howling wind had blown down the aerial, I threw on a dressing gown, grabbed my flashlight, and headed for the fifteenth floor roof.

"AN ICY WIND chilled me as I searched for and found the aerial. Making hasty repairs, I started back down. To my horror, I found myself locked out. I battered the door. I shouted. But the wind howled me down.

"NEARLY FROZEN TO DEATH, I had an inspiration. Ripping the aerial loose, I tied the lighted flashlight to it, and swung it over the side of the building. Luckily the light attracted someone in an apartment below. Thanks to those dependable 'Eveready' fresh dated batteries I was saved.

(Signed) Allen H. Gipson"

The word "Eveready" is a registered trade-mark of National Carbon Company, Inc.

FRESH BATTERIES LAST LONGER...Look for the DATE-LINE

NATIONAL CARBON COMPANY, INC., 30 EAST 42nd STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

Unit of Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation
QUICK EASY WAY

to train for

ELECTRICITY

in 12 weeks

by Actual SHOP WORK

NOT BOOKS

WANT TO EARN MORE MONEY?

Have you ever dreamed of holding down a steady, good pay job? Have you ever dreamed of doing the work you really like in a job that holds promise of a real future in the years ahead?

Well, we all know that you can't get the good things in life by just dreaming about them. Hundreds of fellows are today holding down mighty fine jobs with prospects of a bright future. They are filling these jobs because they had the foresight to equip themselves with the right kind of training.

Most of these men were only average fellows a short time ago, but the proper training helped to lift them out of the low pay ranks of unskilled workers. The same opportunity is now offered to you.

The great fascinating field of ELECTRICITY offers a real future to many men and young men who are willing to prepare for a place in this giant industry.

AN EXTRA 4 WEEKS COURSE IN RADIO INCLUDED

I'LL FINANCE MOST OF YOUR TRAINING

You can get this training first—then if you are short of money you can pay for most of it later in easy monthly payments, starting 60 days after your 12 weeks' training period is over—then you have 10 months to complete your payments. If you need part time work to help out with expenses while training in my shops, my employment department will help you get it. Then after graduation this department will give you valuable lifetime employment service.

Send the coupon today for all details. When I get it I'll send you my big free book containing dozens of pictures of students at work in my shops. I'll also tell you about my "Pay After Graduation" plan, how many earn while learning and how we help our students after graduation. Fill in, clip coupon, mail today for your start toward a brighter future.

H. C. LEWIS, Pres., COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
500 S. Paulina St., Dept. 31-84, Chicago, Ill.

MAIL NOW

Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________
City: ___________________ State: __________

Dear Sir: Please send me free your big catalog and full particulars of your present offer, also your "Pay-Tuition-After-Graduation" Plan, and also your Extra 4 Weeks Radio Course.

COYNE CHICAGO Electricians' Training School
Established 1873
THE PUBLISHER PLEDGES: 1. That this magazine is clean and entertaining. 2. That every story is brand-new. 3. That careful censorship guards our advertising pages.

THREATLING

Vol. XXXVII, No. 2 DOROTHY SANDS, Editor March, 1941

Complete Romantic Novel

THREE MEN IN HER LIFE

Helen Ahern 16

Nikki Carleton, the Golden Girl, Faces a Baffling Problem in Which She Must Choose Between High Society Glamour and True Love!

Complete Novelet

HONEYMOON ISLAND

Virginia Brightman 70

A Bus Wreck Crashes Anna Allen’s Romance to Ruin—and it Takes a Hurricane to Fit Her Heart Together!

Thrilling Short Stories

LOVE SONG

Dorothy Dow 46

Clare’s Heart Did Eight Beats to the Measure Until—

NEW YEAR’S DATE

Nina Kaye 55

A Navy Commander Takes Charge of Ginny’s Emotions

MAID TO ORDER

Shirley Manners 87

Ruth Makes a Bid for a Servant’s Role—and Finds Herself Starred

CARIBBEAN RENDEZVOUS

Joyce Hilton 93

Dan Capid Turns Pirate and Upsets Valerie’s Wedding Plans

Fascinating Features

LISTEN, GIRLS!

Dorothy Sands 67

The Editor Chats with You on Various Topics

THE FRIENDLY SET

Mrs. Elizabeth Elder 85

Where You Meet New and Worthy Friends

A LITTLE BIRD WHISPERS

Sally 99

Intimate News and Notes from Hollywood

LOVE ASTROLOGY

Lucille Le Mar 100

Revealing the Secrets of the Heavens

See Page 12 for Our Interesting Charm Column

Published monthly by Standard Magazines, Inc., 19 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y. M. A. Goldsmith, President. N. I. Pipes, Treasurer. Copyright, 1941, by Standard Magazines, Inc. Yearly, $1.20; single copies, 10¢; foreign and Canadian, double rate. Entered as second-class matter in Post Office at New York, N. Y., on September 17, 1931, under Act of March 3, 1879. Names of all characters used in stories and semi-fiction articles are fictitious. If the name of any living person or existing institution is used, it is a coincidence. Manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes, and are submitted at the author’s risk.


PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.
I Trained These Men

Chief Operator Broadcasting Station

Before I completed my lessons, I obtained my Radio Broadcast Operator's license and immediately joined Station WMPO where I am now Chief Operator. HOLLIS E. HAYES 323 Madison St. Laporte, Michian

Service Manager for Four Stores

I was working in a garage when I purchased N. R. I. and I am now a radio service manager for the Furniture Co. for their four stores.

JAMES E. RYAN 118 Pohbie Court
Fall River, Mass.

$10 to $20 a Week Plus Sales Commission

I repaired some Radio sets when I was on my tenth lesson. I really don't see how you can do much for so small a salary. I made $600 a year and a half, and I have made an average of $10 to $20 a week—just short time.

JOHN JERRY 127 Arapahoe St., Room 17
Denver, Colorado

DRAFT REGISTRANTS!

If you ARE called and are a Radio Technician, you'll be eligible for a communications branch of the service; in line with technical ratings with extra pay.

If you ARE NOT called, you now have an opportunity to get into Radio as a time when the Government is pouring millions of dollars into the Radio Industry to buy Defense equipment, on top of booming civilian Radio business. Either way—it's smart to train for RADIO NOW!

LEARNING RADIO THIS WAY IS ACTUALLY FUN. I'LL ALREADY HAVE YOU MAKING $10 A WEEK IN SPARE TIME RADIO. RADIO CERTAINLY OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO WELL TRAINED TECHNICIANS!

YOU CERTAINLY KNOW RADIO. THAT'S NEVER SOUNDED BETTER.

THANKS, I HAVE TAKEN N R I. TRAINING.

LOOK HERE. N R I. HAS TRAINED HUNDREDS OF MEN LIKE ME TO MAKE GOOD MONEY IN RADIO. I KNOW.' I'LL GET THAT FREE BOOK.

MARY. RIGHT. I DON'T HAVE NO RIGHT TO ASK HER TO MARRY ME ON THE MONEY I'M MAKING.

ON JIM'S, IT'S WONDERFUL. NOW YOU'RE ON THE WAY TO SUCCESS.

YES, MARK, AND THERE'S A REAL FUTURE FOR US IN RADIO AND TELEVISION.

I WILL TRAIN YOU AT HOME in your spare time for a GOOD JOB IN RADIO

If you can't see a future in your present job, feel you'll never make more money, if you're in a small shop, subject to lay off, IT'S TIME NOW TO INVESTIGATE RADIO. Trained Radio Technicians make a good money, and you don't have to give up your present job or leave home to learn Radio. I train you at home nights in your spare time.

Why Many Radio Technicians Make $30, $40, $50 a Week

Radio broadcasting stations employ operators, technicians, radio manufacturers, employ testers, inspectors, servicemen in good-pay jobs. Radio stations, dealers, employ installation and service men. Many Radio Technicians operate their own Radio sales and repair businesses and make $25, $30, $40 a week. Others hold their regular jobs and make $30 to $50 a week. Radios in spare time. Automobile, Police, Aviation, Commercial Radio, Loudspeaker systems, Electronic Devices are other fields offering opportunities for which N. R. I. offers the required knowledge of Radio. Television promises to open up many new sources.

Many Make $5 to $10 a Week Extra in Spare Time While Learning

The day you enroll, I start sending you Extra Money Job Sheets—start showing you how to do Radio repair work. Throughout your course I send plans and directions which have helped many make $5 to $10 a week extra in spare time while learning. I send special Radio equipment to conduct experiments and build experiments. This 5¢-50¢ training method makes learning at home interesting—fascinating—practical. YOU ALSO GET A MODERN PROFESSIONAL ALL-WAVE, ALL-PURPOSE SET SERVICING INSTRUMENT to help you make money fixing Radios while learning and equip you for full time work after you graduate.

Find Out What Radio, Television Offer You—Mail Coupon

Act Today! Mail the coupon for my 64-page book, "Rich Rewards in Radio." It points out Radio's spare time and full time opportunities and those coming in Television; tells about my course in Radio and Television; shows more than 100 letters from men I have trained, telling how they are doing; gives rates. Read my money back agreement, MAIL COUPON in an envelope or paste on a penny postcard—NOW!

J. E. Smith, President, Dept. 1C09 National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

Mail this to get 64 page book FREE

J. E. Smith, President, Dept. 1C09 National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

Mail me FREE, without obligation, your 64-page book "Rich Rewards in Radio." (No salesman will call. Write plainly.)

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE

RICH REWARDS IN RADIO

Mail this to get 64 page book FREE

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE

RICH REWARDS IN RADIO
FALSE TEETH
$6.85 TO $35.00
— BY MAIL —
SEND NO MONEY

THE TESTIMONIAL LETTERS WE PUBLISH are communications that customers have sent to us without solicitation and without pay. We have large numbers of such missives. We never print anyone’s letter without previous consent. We believe that each of our customers who has written to us enthusiastically endorses our dental plates is sincere. We do not, however, intimate or represent that you will receive the same results in any instance that those customers describe. What is important to you is that when you pay for our teeth, WE GUARANTEE IF YOU ARE NOT 100% SATISFIED IN EVERY RESPECT WITH THE TEETH WE WILL MAKE FOR YOU AFTER YOU HAVE WORN THEM AS LONG AS 60 DAYS, WE WILL GLADLY REFUND TO YOU EVERY CENT YOU HAVE PAID US FOR THEM.

MADE - TO MEASURE
DENTAL PLATES DIRECT FROM OUR LABORATORY TO YOU!

We make to measure for you individually—BY MAIL—Dental Plates for men and women—from an impression of your own mouth taken by you at your home. We have thousands of customers all over the country wearing teeth we made by mail at sensible prices.

AT ROCK-BOTTOM PRICES

If you find out what others have paid for theirs, you will be astounded when you see how little ours will cost you! By reading our catalog, you will learn how to save half or more on dental plates for yourself. Monthly payments possible.

ON 60 DAYS’ TRIAL

Make us prove every word we say. Wear our teeth on trial as long as 60 days. Then, if you are not perfectly satisfied with them, they will not cost you a cent.

WITH MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE OF SATISFACTION

We take this risk. We guarantee that if you are not completely satisfied with the teeth we make for you, then any time within 60 days we will immediately refund every cent you have paid us for them. We take your word. You are the judge.

HIGH-GRADE MATERIAL AND EXPERT WORKMANSHIP

TRY our practically unbreakable ROOFLESS, PARTIAL and TRANSLUCENT plates. Our dentures are set with pearly-white, genuine, porcelain teeth; constructed from high-grade materials, with expert workmanship, to give long service. We make all styles of plates. A dentist who has had many years’ experience in making dental plates supervises the making of each plate.

FREE MATERIAL. Catalog with our new low prices and information. Don’t put this off. Do it TODAY! CLIP COUPON OR WRITE. A one cent postcard with name and address plainly written is all that is necessary.

FREE UNITED STATES DENTAL COMPANY
1555 Milwaukee Ave., Dept. 3-82, Chicago, Ill.

MAIL THIS COUPON NOW

NAME
ADDRESS
(Print Clearly)
Why Trained Accountants Command High Salaries

Get this straight.

By "accountancy" we do not mean "bookkeeping." For accountancy begins where bookkeeping leaves off.

The skilled accountant takes the figures handed him by the bookkeeper, and analyzes and interprets them.

He knows how much the costs in the various departments should amount to, how they may be lowered.

He knows what profits should be expected from a given enterprise, how they may be increased.

He knows, in a given business, what per cent of one's working capital can safely be tied up in merchandise on hand, what per cent is safe and adequate for sales promotion. And these, by the way, are but two of scores of percentage-figures wherein he points the way to successful operation.

He knows the intricacies of government taxation.

He knows how to survey the transactions of a business over a given period; how to show in cold, hard figures the progress it has made and where it is going. He knows how to use these findings as a basis for constructive policies.

In short, the trained accountant is the controlling engineer of business—one man business cannot do without.

Small wonder that he commands a salary two to ten times as great as that of the bookkeeper. Indeed, as an independent operator (head of his own accounting firm) he may earn as much as the president of the big and influential bank in his community, or the operating manager of a great railroad.

Some Examples

Small wonder that accountancy offers the trained man such fine opportunities—opportunities well illustrated by the success of thousands of LaSalle accountancy students.* For example—one man was a plumber, 32 years old, with only an eleventh grade education. Today he is auditor for a large bank and his income is 325 per cent larger.

Another was a drug clerk at $30 a week. Now he heads his own very successful accounting firm with an income many times as large.

A woman bookkeeper—buried in details of a small job—is now auditor of an apartment hotel, and her salary mounted in proportion to her work.

A credit manager—earning $230 a month—moved up quickly to $3000, to $5000, and then to a highly profitable accounting business of his own which nets him better than $10,000 a year.

And What It Means to You

Why let the other fellow walk away with the better job, when right in your own home you can equip yourself for a splendid future in this profitable profession?

Are you really determined to get ahead? If so, you can start at once to acquire—by the LaSalle Problem Method—a thorough understanding of Higher Accountancy, master its fundamental principles, become expert in the practical application of those principles—this without losing an hour from work or a dollar of pay.

Preliminary knowledge of bookkeeping is unnecessary. You will be given whatever training, instruction or review on the subject of bookkeeping you may personally need—and without any extra expense to you.

If you are dissatisfied with your present equipment—if you recognize the opportunities that lie ahead of you through home-study training—you will do well to send at once for full particulars. The coupon will bring them to you without any obligation, also details of LaSalle's convenient payment plan.

Check, sign and mail the coupon NOW.

LaSalle Extension University
DEPT. 832-HR
CHICAGO
Opportunities in Accountancy—Check below and we will send you a copy of "Accountancy, the Profession that Pays," without obligation.

☐ Higher Accountancy:

☐ Modern Foremanship
☐ Personnel Management
☐ Expert Bookkeeping
☐ C. P. A. Coaching
☐ Business English
☐ Stenography
☐ Effective Speaking
☐ Railway Accounting

☐ Business Management
☐ Modern Salesmanship
☐ Traffic Management
☐ Law, Degree of LL. B.
☐ Commercial Law
☐ Industrial Management
☐ Business Correspondence
☐ Credit and Collection Correspondence

Name  
Present Position  
Address  

*Names available on request.
One LIFE INSURANCE POLICY INSURES THEM ALL!

LOOK AT THE AMAZING LOW COST

Only $1 A MONTH

FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

THIS Guarantee Reserve POLICY INSURES FROM TWO TO SIX MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY ... FOR AS MUCH AS . . .

$1,422.00  $2,844.00  $4,266.00

For Natural or Ordinary Accidental Death  For Auto Accidental Death  For Travel Accidental Death
(The above figures represent the amount of insurance provided by the policy on a typical average family of five persons)

Insures Men, Women, Children—Ages 1-75

If aching hearts and unbearable grief were all that accompanied death . . . the burden would still be great. But added to that grief and despair are the huge expenses that always follow the footsteps of tragedy. You’ll need ready cash to see you through, and unless you carry insurance on each member of your family, some time you’re going to have to face these financial burdens.

Computed on Legal Reserve Basis

The Guarantee Reserve Policy is brand new . . . it is actually sound. . . figured out by leading insurance experts without using the many misleading or confusing “trick clauses” and “hidden phrases” that are contained in so many low cost policies. Seeing is believing . . . that’s why we want you to see the policy before you decide to keep it. We want you to prove to us that this is the Policy you should have for your family’s protection.

Parents, Children (Married or Unmarried), Brothers, Sisters, Grandparents, In-Laws, Included

NO MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Selling by mail saves agents’ commissions, branch offices, expenses, collection expenses . . . that’s why from 2 to 6 members of your family, including relatives, may be included in your Guarantee Reserve Family Policy for a total cost of only $1.00 a month. You be the judge . . . decide for yourself without agents to high pressure you . . . without embarrassment or obligation.

Send the coupon below for details of this sound insurance offer made by the reliable Guarantee Reserve Life Insurance Company. Don’t delay . . . do it now. While you and your family are in good health.

NO AGENT WILL CALL
10-DAY FREE INSPECTION OFFER
SEND NO MONEY

MAIL COUPON TODAY!

GUARANTEE RESERVE LIFE INSURANCE CO.  Guarantee Reserve Bldg., Dept. 17-C
Indianapolis, Indiana

( ) Please send me your
FREE 10-DAY INSPECTION OFFER

NAME: ..................................................
ST. OR R.P.D: ......................................
CITY & STATE: ..............................

QUESTIONS YOU WILL WANT ANSWERED:

1. Q. Does the death of one or more members of the insured family cancel the Policy?
   A. No. The policy remains in effect; insuring the balance of the insured family, as long as premiums are paid.

2. Q. How are premiums paid?
   A. Pay your $1.00 premium monthly. You will receive a receipt and premium notice each month. NO collectors will ever call on or bother you.

3. Q. In what States are policies issued by Guarantee Reserve Life Insurance Company?
   A. Guarantee Reserve Life Insurance Company is legally entitled to do business by mail in every State in the Union. It is incorporated under Indiana insurance laws.

4. Q. Is a Medical Examination required?
   A. No. But any members of your family who are not in good health cannot be insured.
THOUSANDS NOW PLAY WHO NEVER THOUGHT THEY COULD

Read this typical letter from one of our students

YES, just like thousands of others, who thought music was hard, this man got the surprise of his life when he tried this easy way to learn music at home. And no wonder! Instead of months of tedious study and practice, he found himself actually playing real tunes in the very first few weeks!

But read this unsolicited letter for yourself:

"I didn't even dream that I could actually learn to play without a teacher, because I had always heard that it couldn't be done. I was unaware that I couldn't find a teacher so I didn't think it would do me any harm to take your course.

"When I received the lessons I took the instantaneous note finder and struck the notes right off. You can imagine my surprise when after three or four weeks I found that I could actually play real tunes.

"Now, when I play for people they will hardly believe that I learned to play so well with just a correspondence course in such a short time. I am getting to the point where even the hardest music holds no terrors for me."

(Signed) *H. C. S., Calif.

FREE PROOF it's fun to learn the U. S. School Way

... and it costs less than 7c A DAY

Plays on Radio
I am happy to tell you that for four weeks I have been on the air over our local radio stations. So thanks to your institution for such a wonderful course.

*W. H. S., Alabama.

Wouldn't Take $1,000 for Course
The lessons are so simple that anyone can understand them. I have learned to play by note in a little more than a month. I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for my course.

*R. B., Kansas City, Mo.

Easy to Understand
The manner in which the various lessons are explained is very helpful as well as interesting. It makes one feel that the explanation is being given in person.

*W., W., Florida.

Here's the best news of all! By this easy, modern method, you can now learn to play your favorite instrument, right at home, in your spare time, for less than SEVEN CENTS A DAY! And that covers everything, including valuable sheet music. No extras of any kind. What's more, it doesn't take years to learn this way. You learn to play in much LESS time than you probably ever dreamed possible.

It's easy as A-B-C. It's FUN! You learn to play by playing. If interested, send at once for the Free Print and Picture Sample that shows HOW and the handsome illustrated booklet that gives complete information. Just mail the coupon. Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit. U. S. SCHOOL of MUSIC, 2943 Brunswick Bldg., New York, N. Y.

FREE PRINT & PICTURE SAMPLE
U. S. School of Music, 2943 Brunswick Bldg., N. Y. C.

I am interested in music study, particularly in the instrument indicated below. Please send me your Illustrated Booklet, "How to Learn Music At Home," and your Illustrated Print and Picture Sample.

(Do you have instrument? )

PIANO  Mandolin  Trombone  Plane Accordion
Mandolin  Saxophone  Banjo  Piano Accordion
Guitar  Clarinet  Ukulele  Hawaiian Guitar
Cello  Trumpet  Corset  Other Instrument

Name:
Street:
City:
State:

[ ] Check here if under 16 years of age.

*Actual pupils' names on request.
Pictures posed by Professional models.
BLEEDING GUMS
PYOHRREA
TRENCH MOUTH

Don’t wait until it’s too late and lose your teeth. PYRO which has astounded the medical profession. PYRO gets right at the trouble and kills the poisonous germs. One reason why PYRO works so efficaciously is because it actually penetrates the gums, thereby killing the germs inside and out. Remember pyorrhea and trench mouth. If unattended, permits the infection to spread quickly, and before you know it, teeth are rotted and bone construction is destroyed and teeth fall out.

PYRO SAVES YOUR TEETH or NO COST!

You can believe the sworn affidavits of doctors and dentists who have tried this new discovery on most stubborn cases of pyorrhea, trench mouth and bleeding gums.
PYRO was used with startling success many times, in cases that seemed hopeless...where everything else failed. PYRO is almost uncanny in getting quick and sure results. It gets to the root of the trouble because PYRO has a penetration of 1/4 inch in 5 minutes and it corrects and heals as it penetrates the diseased areas. If your gums are sore or bleed when brushed...if your teeth are loose or pus pockets have formed, order PYRO today for quick correction...act now before you lose your teeth entirely.

A DOCTOR WRITES:
A well-known physician...a member of the American Medical Assem., and many other professional organizations, says: “I do not hesitate to state that this solution has saved me from the nightmare of false teeth.”

Don’t Lose Your Teeth
Order Now!

We have 45 pages of affidavits attesting to the wonderful powers of PYRO. So positive are we that it will bring you the health and happiness you have been seeking, that we will send it to you without a single penny of risk. Send $2 today for the full home treatment or we will send C.O.D. for $2 plus postage. Use PYRO as directed and if not 100% delighted with results, return the unused bottle and we will refund the purchase price in full.

CABLE PRODUCTS
Dept. 1703
501 West 139th Street, New York, N.Y.

CABLE PRODUCTS,
Dept. 1703—501 W. 139th St.,
New York, N. Y.

Send me your regular size bottle of PYRO and simple instructions for home use.

[Box for checking options: Send C.O.D. I will pay postman $2.00 plus postage. Enclosed find $2.00 in full payment. I will return empty bottle and you will refund my money if I am not satisfied.]

Name:
Street:
City:...State:

With order.
GIVEN BIKE
GIVEN
BOYS—GIRLS!
SEND NO MONEY—Mail Coupon
Or Cash Commission
FULLY EQUIPPED—Balloon tires and all. SIMPLY GIVE AWAY FREE colored Art Pictures with our well known White CLOVERING Brand SALVE, used for chaps, mild burns, shallow cuts. Salve easily sold to friends at 25¢ a box (with picture FREE). Remit and select premium as per catalog. SPECIAL: Choice of 35 premiums given for returning only 31 collected. Nothing to buy! New patriotic flag pictures included. First Write or mail coupon now.
WILSON CHEM. CO., INC.
Dept. 31-A
TYRONE, PA.

GIVEN
ABOUT SIZE OF A DIME
GIVEN
Valuable watches, other premiums or liberal cash commission GIVEN—SIMPLY GIVE AWAY FREE pictures with White CLOVERING Brand SALVE at 25¢ a box (with picture FREE) pictures and remit per catalog. 46th year. Be first. Nothing to buy! Write or mail coupon.
WILSON CHEM. CO., INC.
Dept. 31-C
TYRONE, PA.

GIVEN
Both Given
NOTHING TO BUY
SEND NO MONEY—Mail Coupon
Boys
Girls
Write for Salve or Mail the Coupon

Standard guitar, Indian blankets, other musical instruments, other blankets, other premiums or cash GIVEN—JUST GIVE AWAY FREE pictures with White CLOVERING Brand SALVE for chaps and mild burns, easily sold to friends at 25¢ a box (with picture FREE). Nothing to buy. Write or mail coupon now!
WILSON CHEM. CO., INC.
Dept. 31-F
TYRONE, PA.

Both Given
NOTHING TO BUY—Send No Money
MAIL COUPON
Boys—Girls
SEND NO MONEY—Mail Coupon
Or Cash Commission

Choice of cash commission. Combination Phonograph with self-starting motor, plays 13 in. records, good radio reception, or Portable Dry Cell Radio with four miniature tubes and dynamic speaker, ready to play. Get the news! Simply give away FREE beautifully colored art pictures with famous White CLOVERING Brand SALVE used for chaps, surface burns. Salve easily sold at 25¢ a box (with picture FREE). Remit and select premium, or keep cash commission per catalog. Other Radio Given. SPECIAL: Choice of 35 premiums given for returning only 31 collected. 46th yr. Square plan. Nothing to buy. New patriotic flag pictures included. First Write or mail coupon now.
WILSON CHEM. CO., INC.
Dept. 31-B
TYRONE, PA.

Both Given
NOTHING TO BUY—Send No Money
MAIL COUPON
Boys—Girls
SEND NO MONEY—Mail Coupon
Or Cash Commission

Send No Money
Mail Coupon!
Ivor Johnson Bolt Action 22 Cal. Self-Cocking Safety RIFLE—30" Long STURDY! This Rifle, Cash or choice of other valuable premiums given—SIMPLY GIVE AWAY FREE beautifully colored Pictures with White CLOVERING Brand SALVE used for chaps, mild burns, shallow cuts. Salve easily sold to friends at 25¢ a box (with picture FREE). Remit and select premium per catalog. 46th year. Nothing to buy. Be first! Write or mail coupon.
WILSON CHEM. CO., INC.
Dept. 31-D
TYRONE, PA.

Mail Coupon
Dept. 76-SH-3-41. Date

Dear Sir: Please send me 12 beautiful art pictures with 12 boxes WHITE CLOVERING Brand SALVE to sell at 25¢ a box. (Gifting popular picture FREE). I will remit within 30 days, select a premium or keep cash commission, as per catalog sent with order, postage-paid.

NAME

Address

Gentlemen:

On the return of White CLOVERING Brand SALVE at 25¢ a box (with picture FREE) and remit per catalog. Be first. Nothing to buy. Write or mail coupon.
WILSON CHEM. CO., INC.
Dept. 31-E
TYRONE, PA.
Elizabeth E., Newark, N. J.: Yes, a wedding gown of champagne colored crepe would be perfectly proper for a formal wedding. Carry yellow roses and peach-colored lilies. Rust-colored crepe dresses for your attendants, with bouquets of snapdragons, would be beautiful and “different.”

·


·

Patricia D., Saginaw, Mich.: Please allow two weeks for special party plans to be sent to you. Your letter reached me about the date of your party. Better luck next time!

·

Irene G., Philadelphia, Pa.: Washing your mascara brush every time you use it will keep your lashes silky and let you apply just the proper amount of mascara. Before using your eyebrow pencil, touch the point to the light bulb and it will go on easier. Outlining the eyelid with eyebrow pencil isn’t done. Use it on the upper lid, if you like. But never all around. After using the pencil on your brows, soften the line with a fingertip.

·

Beatrice B., Albany, N. Y.: Your perfume evaporated because you left it standing near the radiator. Heat evaporates the volatile essences. A bit of cream touched to the atomizer opening after you use it will help prevent evaporation.

·

Mrs. R. T. B., Mount Vernon, N. Y.: It is correct always for a hostess to shake hands when welcoming guests to her home. You needn’t shake hands at any other time, unless someone extends a hand to you. It would be extremely impolite not to extend your own hand in this case. Your husband was quite right, too, in saying a hostess must be at home to welcome her guests. This is a hard and fast rule and really explains itself.

See

LISTEN, GIRLS!
Here's the Kind of MEN I Build!

Will You Let Me PROVE I Can Make YOU a New Man?

MEN—Meet J. G. O'Brien, of California, one of my Silver Cup Winners! Look at that strong neck—those broad, handsome, perfectly proportioned shoulders—that muscled chest and stomach. Read what he says: "Look at me NOW! 'Dynamic Tension' WORKS! I'm proud of the natural, easy way you have made me an 'Atlas Champion!'"—J. G. O'Brien.

I myself, was once a skinny weakling of 97 lbs. I didn't know what real health and strength were. I was afraid to fight, ashamed to be seen in a swimming suit.

Then I discovered the secret that changed me into "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man," the title I won and have held ever since. My secret is "Dynamic Tension." It is a natural method. Its purpose is not only to give you the powerful, rippling muscles you'd like to see in your own mirror, but also—for those whose systems are sluggish from lack of proper exercise—to help them tone up their entire body, inside and out.

Accept My 7-Day Trial Offer

Do you want a better build? Are you dissatisfied with your present physical development? All I ask is a

FREE BOOK

"Everlasting Health and Strength"

Let me show you the results produced for other men! I'll send you FREE my famous book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." It shows actual photos. Write your name and address carefully on coupon. Mail to me personally today. I'll rush your free copy to you AT ONCE! Charles Atlas, Dept. 77C, 115 East 23rd St., New York, N. Y.

CHARLES ATLAS

Dept. 77C, 115 East 23rd Street, New York, N. Y.

I want the proof that your system of "Dynamic Tension" will help make me a New Man—give me a healthy, handsome body and big muscle development. Send me your FREE book, "Everlasting Health and Strength" and full details about your 7-DAY trial offer.

Name .................................................. (Please print or write plainly)
Address ..................................................
City .................................................. State
don’t Worry about Rupture

Why put up with days... months... YEARS of discomfort, worry and fear? Learn now about this perfected invention for all forms of reducible rupture. Surely you keenly desire—you eagerly CRAVE to enjoy life’s normal activities and pleasures once again. To work... to play... to live... to love... with the haunting Fear of Rupture banished from your thoughts! Literally thousands of rupture sufferers have entered this Kingdom of Paradise Regained. Why not you? Some wise man said, "Nothing is impossible in this world!"—and it is true, for where others fail is where we have had our greatest success in many cases! Even doctors—thousands of them—have ordered for themselves and their patients. Unless your case is absolutely hopeless, do not despair. The coupon below brings our Free Rupture Book in plain envelope. Send the coupon now.

Patented AIR-CUSHION Support Gives Nature a Chance to CLOSE the OPENING

Think of it! Here’s a surprising yet simple-acting invention that permits Nature to close the opening—that holds the rupture securely but gently, day and night, at work and at play! Thousands of grateful letters express heartfelt thanks for results beyond the expectation of the writers. What is this invention—How does it work? Will it help me? Get the complete, fascinating facts on the Brooks Automatic Air Cushion Appliance—send now for free Rupture Book.

Cheap—Sanitary—Comfortable

Rich or poor—ANYONE can afford to buy this remarkable, LOW-PRICED rupture invention! But look out for imitations and counterfeit. The Genuine Brooks Air-Cushion Truss is never sold in stores or by agents. Your Brooks is made up, after your order is received, to fit your particular case. You buy direct at the low "maker-to-user" price. The perfected Brooks is sanitary, lightweight, inconspicuous. Has no hard pads to gouge painfully into the flesh, no stiff, punishing springs, no metal grille to rust or corrode. It brings heavenly comfort and security—while the Automatic Air Cushion continually works, in its own, unique way, to help Nature get results! Learn what this patented invention can mean to you—send coupon quick!

SENT ON TRIAL!

No... don’t order a Brooks now—FIRST get the complete revealing explanation of this world-famous rupture invention. THEN decide whether you want the comfort—the freedom from fear and worry—the security—the same amazing results thousands of men, women and children have reported. They found our invention the answer to their prayers! Why can’t you? And you risk nothing as the complete appliance is SENT ON TRIAL! Surely you owe it to yourself to investigate this no-risk trial. Send for the facts now—today—hurry! All correspondence strictly confidential.

FREE! Latest Rupture Book Explains All!

Sent You In Plain Envelope Just Clip and Send Coupon


Mail This Coupon NOW!

BROOKS APPLIANCE CO.

Without obligation, please send your FREE Book on Rupture, Proof of Results, and TRIAL OFFER—all in plain envelope.

Name:

Street:

City:

State:

State whether for Man □ Woman □ or Child □
Your Horoscope For the Entire Year!

The Handy Astrological Guide
Now on Sale 10¢ Everywhere
The Big New Fun Book
Popular Crossword Puzzles
Only 10¢ at All Stands

What Are YOUR Mistakes in English?

They may offend others as much as these offend you

If someone you met for the first time made the mistakes in English shown above, what would you think of him? Would he inspire your respect? Would you be inclined to make a friend of him? Would you care to introduce him to others as a close friend of yours?

These errors are easy for you to see. Perhaps, however, you make other mistakes which offend other people as much as these would offend you. How do you know that you do not mispronounce certain words? Are you always sure that the things you say and write are grammatically correct? To them they may seem correct, but others may know they are wrong.

Unfortunately, people will not correct you when you make mistakes; all they do is to make a mental reservation about you. "He is ignorant and uncultured," they think. So you really have no way of telling when your English offends others.

FREE—Book on English

Sherwin Cody, perhaps the best known teacher of practical English, has perfected and patented a remarkable device which will quickly find and correct mistakes you unconsciously make. Correct English soon becomes a HABIT.

Mr. Cody’s remarkable new invention, the 100% Self-Correcting Method, has already improved the English of more than 100,000 people. No useless rules, no tedious copying, no hard study. Only 15 minutes a day required. You learn by creating the HABIT of using correct English. Nothing like Mr. Cody’s method has ever been used before!

A new book, "How You Can Master Good English in 15 Minutes a Day," is ready. It explains Mr. Cody’s surprisingly easy method. Get a copy free and learn how to stop making embarrassing errors. You do not want others to judge you unfairly. Merely mail the coupon or a postal card, Sherwin Cody School of English, 33 Searle Building, Rochester, N. Y.

Sheerwin Cody School of English
33 Searle Building, Rochester, N. Y.
Please send me your free book, "How You Can Master Good English in 15 Minutes a Day."

Name
Address

☐ If 18 years or under, check here for Booklet A.
THREE MEN

Nikki Carleton, the Golden Girl, Is Faced by a Baffling Problem in Which She Must Choose Between the Glamour of High Society and the Glory of True Love!

CHAPTER I
DON JUAN ON SKIS

FROM a side window of the inn, Nikki could see the practice slopes and Steve Hall. He was the new skiing instructor. A tall young man in dark blue ski clothes. A mysterious young man. A disturbing young man.

For the hundredth time Nikki wondered why she had hired him and, simultaneously, knew. He was, of course, an expert skier with a background of Swiss and Austrian training.
IN HER LIFE

A Complete Romantic Novel

By

HELEN AHERN

Author of "Million Dollar Girl," "Heart of a Princess," etc.

They had not lost the knack of dancing together beautifully

But there had been other applicants as skilled, with more solid references. As Walt Frawley, always the Vermont banker and cautious business man, had pointed out:

"This fellow Hall tells very little about himself actually. How do you know that he's not some kind of adventurer?"

Secretly Nikki was quite sure that Steve Hall was an adventurer. But not a lousy adventurer. A charming adventurer with a smile that lighted little stars in his moody midnight
eyes, and curved his thin ironic mouth crookedly. It was the smile, she had to admit shamedly, that had won him the job, over Walt’s sensible advice and her own better judgment. It had done things to her, that smile. And it did things to the women guests at Windy Point Inn. They liked him.

Too well!

With a little frown between black-lashed violet eyes, Nikki saw the tall slender figure of a woman climbing to meet him. She was all in white and her blond hair was dazzling in the January sunlight. She probably retouched it, thought Nikki. Diane Asketh was forty-five if she were a day. Entirely too old to be chasing Steve Hall. Not that he seemed to mind!

Feeling queerly, unaccountably ill, Nikki had a swift mental flash of the previous night—midnight in the card room—and of Diane in Steve’s arms. She had been clinging to him, crying a little. And he had been holding her closely, with a pained expression on his dark, lean face. Nikki had opened and closed the door of the card room upon them swiftly and silently. But one look had given her the picture. Fading beauty and bored gigolo.

Diane Asketh was supposed to be very rich.

“The sort of thing you might have expected from Hall,” Walt would have said.

And it was none of Nikki Carleton’s affair. The unaccountable hurt in her heart was her affair, though, and she took herself sternly to task about that.

NIKKI turned resolutely from the window.

As owner and manager of Windy Point she had other things to do besides mooning about Steve Hall, or Diane Asketh, or what either of them did. She should be busy with her own affairs—there was plenty to do. For one thing she should be worrying as to whether the snow would last through the week-end, be counting up reservations. It was her duty not only to herself, but to Walt whose money had enabled her to turn Windy Point into one of the smartest winter resorts in the Green Mountains. Walt expected a return on his investment, if not of one sort then of another.

Involuntarily she prayed: “Please don’t let it thaw, or I’ll have to marry Walt. Please send us lots of customers.”

As if in answer, her desk clerk called to her from the lobby.
"More reservations, Miss Carleton," he said. "In a telegram that I think is personal."

Nikki went to the desk and took the slip on which the clerk had written down the message. And she felt her heart contract. The wire ran:

COMING UP TONIGHT. WITH ANGEL WILMOTT AND AUNT. NEED SUITE AND EXTRA ROOM. LOVE AND KISSES. LARRY.

The audacity of him! The callousness. Forcing his way into this new life that she had made for herself. And with Angelica Wilmott, the girl whom he had made successor to Nikki herself!

The clerk though, was jubilant, smiling.

"Angel Wilmott!" he said. "Good publicity for us, having a hot-shot deb like her. She drags a crowd."

"Yes," Nikki said cooly. "Give her the front suite on the second floor. And have the vases filled with winter berries."

Nikki forced herself to be businesslike. But she neither felt nor looked businesslike. Still clutching the telegram, she crossed to the great log fire that illumined the empty pine-paneled lounge. In its glow she was wistfully young and lovely. Dusky hair curling to her shoulders caught violet lights from her eyes and from the soft violet wool dress that hugged her slim figure. Her oval, camellia-white face was lost and lonely.

She was not thinking of business now, nor of customers, nor even of Steve Hall who chose to be so mysterious. She was thinking of herself, of Nikki Carleton as she had been two years ago. Nikki Carleton who had known, and was known by New York. Its most expensive modistes, its newest night clubs, its gayest restaurants. Nikki Carleton, the golden girl, who had loved Larry Martineau, golden boy. Only Larry had turned out to be gold-plated.

Nikki's soft geranium-red mouth was twisted by reminiscent bitterness. Larry had ended their half-engagement cooly when, upon the death of her father, the Carleton paper millions had dissolved into thin air and she had been left with nothing but a rundown Vermont lodge, and no slightest idea of what to do with it.

"I'm that way and this way about you, Nikki-Nik," he had said, "but I was never cut out to be a poor girl's husband. Certainly, I'd be no help to you at running a country hotel if
that's in your mind, as you've been hinting. Too bad, that that's the way I am. Forgive me, and don't hate me too much.”

SHE knew that she should hate him and she had tried. But hating Larry was like hating a spoiled child, or the sun that warmed and then faded capriciously.

His hair had been like the sun, she remembered, and felt her pulses quicken.

Larry was Larry. He belonged to the world of show and play, to girls like Angel Wilmott, glamour deb, who would have five million dollars in her own right when she became twenty-one.

And Angel was young and lovely. Not aging and worn like Diane Asketh whom Steve Hall pursued—even though Diane was still lovely. With artificial aid, Nikki was sure. Larry was more particular than Steve in his choice of lady millionaires.

But they were two of a kind!

Nikki was swiftly angry at herself for dwelling upon either, and then was as swiftly embarrassed. Steve Hall was standing beside her, as though her thoughts of him had materialized him there. He had come up to the fire unnoticed.

As instinct made her aware of his presence, he looked from the telegram in her hand to her lovely emotion-racked face. His midnight eyes were full of disarming concern.

“Bad news?” he asked.

Nikki hesitated for an instant in which she had a sudden sharp consciousness of his nearness, his height, the lean hardness of his body. Confused, she blurted out the hurting truth.

“I'm not sure. An ex-heart throb is arriving tonight—with his current number.”

Steve eyed her keenly. “Sounds as if he were not entirely an ex,” he said.

“What happened? Why should there be a current number?”

“She had money—as much or more than Mrs. Asketh.”

“That sort of lug, eh?” Steve's voice was disapproving. “How can a swell girl like you go for him? What's he got?”

He ignored the personal thrust in her words. He was either utterly stupid or utterly brazen. Nikki did not think that he was stupid. A fierce reasonless desire to puncture his assurance seized her.

“Larry has about everything,” she answered recklessly. “Six-foot something of muscle. Nice shoulders, nice hair, nice eyes, mouth—”

She stopped short, an odd choke in her throat as memories of Larry blurred. When it had not really been Larry that she had been describing at all! It had been Steve Hall. Six-foot something of muscle towering over her. Nice shoulders. Hair whose blackness the fire touched with copper. Midnight eyes a-glint, holding hers.

“And the mouth?” he urged. “It's nice to kiss, I suppose?”

She gave a breathless, scared nod and saw Steve's firm lips tighten.

“So that's what you want from a man! Brawn and kisses. Okay, my sweet!”

He swept her to him. His hard young arms stilled her feeble struggle until all the blood in her body seemed to be throbbing to the quick beat of his heart, to the sudden upsurge of emotion which she could not control.

The firelight gleamed on his dark hair as his head bent. Slowly.

He kissed her without haste, as if sure of himself and of her. And, sensing it, Nikki loathed herself as much as she loathed Steve. But she was powerless against the desire that was at once like an elixir and a drug. It left her limp in his embrace while his lips warmed hers into helpless response, lifted her to a strange bitter-sweet heaven.

The kiss ended but he did not let her go immediately. And it was
as well. Her heart and brain were reeling. She leaned against him, brain in a turmoil, nerves a rushing song, and did not rouse until he laughed.

Laughed and said:
“’You see, it takes all kinds of kisses to make up a world’”

Nikki jerked herself from his arms, and her small hand, uplifted in blind, shamed rage, would have struck him had not Steve caught it in his.

“How it!” he warned her. “Someone is coming.”

There were voices in the lobby, and Nikki had barely time to compose her face and smooth her kiss-ruffled hair before Diane Asketh came in, followed by Walt Frawley. If Diane noticed anything amiss, she gave no sign. She seated herself before the lounge fire, and Walt stood nearby, hands thrust deep into his pockets as he regarded the nearness of Steve to Nikki.

“How about a cocktail all around?” Diane asked. “Steve? Miss Carleton, Mr. Frawley?”

“Fine! Thanks!”

Walt answered for them all with his eyes on Nikki who, cheeks flushed, rang for her bartender.

“Didn’t you expect me, my dear?” Walt went on to her a little too smoothly. “I told you I’d come out this afternoon. And what’s more, I’ve arranged it at the bank so that I can stay over the week-end.”

“Marvelous!” Nikki said, but she thought: “Dear heavens, how will I ever get through it!” And then wondered why she should be so dismayed at the prospect of an uninterrupted week-end of Walt Frawley’s constant companionship.

Walt was worth a dozen Larry Martineaus. A hundred Steve Halls! A little on the dull side, but generous and devoted. And not bad-looking in his slim, blond fashion. She only wished that his gray eyes were not quite so sharp and cold. At the moment they reminded her of the rocks on his own Vermont mountains. Larry’s were sunny lakes. Steve’s were midnight skies, star-lighted, pools of flame...

Nikki found herself, mothlike, seeking their flame; then was furious. Steve was paying no attention to her. It might have been as if he had never kissed her. He was handing Diane her cocktail, was intent only upon Diane and what she was saying.

“This place reminds me of Switzerland,” Diane was drawling idly. “The chalet where we had tea and scones on Christmas day, in Thirty-six. Or was it Thirty-five, Steve?”

Walt, listening, spoke up alertly.

“You and Mrs. Asketh have known each other for five years, Hall?”

“Longer than that,” said Diane in a quiet, tired voice while Steve frowned.

CHAPTER II

FIRE FIGHTS FIRE

Nikki picked up her own cocktail and sipped it slowly, to hide the tumult of surprise and hope and dismay that surged through her. Five years was a long time. Steve could have been then little more than a gangling boy to whom Diane might have been kind. Maybe they were just old friends. And yet there was something more than friendship between them, something that was there subtly, and which Nikki could not understand.

“At least she’s been a faithful sugar mamma,” Walt said to Nikki under his breath, and Nikki told him fiercely: “Shut up!”

Diane Asketh did not seem to be the “sugar mamma” type. She was beautiful in the firelight. Beautiful and sad-looking. She had changed to a long-sleeved dinner dress of black wool and brushed her hair into a smooth cap of gold. She looked the lovely patrician that she was.

Nikki tried to remember all the
things that she had heard about Diane Asketh. She had been Diane Latham, a glamour girl in the days before there were glamour girls. She had married a munitions fortune, was still married to Charles Asketh, manufacturer of bombs that he had sold without discrimination. Nazi Germany had been his chief market, and he had not been a popular man since war had blazed in Europe.

No wonder Diane looked sad, thought Nikki. It couldn’t be much fun to live in a house that Death had built. And how could Steve covet money that had made refugees of happy children?

Nikki stared at him, telling herself that she despised every lean inch of him. She was almost convinced that it was true when he whirled unexpectedly and their eyes clashed. In his was a smile of remembrance and promise that she refused to return. But, within her, her heart trembled so violently that it shook her whole slim body.

“Sorry,” she said quickly. “Loads of work to do. I must—”

She refused mechanically a second cocktail and stood up just in time to meet the bellhop who was hurrying up.

“A Mr. Martineau and Miss Angel Wilmott have just arrived and they wish to see you, Miss Carleton,” he announced.

Nikki nodded assent, her throat too taut for speech. It had come. How was she to face it?

“I’ll go with you,” said Walt, and was at her heels as she started for the lobby.

He overtook her in the hall and, with his hand on her arm, slowed her pace.

“This fellow Martineau,” he asked, frowning, “What do you suppose he wants up here?”

He knew that Nikki and Larry had once been one of fashionable Manhattan twosomes, and his curiosity had some justification. But it irked her.

He seemed to be taking so much for granted, where she was concerned.

“Rooms for the week-end,” she told him crisply. “Angel Wilmott is with him, remember.”

“Of course,” said Walt, sounding satisfied, “he won’t be bothering with you when she’s around.”

Wouldn’t he? Nikki’s violet eyes darkened. She was too feminine to ignore the challenge, although Walt had not meant it as such. Like most newspaper readers, he believed Angel to be a super-girl. The reporters and photographers had given her that kind of publicity. But Nikki knew her débutante racket and she doubted that Angel was much more than another pretty, well publicized deb. As for Larry—

NIKKI smiled to herself thinly. Larry’s sunny blue eyes had always been wandering eyes. Unless he had changed, it might not be too hard to give Angel a run for her money. In spite of her money!

And it would be a good antidote for the feeling that made her want to turn back and look at Steve Hall. Larry, in fact, might be a good antidote for Steve himself. Resisting temptation, Nikki quickened her pace to the lobby.

Larry came forward to meet her. He was just as she remembered him. Leanly tall, but not as tall as Steve Hall. Hair like the sun, reflected in blue eyes. A ready boyish smile. He took her hands in his.

“Nikki-Nik!” he said.

There was a genuinely husky note in his voice which told her that he had not forgotten. Nor had she. That “Nikki-Nik”—his name for her—quivered across the years like a chord of sweet, distant music. She smiled at him uncertainly, knowing that she had been right. She could reawaken their romance that had lain dormant for two years. It had not died. But would it be wise?

Larry drew Angel forward and in-
roduced her and her Aunt Elsa, and Nikki presented Walt Frawley. Angel's Aunt Elsa was a plump placid woman who seemed to have learned that chaperones should be rarely seen

and less often heard. She withdrew dutifully when Angel said:
“I want a drink. You tend to the settling and unpacking, won't you, Lamb?”

Angel was as pretty as her pictures. She had babyishly curling yellow hair and babyishly wide
blue eyes that were an effective contrast to a sultry, wilful mouth. She looked Nikki over with the rudeness of the very rich.

“Larry’s been telling me about you,” she said. “And I’ve been dying to meet you. I think it frightfully noble of you to bury yourself up here after being in New York—known around, and all. Ages and ages ago, wasn’t it?”

“Two years,” Nikki told her and gave Larry a slow look. The look he had called her “heart-stopper look.” She added to him: “A long time, but somehow it seems like yesterday that you and I—”

She did not go on. She let him supply the memories of all that they had shared, and saw him draw in a quick breath. She knew that she was acting like a hussy, but she could not help herself. She liked neither to be called “noble” nor to be verbally put on the shelf.

Angel was only a few years younger than herself and, except for her money, would not have been competition. She was too bad-tempered and bad-mannered.

“Well, Larry,” Nikki said, irritated, “are you going to let me buy you a drink? Or shall I find another customer?”

Brick red crept up to the roots of Larry’s bright hair. He was not, thought Nikki, beyond being hurt by digs about his financial status. He was not as hardened as Steve Hall. She quickly relented.

“First drinks are always on the house,” she said hastily. “You take them into the bar, Walt.” She shook her dark head at Larry who protested that he wanted to drink with her to old times.


UNEASILY, Walt started his somewhat sulky socialite charges toward the bar, calling back over his shoulder:

“You’re having dinner with me, you know, Nikki.”

Nikki had not known, but she let it pass. If she dined with Walt she would be safe. Safe from Larry. Safe from Steve. Safe from her own unpredictable emotions.

She dressed for dinner in a long slim skirt of black crepe topped by a sheer white blouse, sleeveless but demurely high-necked. She pinned a gay scarlet bow a-top the dark cloud of her hair, tied a wide scarlet sash about her slender waist and went downstairs.

Walt was waiting for her. They were not dining as he had hoped, but with Angel and Larry, he said. Larry had insisted, and Angel had included Steve Hall and Diane Asketh in the party.

And so for Nikki there was no safety after all.

Listening to the arrangements, she experienced one moment of dismay. Then recklessness took possession of her. “Let’s go!” she said, and shook off the worries and inhibitions of two years.

For that one night she would be the old Nikki who had laughed and danced and cared nothing about the morrow.

Larry’s blue eyes laughed into hers, as he recognized her mood. He understood her, knew her moods so well. They had been wonderful playmates.

“How I ever did without you all the weeks and months—the centuries—I don’t know,” he said, low-voiced, as she slid into a chair beside him.

“You seem to have managed,” she said carelessly.

Nikki glanced across the table at Angel. Evidently still piqued, the little deb was devoting herself to Steve who looked sardonically amused. He intercepted Nikki’s gaze and smiled, the smile that lighted little stars in his moody midnight eyes. Nikki’s heart skipped a beat, and for the balance of the meal she avoided looking at him.
It was a gay, if hectic party. Only Walt and Diane Asketh seemed set apart. Walt sensed the undercurrents beneath the flippant give-and-take that went round the table, without quite understanding, and he was uneasy. Diane, for her part, had an air of having withdrawn into some remote and not too happy world of her own. Nikki wondered if she might not be jealous about the obvious play that Angel was making for Steve. But, if so, Diane gave no sign. Dinner over, she excused herself gracefully from the Friday night dance.

“I’ve had quite enough exercise today practising slaloms and Christiances,” she said.

Steve took her to the elevator. Nikki and Larry led the way to the ballroom, a long-beamed hall flanked by a glass-enclosed veranda. It was a new and popular addition to the Inn which Nikki had had built upon Walt’s advice and with his loan to make it possible.

Reminded now of her debt to him, she looked around and found him bringing up the rear with Angel who was patently and impolitely bored. Nikki knew that she ought to rescue Walt, but she didn’t.

The orchestra was playing an old favorite of hers and Larry’s:

You may have been a headache,
But you never were a bore . . .

“That about describes it, doesn’t it?” He grinned at her impishly, then swept her into the dance and into the past.

THEY had always danced together beautifully, and they had not lost the knack. Moving smoothly to the rhythm of the small but torrid jive band, Nikki thought: “That is what I’ve wanted. Larry is what I want.”

She almost said the last aloud, like a small boy whispering in the dark, because just at that moment Steve reappeared in the doorway. He wore dinner clothes with an air. The air of the gentleman adventurer, she told herself. But that did not keep her pulses from quickening or her small feet from stumbling.

Larry looked down at her quizically.

“Losing your technique, my pet?” he asked. “Being up here in the woods so long? Or did the sight of the handsome ski teacher throw you off balance?”

He was keen, and he knew her well. The pale oval of Nikki’s face flamed, and it was a full second before she managed to retort mockingly:

“Maybe. But, if that’s the case, it looks like I’m wasting my torch when there’s Mrs. Asketh, and now—” She nodded toward Angel.

Steve was sauntering across the floor to cut in upon Angel and Walt.

“And, by the way, my pet,” she said airily, her eyes still on Angel, “shouldn’t you be watching your fences there?”

Larry shrugged. “Angel’s a nasty-tongued little wench. After the way she’s been acting tonight, I’m not at all sure she’s what the doctor ordered. In fact, with you in my arms, I’m sure of only one thing. That you’re what I’ve always wanted!”

“But you yourself said it was impossible,” she reminded him.

“It seemed so at the time. Now I don’t know.” He stared down at her, the sunny blue of his eyes troubled.

Nikki had never seen Larry so serious, and gravity was not becoming to him. It was not what she sought from him, at least not tonight.

“Don’t, Larry,” she said quickly. “Don’t worry. Let’s just make hey-hey.”

He grinned and sang: “Hey, nonny-nonny!” He was himself again. He was the Larry who could give her forgetfulness.

They danced again and again, while Steve and Walt divided Angel’s dances between them. Refusing to let herself be chagrined by Steve’s failure to cut in upon herself, Nikki concen-
trated on Larry. She pretended that they were back in New York, playboy and playgirl in love; that there had been no separation.

Larry made it easy. He was more than ready to assume that nothing had changed between them.

CHAPTER III

LOVE LAUGHS AND LIES

QUITE naturally, Nikki and Larry drifted from dancing to the bar for a drink, and from the bar to the glass-enclosed porch. To its most deserted shadowy corner. The Green Mountains rose distantly above them and around them. But they were not green mountains tonight. They were dark and forbidding, their white peaks lost in a lowering sky that promised snow.

Temporarily slipping from her frivolous rôle, Nikki frowned worriedly. A little snow would do no harm to the ski runs, but a real snowstorm would spoil the week-end for her athletic-minded guests, and make a big dent in the Inn’s profits.

“You look as if you were about to sing the blues,” said Larry. “What’s up?”

Nikki did not tell him. Larry was not the kind of person to whom you brought problems. He forgot the question as soon as it was asked, for other and more important things—to him—were on his mind. He put his hands on her shoulders, pulled her against him. His shoulder shut out the mountains.

“Nikki-Nik,” he said, and once more evoked memories.

She shut her eyes and let him hold her. She thought of the many times that he had kissed her, and she waited for the old sweet surge of response to lick through her veins. But nothing happened.

She lifted her hands and clasped them behind his head. Once her fingers had tinged to the stubborn curliness of his hair. Tonight, though, the thrill was gone. There was just emptiness within her.

No, not emptiness!

There was another memory in her heart, a newer, sharper memory. Unwillingly, frightenedly, she had a quick flash of midnight eyes and a thin, ironic mouth. She felt Steve’s kiss, and it was like a living thing between her and Larry. She twisted away from him, and he looked down at her with a trace of annoyance.

“Don’t do that,” he said. “All we need is a little practise.”

“That,” said a bland voice, interrupting, “is just what I tell my pupils when they get discouraged with the wooden blades.”

It was Steve, looking very tall and somehow formidable. He had appeared so suddenly that they had not known he or anyone else was near. They had not heard his approach until he spoke. They could not really see him now. Only his eyes and his white shirt front gleamed in the shadows that enveloped them. Nikki whirled, her heart pounding with a mixture of anger and excitement, but before she could speak Larry cut in.

“I say Hall—if that’s your name”—Larry began.

“Why not?” asked Steve. “Hall. Spelled H-A-L-L, as in hallay, hall bedroom, not halitosis. I hope I’m not intruding, but I got marching orders from Miss Wilmott to bring you back dead or alive. It seems that you’ve run off with her war paint.”

Larry felt in his pocket and, swearing softly, brought forth a jeweled vanity case.

“She put it there herself during dinner,” he said glumly.

“It’s a good trick. Gives a girl a rain check on a man.”

Steve laughed, and Nikki laughed with him, then shivered. He knew too much about women.

He stood quietly, waiting, while Larry fingered the compact. Obvi-
ously, Larry did not want to leave, but Steve's will was stronger than his. He moved off, and Nikki was left to face Steve, with a jungle drum in the place where her heart should have been beating sedately.

STEVE did not speak immediately. He just looked at her and, in spite of the darkness, she could see that there was reproach in her eyes. He made her feel guilty and she did not want to feel guilty.

"Is it a habit of yours," she said, with shaky sarcasm, "eavesdropping and barging in on—on—"

"Woo-woo parties?" he asked helpfully. "No. But when I kiss a girl I expect her to stay kissed! Until I get round to kissing her again. Understand?"

He stepped close to her, gripped her by the soft bare arms.

"You—you—"

Words of indignation choked in Nikki's throat. She was suddenly weak beneath the pressure of his fingers. His eyes were two points of flame that came dizzyingly closer, then receded abruptly. He straightened up and shook his head.

"No, not here?" he said. "Not in Martineau's woo-woo corner."

And then, keeping a firm grasp on one of her slim arms, he dragged her from the veranda, back to the brightness of the ballroom. He did not stop, but skirted the dance floor. In the lobby he looked around speculatively. For a quiet spot in which he could kiss her! She knew that instinctively. And Nikki wasn't even protesting. She couldn't.

The heady weakness which had taken possession of her had numbed her will, paralyzed her throat muscles until she couldn't speak. And she didn't care! That was the worst of it. She wanted him to sweep her whither he wished. She wanted him to kiss her!

Only when he paused almost imperceptibly in front of the card room did rebellion stir within her. Just let him dare take her in there, where he had held Diane Asketh in his arms. Diane's woo-woo corner. Just let him dare!

But there was a bridge game in progress in the card room and Steve kept right on going until he reached the semi-darkened writing room of the inn. The Ethan Allen Room, it was called, because it was dominated by a huge picture of Vermont's Revolutionary hero.

Steve closed the door. And then, beneath the stern gaze of the leader of the Green Mountain boys, he took her in his arms. His eyes poured a deep look into hers while his lips hesitated above her suddenly aching lips. Fear and wild delight riotied through her.

He said her name softly.

"Nikki, Nikki! Tell me that you want me to kiss you—just me. You made it sound this afternoon as if any man with a strong pair of arms and hungry lips—"

"No!" she cried. "No, no!"

He went on, his voice roughening, while his lips remained a tantalizing temptation above hers.

"And tonight I find you playing kissing games with a cheap fortune-hunter. No matter if you had known him before! You little idiot! I ought to beat you, but maybe I'd better do this instead!"

His arms tightened, and his lips came down, crushing and demanding, on hers. And the jealousy that he had repressed on the veranda was in his kiss. A kiss that was all savagery—in its beginnings. But, as he felt the soft response of her lips, tenderness crept in. Cradling her to him, he kissed her shadowed eyelids, the soft curve of her cheek, her throat. Against its throbbing hollow, he begged again:

"Tell me that you want me to kiss you—just me!"

"Just you," she must have answered. She couldn't be sure. She was
drifting on warm waves of ecstasy, floating somewhere among the stars that were whirling dizzily, spinning her around with them in their joyously mad gyrations.

His lips, upwinging for a bare instant, came back to hers and clung for a timeless interval when it seemed to her that her very soul merged with his.

There was no time, no space—nothing but they two, the warmth of his crushing arms, the heady wine of his kiss.

They drew apart to look at each other gravely, as if they had never seen one another before.

Then, with a heart-shaking simplicity, he said: "Nikki, I love you."
"And I love you," she told him, and it was the truth in all its beauty and terror. The truth and madness. But heavenly madness.
"I don't deserve it," he said unsteadily. "I don't quite believe it. My dear, my dear! You know so little about me. There are a thousand things I should tell you—"
"No!" she cried.
She didn't want to hear a confession in this, their moment of glory. She didn't want to hear about a boy's infatuation for an older woman. She didn't want to know about Diane Asketh.

In something like a panic, she pressed her face into the satin lapel of his dinner jacket, and words died between them. There were once more just kisses. Kisses on her hair, kisses on her lips and, lastly, two kisses, one for each palm.
"To take to bed with you," Steve said, and closed her slim fingers around them.

It was time to leave the Ethan Allen Room, which had been their particular corner of paradise. The music in the ballroom had stopped, as had the buzz of conversation as guests trailed off to bed, or others left the inn. The lounge and the lobby seemed empty, and from outside came the whir of departing cars.

Steve laughed ruefully.
"I've kept you up way past your bedtime," he said. "And, if it doesn't snow too hard, I want you to go skiing with me in the morning, early. Do you realize that we've never skied together, my sweet?"

There was a whole world of things they had never done. A whole world of things to do—together. Aglow with the thought of it, Nikki slipped a soft hand into his.
"I'll ski with you," she promised.
"I don't be tired."
It seemed, as they made their way to the elevators, that she would never be tired again. She would never be lonely. Steve rang for an elevator and they waited, hand in hand.

"Nikki!"
An aggrieved, faintly commanding voice—Walt's voice—startled them apart. He stood in the doorway of the lounge where, from some shadowed chair, he must have been watching. Spying upon them, thought Nikki!

Her contrition at having neglected him all evening was banished by resentment. She looked at him coldly as he came forward, his face beneath the smooth sleek blondness of his hair expressionless.
"Just a minute," he said. "I want to talk with you."

She was about to refuse when Steve cut in: "It's rather late for business conferences, isn't it, Frawley?"
"I think that's up to Miss Carleton. What about it, Nikki?" Walt turned granitelike eyes upon her. "As a friend and business partner, I'm asking for a few minutes of your time. Do I get them?"
CHAPTER IV
WHITE DANGER

REMINiscing herself that she owed Walt Frawley a great deal, not only as a banker, but as an advisor, Nikki suppressed her resentment. She motioned Steve to the waiting elevator.

"Of course, Walt," she said. And then, as the elevator door closed upon Steve’s darkly annoyed face, she asked: "What’s happened. What must we discuss at this hour?"

"I’m glad that you realize that the hour is late." Walt spoke with heavy sarcasm. "I was afraid our handsome ski teacher had made you forget time. He’s good at that sort of thing, I understand."

"Walt!" There were danger signals in Nikki’s violet eyes and in her voice. "I refuse to let you insult me—or Steve."

"So it’s Steve now?" he said acidly. She did not answer. She was hanging to her temper by a thin fraying thread. But her silence only infuriated Walt.

"I won’t stand for it!" he burst out. "I didn’t mind—or tried not to mind—your amusing yourself with Martineau. He’s an old friend of yours, and a gentleman."

"And you think Steve Hall is not a gentleman?" Nikki asked, and there were little chips of ice in her voice.

"I think he’s a cheap, two-timing chiseler!" Walt abandoned all pretext of smoothness and glared. "I won’t stand for it!" he repeated.

Nikki was shaking with rage. She kept her voice level by an effort.

"Won’t stand for what, Walt?" she asked coldly. "You have no right to criticize me or my friends."

"I think I have," Walt said flatly. "Didn’t I give you money and—"

"You loaned me money," Nikki corrected, her temper flaring now. "It was a business transaction. I’ll pay you back. The inn is making money."

"A little," he agreed. "Not much. You could easily get back on the wrong side of the ledger. Anything would do it. A bad stretch of weather, a scandal—"

She lifted disdainful eyebrows at the word and he said it again.

"Yes, a scandal! That’s what I said. Unfavorable publicity. You know well enough what that can do for a place like this, and you as good as asked for it when you hired Hall. As I told you before, you know nothing about him."

Nikki shook back her dark hair, her eyes going dreamy.

"I know that I love him," she said softly but firmly. "What do you say to that?"

"I say that you’re a little fool!" Walt flamed.

"Be careful, Walt," she warned him. But he was too outraged to be careful.

"Have you gone crazy?" he demanded. "Don’t you realize that he’s Diane Asketh’s property, that it’s her money that keeps him going?"

"No!" Nikki flung at him defiantly. Walt smiled unpleasantly. "Your faith in him is charming, my dear, but misplaced. Any chambermaid in the inn can tell you that he stops nightly in her suite before going to his own."

"I don’t believe it!" There was fierce loyalty in Nikki’s voice, although her face was white. "It’s true." Walt shrugged, and his smile was not nice. "Look and listen for yourself. Your room is on the same floor as hers, I believe."

"You think I’d play spy?" Nikki demanded scornfully.

Walt shrugged. "It might not be a bad idea for your own information and protection. Or perhaps you’re afraid to?"

NIKKI turned her back on him, not trusting herself to speak. She walked over to the desk and pretended
to be busy inspecting the register. She could feel Walt's eyes, knowing and malicious, upon her slim, stiff back. She heard him walk over to the elevator and push the button.

"Coming up?" he asked.

She shook her head. She felt that she would stifle in the same elevator with him. Him and his lies! Servant's gossip. That he could stoop to listen, or imagine that she would! Maids always discussed and speculated about people like Diane Asketh. It was their only outlet for vicarious romance or adventure.

And she didn't believe a word of it, Nikki told herself. She was the one Steve loved. She, whom he had kissed.

In her own room, she pressed her fingers to her lips, as if to hold there the warmth and sweetness of his kiss. She smiled as she opened her pink palm and looked down at it, as if she could see the imprint of his lips there.

Then an icy hand seemed to be clamped around her heart. She forced herself to think of tomorrow. They were going skiing if it didn't snow. But it was snowing. She walked over to the window and saw what looked like the beginning of a blizzard.

She was trying not to listen for the opening and closing of a door. The door of Diane Asketh's sitting room. Diane's suite was just two doors away and she would be able to hear it without spying, on such a still night.

Then suddenly she did hear it. She heard footsteps pass her own door, head for the elevators.

For one instant, she froze, small hands clenched. The next instant, hating herself but unable to stop, Nikki was flying across the room. She opened her door a crack, peered out. She had to look, if only to prove that she was not afraid.

She drew back, slowly, fumblingly.

Steve had been standing beside the elevators. Although his back was turned, unmistakably it was he. And unmistakably he had come from Diane Asketh.

Nikki dropped to the bench in front of her dressing table. In the mirror her face was strange and white, and her violet eyes were black and stricken. They looked like the eyes of someone who had gazed upon death. And they had! The death of faith. And—the death of love!

A knocking on her door roused Nikki the next morning from belated and exhausted sleep that was close to unconsciousness. She sat up, pushed back her tumbled hair. She felt sick and beaten, without knowing why.

She noticed that her windows were coated with thick, driving snow. The blizzard had materialized in earnest. There would be no skiing today for her and Steve, was her first thought.

And then the events of the night came back.

She shrank into her pillows, remembering, her heart breaking afresh. The knocking on the door was repeated, and it had a frantic sound that dragged Nikki from her bed in spite of herself. Hastily shrugging into a warm dressing gown she snatched up, reluctantly she opened the door to a scared-looking maid. The girl could hardly talk for excitement.

"Miss Carleton—she's gone!" she stammered. "She's gone to get lost in the storm. Hans saw her going and tried to stop her, but she wouldn't stop. She just waved. And there's a note. Mr. Frawley has it and—"

"Come in and talk sense!"

NIKKI pulled the girl into the room and spoke sharply.

"Who's gone?" she demanded. "What note? And what have Mr. Frawley and Hans got to do with it? What's all this about anyway?"

Hans acted as caretaker and general handyman around Windy Point. Nikki doubted if Walt even knew him. Certainly both of them were the last people to be concerned in some mysterious disappearance.

The maid drew in a steadying
breath and answered the first question.

"It's Mrs. Asketh that's gone."

Almost Nikki said, "Good riddance!" A moment later she was glad that she had not, when the maid explained, her words tumbling out in her fright.

Hans, coming to work early that morning had met Diane at dawn heading away from the inn, the girl said. She was following the already almost obliterated trail that led up into the mountains. She was carrying skis which would be quite useless in the thick soft snow. Hans had remonstrated with her, had pointed out that she might easily lose herself in such a storm.

"But she just smiled," said the maid. "A funny sort of smile, and says it's best sometimes to lose yourself."

Alarmed, Hans had reported the incident in the kitchen as soon as the staff came on duty, and there had been an investigation.

"And she was gone all right," the maid said.

"She'll probably be back soon," Nikki protested, without conviction.

"She'll never be back," the maid said. "She's just going to keep on going until she falls down and freezes. Else why did she leave a note?"

"To whom was the note addressed?" Nikki asked quickly. "What's Mr. Frawley doing with it?"

"The note was addressed to Mr. Hall, the ski man," was the answer, and Nikki felt her heart twist.

The maid went on to tell her wordily that Walt, coming down for an early breakfast had taken charge of matters as soon as he had been told of what had happened.

"We thought you wouldn't mind seeing how he's kind of a partner of yours, Miss Carleton," the girl said.

There was another rap on the door. Nikki asked who it was and Walt answered. She threw off the dressing gown, zipped herself into a housecoat, and let him in.

"This is terrible—terrible!" he said at once. "A sensational, willful disappearance. It will blacken the name of the inn, ruin our business."

Nikki was revolted.

"That's not the important thing right now," she told him curtly. "The thing to do is to find Mrs. Asketh." She hesitated a moment before she asked: "Does—St—Mr. Hall—know? Have you given him his letter?"

Walt said that he had sent a bellhop to Steve's room to inform him of Mrs. Asketh's disappearance, but that he, Walt, still had the note that had been found in Diane's suite. [Turn Page]
“I’ll give him the note after I’ve had a word in private with you,” Walt told Nikki.

He looked at the maid, who excused herself and left. He drew a crested, folded sheet of notepaper from his pocket.

“This is it,” he told Nikki. “And I think you should see it before I pass it on.”

“You’ve read it? You’ve read Steve’s letter?” Nikki’s voice was shocked, but Walt was unabashed.

“Certainly,” he snapped. “The doings of the Asketh woman have definitely become Inn business, and I have quite an investment in Windy Point. Or had you forgotten?”

“I hadn’t forgotten,” said Nikki. Fascinated, she watched him unfold Diane’s message. Then, realizing his intent: “No—please, Walt! I don’t want to see it. I don’t want to hear it!”

But Walt paid no attention. Inexorably he read the note aloud.

It ran:

Steve dear,

I can’t and won’t give up the man I mar-
ried and have loved. But neither can I bear losing you, boy of mine. This is good-
by to you both.

Diane.

Walt finished, folded it and returned the tragic sheet of paper to his pocket.

“It proves everything I’ve been try-
ing to tell you,” he said. “Hall has been making love to her, no doubt ask-
ing her to divorce her husband and marry him. The old man has settled an independent fortune on her, you know. It would be a swell marriage for a chiseling ski instructor. Prob-
ably Hall was using you to bring her to terms and—”

“Walt!” Nikki felt a scream rising to her throat. Hysterically, she or-
dered: “Get out of here! Let me get
dressed. We’ve got to find her!”

She was already laying out clothes. Creamy beige ski trousers and heavy matching sweater. Scarf and mittens of lipstick red. They seemed incon-
gruously gay for the occasion.

“What are those for?” Walt asked.

“You’re surely not planning to go out in this snowstorm?”

“I surely am,” Nikki told him firmly. “As will everyone else in the Inn who has the strength and decency—and nerve.”

He colored as he turned toward the door.

“I’ll hustle into some duds and meet you downstairs,” he said.

CHAPTER V

ONE WAY OUT

With shaking hands, Nikki threw on her ski clothes. She ran down to the lobby to find Steve already there, and hurriedly organizing a search party out of such of the startled inn guests as were awake. He looked white and grim, and Nikki’s heart ached for him, even though the blame was his for the tragedy that threatened, that perhaps had taken place. It had been hours since Diane had gone out alone into the storm, and she was not a young woman, and an easy life had not given her much resistance.

Nikki pictured her collapsed, ex-
hausted, snow piling coldly around her. She found her own teeth chatter-
ing.

Steve glanced over at her once. She kept her face wooden. But it was doubtful if he noticed. He was too busy, calling for snowshoes and skis, questioning his volunteers as to their ability to handle themselves.

Nikki said that she could use either snowshoes or skis, and Walt made the same claim. Angel and Larry joined the assemblage.

“I fell off an Alp once without breaking my neck,” Angel bragged.

“I’m the original Christiana kid,” Larry said. Then, looking ashamed of his levity, he added hurriedly:
“Count me in, Hall. I may be able to help you. I’ll do what I can.”

They started off up the mountain, a subdued, determined group, on the trail indicated by Hans. He pointed out the spot where Diane Asketh had stopped to wave him farewell. They passed it in silence, climbed onwards and upwards. The snow was coming down thicker and harder by the hour. They could hardly see one another a few feet distant.

They would never be able to find Diane, slender and frail, clad in a ski suit the color of the snow itself, thought Nikki. Tears rose to her eyes and froze to her long lashes.

They lost the trail entirely at the first plateau, and Steve divided the party into pairs, instructing them to circle the region, but never to get out of hailing distance of one another.

“She couldn’t have gone much further than this,” he said. “She wasn’t strong.”

“Neither am I,” muttered Walt, so that only Nikki could hear. “And I think my nose is frozen.”

Nikki gave him one contemptuous glance, but said nothing. Her whole face felt stiff, but she plunged on, leaving him to follow or stay behind as he chose. Minutes dragged into hours and the morning must have become afternoon. Light as snowshoes were, Nikki’s feet ached from their weight. Walt was threatening at any minute to turn back, although the storm was abating a little. Nikki kept as far away from him as possible, so that she need not hear his complaining.

It was Steve who found Diane in late afternoon.

Nikki heard him call from a slope above them and hurried up, stumbling, breathless. Walt panted at her heels.

They found Steve bending over a prostrate form that was scarcely distinguishable from the snow in which it lay. The blue scarf that Diane had knotted about her throat was the only thing that could have led him to her. He lifted her up, so that her head rested on his shoulder. Her hair sprayed ash gold against the dark blue of his ski suit. He chafed her hands frantically, and as they came closer, Nikki could hear him saying over and over:

“Diane darling, darling! What did you do it for? Didn’t you know that in spite of how I felt about Charles you could never lose me?”

DIANE’s eyes remained closed. Her face was colorless, her lips blue. Nikki feared that she would never again hear the voice of love. And Steve’s voice was the voice of love. Listening to him, it was impossible to doubt that he loved Diane for herself as much or more than for her millions.

Nikki was glad of that. It helped to restore her faith in the decent things of life, although it did nothing to ease the sick emptiness within her. And, how could she ever reconcile what had seemed Steve’s sincere words of love to her, with these truly sincere words of love to Diane? Unless Walt had been right, and Steve had only made love to her to bring Diane to terms.

The rest of the search party was beginning to gather around. Steve made swift arrangements with Larry for getting Diane down the mountain.

“She’s alive,” he said. “We may be able to save her, if we take her quickly to the inn where it’s warm, then to a hospital.”

Nikki turned away, unnoticed, unneeded, unwanted. Only Walt stayed close to her, and she was vaguely glad of his presence. Especially glad when they reached the inn. The lobby seemed full of strangers.

“Reporters,” said Walt briefly. “Lord, how quickly they scent out a juicy story!” Then, as Nikki looked terrified, “Don’t worry. I’ll take care of them.”

He propelled her through the crowd, put her in an elevator and turned
back to face a gangling young man she knew to be local correspondent
for one of the New York tabloids.

“'Yes,' Nikki heard Walt say. 'Mrs. Asketh has been found. If you’ll come
into the lounge with me I’ll give you the facts.'

The elevator door closed upon the
mass exodus from the lobby. Trem-
bling with weariness and misery, Nikki let herself into her own room.
Somehow she managed to shed her
ski clothes and draw a hot tub. She
climbed in and lay there in a near-
stupor.

There was nothing she could do for
Diane who must have been brought
back to the inn by this time. Steve
would call doctors and an ambulance.
Steve would do everything in his
power for the woman he loved. And
he loved Diane. There was no slight-
est doubt of that.

The telephone rang, and Nikki let
it ring twice before she wrapped her-
sell in a white woolly robe and pat-
tered from the tub to answer. The
desk said that Mr. Hall was calling.

‘No, no—I won’t talk to him!’
Nikki cried, and the desk clerk must
have been surprised at her violence.

Sensing it, she said that she was
resting, and inquired about Mrs.
Asketh. A doctor, the clerk told her,
was with Diane and an ambulance
had been summoned to take her to the
town hospital. She was in a critical
condition after her hours of exposure,
and it was as yet impossible to say
whether there was a chance for her
recovery or not.

‘Please extend my sympathy to Mr.
Hall,” Nikki said.

“And if he phones you again?” in-
quired the clerk.

“I am busy,” Nikki said, and disre-
garded what he might surmise.

She pitied Steve—she pitied them
all—but she could not, would not, talk
to Steve Hall. The sound of his voice
would only drive deeper the knife that
was twisting in her heart. And, she
could not—must not see him. The look
in his midnight eyes, whatever it
might be, would be more than she
could stand.

INSTRUCTING the clerk to tele-
phone the hospital at hourly inter-
vals and keep her informed about
Diane, she hung up and dressed.
Looking like a school girl in black
wool with a Peter Pan collar, she sat
down to wait. For what she waited
she had no idea. She could see nothing
but loneliness and emptiness in the
future that stretched ahead of her.
She could not even bear to go down-
stairs. She could not face anybody—
anybody!

Walt telephoned a little later, and
asked if she would meet him in the
lounge which he had cleared of re-
porters. Nikki agreed mechanically.
She had to go down there some time.
It might as well be now, she supposed.

Walt had appropriated a corner of
the lounge and was waiting for her.
He looked excited and secretive.

“What a day!” he said. “What a
session I’ve had! Those reporters!”

Nikki’s violet eyes widened appre-
hensively. “You didn’t tell them any-
thing that shouldn’t—”

“I didn’t have to tell them any-
thing,” Walt said. “They knew the
worst already. They even knew the
contents of Mrs. Asketh’s farewell
note.”

Nikki gasped. “But only you saw
it. You and—and Steve.” It was hard
to bring out his name.

Walt looked annoyed. “How can
you be sure we’re the only ones who
saw it? There were servants in Mrs.
Asketh’s suite before I was. And
they’re always on the lookout for
gossip items that they can pass along
to the newspapers. They get five dol-
ars or better for a spicy tid-bit. To
say nothing of getting a big kick.”

“Wasn’t the note sealed?” asked
Nikki.

Walt fidgeted uncomfortably before
he answered her.

“It wasn’t even in an envelope,” he
said after a second. "Ridiculous, eh?"

Nikki thought it strange that Diane should risk exposing such intimate words to the eyes of strangers. She must have been indeed distracted.

"It's bad business," Walt rushed on agitatedly. "Diane Asketh's socially prominent. The story will be in all the big city papers—'Society Beauty Attempts Suicide For Love of Ski Instructor.' People will wonder what kind of place you're running up here. Mothers will be afraid to let their débutante daughters come up for week-ends. It will be the end of Windy Point."

Nikki pushed back her hair with a tired gesture. She supposed she should feel crushed. She could feel nothing. Within the last twenty-four hours she had seen the end of love and trust. She had seen a life come close to its ending. The disaster which threatened the inn seemed unimportant but she could not ignore it since Walt, and his bank were involved. He was eyeing her aggrievedly.

"I warned you against hiring Hall," he said.

"You've mentioned that before." Nikki spoke with a sarcasm that she immediately regretted. She asked more gently: "Is there anything that I—we—can do?"

Walt was silent for a long minute, appraising her between pale lashes. When he answered, it was carefully.

"It's wrong in the first place for a girl alone to be running a resort hotel," he said flatly. "It doesn't make for the right kind of atmosphere. You should be married, my dear!"

"Married?" Nikki repeated the word as though it came from some foreign language. Marriage, she had decided, was definitely behind her. "Married to whom?"

"To me," Walt said. "It's been in my mind for some time. When I loaned you the money to remodel Windy Point, I hoped that I was making the loan to my future wife. You must have guessed."

NIKKI had to admit to herself that she had guessed, and she knew that she had only herself to blame. She had been quite aware of Walt Frawley's interest in her, and she had traded on that interest to make a success of the inn. She had lost or at least it was beginning to look as if she would inevitably lose—and he was demanding payment.

"Why not, Nikki?" he went on urgently. "I'll make you a very good husband."

She looked at him dispassionately. He would make her a better husband than Larry with whom she had been infatuated, who had thrown her over for money's sake. He would make her a better husband than Steve whom she had loved, who had made love to her to goad another woman into acquiescence. She echoed his question aloud:

"Why not?"
Walt blinked. He was taken back by the promptness of her surrender. “You mean it?” he asked eagerly. “When? When will you marry me?” “Whenever you wish,” she told him, with a fatalistic sense of yielding to a dark fate that had been ordained for her.

“I can get a license in the morning.” Walt was suddenly beaming and planning. “We can be married at the town hall by a justice. Or, better yet, I’ll have our family minister arrange a little wedding at the rectory. You’d like that, wouldn’t you?”

She said, “Yes,” and tried to smile. The smile wasn’t much of a success and Walt, noticing, decided:

“What you need is a drink, my dear. Let’s go into the bar and drink to our happy future.”

CHAPTER VI

“AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING—”

FEELING like a puppet doll that Walt was moving by invisible strings, Nikki rose obediently. They went into the bar, to find most of the searching party congregated there, animatedly discussing the events of the day. Nikki would have fled at once, but Walt promptly accepted Angel Wilmott’s invitation to join her and Larry in old-fashioned. It struck Nikki that the two of them had been quarreling. Larry was in anything but a pleasant mood, and Angel’s eyes looked alternately teary and snapping. Larry looked at Walt and drawled with a trace of a sneer:

“Hear you talking to the news hounds today. You seemed to be getting right chummy with them.”

To Nikki’s surprise Walt seemed embarrassed rather than offended.

“I always try to be courteous to the gentlemen of the press,” he said stiffly.

Larry made a derisive sound, and Angel called him “a low-minded lug.” Angel had her say then, and it developed that she and her Aunt Elsa were leaving on the midnight train. The real cause of the trouble was that she was alternately trying to coax and badger Larry into accompanying her. Larry, with unexpected stubbornness, was determined to finish out his week-end at the inn.

He gave no reason, just looked speculatively at Nikki. She was getting tired of that look in men’s eyes. It made her feel as if she had been tossed upon the market and stood up on an auction block. That was what Steve had done to her, she thought, with a stiffening surge of anger.

Claiming an entirely fictitious appetite for dinner, she escaped from the bar. She refused Walt’s invitation to dine with him, preferring the bleak solitude of her room. He was a little disappointed but he consoled himself with the thought that he expressed to her.

“Perhaps it’s just as well that you rest, seeing that tomorrow is your wedding day.”

Nikki hurried away from him, her knees weak, her hands clammy. In the lobby she stopped and steadied herself against the desk while she inquired for news of Diane.

The latest news was good news. Diane had regained consciousness and was expected to recover. Her husband, the clerk added, was speeding north to her bedside. He would meet Steve there, thought Nikki. What would happen?

There were three telephone messages from Steve in her box. She crumpled them and dropped them in the waste receptacle beside the desk.

Steve telephoned once again that night and twice the next morning. Nikki took none of his calls.

The morning papers from New York arrived, and they played up Diane’s attempted disappearance as much as Walt had feared, although they were cautious about connecting
her directly with Steve Hall. Only the tabloid whose gangling correspondent Nikki had seen in the lobby came out with headlines about "Socialite and Ski Romeo."

Evidently sure of his facts, the gangling young man had gone to town on the story. His paper had reprinted word for word the letter that Walt had carried in his pocket. He had sent in a picture of Windy Point which he described as "an ideal trysting spot."

READING, Nikki could imagine the distaste of the outdoors, conservative type of people who made up the bulk of her clientele. Walt had been right. The business of the inn would be ruined. She prepared to pay her debt. This day she would marry him, as she had promised.

She dressed carefully for her wedding. Slim suit of gray wool. Boxy skunk jacket with a pert little tip-tilted hat of gray to match her suit. The local papers would say, "The bride was charming in an ensemble of gray, with fur jacket." She painted on a bright brave mouth, and made up her eyes heavily to hide traces of the tears which had streamed down her cheeks throughout half the night.

Walt was meeting her at two o'clock. It lacked thirty minutes of the hour when she was finally all ready, but she was suddenly too restless to remain in her room. A drink might help, she thought, and went down to the bar.

It was deserted except for the bartender who was slicing a pineapple into sticks and one solitary drinker at whose back Nikki stared with stricken, darkening eyes. She started to retreat. But she was too late.

Steve had seen her in the bar mirror.

In a flash he was beside her. He had her by the arm, and his fingers had lost none of their magnetism. Willy-nilly, he propelled her to a table for two in one corner.

"This is a break," he said. "I was just planning to storm your room. Why won't you talk to me, Nikki?"

She locked her fingers together to hide their trembling.

"Why should I?" she countered. "You must realize that I know everything now and—"

"I suppose you think I'm a heel?" She did not answer. She could not think of him as a heel. Never had he seemed more dear to her. He looked tired and worn and yet, at the same time, somehow young and defenseless. Nikki was conscious of a wild impulse to reach out and draw him to her, to hold his weary head to her heart. She stood up, gripping the edge of the table. She saw pain leap to his midnight eyes. There were no stars in them today.

He did not understand the reason for her withdrawal. She did not want him to understand.

"Good-by, Steve," she said in a quick, breathless sort of voice. "This is getting us nowhere."

"No," Steve agreed savagely, while he arose and rounded the table in long strides. "But this might!"

He caught her in his arms and laid his lips to hers in a hard, punishing kiss. Vainly, Nikki tried to fight its unowned sweetness. Vainly, she reminded herself that he belonged to Diane. The fire of his lips crept into her blood and into her heart. She forgot everything except that the man she loved was holding her close. Sobbing soundlessly, she pressed yet closer and gave herself to the ecstasy of surrender.

Neither she nor Steve paid any attention to the bartender who pretended to be absorbed in his pineapple. This was their moment. Their last moment. Steve let her go.

Good-by, my dearest dear," he said huskily. "If that's the way you wish it to be."

There was a question in his voice to which she dared not respond. Good-by, was the way it must be. She stood
silent, and he turned away slowly, heavily. Then she was alone, with the
bar a blur before her tear-misted
eyes.

LARRY found her there a few min-
utes later, gazing down into an
untasted Martini. He slid into the
chair opposite her. She looked up
with a gasp of dismay that changed
to a sigh of relief. Larry looked at
her keenly.

“You seem almost glad to see me,”
he said. “Who were you expecting?”

“Walt,” she told him, and he lifted
his eyebrows.

“Why bother about Walt?” he de-
demanded.

Because she had to talk to some-
one, she said: “I’m going to marry
him. Today. In just a few minutes
from now.”

Larry whistled. “What for? You’re
surely not in love with him.”

“No,” she agreed. “But he’s been
kind, and I owe him a lot of money
and—”

“You sound like a Hoboken melo-
drama,” Larry said dryly. “Little
girl lifts mortgage on old homestead,
all that sort of thing. Why not pay
him his money?”

“I won’t be able to—not now. All
this publicity will ruin the reputation
of the inn.”

“Bologny, applesauce, h o o e y!”
Larry was derisive. He leaned across
the table. “And who do you think
dished out the gossip of which you’re
so afraid?” Nikki looked puzzled and
he answered his own question flatly.
“No one but Mr. Walt Frawley him-
self. I listened in while he was talk-
ing to the reporters yesterday and
wondered at the time what he was up
to.”

Nikki stared. She knew Larry well
enough to know that he was not
lying. She remembered, too, how he
had taunted Walt about being
chummy with the newsmen.

should Walt do such a thing?”

Larry grinned cynically. “Prob-
ably to get just what he’s getting.
You, and a nice piece of resort prop-
erty tossed in for good measure. He
was deliberate enough about it. He
even handed over that note of Mrs.
Asketh’s which appeared in this
morning’s paper.”

“It was Steve’s note!” Nikki said,
shocked.

“It’s the world’s now—thanks to
your future husband. If he is your
future husband!”

“No, oh no!” Nikki said quickly,
and felt a weight lift from her slim
shoulders.

She had not realized how much she
had dreaded marrying Walt until now
it was no longer necessary. And it
was not—not after what she had just
heard. She looked at Larry grate-
fully and liked him better than she
had for two years.

“Larry, you’ve been wonderful!”
she told him. “You’re sweet!”

He squirmed, flushing.

“Sugar and spice and everything
nice— No, that’s all wrong. That’s
what little girls are made of. ‘Snails
and puppy dog tails, that’s what lit-
tle boys’ . . .”

He stopped his nonsense, his face
hardening as much as Larry’s weak,
handsome face could harden. Walt
was coming into the bar. He peered
around and spied Nikki.

“I’ll take care of him, honey bee,”
Larry whispered. “Just leave every-
thing to Mrs. Martineau’s fair-haired
boy.”

And Nikki was glad enough to do
so. Walt joined them, his expression
wary.

“About ready, my dear?” he asked.

“Ready for what?” said Larry.

“Your true confession?”

Walt tried to bluster. “I don’t
know what you’re talking about.”

“Skip it! You know exactly what
I’m talking about, and so does Nikki.
She knows the stunt you pulled yest-
day with the reporters. In other
words”— Larry grinned— “I’ve
'sung'. And wedding bells won't rung. Rotten poetry."

WALT'S face had mottled. His confused eyes slid to Nikki.

"Do you believe it? Do you believe that I gave Mrs. Asketh's letter to the newspapers?" The question was admission in itself, and he realized it immediately. Half pleadingly, half blusteringly, he said: "Surely you're not going to let it make any difference in our plans today?"

"You know I am." Nikki gave him a cold level glance. "You know that I was marrying you only because I felt I owed you a debt I couldn't pay. I thought it was my fault."

"It's still your fault," Walt said hotly. "If you hadn't brought Hall here—"

Involuntarily, Nikki winced away from the reminder of Steve.

"Lay off, Frawley," Larry ordered. "You're wasting breath. Nikki and I are driving to New York tonight to paint the old town a poinsetta red. Aren't we, Nikki-Nik?"

Her violet eyes had flown wide. It was the first she had heard or thought of such a thing, but it was a way of escape. With Larry she would be free from the cares of the inn which she had come to hate. Larry would help her to forget Steve. Some of the recklessness that had seized her the night of his arrival—was it two days or two centuries ago?—repossessed her.

"Poinsetta red, shocking pink, and all the colors of the rainbow!" she heard herself saying.

Larry laughed. She was in the mood that he knew and liked. It was the mood that she must maintain. She thought: "As it was in the beginning..." Playboy and playgirl. Walt was staring at her aghast.

"What about the inn?" he demanded. "Who'll run it?"

"You run it," Larry told him. "And unless I miss my guess badly, you'll have plenty of business. Nothing like a little scandal among the elite to bring the customers. Shall we go, Nikki-Nik?"

CHAPTER VII

NOT A POOR LOSER

LARRY finished his Martini and pulled Nikki to her feet. He insisted upon coming upstairs with her while she packed an overnight bag. And she let him. His flow of nonsense kept her from thinking of the responsibilities from which she was fleeing, of Steve whom she was putting out of her life forever.

They went down to his car, a second-hand but expensive-looking convertible sedan. Larry drove with one arm around her, and sang gaily:

Over the world and under the world
And back to the last to you...

"We'll have a grand time in old Manhattan," he said, while Nikki briefly wondered: "On what?"

Two years of hard work and economy had taught her practicality. She knew that Larry had a small income. It would just about keep them in an apartment in Brooklyn or the Bronx. Certainly it would not encompass the night club life that he adored. He looked at his watch as he drove.

"We'll hit town just about in time to make the last floor show at Leon and Eddy's," he decided.

But in that he was wrong. The blizzard had left the roads in bad shape. Darkness found them plowing through drifts and, at the foot of Lake Champlain, Larry gave up the idea of trying to drive further that night. He turned in beneath a sign that announced:

MEALS AND CABINS

"We'll eat and sleep here," he said.

"Otherwise we may get stuck and have to sleep on the road."
His argument was sensible, and Nikki offered no protest. But she was disturbed to hear him ask for a double cabin. He explained in answer to the startled question in her eyes.

"This is an ultra-respectable joint. They wouldn't put us up if they didn't believe we were honeymooners. Anyway you don't want to go off in the woods by yourself, do you?"

The cabins were set on the shore of the lake among gaunt, bare trees. They were empty except for the one that she and Larry were to occupy. That was the largest one in the camp, practically a house, with two bedrooms opening off a snug living room. She banished her unease. When all was said and done she and Larry were old friends, playmates.

He was gay during dinner, calling her "Lovely-dovey, honey lamb," and other exaggeratedly affectionate names for the benefit of the stolid country girl who served them. Nikki's spirits rose, and she found herself eating a real meal for the first time in twenty-four hours. Life with Larry, she thought, might not be rapturous, but it would certainly be cheerful.

They finished off with coffee laced with brandy, which he produced from the car. Then, because there was nothing to do in the main lodge, they went out to their own cabin. Then Nikki's sense of well being deserted her. She felt again the stirrings of doubt.

"Alone at last," said Larry, when he had closed the door and touched a match to the fire that was laid in the small fireplace. "Kind of nice, isn't it?"

She said "Yes," uncertainly, and he came and put his arms around her. He kissed her experimentally, gently. His kiss was neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Even though she wished she could respond, her lips remained cold and still beneath his. She was glad when he released her. He yawned.

"I'm tired as a dog," he said. "How about turning in?"

They switched off the lights in the little living room and went to their separate quarters. Nikki laid out her blue satin pullman pajamas and matching robe. She brushed her hair for a long time. She was reluctant to undress.

Increasingly, she had the feeling that she did not belong there. She did not belong with Larry. If it had been Steve moving about in the other bedroom—

At the thought it all came back, the pain and the longing. Helplessly, hopelessly, Nikki buried her face in her hands and two slow tears trickled between her fingers.

She did not hear her door open. A sixth sense warned her that she was not alone. Her dark head jerked up, and she saw Larry standing in her bedroom door. He was in bathrobe and slippers, and he was grinning. He didn't look exactly like the Big Bad Wolf, but Nikki's heart began to beat a tattoo of fright.

"Larry, what are you doing here?" she demanded in a small, taut voice.

He came in and closed the door, laughed. Then as quickly his laughter died away.

"Nikki-Nik," he said. "I love you as I've never loved a girl before you, as I'll never love another girl after you. Surely you must know that."

Crossing the room swiftly, he gathered her to him. His blue eyes were imploring. Nikki felt sorry for him, even while she held him off.

"Larry, be your age," she said firmly. "We're not married yet."

She felt the slackening of his hold on her, the alert, tensing body. She saw his eyes cool and cloud, and she knew as clearly as if he had spoken that marriage had been no part of his plan. It had not even been mentioned.

He said as if following the workings of his mind:

"I thought we'd have a fling, that
it would be good for us both. You were fed up and wanted to get away, and it's not much fun for me to be waiting round for Angel to get through being the Number One deb of the season. We're going to get married then, you know."

Nikki had not known. She remembered how she had figured living on his income in a Brooklyn or Bronx apartment. He had figured living on comfort of a sort in his protestations. She choked down her sobs and sat up.

"Larry, you are sweet. But I don't want to marry you. I shouldn't have come here."

"What's the harm? There's only you and I."

She shook her dark head. "There isn't only you and I. There's Angel and—"

---

**Love's Mirror**

You always know the thing to say,
And what I'd have you do—
You seem to read my hidden thoughts
And make my dreams come true.

Your wisdom is no mystery,
Although it makes me start—
You are the mirror of my love,
Your eyes reflect my heart!

—**HELEN ARDSLEY**

---

five million dollars. It was ironic. It was funny. Very funny.

Suddenly she began to laugh. She laughed and laughed until she cried. She couldn't stop the tears that drenched her eyes and the pillow into which she buried her face. Larry grew frightened, frantic. He knelt beside her.

"Don't, Nikki-Nik! Don't. I do love you. I'll marry you, if that's what you wish. We'll make out somehow."

He did not mean it, but there was Midnight eyes seemed to be looking into hers, reproaching her. Larry stood up and lighted a cigarette.

"And Steve Hall," he said through a smoke ring. "Halloway, rather. It's been he all along, hasn't it?"

Nikki answered the question with another.

"What did you call him?"

"Halloway," said Larry. "His right name. And now I'm going to give you the lowdown on him. I may be a weakling and an opportunist, but no one can ever call me a poor loser."
He grinned ruefully and sat down beside her.

NIKKI'S heart was pounding in her throat. She waited breathless for him to begin. He had called Steve Hall, "Steve Halloway." The name struck a familiar chord.

"You've thought all along that Halloway loved Mrs. Asketh, haven't you?" Larry said. Then, as she nodded, "He should! She's his mother."

Nikki's lips parted on a soundless gasp of mingled disbelief and wild hope, and he explained succinctly.

Steve was Diane's son by a romantic first marriage that had been ended by the death of her young husband in France during the first World War. A few years later she had married her present husband, Charles Asketh. The millionaire munitions manufacturer had raised Steve as his own son, and would probably some day make him his heir.

Nikki pushed back her hair bewilderedly, a familiar little trick of hers that made Larry smile a trifle sadly.

"Why doesn't he use his own name?" she asked. "Why should he pretend to be merely a friend to his own mother?"

"It's beyond me," said Larry. "I only know that he's Steve Halloway, Asketh's stepson. I met him once at Saint Moritz, and I recognized him right off the bat."

"And you didn't tell me!" Nikki's voice was accusing. "You let me go on thinking—"

Larry shrugged. "In the first place, Halloway plainly did not want his identity known, and I'm no tattle-tale. Besides—" He grinned a bad boy grin and exclaimed: "Oh, let's be honest! I saw how you felt about him, guessed what you were imagining. I decided to let it ride and hope for a break for myself! Sorry!"

Nikki accepted the explanation and apology without really hearing them. She was staring straight ahead of her, seeing Steve as she had seen him last, hurt and unhappy.

"I wouldn't listen to him," she whispered as if to herself. "I wouldn't talk to him. I turned him away when his mother was ill, perhaps dying. He'll hate me always."

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," Larry said. "You've just given me the merry run-around, and I don't hate you. If, for instance, you should put your arms around me and say, 'Larry, love of my life, forgive me'—"

Nikki looked at him, hope brightening her tear-washed eyes. He was talking nonsense again but there was good advice beneath his light words.

"You think if I went back—"

"Sure. And I'll take you back the first thing in the morning."

But Nikki had not the patience to wait until morning. Neither did she want Larry to deliver her to Steve. "Aren't there buses?" she asked.

And there was a note of desperation in her voice that roused Larry to dress and return to the main lodge for a bus schedule.

CHAPTER VIII

THREE TIMES AND OUT

HALF hour later, Larry was putting Nikki on a northbound bus. He took her face between his hands and kissed her gently. Both knew that it was the last time they would ever kiss, perhaps the last time they would ever meet.

The bus started with a jerk, began its interminable jolting trip. Dim-lit gasoline stations raced past its dark windows, but Nikki's heart raced faster, raced far ahead of the bus. She tried, without success, to make herself comfortable in the cramped seat, to sleep. She was too nervous, too afraid of what might await her at the end of her journey.

Pray God that it be forgiveness and love! She did not deserve either. She
had snatched at security as personified by Walt. At escape in the form of Larry. She had been cruel and blind. Steve had every right to send her away.

Miles and hours rolled by. The lights outside the windows became more frequent, then continuous. Familiar buildings loomed up. At last, after what had seemed an eternity, they had reached the town to which Steve had taken his mother. The bus pulled into its station, and Nikki picked up her overnight case and made her way unsteadily down the aisle.

She had no idea where she would find Steve at this hour. Perhaps at the hospital. Perhaps at some nearby hotel. She only knew that search she must until she found him. Shaking, but determined, she stepped from the bus. She stepped into the arms of love.

Steve himself swung her to the snowy ground!

She gazed up at him unbelievingly, with starved eyes.

"Yes, it's me," he said. "Welcome home, runaway!"

"How—how did you get here?" she faltered.

"Martineau phoned me that you were on your way," he told her, and she blessed and forgave Larry all over again. He had made the amende honorable in the grand way.

Steve took her bag from her with a crisp, "Come on!"

"Where?" she asked, without caring, and was rewarded by his growl.

"Preferably," he said, "to some place that has barred windows where I can lock you in and know that you'll be safe."

He led her to a powerful limousine. An impassive-faced chauffeur opened the door for them.

"A trifle paid for by bombs," said Steve. "My step-father's. You know by now who he is. I thought you knew this afternoon."

"I didn't. I thought—"

"Martineau was quite explicit as to what you thought," Steve said, and Nikki's heart missed a beat.

Steve's voice was grim, but there was reassuring tenderness in the touch of his hands as he tucked a robe around her. He picked up the speaking tube,

"Drive anywhere," he directed their chauffeur. "And eyes straight ahead, fella!"

The chauffeur touched his cap, and the big car moved forward with a soft purr. Steve drew Nikki to him and laid a cold cheek to hers. She sat scarcely breathing, listening to the thud of his heart, reveling in the warmth and strength of his arms. She had a crazy wish that she might die in his embrace. Life could offer no more.

THE car turned corners at random.

The chauffeur's back was an impersonal ramrod. Nikki had no idea where they were going, and cared less.

Steve did not speak for a long time, and then all the tenderness that had been in his hands was in his voice. "Darling," he murmured. "I shouldn't have been angry at you. All the ghastly misunderstanding is as much my fault as yours. More. I was so used to thinking of Diane as my mother—naturally after more than twenty years of being her son—that it never occurred to me that other people might question our relationship."

"I was stupid, stupid—" Nikki began contritely.

He shook his head. "Not stupid, but wickedly mistrustful," he said, with mock sternness. "I told you that I loved you."

"Loved?" She caught her breath, frightened by his use of the past tense.

"Loved, love, will love, do love!"

Reassurance came from him quickly, in word and in deed. In the kiss for which she had been hunger-
ing. A kiss that was all adoring, possessive demand and tingled its way to her toes. A kiss that left her deliciously spent in the snug circle of his arms. She smiled up at him dreamily.

“Oh, darling, darling!” she wondered. “What if you hadn’t come to Vermont? And that reminds me. How did you happen to come to Vermont to teach skiing for my silly inn?”

Then she regretted the question because Steve’s dark young face shadowed instantly.

“I’m teaching skiing because it’s the only way I know at the moment to make my own living,” he told her concisely. “And I had to support myself. I couldn’t stand it any longer living on munitions money. Nazi money! That’s what most of the Asketh fortune consists of.”

He frowned in silence for a moment and went on:

“Charles is a good enough guy, and he’s sorry now for all the war material that he sold to the dictators. And—I didn’t know it until he came up here to be with Diane—he’s turning most of his millions over to rehabilitation and refugee agencies. I was pretty hard on him, I guess, and I’ll never forgive myself for what I did to Diane. You see I wanted her to walk out on him and his ill-gotten dough at the same time I did, and she—”

“But she loved him,” cried Nikki. “She couldn’t!” Diane’s pitiful farewell note became suddenly clear.

“I realize that now,” Steve said. “Loving you, almost losing you, has made me see how selfish and unreasonable I was. Diane loves Charles like that, and he loves her, so... Well anyway at the time I believed I was doing the right thing. My father had died under German fire in the last World War. Boys I had gone to school with in England were flying in the R.A.F., being shot down, perhaps with Asketh bullets. The wife of my best friend was killed in one of the night raids on London.”

NIKKI’S fingers pressed his sympathetically.

“Naturally you couldn’t take any more money from your step-father.”

“No,” he agreed. “But I had no right to try to make my mother choose between her husband and her son. She was heartbroken. She followed me up here to Vermont. She wanted me to be friends with Charles, even though I accepted nothing more from him. But I wouldn’t compromise and—I almost killed her in my pride and stubbornness.”

“You didn’t though,” Nikki whispered consolingly. “She’s going to get well, isn’t she?”

“Yes, thank God!” Steve’s voice was fervent, and there was a moment of silence. Then he pulled Nikki tight to him once more. “And she’s happy with Charles, just as you’re going to be happy with me,” he murmured. “They’re planning to settle down quietly on a farm that Charles owns in Maryland. We’ll visit them now and then when the inn can spare its ski instructor and its manager.”

Nikki jerked erect. “But I’m not its manager any longer. Walt is.”

“Walt is a very unhappy manager,” said Steve. “He’s swamped with guests, and praying for your return. The publicity that your hostelry got in this morning’s papers brought a flock of customers. And the true facts, clearing my mother’s name and the name of the hotel, which I gave to the evening papers, dragged up a small army.” He grinned and added: “You have, my sweet, about the most popular ski instructor this side of the Rockies. You’ll never dare to fire me!”

“As if I would, as if I could!”

She rubbed her cheek against his shoulder, and he held her close, again murmuring:

“No, you can’t very easily fire a husband. And don’t let me forget to
remind you that tomorrow's your wedding day."

HER wedding day! Walt had said those same words and her heart had died within her. She had imagined a wedding day with Larry, and had felt no emotion. Now she thought of tomorrow, hers and Steve's wedding day, and she soared to the wintry stars.

But she was horribly ashamed of all the errors that she had so nearly made.

She buried her face in the roughness of his coat and her voice came small and muffled.

"Darling, darling! Are you sure that you want to marry a girl who's tried twice in twenty-four hours to get married?"

Steve laughed and kissed the tip of her ear.

"Just so she's you, and she marries me in the end. Three times, and out—remember?"

But, as he tipped up her face and his lips claimed hers, it was three times, and in! Into love, into safety, into Paradise without ending.

COMING NEXT MONTH

LOVE ON TRIAL
A Fascinating Complete Romantic Novel
By MARION WHITE
AND MANY OTHER DELIGHTFUL STORIES

Deal tough beards a knockout blow,
And save yourself both time and dough:
Use Thin Gillettes for shaves that click—
You'll find it's easy to look slick!

Rigid inspection assures absolute uniformity

The Thin Gillette Blade Is Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade
Clare’s Heart Did Eight Beats to the Bar Until a Sour Note Upset the Tempo of Her Romance!

"I'll have it over in an hour and a half at the latest, Beautiful, so don't bite those gorgeous fingernails or do anything to spoil yourself before I pick you up for dinner tonight. Yes, sir, it's exactly what you ordered—a song that suits your personality. Like me, a lot, huh? Listen, I can top that by a million! Oh, all right, all right!"

Mr. James Wrenn put down the telephone and swung around and looked at his stenographer-secretary-general caretaker. She was twenty-
two years old, with satin-black hair, and eyes that looked like storms whenever he talked over the telephone to Miss Leola Ledley.

It wasn’t, Clare Kelly told herself over and over, that she cared a damn personally what happened to Jimmy Wrenn. If he wanted to make himself idiotic over a professional siren who was thirty if she was a day, it was none of Clare’s business. But when it came to ruining a perfectly good musician, that was different!

Jimmy wrote music, and up to the moment when he had looked into Leola Ledley’s big blue eyes, two months and ten days ago, he had been known as one of the best writers of swing music in the business. It wasn’t quite boogie-woogie, because boogie-woogie is an acquired taste, but it was red-hot. Orchestras went to town over his numbers, and band leaders cried for more. “I’m Your Red Hot Sweetie, Ain’t I?” was Number One on the Top Parade for one week. “Where Did You Get What You’ve Got?” was Number Three a week later. Jimmy was going places.

THEN Leola came along, and suddenly Jim turned around. You could hardly say he turned back; he just went in another direction. If you knew all about music, you called it “going corn.” Leola sang in night clubs of the second rank, wearing very lowcut black dresses and a haunted smile, and she sang strictly sentimental music.

If anyone had written another “Mon Homme,” or “Night and Day,” Leola would have given anything up to her right arm for first rights to it. Under her tutelage Jimmy went sweet and dreamy with “Mourning for the Morning,” and even sweeter with “What Does Your Heart Say Now?” The only trouble was that while those tunes would have been big in 1935, times were different now.

Clare stared at him through her tortoise-shell glasses which she only wore because a girl five-feet-one inch high and weighing one hundred and one pounds has to do something to look businesslike. She had pointed out to him once or twice or three times that royalties were not so hot on the last two numbers. Jim had only shrugged his easy shrug and smiled his ingratiating smile, that smile that made you want to put your arms around him!

“Every one can’t be a hit, baby. You know that. I’ll be in the parade with the next three—you watch me.”

He wouldn’t be in the parade with the one he had just finished, and Clare knew it, whether he did or not. The first copy lay on the desk between them, and her eyes went to it. The title was Leola’s idea—“I’m Yours No Matter Why” and the words matched the title. The music was sticky sweet, so sweet that it made Clare furious to listen to it. Didn’t Jim know, couldn’t he believe his own ears?

“Listen, baby, I’ve got a large date to have a drink with myself in a bar and then I’ve got to get a shave and a haircut. And then if my memory still serves me, I’ve got a fitting at my tailors,” he said now, easily. “What about getting this song copied and getting it over to Miss Ledley? She’s sitting on the hot seat waiting to rehearse it to sing tonight. And just between us, what do you think of it?”

“Just between us,” Clare said pertly, “I think it’s crummy. She held her breath when she said that, because Jim, like all artists, was sensitive about his work, and he had a hot temper that matched the fire in his devastating eyes. But he only grinned at her.

“That’s because you don’t know about love,” he told her lazily, rising to his full six feet. “You’re a smart little girl, and you learn fast, but what you need is a beau. Someone to show you the moon, and tell you what stars are for. Stars are for kisses, don’t you know that? Like this.”

He bent quite casually and kissed
her mouth, the very lightest kiss in the world. Then he moved away and laughed at her. Clare couldn’t slap him; she didn’t even have a chance. He picked up his gray hat and his stick, and took a cigarette out of his case.

“The trouble with you,” Jim said provocatively, “is that you’re what is known as a career girl. You think of getting a better job all the time. I’ve given you three raises in the last year, haven’t I? Now, if you were a normal girl you’d be thinking about settling down with a guy. You’d be dreaming dreams. People want music that makes them dream dreams.”

“Miss Ledley didn’t happen to tell you that, did she?” Clare inquired. “Because she ought to know what makes them settle down—for awhile, anyway. She’s tried it three times, hasn’t she?”

As soon as she spoke, she knew she had gone too far. Jimmy’s good-looking face froze, one eyebrow quirked as it always did when he didn’t like something.

“Just because Miss Ledley had a bad break from three of the worst heels in the world is no reason to be funny about it,” he said irritably. “And as far as that goes, it’s just too bad you don’t like the song. A lot of other people will.”

H e was angry at her. Watching him swing out of the room, Clare felt stifled and full of a queer hunger. She wanted to run after him and pull him back, and say, “Look, Jimmy, I’m sorry.” But you didn’t do that with your employer, in the first place, and in the second place, he wouldn’t care.

Plenty of other men looked at Clare, but to Jim she had been strictly business ever since she had come into the office, and taken over everything in small, competent hands. Not that he wasn’t a woman’s man. The trouble was that he was too many women’s man. Chloe Hartford—Francine Smith—Anne Waters—now Leola. Every time Clare had watched from the side lines, feeling sick with jealousy.

It was old stuff to fall in love with your employer, of course. Every girl in the world was supposed to do it. But what could you do about it when it happened? Especially when he was the sort of employer who called you “Toots” and chucked you under the chin and told silly stories and was so much fun to be around? Now for days and days he probably wouldn’t be fun. He would be stiff and polite and formal, and she, Clare, would be wretched.

“Well, you asked for it,” she told herself, picking up the sheet of hentracks and looking at it with distaste. If you knew much about music, and Clare did, you knew it wasn’t a very good song. It was too mournful, too wistful, too full of carrying the torch. Anyone but a man in love would have seen that, she thought, with a pain stabbing under the neat blue frock.

“He’s really hit hard this time. When it affects their work, then it’s serious,” she said to herself. She made a gesture as if to shake the thought away. Someone came behind her and looked over her shoulder. It was Roscoe, coming in on rubber heels from next door. He took the music out of her hand, went over to the piano and fumbled with the keys. He played a few chords, and hummed in his bass voice. Clare listened.

I’m his, no matter why,
I’m his, from now till I die—

Roscoe got up and grinned at her. “Punk, isn’t it?” he remarked. A moment ago she had said the same thing, but it made her angry to have Roscoe, who was a competitor in Musician’s Row, put it into words. Her temper flared.

“I don’t know about that. I suppose you could write a better one!”

“Almost anyone could, but it would be hard to do a worse one, and you know it.”
"That's not true! You're just jealous of Jim. He's got a higher rating than you have, and more hits to his credit."

"He's got a higher rating and he had more hits to his credit until lately," Roscoe told her smoothly. He was slim, with a small black mustache. "But if you think the work he's doing now is going to help him, baby, you're crazy. He's been slipping so fast it's like seeing someone go backward on the ice. It's the Ledley number. She's one of those gals who's strictly poison for any man she gets her clutches on."

"I think he's big enough to take care of himself," Clare said.

**ROSCOE** looked at her knowingly.

"That's because you're carrying the torch for him and you can't see straight any more than he can," he said, staring down at her. "Why don't you get over it, kid? You're not his type. You're swell. But he likes them showy and night-club and Stork Club. Why don't you change your mind and try me for awhile? You might even get a taste for me, if you did. I'm nice; I dance well; I pay my bills; I don't bite little girls. Not hard, anyway. Why don't you stop breaking your heart for a guy who doesn't even look at you?"

"Why—you—you—" Clare was flushed, and the words came too fast.

"You're simple crazy. I can't stand the man. I think he's ridiculous. Running around all the time. Staying out till all hours. Hanging around bars. Falling for a peroxide blonde! I don't even like him! I just work for him, that's all. But I don't care for his type outside of work any more than he cares for mine, and—"

"You don't care for his type any more than most girls care for diamonds," Roscoe said. "I think I'll tell him that. I think I'll tell him he's missing something right under his nose. I think—"

"I'll—kill you if you do!" she flamed. One hand went out and flashed across his face. Roscoe backed away, his cheek red.

"Wow, what a temper! All right, I'll keep your secret. But what about dinner tonight?"

"All I want is to be left alone," Clare snapped. "And if you don't mind, I have work to do."

"Be seeing you tomorrow," said Roscoe, who never gave up. He strolled out of the office, whistling, "Fools Rush In," and Clare blinked back the sudden tears that had come into her eyes. He was right about both the things he had said, even if they had made her furious. Jimmy was slipping fast. And in this business you couldn't afford to go back. You had to go ahead. And she was crazy about him.

How could you help it? She remembered the first day she had stood before him, hoping against hope for a chance at the job.

"I can type," she had said glibly. "And I can transpose music. And I can play the piano. And I can run a switchboard. And—"

"But can you fix a bromo seltzer for a chap who's been out too late the night before? Can you fix an ice bag for a brow that is fevered? Can you tell lies over the telephone without the person at the other end knowing that you're lying? Can you keep women away from me when I don't want to be bothered, and see that I get to work when I'm feeling lazy?"

"Can you be a combination slave driver and watch dog and mother? Because that's really what I need," Jim had said. His long lashes had wavered her way just once and then he had blown a smoke ring. It seemed to Clare that her heart slid right into that smoke ring, and through it, down into his hand, in that very first minute.

"I can do anything that's necessary to get the job," she had said shortly.

"And you swear you won't flirt with me?"
"What? Of all the—"

"Oh, you needn’t get hot and bothered about it, Toots. They always do. I never had a girl who didn’t. I’ve got a headache now and it’s too much bother to open my eyes but I have a kind of feeling from the first look that you’re cute. Now I never mix business and pleasure, so—"

C L A R E tossed her head angrily.

"I wouldn’t look at you if you were the last man on earth," she had told him. "Outside of business, I mean. I think men who get hangovers are silly. I don’t care for song writers since I happen to prefer professional men, doctors and lawyers. You need never worry about my flirting with you."

"That’s a promise?"

"It certainly is."

She had been furious. The next day she had come to work in the plainest dress, the glasses over her big eyes, her hair slicked back, so that she looked as nearly unattractive as so attractive a girl could look. Jim had not been lying on the sofa with a headache that day. He had been at the piano and all business. She had started on a batch of letters, and from that day on they had made a perfect team. Perfect for Jim, anyway. Heart aching for a girl who felt dizzy with loving him every time he turned his head, and never showing it by a gesture.

She stared at the new song wearily, now. Stale, banal lyrics, stale, banal melody. Nothing striking, nothing new. One more nail in his coffin or at least the coffin of his reputation. And he would go on writing songs like that for Leola as long as Leola wanted him to.

Something struck her. A tornado struck her. A day ago, even a minute ago, it would have been incredible to think of such a thing. But all at once the idea, the impulse, was there and she acted on it almost without knowing what she was doing. It was all right for Leola to be poison to some men, but not to Jim. This had to be stopped right now. Now, before it got too bad to stop.

Unsteadily, she tore the song in pieces, not so small that they could not be pieced together if she lost her nerve at the last minute. Then she went to the file case. She knew exactly what she wanted—the last number that Jim had been working on the day before he had met Leola. A gay, lilt- ing, hot tune, with everything, except that there were no lyrics to it.

He had put it aside to write "There’s Too Much Love in My Heart" for Leola, after their first meeting. When Clare had reminded him of it, he had just shrugged. She got it out, now, and sat down at the desk. It was good music, swell music. Now, if you could only find enough words to rhyme, it ought not to be hard to write a lyric.

"It ought not to be hard to get another job either," Clare told herself fiercely. "Because that’s what you’re going to do if you go through with this."

But something told her that she was going to go through with it. Maybe it wouldn’t have the effect she thought it would, maybe it wouldn’t change what Leola was doing to Jim, but at least it would do her, Clare, some good! It would make her get out of the place and away from a man who didn’t know she was alive except as a useful employee.

It would make her free whether it freed Jim or not. Furiously, she scribbled on.

I T W A S almost five o’clock. The song had been copied and sent by special messenger to Leola two hours ago. Those two hours were a blur. Clare didn’t know what she had done in them. What did you do when you had committed the most awful act of your life?

She had walked the floor. She had lighted one of Jim’s cigarettes, and
then forgot to smoke it. She had taken up the telephone to call Leola and tell her the wrong song had been sent. She had put together the pieces of the first song, the one she should have sent, and made a copy of that. She had bitten her little fingernail, and thrown her glasses across the room, mussed up her hair.

Three hours ago she had looked like a very efficient private secretary, but now she looked only like a lovely lady in a stew. Stewing—and scared.

"Why did I do it? How could I possibly have done it?"

She didn’t know; she couldn’t understand herself. Everything inside her had changed little by little since the minute she had looked at Jim Wrenn. Before then she had liked lots of other men, but now all she wanted to do was to work late in Jim’s office, hanging around, or to sit at home and dream of him. You dreamed such silly dreams—of Jim’s suddenly saying, “Why haven’t I ever noticed before that I’m in love with you?” You dreamed of Jim’s kissing you—

But even if he did, it probably wouldn’t mean anything. Jim had so many girls. This Leola thing wouldn’t mean anything six months from now. Her heart told her that. It was just that it was hurting Jim now, and she couldn’t bear to have Jim hurt! A passionate desire to protect him, to look after him, was in every breath she drew.

“It was not of your business! What right did you have to interfere in his affairs?”

No right at all. The only rights she had, really, were to listen to his voice when he wanted to lounge and talk to her. To see his lazy smile. To flush with ecstasy over the orchids he had tossed on her desk one day, saying so casually, “For a good little girl.” To cherish as long as they lasted the violets he had dropped in her lap another day. To worry over his comings and goings. To watch his work as best she could. To be as useful as possible—

But no rights, not a single one, in the personal sense, and that was all that mattered.

“You’re a fool. Girl in love with boss. Girl gone crazy over employer! You’re a fool!”

Well, he wouldn’t be her boss much longer, that was certain, unless she did something about that song right now. Her hand went to the telephone and then came stubbornly away. She hated Leola—hated her—hated her!

But that wasn’t any excuse.

“I must have been crazy! I must have lost my mind! I—"

It didn’t do any good to say that now. It was too late to say anything now, because the office door burst open, and someone came in like a tornado. It was Leola. She was tall and she was beautiful if you liked false eye-lashes and bleached hair and a general effect of silver fox and a blast of perfume. But she didn’t look beautiful now. She looked as only a furious woman can look, a woman who is so furious that she is beside herself.

“Jim—where is he? Where is Mr. Wrenn? I have to see him at once. Get hold of him for me. Did you hear me? Get hold of him for me. I—"

“He’s out on some errands. I’m terribly sorry, I—"

“Find him!”

The insolence of the command made Clare catch her breath. She was calm all at once, staring at Leola. One thing to do and that was to soothe her, to give her the right song, to lie, to say it was a mistake. Smooth everything over, take the blame, get it all fixed up.

“I’m terribly sorry but if it was about the song, why—"

“It was the most putrid song in the whole world and I’m going to find out what he means. I’d like to kill him! I’d—"

“Now, Beautiful!”

That was Jim. He walked into the room, swinging his stick. He looked debonair, easy, assured. He looked
completely lovable. Clare’s heart turned upside down.

“Jim Wrenn, you rotten heel, what do you mean by sending me this piece of cheese?” Leola demanded violently. “If you think it’s a joke, I don’t! I never saw such a rotten song in my life! I never dreamed you could turn out such trash! Everyone’s said you were slipping, but when it comes to something like this, it’s too much. I was doing you a big favor when I let you do a theme song for me and don’t you forget it. I was singing on Broadway when you were still in high school. I mean”—she caught herself hurriedly—“I’m a little too important for you to pull something like this on me! A cheap song writer! When I could be running around with millionaires! Only I was thinking of my career! A cheap song writer, and—”

“Is that so?”

Clare knew this Jim, she had seen him three times before. Once, when a teamster had kicked his horse in the street, and Jim had stopped, very calmly, and kicked the teamster. Once, when a man had said something he didn’t like. Once, during the song writer’s strike. Pure temper was steel gray in his eyes. His mouth hardened, and you would not have believed that he could ever be gay. Gay—you would not have believed that he could ever be anything but forceful, efficient, and brutal. He started to be all three now.

“You interest me,” he said, his voice ever so much of a drawl. “You interest me strangely. You see, I thought you loved me for myself alone. I didn’t know it was the songs. And I think my stuff is pretty good, as a matter of fact. And I think I amount to something, myself. And I think maybe there are two sides to this slipping business. And I think that maybe if you’d like to go out and join one of your millionaires right away as fast as possible this office would be a lot nicer to be in. Good-by, Leola. It was nice to have known you, and—”

“Wait—wait, please.” Suddenly Clare knew that she couldn’t go through with it. She clutched at his arm, and pulled him back, as he opened the door for the raging Leola. “Wait a minute. Miss Ledley, you wait, too. It’s my fault. I sent the wrong song. I—I sent the wrong song on purpose. I—an—is the right one right here. I don’t know why I did it. As a joke, I guess. I—I’m terribly sorry. I can’t apologize enough. That isn’t the song you told me to send her, Mr. Wrenn. That—”

SHE faltered at the stunned amazement in Jim’s eyes.

“Of all the nerve!” Leola had grabbed the other song from Clare’s hands and was looking at it with knowing eyes. “This is more like it.” She was suddenly sharply changed, her face altered, her voice altered. “Jim, dear, you must forgive me. I lost my head, I admit it. But you know how much your music means to me. And to have this—this”—she indicated Clare as if she could not find words for her—“pull something like that! I never dreamed! Of course I didn’t mean a word I said! I didn’t mean any of it, Jim, honey. If you’ll just—”

“Didn’t you?” asked Jim. He was staring down at the song that Clare had fashioned into such a dangerous weapon. There was the queerest look in his eyes. “Didn’t you? Well, listen, I mean something. I mean what I’m saying. And it’s just this. You make me sick.”

He took the other song, the song he had written for her, from her hands while Leola stared at him incredulously. He tore it into tiny pieces, pieces so tiny that no one could ever put them together again.

“Now, scram!” said Jim.

The door shut behind Leola Ledley. For one moment Clare wanted to rush after her. Anything to get away from this man who was looking at her exactly as he had looked at Leola.
Fiercely, angrily, grimly. But you couldn't be cowardly enough to run away. You had to take your medicine.

"I suppose there's some explanation," Jim said, in those steel-cold tones, "of how you happened to do this. And of why you did it. And—"

"There's—I—it's—"

She couldn't talk. She could only stand staring at him. She indicated the paper in his hand.

"Read the words and you'll see."

Even then it was natural for Jim to move over to the piano. That was a gesture as mechanical as breathing, to a song writer looking at a new song. His eyes swept the page. Standing behind him, Clare could not have seen his face if she had wanted to. He made a sound halfway between an exclamation and a whistle.

Then he sat down at the piano and played and sang the song. Clare stood waiting, breathless, while his husky voice went over the unfamiliar words.

They were unforgivable words, she knew that now. He would never, never forgive her.

Why can't you see that you're through?
All that you say and you do
Is dated and fated and weighted with sighs...
You've gone too long with those tears in your eyes...
Time changes, love changes, you ought to, too—
Why can't you see that you're through?

Clare almost put her hands over her ears to shut out the words as Jim sang. He got up from the piano.

"Nice title. You ought to change your type," he said formally. Clare turned her back because she could not bear to look at him.

"All right, I'm fired," she said weakly. "You don't need to say it. I'll go. I don't blame you. I'm sorry and I'll always be sorry. I don't know why I did it. I—"

"For the same reason every girl does things," Jim said behind her, clearly. "Because you were jealous and wanted to get rid of the dame."

"That's not true!" She swung around now, her cheeks blazing. "What do I care about your silly girls? They're all silly! I cared about your work! I cared about what you were doing to your reputation. I—"

"You ruined my romance," Jim said coldly.

HE CAME very close to her. He stared straight down at her. There was a change in his face now. Somehow it was no longer grim.

"You broke my heart. What are you going to do about that? I'm a man without a girl, now. I can't get along without a girl. What are you going to do about that?"

"I—I—"

"I need a girl to kiss," Jim said. In one motion he had her in his arms. In one motion his mouth was against hers. "I need a girl to look after me," he said, low. "A spitfire girl with big eyes and curly hair and the sort of head smart enough to get what she wants! Don't tell me you're not in love with me; you have to be! Because all of a sudden I'm in love with you! Don't ask me why! Maybe it's because you're so small. Maybe it's because you look scared! Maybe it's because you've just written, though maybe you don't know it, what will probably be the biggest hit this office ever turned out!"

Suddenly, his arms tight around her, Jim was laughing. He was laughing as if he were never going to stop. Close to him, warm against him, Clare felt that laughter thrill through her whole body.

"If I could just have seen Leola's face when she got her first look at that song," he said through his laughter. Clare stiffened and pulled away.

"I don't understand," she said sullenly. "You—you were crazy about her. Now you're laughing at her. I don't like that. And you—me—I mean—"

"I was infatuated with her," Jim corrected. "Come back here and stay here. Aren't you hired to do what I
want you to do? Don’t wriggle so! And when a man is infatuated he’s an utter imbecile. But you opened my eyes, darling, and how! And now that my eyes are opened—"

“You needn’t think,” Clare warned him angrily, “that you’re going to add me to the list of girls you flirt with and fall for and have affairs with and then get tired of. I’m the sort of girl who wants a home. I’m the sort of girl who wants to get married. I’m—”

“Maybe—if you give me time enough to get used to the idea, and if you stay close enough to me, and if you never never change at all, I’ll be the sort of man who wants to get married, too,” Jim said slowly. “Say, in another day or two—"

His mouth on hers was everything she had always known it would be. Clare gave herself up to that kiss, lost herself in the kiss.

There was a noise behind them, and she jerked away as far as Jim’s arms let her.

“Girl gets her man,” Roscoe said in the doorway, just then.

“Man gets girl,” Jim corrected. “And if you think the man doesn’t know he’s lucky—”

And Clare murmured happily, “You’ll have to write a song about that.”

COMING NEXT MONTH

PROFESSIONAL BEAUTY

A Glamorous Complete Novelet

By HELEN AHERN

Is there Magic in this Oriental Confection?

Only one man in the world knows the secret of Sen-Sen. Behind closed doors he blends its precious ingredients. And some people feel there’s magic in its making.

Certain it is that Sen-Sen sweetens your breath and thrills you with its unusual haunting flavor. But some say it does more . . . gives men and girls who use it a special fascination.

Try it yourself. Sen-Sen is potent yet pleasing. Sold everywhere in five and ten cent packages.
Dick looked marvelous in his uniform. He was tall. His shoulders were broad, his waist tapering in the blue fitted tunic. He wore his lieutenant-commander's cap set jauntily on the side of his coal-black head.

Less than two months since he was mustered out of the Reserve Officers' Corps and into the Navy, and already...
there was something different about his walk, about all of him, as he came across the living room and caught Ginny up in his arms, swinging her small, brown alligator oxfords high off the floor.

"Hi, darling!" he said. "Been keeping the home fires burning for your sailor boy?"

He held her with her deep gold head cupped in the curve of his arm and her blue-violet eyes laughing up into his. Her lovely oval face was happy and radiant.

"I’ve been trying," she told him a little wistfully. "I can’t get used to all those evenings without you, Dick."

"Can’t be helped, sweet," he said. "I’m in the Navy now, you know."

"But you’re an officer. You could come home every night if you wanted to!"

"You forget I’m in the Intelligence Service. That’s a twenty-four hour job. We have to take our turn at night duty, sweet."

"Your turn, yes!" Ginny burst out. "It looks as if your turn came all the time! I’ve hardly seen you at all in weeks!"

**D**ick lifted his big shoulders in a helpless shrug.

"It isn’t my fault," he said. "If you’re going to blame anybody, blame my commander. He’s the guy who says when I’m to be off duty and when I’m not."

"He can’t be a very fair person, if he gives you all the hard jobs. Did you remember to tell him you were engaged?"

Dick grinned at her broadly.

"Commander Ward isn’t interested in my love life, sweet. His job is to see that the plane factories go ahead with their orders without any sabotage holding them up. That’s all he cares about. He’s a demon for work, and he expects every man under him to be too."

"I don’t believe I like your Commander Ward," Ginny said. "In fact, I think I hate him!"

"That’s all right, Angel Girl." Dick laughed. "The more men you hate, the more love you’ll have left for me!"

He kissed her then. He put his lips, firm and desirous, against her warm, sweet mouth. His dark eyes were so close she could see twin images of herself in their depths. She was so happy, so gloriously happy, she wanted to cry. She wanted to pinch herself, to see if she were awake.

It still seemed too incredibly perfect that she, Virginia Jamieson, was the lucky girl handsome Dick Wayburn loved! He was so tall, so good-looking, with his black hair and his coal-black eyes. But it was his charm, his gay and easy assurance, the flattering way he looked at her and spoke, which set him apart from all the other men she knew. That was what had attracted her when she had walked into her father’s bank and had seen him behind one of the mahogany desks at the front, his name on a shiny new brass plate on the desk.

That had been nearly a year ago. They had wanted to be married almost at once, but her parents wouldn’t let them.

"Not until Ginny is eighteen," they said.

Well, she was eighteen now. But Dick was in the Navy and now they didn’t know when they would be married.

Dick moved his lips from hers, trailed a kiss across the smooth curve of her cheek.

"I’m almost sorry I came," he said fervently, huskily. "You’re so sweet, Ginny. It—it’s going to be hard to leave you."

Ginny reached up and threaded her fingers through his dark hair.

"Let’s not think of it, darling," she begged. "Let’s have a grand time tonight, the way we used to. Dinner,
somewhere and then the theater. I’ve already got the tickets. For ‘Panama Hattie.’ I saw it with Mother and Dad, but you haven’t. It’s fun.”

He looked down at her, scowled darkly.

“It’s no use, Ginny. Ward’s put me on for night duty again. I have to get back to Baldwin.”

She slid away from him and faced him, her body taut. All the disappointment of the past weeks welled into her throat.

“Dick, not tonight! We were to meet the crowd at the Stork Club afterward. I promised them you would be there! Isn’t there some way you could get away?”

“I’d have to telephone and ask Ward for a special favor. He’d grant it, of course. But I can just see his face when he does.”

“He’s unspeakable!” Ginny cried. “Of course I won’t have you cringing before him. It’s enough that you have to take orders from him! But Dick”—she hurried on breathlessly—“you are going to be able to manage New Year’s Eve, aren’t you? Mother’s giving a party. It would be terrible—without you.”

HE CUPPED her chin with his hand and smiled at her.

“There are some things more important than a date, even for New Year’s Eve,” he said. “And if you don’t let me get away now, I’ll be A.W.O.L. Commander Larry Ward would like that. Dressing me down would be just his dish.”

“He doesn’t like you, Dick. That’s why he’s so mean!”

“Something like that.” He nodded. “And now, Ginny, I have to dash.”

“I’ll drive you to the train,” Ginny said. “And then I’ll stop by and turn back the tickets.” She tried not to sound forlorn, but that was the way she felt.

She got her leopard jacket and slipped it on over her velvet dinner dress that was exactly the deep violet of her eyes, and went out of the apartment with Dick.

Crossing the apartment house lobby and later, when they were hurrying through Pennsylvania Station toward the Long Island trains, Ginny was conscious of the glances of the people who passed them. She thought she read a tiny trace of envy in the women’s glances. And she was conscious of a kind of nameless fear.

She shook it off finally. She had to expect this. Dick was so handsome in his officer’s uniform. Those women couldn’t help admiring him and envying her a little.

She nestled her hand more closely under his arm and her heart shook with joy. What did she care how many women were attracted to him? Wasn’t she? And it was she he loved! Dick, the handsome, black-eyed officer, belonged to her.

At the gate to the Baldwin train, Dick took her hands.

“Good-by, Dick,” she said, biting at her trembling lower lip, blinking hard to keep the tears from spilling over and sliding down her cheeks.

“Consider yourself kissed, darling,” he said.

And then he was gone, swinging his broad blue shoulders through the gate, running rapidly down the long, steep iron stairway to the train platform.

Ginny went home. Her mother came into the hall to meet her.

“Why, Ginny,” she said, “I thought you were going to dinner with Dick.”

Ginny turned to her mother, all her hurt and disappointment flooding into her voice.

“I was,” she said, her lips trembling. “But he couldn’t stay. He’s on special duty again tonight. It isn’t fair, Mother.”

Her mother tried to comfort her.

“Better get used to such disappointments, dear. Dick’s time isn’t his own, you know.”

“It isn’t that!” Ginny said hotly.
“His commander doesn’t like him. That’s why he keeps him working every night! Now I’ve got to phone Gracie not to expect us at the Stork Club. They’ll be wondering if Dick and I aren’t splitting up, I’ve canceled so many engagements in the past few weeks! And I’ve got to go back and turn in the theater tickets I bought. I meant to do it on my way back uptown, but I felt so bad after Dick left, I forgot.”

“Couldn’t you get someone else to go with you, darling?” her mother asked. “Your father and I are going out. I hate to leave you all alone.”

GINNY shook her head as she went to the telephone closet beneath the stairway. There was only one person in the world she wanted to go out with and that was Dick.

For a few minutes after she finished speaking to Gracie, who tried without success to persuade Ginny to come along anyway, Ginny sat at the telephone table drawing circles on the message pad. She could hear the ticking of the grandfather’s clock on the stairway and it seemed to be beating hollowly in her heart. There were so many hours to an evening alone! So many minutes to every hour!

“I’d like to give that commander of Dick’s a piece of my mind,” Ginny thought, viciously jabbing the pad with the pencil point.

Suddenly, she sat up straight. Color came up quickly into her cheeks. Her eyes were unfathomable beneath her half-closed lids.

“I’m going to!” she said aloud.

Suddenly her hands were lacing through the telephone book. There was just a chance, just a single chance, she thought, following the rosy tip of her nail down the column of names.

There was just one Lawrence Ward in the telephone book. He lived at the River Club. Of course, he might not be Dick’s commander. And even if he were, he might not be in.

“I haven’t anything else to do with my time,” Ginny thought, hurrying out of the telephone closet.

“I’m going out,” she called into the living room where her mother had gone.

“Taking those tickets back now, dear?”

Yes, she had to take the tickets back. But Ginny didn’t drive toward the theater section right away. Instead, she turned her car east, toward the exclusive Sutton Place section, and stopped in front of the handsome apartment house that called itself the River Club.

She sailed into the lobby, her gold head high with a confidence she was far from feeling.

“Is Commander Ward in?” she asked the doorman, resplendent in burgundy and gold.

The doorman turned her over to a switchboard operator.

“Commander Ward is in,” he told her. “Who is it, please?”

“Please tell him the fiancée of one of his men, and that it’s important,” Ginny said.

The man murmured into the telephone and then turned to Ginny.

“Will you go right up?”

A man almost as young as Dick, hardly a year or two older, opened the door when Ginny rang the bell. He wore a naval officer’s uniform like Dick’s, except for the insignia on his shoulders. There was something else different about him, too. A kind of dignity that Dick with his gay, easy-going charm, didn’t have. His sandy hair swept back from his temples. His face was rugged, rather than handsome, but it was undeniably a strong face. A strong young face with deep-set, intelligent gray eyes.

He smiled at Ginny. “Won’t you come in?” he asked politely.

She walked into the apartment. It was furnished in leather and
mahogany, a man's room, definitely. "I wanted to see Commander Ward," she said. "They told me downstairs he was here."

"I'm Commander Ward."
She stared at him. "You! Why, you're—"

"I'm nearly thirty and I went to Annapolis," he explained. "What can I do for you, Miss—"

"I thought you were an old man who'd forgotten how to be young!" she burst out. "I thought you weren't human and didn't expect the men under you to be human. Why do you make Dick work nights all the time? Why don't you like him?"

He made a surprised sound in his throat.

"Dick?" he said.

"Dick Wayburn," Ginny went on breathlessly. "We're engaged. Every night now, for weeks, he's had to break every appointment he's had with me because you put him on night service. Dick doesn't know I'm here. I suppose it was a crazy, impulsive thing to do, but I just couldn't face it, when I had the theater tickets and all! Oh, I know it's not important. Not nearly as important as keeping men at the plane factories. But it doesn't always have to be Dick! And if you take it out on him because I came here, I'll hate you more than I do now. If that's possible!"

She swirled around him and went toward the door. She was beautiful in her wrath, more amazingly beautiful in that moment than she had ever been in her life.

"Have you still got those tickets?" his voice asked quietly behind her.

"Yes, I've got them!" she answered, her hand on the knob of the door. "I'm going to take them back now."

"Don't," he said. "That is, unless you mind my substituting for your fiancée tonight."

Ginny turned around slowly, slowly, the way a mannequin turns, as if hidden wires were moving her. The light of revenge glinted in her inky blue-violet eyes.

"Why, I'd be flattered," she said, her voice high and only faintly, imperceptibly mocking. "I'd be flattered to death, Commander Ward."

"I'm the one who should be flattered," he said. "That you'd even be willing to let me fill in for Wayburn."

"Beggars can't be choosers, Commander Ward," Ginny said, and softened the words with a soulful glance.

Behind her eyes, her brain was planning busily. She was going to make Commander Lawrence Ward thoroughly ashamed of himself! Ashamed for making Dick work as he did!

They had dinner at Stouffer's and Ginny hung entranced on every word he uttered. They were halfway through the meal before they discovered she hadn't told him her name. "It's Virginia Jamieson," she said, and raised her heavy lashes to look up at him admiringly. "Everybody I like calls me Ginny. Won't you?"

He was pleased. "If you call me Larry," he agreed.

"Larry," she murmured. "I like it."

THE lobby was crowded when they reached the theatre. Again, as she had been with Dick, Ginny was conscious of people admiring her escort. He did have a fine physique, she had to admit. Then she thought of Dick and she took a new grip on her determination.

"Everybody's envying me," she murmured, summoning an ardent tone. "It isn't every girl gets a chance to go out with a handsome naval officer."

She didn't either, she was thinking. She hardly ever got a chance to go out with Dick.

He flushed. "Do you always go in for flattery?" he asked, guiding her into the theater. "Or only when it's your fiancé's boss?"
“I wasn’t flattering you!” Ginny denied hotly.

The curtain bell rang and they hurried to their seats in the descending darkness. Ginny had seen the play, so she concentrated her attention on Commander Larry Ward.

Without actually looking at him, she knew when his eyes left the stage and rested on her face. She knew how often it happened.

And she gloated!

Afterward, he suggested the Stork Club. But Ginny shook her head. She certainly didn’t want to run into the crowd with someone other than Dick.

“The Hurricane then,” he suggested.

Across a tiny table beside the dance floor in the pseudo-tropical atmosphere of the Hurricane Club, Ginny faced him, conscious of that steady gaze of his. Her hands beneath the table clutched her napkin, twisting it vindictively.

“Let him enjoy himself! Let him! Then when he hears what I’ll have to tell him, won’t he be utterly, thoroughly ashamed of himself!”

With a gay, flirtatious light dancing in her eyes, her lips litting to sudden laughter, she murmured:

“Isn’t this fun! I’m famished. And dying to dance—with you.” Her voice trailed off to a wistful sigh.

They had smoked turkey sandwiches and champagne. He insisted they belonged to the gala occasion.

“All this,” he said, glancing about, “is pretty much the usual thing to you, I suppose. I don’t get much of this. Even before I went into the Service, I didn’t take time out from my law practice very often. I didn’t know what I was missing. I can see that now, with you there across the table. Oh”—he broke off suddenly—“I’m no good at this sort of talk. Let’s dance.”

Ginny couldn’t help comparing Larry Ward’s awkward little speech with Dick’s sure love making, the swift and charming way he had gone after her that first day she had seen him at the bank, the way he had of inventing new pet names to call her, new ways to tell her he loved her.

Larry Ward was certainly no good at that sort of thing. And yet, for whole minutes as they danced, feeling his arm about her, her hand resting lightly in his, Ginny forgot why she was here. For whole minutes, she forgot she was doing this for revenge.

He bent his sandy head to whisper in her ear:

“There’s isn’t anyone here who can hold a candle to you, Ginny!”

Something in his tone frightened her. Her gay retort died on her lips. A tiny feeling of shame began to creep and spread through her. She was glad when he said at last, ruefully, that he had better take her home.

At her door, she held out her hand to him. But before she could speak, he said earnestly, gazing down at her:

“Thanks is such a small word for all the pleasure I’ve had tonight. I’d dreamed about an evening like this with a girl like you, but I never expected the dream to come true!”

The simple sincerity of his tone made her hesitate, made all the words she had meant to fling at him run away from her hesitate. And in the fraction of a second that Ginny hesitated, so swiftly that she hardly knew what was happening to her, he pulled her to him, swept her into his arms and held her so tightly she could feel the trip-hammer thud of his heart pounding in his chest.

His lips on hers came as a shock. He crushed them with a vehemence that had nothing whatever cruel about it. Her quivering young body close in his hungry embrace, Ginny felt a strange sensation course through her. Her heart throbbed in an odd, unfamiliar way that she had
never experienced before. This kiss, clamorous, wild, insistent, was not at all like Dick’s deft kisses!

And then, as suddenly as he had drawn her to him, he released her.

“I’m terribly sorry!” he apologized. “Can you ever forgive me? I don’t know what came over me!”

Before his genuine contrition, the last icicle of her fury melted, leaving her feeling very shamed and small beside him. Slowly she raised her lashes, glanced at him, looked down again and gulped.

“You’re the one who has the forgiving to do,” she said. “I’ve a confession to make!”

Then, summoning all her courage, she hurried on. “I meant to make you ashamed of yourself! I wanted you to have a thoroughly good time. I even”—she admitted that in a muffled voice—“wanted you to kiss me!” His arm trembled beneath her fingers. “And then I was going to fling in your face what an utterly despicable thing you’d done while you kept Dick on duty!”

He said nothing but she could feel his deep-set eyes on her.

“I’m terribly ashamed instead!” she finished, the desolate notes of her voice dying to a whisper. A tear slid down her cheeks.

HE CAUGHT her hands. “Don’t cry!” he pleaded. “I can understand how you felt.”

He gazed into her tear-drenched eyes for a moment without speaking. Then he dropped her hands and went toward the elevator.

Ginny went inside, her shoulders hunched miserably, her head bent. She felt like a child who has been naughty, and instead of the expected punishment, has been rewarded with kindness.

When Dick came the next night, she knew, even before he spoke, that she had Commander Larry Ward to thank for his being there.

Dick swung her off the floor, holding her up to his lips for his kiss, and then set her down.

“You crazy nut,” he said. “Do you think you can run the United States Navy? What if my commander decided to show his authority by keeping me on duty every night?”

Ginny flashed him a happy smile.

“He isn’t at all like that! Dick, he’s nice! You see, he didn’t keep you tonight! Did he”—her feathery golden lashes curved to her cheeks—“did he tell you he offered to pinch-hit for you last night and I let him?”

Dick pulled her down into a chair beside him, pressed his cheek against hers.

“Yes, he told me. Ginny, Ginny. I’m so crazy about you! I’m eaten up with jealousy!”

She nestled against him. She was quite sure Larry Ward hadn’t told Dick about his kiss. And even if he had, it didn’t matter.

“You needn’t be jealous, darling,” she said softly. “You see, I also happen to be crazy about you.”

“You won’t see him again, will you?” Dick demanded.

“Of course not, darling! I was just fighting mad last night.”

He drew her head close and turned her face to his lips. Larry Ward and all the world were forgotten in their kiss.

Ginny saw more of Dick after that. She couldn’t help wondering if Larry Ward weren’t himself taking special duty some of the nights, so that Dick could be free. He was just fine and grand enough to do a thing like that, she knew now.

But Dick couldn’t be sure of New Year’s Eve.

“We never get our orders in advance, blue-eyed Susan,” he told Ginny. “Any time you want to take it up with Washington it’s all right with me. . . .”

* * * * *

Ginny was dressing and the apartment was already full of caterers and last minute preparations for the
party, when Dick called her. His voice was gruff and angry, coming over the wire to pour cold water over her, over the most gala night of the year.

"No soap, darling," he said. "Ward's got me pinned down for tonight!"

Ginny gulped back the tears. She needed him tonight more than ever. She needed his arms about her while they danced. She needed him in that precious moment when the bells rang out to welcome New Year. How could you face that alone?

"Won't you please try to get off tonight, dear?" she begged. "I'm sure if you told him we were having a party—"

"I've already told him," Dick said, biting his words out furiously. "And he refused emphatically!"

IN THAT moment, Ginny almost hated Larry Ward again. He had said he understood how she felt. Then how could he be so inhuman as not to let Dick off?

But there was nothing she could do about it. She certainly couldn't call him, plead with him. Dick wouldn't have it. After all, he was in the Navy.

Dick had to hang up. She said, "Good-by," reluctantly, fighting to keep the tears out of her voice. "And Happy New Year, darling."

"Happy New Year to you, sweet. We'll be together for the next one. You can count on that!"

"I'll try to."

Ginny smiled, a wretched, miserable little smile as she let the ivory telephone slide from her palm to its cradle. All the joy had gone out of the night for her. All the loveliness from the new black lace and white chiffon dress that made her look like a golden-haired, black and white Goya portrait.

She sat still on the dressing table bench when she had finished dressing. She heard the hubbub of guests arriving, but she couldn't bring herself to go out and join them.

The maid put her white-capped head agitatedly in at the door.

"Miss Ginny, there's someone to see you! He said he wasn't invited to the party. I didn't know what to do with him, so I put him in the library. Mrs. Jamieson said we weren't using it tonight. He wouldn't give his name, but he's an officer like Mr. Dick."

Ginny stood up. She looked taller than she was and not only like a Goya portrait but as proud as one as she hurried past the maid and down the hall to the library.

She opened the door and closed it behind her, and wasn't at all surprised to see Commander Larry Ward rise out of a deep chair.

"So this is why Dick is on duty tonight!" she flung at him.

"It is not!" he denied curtly. "It happens to be Wayburn's turn tonight. The plants aren't working, but there had to be someone detailed to each of them and someone in charge just the same."

Ginny was smiling again, but it wasn't a miserable smile. It was cold and terrible.

"And I suppose you want to fill in for Dick tonight?" she asked him airily.

"I knew you were having a party. Wayburn told me. I thought—he made his admission grinning, boyishly confused—you might let me stay. We had such fun the last time. You said so yourself, remember?"

She folded her arms and moved toward him.

"Why, of course I'll let you stay, Commander Ward. And I promise you the most boring New Year's Eve of your life. You don't think we ought to be enjoying ourselves with Dick working, do you?"

She sat down in a chair and waved him to a seat opposite her. He dropped into it. There was a frown between his brows. But there was
something shining in the depths of his gray eyes.

"I'm going to tell you the story of my life," Ginny said. "I hope you'll be completely bored. Men usually are, unless they're talking about themselves."

FOR two hours, while the party went on in the other rooms and the sound of music and laughter came to them faintly, Ginny talked. And Larry Ward sat there, his hands on the arms of the chair, not saying anything, his eyes resting on her face in that steady way they had in the darkness of the theater.

Bells, horns, sirens, whistles interrupted Ginny's monologue at the stroke of midnight. Somewhere one of the servants turned off the main light switch according to her mother's instructions. The library was in darkness. And in the darkness, Ginny felt herself pulled abruptly out of her chair, held tight against a broad, hard chest.

"Happy New Year, Ginny," Larry Ward said, his voice low but exultant, close to her ear.

Ginny tried to get away from him, but he held her in arms hard as steel and just as relentless. And then he kissed her.

The same thing happened that had happened when he kissed her before. All her anger and her hot, furious words ran away from her. She felt weak, deliciously weak against the strength of his arms. There was a sweet, tremulous, shaken feeling stirring under her heart. She felt light as air and strangely, inexplicably, immeasurably happy. Her lips moved, answering his kiss.

"Happy New Year, Larry," she whispered.

The lights came on again and Ginny lifted her hand and struck him across the cheek. He winced, but he didn't speak.

She whirled to the door.

"I think you had better go now," she said, fighting the tumult raging within her.

She let him out herself. She didn't want to go in to the party. She wanted to go to her room and face herself in the mirror and tell herself that her blood racing gloriously in her veins and her heart plunging and singing didn't mean anything. It was New Year's Eve and a man had kissed her. That was all! It had to be all! She loved Dick!

Ginny didn't get by the living room door. Her mother, regal in black velvet, rushed out and caught her arm.

"Darling, I was worried about you! I thought you were moping in your room because Dick didn't get here. I wanted to send Maria for you, but she said you had a caller. Who was it, darling?"

"Nobody important," Ginny said. "Nobody in the least important." She hoped she sounded convincing to her mother. She didn't to herself.

Ginny joined the party. She donned a red paper fez and threw confetti and guided people toward the buffet table. But when, at last, she was alone, standing at the window in her bedroom, watching the gray dawn sift down into the dark street, she thought, "I mustn't see Larry Ward again. It's dangerous to feel this way about one man when you love another."

She slept late. It was noon before she came into the breakfast room, wrapped in a woolly white robe. Her mother wasn't up yet, but her father was there, hidden behind the paper.

"Mornin'," Ginny yawned, and slid into her seat.

"Ginny!" Her father put down the paper. He looked round and pink as usual, but his eyes were worried. "Ginny, isn't Dick stationed at one of the plane factories on Long Island?"

GINNY nodded. "I don't know where exactly though," she said. "He isn't supposed to tell. Why?"
Her father reached the paper across the table to her. The huge black headlines across the front page leaped out at her:

POWDER BLAST ROCKS PLANE PLANT

Ginny caught the paper closer. Her first thought was, “Dick! He’s killed!” And then her heart calmed as she read below:

NO CASUALTIES; PLANT CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY

Roslyn, L. I., Jan. 1.—The plant of the United Airplane Corporation was severely damaged today by a powder explosion. The blast occurred just at midnight, the loud report filling the air for miles around, drowning out the sounds of New Year’s celebrations in half a dozen towns in this vicinity.

Due to the fact that it was New Year’s Eve, no workmen were in the plant at the time of the explosion.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation began an inquiry immediately into the cause of the explosion. Sabotage is feared, since the United Airplane Corporation was working on national defense orders. Protection of the plant came under the jurisdiction of the Naval Intelligence Department.

Ginny threw down the paper. Swiftly, with fear tearing at her heart, she ran to the telephone in the library. Her fingers were numb with dread as she dialed Dick’s number.

He had been on duty all night but she had to call him, even if it meant waking him.

He sounded surprisingly alert when he answered, not in the least sleepy.

“Dick, there was an explosion at a plane factory last night!” her voice rushed to him. “You aren’t going to get in trouble, are you?”

“You’re a darling to be worried about me,” he said. “But you didn’t have to. There aren’t any afternoon papers today because of the holiday, but if you’ll tune in on a news program you’ll hear that Commander Ward has assumed entire responsibility.”

Her eyes were puzzled. “I don’t understand. You were on duty last night, not Commander Ward.”

“Listen, sweet,” Dick snapped tersely. “If Ward wants to say he was on duty, what do you care? Or I?”

She shook her head as if to rid herself of confused thoughts which grew more cloudy.

“Why don’t you say you were on duty last night, Dick, as you were? If something happened that wasn’t your fault, you’ll be cleared.”

“Why the sudden interest in Ward?” Dick whipped out. “Don’t you care whether I’m court-martialed or not?”

“What are you saying, Dick!” she cried.

He didn’t answer her. But that was an answer. It was the whole answer.

“Dick, you left your post! Oh, how could you!” Suddenly her head was clear. Her voice rang out determinedly. “I’m not going to let you make Larry take the blame, Dick. I’m not going to let you do something you’d be sorry for all your life!”

He laughed, a short, harsh laugh. “Luckily, it’s not up to you! If Ward says he was there, you can’t say he wasn’t!”

“Can’t I?” Ginny burst out. “Can’t I, though!”

SHE dropped the telephone, breaking the connection, and ran to her room, tearing at the sash of her robe. But all the time she was hurrying something inside her was dying. All her love for handsome Dick Wayburn was dying torturously in her breast. And something else was dying, too. Her respect for him, for the man she had thought he was.

She was dressed in no time at all. She dragged her leopard jacket over her blue tweed suit as she dashed from the apartment. She didn’t wait to get her car. She called a taxi and sped east. Again, she stopped in front of River House.
She gave her name to the switchboard operator this time.

Larry was waiting for her at the elevator when she got upstairs. She went into the masculine apartment with its smell of leather and good tobacco and tweed.

“Why are you trying to shield Dick, Larry?” she demanded at once. “If he was negligent, why do you want to shoulder the blame?”

The color came up quickly under his healthy tan.

“Because you love him!” he blurted. “Because I didn’t want you to suffer!”

“Even if I did love him,” Ginny cried fiercely, “which I don’t, I wouldn’t let you be court-martialed instead of him!” Her eyes blazed and her voice was harsh with hurt for me.” His hand went to his cheek. “There wasn’t. I saw that plain enough.”

Ginny swallowed hard. She couldn’t get words past that lump that kept rising in her throat.

“When I learned Wayburn wasn’t at his desk when the call came through from our man in Roslyn just before midnight for help last night, I said I was there, but I didn’t get the call. Said I fell asleep! It doesn’t matter to me, Ginny.” Larry was speaking earnestly. “I want you to be happy. All the admiration has gone to Dick’s head. He’ll get over it.” Then he added firmly: “But you mustn’t marry him until he does! It will save you heartache later on.”

Ginny gazed into his earnest, grave eyes. “I don’t think you heard me before, Larry,” she said quietly. “I’m not going to marry Dick, ever. It took me a long time to find out that I don’t love him. But finally, I did find it out.”

Larry caught her hands, clung to them.

“Ginny, do you mean it? Do you really mean it?”

“You’ll find out whether I mean it!”

She pulled her hands away from him and started toward the telephone on a corner table.

“Ginny, what are you going to do?”

“I’m going to call the broadcasting stations!” she declared. “I’m going to call the newspapers! I’m going to call J. Edgar Hoover himself!” Her voice was clear and determined. “You see, maybe no one else knows
where you were last night. But I do!"

His hands were on her shoulders, turning her around to face him. His eyes were shining down into hers.

"Couldn’t it wait for a minute?" he demanded.

"I guess so," she said softly, tremulously, feeling that deep, sweet stirring within her again that was so different from anything Dick had ever made her feel.

It was more than a minute. It was a long time more than a minute before Larry took his lips away from hers and let go of her arms. Then he strode over to the telephone, spun the dial, barked a command for Lieutenant-Commander Richard Wayburn’s arrest.

Then he came back and put his arms around Ginny again.

"I’ll keep the court-martial as quiet as possible," he said. "It can be managed. The Navy will be better off without Dick Wayburn. He’ll be better off out of that uniform, too!"

Ginny shook her head. "Dick’s charming even without a uniform. That charm of his can blind you to so many things. It did me."

Larry cupped his hand under her chin, tilted her face far back.

"Your eyes are open now, Ginny," he said. "Tell me, what do you see?"

"I think," she said, smiling up at him, "I think I see that I’m going to marry a Navy man, after all."

He kissed the tip of her upturned chin, and then she was in his arms again, and the world was spinning deliciously—a new world that was hers and Larry’s. Always she would be there. Duty might call him, but always he would come back to her and she would be waiting for his arms—waiting for the heaven that lay in them. The heaven she had found.

---

OLD MR. BOSTON SAYS: "YOU’LL AGREE MY APRICOT NECTAR IS TOPS!"

IT'S SMOOTH, IT'S RICH, IT GOES DOWN SICK.

IT GIVES YOUR TASTE A BRAND NEW "KICK!" "KICK!"

IF YOU WANT FRIENDS TO SAY YOU'RE SWELL, HERE'S THE DRINK THAT "RINGS THE BELL!"

Here’s the luscious flavor of ripe apricots in a rich, hearty liquor! Drink Mr. Boston’s Apricot Nectar straight. A handy drinking cup tops each pint bottle. You’ll agree it’s "rich as brandy, smooth as honey!"


OLD MR. BOSTON APRICOT NECTAR
ALSO BLACKBERRY - PEACH - WILD CHERRY - 70 PROOF
IVE a Jiggs Supper for a gay, rollicking party in celebration of St. Patrick’s Day! Rebus invitations leave it to your friends’ ingenuity to figure out for themselves what it’s all about.

Cut out pictures of Jiggs from the comic strip that bears his name, one picture for each invitation. Paste on squares of brown wrapping paper. Next comes a picture of “supper” cut from advertisements. Tiny calendars from the Five-and-Ten, with the date of the party ringed in red pencil, go on next. They search through the months to find the date. A free-hand drawing of your house, or a snapshot if you have it, and the invitations are ready to be mailed without a word written on them!

Host and hostess are the only two who wear costumes at this party, the host dressed as Jiggs, high hat, loud checked trousers, spats and all! The hostess dresses as Maggie, his spouse. A girl giving this party herself can dress as Jiggs or Maggie, as she likes.

Instead of the usual shamrock decorations, cut huge potatoes out of brown wrapping paper and fasten them to the walls with Scotch tape. The eyes are drawn in with black crayon. As each guest arrives, hand him or her a well-scrubbed potato, with no word of explanation.

Potato Partners

When everyone is there, partners are found by finding the person whose po-

tato most nearly resembles yours! Much confusion, much fun while the men try to find girls with potatoes of the same shape as theirs, or eyes that match, the girls at the same time hunting, too! Those who put their potatoes down will first have to find them before they can pick a partner.

The hostess acts as judge and the couples line up in the order in which they paired off. The first couple to match “potato partners” receives five beans each as a reward!

A new kind of Potato Race now. The couples lined up form the two teams, men against the girls! Collect the potatoes in two baskets, an equal number in each and place the baskets at one end of the room a few feet apart to prevent the teams from colliding. Teams spread out to form a brigade from the baskets to the other end of the room. At the signal to “Go!” the player nearest the basket takes out one potato and passes it to the player next to him.

Down the line the potato goes, from one player to another, like the old-time bucket passed by the fire brigade.

A second potato can be passed as soon as the first one is started, but no player may hold two potatoes at once. Penalty for doing so is one more potato in the basket. The team finishing first in this hilarious relay receives five beans each for their trouble. Stage a second race, letting half the girls change places with half the men to have mixed teams. Beans are the prize a second time, too.

Spud Artists

The potatoes again, for another gay contest! Pass the baskets and let each guest take a potato. A handful of crayons, a few lipstick stubs, bits of yellow, red, brown and black wool are dumped on a table. Ten minutes to see who can make the handsomest, the funniest or the most grotesque potato face! Those made by the
men will be screamingly funny. Especially when they see what's in store for them next!

As soon as all the faces have been made and judged for the winners (who receive the usual quota of beans as prizes) each must take his place beside his creation and assume the same expression as the potato! Anyone who can, without laughing, should be rewarded with five beans.

**Bean Auction**

“What are we going to do with all these beans?” will be the cry along about now. They’re money, wampum, whatever you want to call them. They can be used to bid for the prizes which are auctioned off at this time!

A dozen amusing prizes—a china pig bank, a high-hat cigarette holder for the table, a tiny pipe lapel ornament and the like—are more fun than one or two more expensive prizes. Guests bid beans for the prizes, the highest bidder getting the coveted prize. He must give up his beans, of course, which means one person, unless he won all the games, won’t be able to bid for more than one prize.

**Surprise Menu**

Food will be the thought in everyone’s mind by the time the prizes have been auctioned off. Jiggs and Maggie cut-outs make the unusual place cards. Jiggs at the men’s places, Maggie for the girls. Attach a strip of cardboard behind each figure to make them stand up.

Corned-beef and cabbage in a new guise are the refreshments for this party full of surprises. Roll rich biscuit dough a quarter of an inch thick and lay slices of canned corned beef over half of the dough, add pickle relish, spread thin. Fold over the other half and cut into long strips. Press the edges together with a fork and prick the top. Bake in a moderate oven until brown (about ten minutes). Serve with cole slaw mounds on each plate.

Walnut Squares and tall glasses of Minted Pineapple Juice top off this repast in grand style. For the cake:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1/2 cup butter</th>
<th>1/2 tsp. salt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cup sugar</td>
<td>1/2 cup milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 eggs</td>
<td>1/2 cup chopped nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 1/2 cups flour</td>
<td>1 tsp. vanilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 tsp. baking powder</td>
<td>2 extra tablespoons flour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
after the ball. Real bowling shoes, one shoe rubber-soled, the other leather for just the right amount of slide, when you get expert! Oxfords without rubber soles for roller skating. The skates you hire won't grip the rubber. Here again, when you get to be a fan, you'll have your own high white laced shoes with skates attached. Chic!

For Your Letters
Styles in stationery are almost as glacial in their changes as man's clothes. New and correct for all correspondence are the thin papers intended really for airmail letters. Another trend, patriotic stationery.
There's only one rule about using red, white and blue notepaper. Be restrained. Stripes of red and blue down one edge of white paper, not around all three edges. A white monogram with this. Or, omit stripes and have a script monogram in red and blue letters on the white paper.
Old-fashioned script monograms are the latest revolt from the modern block letters of previous seasons. White on white, blue or a new terra cotta are choices you can make without violating good taste.

Gifts De Luxe
Appliqué to do well by yourself or for a wedding gift de luxe. The season's rage—sheer dinner cloths appliquéd with linen—can be easily duplicated by skillful fingers. Use organdie for the cloth. White on white for an exquisite set that will be one of the heirlooms of tomorrow. Cloth and napkins are appliquéd in a floral design with a wide border of the linen. Luxurious.
Appliqué a huge flower to the corner of a square of chiffon for a different evening hanky. The petals of the flowers aren't sewed to the hanky. Carefully hemmed, they're left free to sway like real flowers when you move the hanky.

Instead of a flower, you can add a butterfly, its body stitched down, its wings loose and fluttering.
A real conversation maker: Vivid red lips cut out of linen, appliquéd in a diagonal line across the whole length of a white chiffon hanky!

Charm Helps
We give you—lapel ornaments wandering down the perch on the cuff or smack on the back of your glove for extra, unexpected glitter. Most amusing of all, tiny knitting needles no larger than pins, on them, real knitting (a sweater for a fairy no doubt) done in very sheer thread.
Loop twin ornaments through buttonholes at the top of the glove cuff or wear your favorite sport-shirt cufflinks in their place.
For evening swank, wear a luminous gardenia glowing softly in your hair. Hold the gardenia under the light for a few minutes before going out. You'll have a firefly florescence for the rest of the night!
A Nautch girl's anklets made into a necklace, so that you shall have music wherever you go.

(Concluded on page 113)
HONEYMOON

By VIRGINIA BRIGHTMAN

Author of "Shackles of Love," "Honey Girl," etc.

CHAPTER I
CRASH IN THE NIGHT

THROUGH that gray wall of mist outside the windows, as the big bus rumbled southward along the white shore road, Anne couldn't see a thing. What a disappointment! At last she was in the Carolinas, that Southern land of romance, and she couldn't see it. She had looked forward to this trip, and what she would see along the way, as much as to the land of orange blossoms for which she was heading. Miami, the blue sea, the bluer sky, the white houses and scarlet hibiscus, and sunshine all day long.

That should be paradise for a girl like Anne Allen, for in the drab winter of her Northern city, she sat at a switchboard all day long. Even the anticipation was paradise. It had
been ever since Anne's heart had soared to the clouds when she'd had the chance to be a telephone operator in a big Miami hotel for a whole winter.

Anne took a breath of romance, and of the foggy gray, then turned to glance over the other passengers who would be her companions on this second leg of her journey. She had boarded the bus only a few miles back, after a day spent in a little Southern town that had intrigued her.

They were an uninteresting lot, at first glance. Her own bags in the rack overhead were more interesting. They held some lovely frocks that she was going to have a lovely time wearing in her off hours. She had everything for a start—evening frocks, slacks, a
wonderful white satin bathing suit, all the rest. It had been astonishingly expensive, preparing for a Southern winter, but it would be worth it.

She had never dared to buy such nice things before. The dark blue traveling suit she wore came from Fifth Avenue. So did the soft camel's-hair coat, and the little white hat with the pert black wings that made her look like some small daughter of a viking, setting forth on an adventure.

A fluff of red-gold curls peeped from under her hat. Wide-gazing, dewy blue eyes were starry with excitement and interest as she cuddled luxuriously in the great chair beside the window.

There were not many passengers. A fussy middle-aged woman didn’t like fog, and was sure the driver didn’t know his business. The paunchy man across the aisle looked as if he were ashamed of being caught riding in a bus. But the man in the cap opposite him looked as if he were used to it. The languidly pretty girl in front was terribly interested in her movie magazine.

At first Anne did not look at the man just across the aisle from her. That would have been too much like staring. When she thought he was gazing into the opaqueness outside his window, she turned her head to look at him—and found herself staring into the darkest, most coolly reckless and laughing eyes she had ever seen!

In that moment those eyes of his, and the quirk of humor about his mouth, did a queer something to Anne. It started with a leap of her heart and sent delicious little prickles all through her slender body. She was suddenly glad of the raucous radio. It covered the loud pounding of her heart.

Anne couldn’t understand the feeling. How could it come from only looking into a strange man’s eyes? Why, every nerve in her body was registering his nearness! The odd joy she felt at seeing him was almost painful, just as if he had been gone from her life a long time and had finally returned, though of course she had never seen him before. She had the giddiest feeling that she would love to tell him how glad she was to see him.

He grinned at her companionably, and nodded toward the fog outside.

“Fond of soup?” he asked.

She laughed. “Not pea soup. Besides, this isn’t England.”

His face grew suddenly sober.

“No, thank God. We’re still safe in this country, even in a fog.”

“We have a lot to be grateful for,” murmured Anne.

She picked up her magazine, but from the corners of her eyes she saw his quick grin.

“If we get stalled,” he said, “I’d like to call you something except, ‘Hey you!’”

It was done in such a nice way that she had to tell him her name was Anne Allen. If she told him anything more about herself, or where she was going, that would be later.

“My name’s Deane, Miss Allen,” he said. “I come when they call for Kerry Deane.”

Anne’s eyes opened wide. Kerry Deane? She knew that name! Why, just a day or so before there had been a big story in the papers about a hero named Kerry Deane, who had saved the lives of his plane passengers in a terrible storm. If this man was Kerry Deane, what was he doing on a bus? Kerry Deane should be flying to Miami, since he was one of the ace pilots on an overnight plane. It wasn’t true. He wasn’t Kerry Deane, yet he had such a wonderful smile, such a heart-clutching way of looking at you . . .

“Thanks,” she said coldly as she picked up her magazine. “I guess I’m supposed to be thrilled. Don’t the papers give you enough publicity, without your having to—”

“Wait!” he said urgently. “Don’t
be like that. If you’re thinking about those darn stories... Listen, I’m no hero. I’m just an insignificant—"

“Who isn’t?” Anne murmured.

What she was really hearing was the radio that had suddenly switched to something different. A thrilling baritone voice was singing, and the words contracted Anne’s heart.

Fools rush in where wise men never go,  
But wise men never fall in love,  
So how are they to know...

She looked away from the man, out of the window. But the gray mist was hiding everything, even the lights that might have twinkled out of the darkness that had fallen so fast.

A vivid flash of lightning suddenly cut through the mist, followed by a crash of thunder that seemed to shake the bus like an explosion. It sent Anne shivering back in her seat. The jittery middle-aged woman screamed. Kerry’s big brown hand reached across the aisle and touched Anne’s trembling small one.

“Steady,” his calm voice said. When another flash of lightning came, his fingers closed on hers and held them tight. “You’ll be all right. This driver knows his business.”

“It—it’s just that I don’t like lightning,” Anne said, trying to make her voice sound brave.

For all his calm, Anne didn’t miss the anxious glance the man who called himself Kerry Deane shot through the windows into the gray haze.

“We’re in the lowlands,” he said. “Marshy country. Be out of it soon, and—”

Suddenly a flash of lightning, more vivid than those before, slashed through even that thick fog and showed them the washout of the culvert ahead. They were going to hit it! The driver couldn’t possibly brake in time, though he was standing on his brakes and they screamed.

One breathless instant, then two strong arms were about Anne, dragging her down, flat on the floor. And she heard Kerry Deane’s voice:

“Hold it! Hang onto me. We’ll get by!”

Even in that ghastly instant when death faced them, Anne knew his words were a prayer, and she was dimly conscious that she was praying herself. In that brief second of suspense, snatched out of eternity, she heard the soft, eager laugh of a man who laughs in the face of death, who goes to meet it defiantly. His arms tightened around her, and she felt him kiss her full on the lips, as if he were saluting Death, his bride!

In that kaleidoscopic flash, that breathless instant while they awaited annihilation, Anne knew that though life should be torn from her, she knew why she had lived. It had been for that kiss of a stranger—the one man whose soul would be welded to hers through eternity!

The crash that came then seemed to rip the world apart. Even the thunder was muted in the splintering explosion of metal against rocks, the shattering of glass, the shrieks of passengers catapulted into a heap on the heaving floor.

Anne felt as if the heart had been yanked right out of her body as she tried to hang onto Kerry, onto anything, with that horrible chaos and the sounds of pandemonium beating at her. The bus lights went out, leaving them in the horror of Stygian darkness.

Something hit them as the bus uplifted and crashed down, in the blackness, into the rocky bottom of the culvert. Then she felt Kerry Deane’s body, to which she had been clinging so desperately, go limp. Shrieks and groans tortured her ears as she felt another crash, heard its accompanying roar. Then something seemed to pick her and the limp man up bodily and hurl them through a window that had shattered in on them.

She was bleeding, gasping for
breath. After what seemed an eternity, Anne knew that she was sprawling on wet rocks where bushes came down to meet them. Then she was struggling to her knees beside Kerry Deane, who lay there, still and silent. Not moaning in anguish as she was. Not even moving.

Was he dead? He must not be! But she had to get him away from there. She had to, before that bus burst into explosive flames. Fire was already licking experimentally about the wreckage. All around lay crushed, bleeding bodies, horribly still in the awful quiet that followed the crash.

Blood stained her hands as she hauled at Kerry's body, pulling him from the rocks up through the bushes, away from the burning wreck. Then she breathed a prayer of thankfulness. Dimly she saw men running down the foggy road. The crash had been heard, and help was coming from nearby farms.

Anne grabbed at one man as he dashed by her. Hanging on desperately, she pointed to Kerry.

"Help him!" she sobbed. "Oh, hurry, hurry!"

And then the blackness that had been closing down overwhelmed her completely, blotting out even the flames that suddenly leaped upward from the bus.

Anne didn't know just how long she had been unconscious when she woke up in a cheerful room. The sun was streaming in through crisp, dotted Swiss curtains. She felt terribly weak, and the feather-bed felt heavenly.

A bustling farm woman came in, a Southern woman who was delighted to see that Anne was awake. She assured Anne that she wasn't badly hurt. They had been worried about her, but the doctors had said it was all right for her to stay here, instead of going to the small hospital that was overtaxed. Shock had been Anne's worst trouble.

Anne asked what had happened to the other passengers. She found that while most of them had been taken to the hospital, friends of the man who had been found with Anne had arrived and taken him away.

She felt unaccountably forlorn, but refused to let it matter. No use being sentimental. The fog and all must have been responsible for that. Anyway, she would never again see the man who had said he was Kerry Deane. That was how life was. One minute you saw a man who could be the only man, and the next minute Fate whisked him away.

She didn't even care whether he was Kerry Deane or not. All that mattered was that she would never see him again. Of course she wouldn't. She couldn't go chasing after him, and he didn't know the first thing about her, even if he wanted to hunt her up. He didn't know where she had come from, where she was going—anything!

Anne held tightly to the thought that he might have looked for her if he'd known where to look. But that was impossible. He didn't know, and she would never see him. Life had to go on being drab, just as if the most wonderful thing in the world had not happened.

CHAPTER II

SUBSTITUTE FOR ROMANCE

The days sped pretty swiftly for Anne, anyhow. Reporters came to interview her about the crash, but all she could truthfully say was that she hadn't known a soul on the wrecked bus.

The newspaper interest had all died down by the time she went on to Miami. But when she went to work at the switchboard in the Hibiscus Hotel, the girls actually envied her the terrible experience. That was all there was to it, though, for there never would be anything else. She
wouldn’t ever be able to do anything except rotate between the switchboard, the employees’ dining room and the dormitory.

How could she? Everything was a flop, and she ought to be glad to be alive. But her money and all her lovely clothes had gone up in smoke.

What made it worse was that she had found out from the newspaper stories that the man of her dreams had been the Kerry Deane who was an air ace in the night plane service. He had been making that bus trip from his home town, where he had been on a visit, to Savannah, where he would pick up a plane.

The work at the switchboard in the big Miami hotel was interesting, even though Anne could not go anywhere after it was over. It might have been easy to go places, if she’d had anything to wear. There were plenty of phone invitations, and the other girls didn’t seem to mind accepting them.

There was one call, however, that always seemed to be shunted to Anne. The others didn’t want it. She heard a girl say, one day, when she plugged out the call:

“It’s old Brant, wanting to talk again. He drools on forever.”

“Tell him, ‘Excuse it, please’, and get busy,” the girl next to her said.

“All he wants, when he comes over from that island of his, is to talk and talk. If I had his money! But me? I’m busy when he calls.”

She looked around at Anne.

“Here, kid, you might as well get broken in. Take this call.”

Anne did, and did not find the caller too hard to please. He seemed to have only a few business calls, and a long distance or so to make.

“The trouble with the kids, Anne,” pretty buxom Carola Dean, the supervisor, told her at dinner time, “is that old Brant doesn’t seem to know the tip system down here.”

“The tip system?” Anne’s eyes were wide with inquiry.

“Sure,” Carola laughed. “This isn’t New York. All you need is to be quick on the trigger with the wide-cracks, and the tips come flying up into this room pretty regularly—if the guests, men or women, want smart service. Not money, sometimes. Say, did you see that swell evening rag I had on last night? That came from Fifty-seventh Street, New York. The customer—not mentioned—said it didn’t exactly fit her fat form, or she didn’t look like a knockout in it or something, and would I mind taking it off her hands.”

Carola, so young and lovely that it seemed unreasonable for her to be a boss, laughed again.

“Would I? Baby, I think I got a happy home with that frock. But don’t get any wrong ideas. You won’t have it so easy with old Brant, though he has phoned up he likes your service. He owns a whole island, but he’s never learned to let loose. You take his calls. The rest don’t want him.”

IT WAS the shock of Anne’s life when the management called her one afternoon. When she appeared, shaking in her knees at the thought of being hauled over the coals for having done something wrong, it was to meet Evander Brant face to face. He was not in the least alarming, for he had a pleasantly ruddy face and the deep tan of an elderly man who found most of his fun chasing kingfish.

He looked mild, a man who didn’t make complaints. He smiled at her, nodding approval of her freshness in the little wash frock she wore at work.

“Mr. Brant wants to speak to you, Anne,” the manager said, beaming. “He likes your service. It’s a compliment to the hotel, which always tries to give the best.”

“Thank you,” murmured Anne, a little afraid to look at Evander Brant. But the next moment she was put at ease by his kind, fatherly smile.
“My daughter’s giving a house party for a raft of addlepated youngsters, this week-end,” he said abruptly. “Want you to come along. Heard you were in a bus crash not long ago. Brave, not letting your nerves crack. Want you to have a vacation. I’ll send my daughter Claudia to meet you with a launch.”

“But, Mr. Brant—”

How could she tell him she had nothing to wear at such an affair? And the thought of such society girls, as she knew his daughter Claudia to be, left her cold and frightened.

He grinned. “Oh, I forgot. Stop over at Burdine’s and pick up some dresses and things. Charge ’em to me. Guess I forgot that women put a lot of store by such things.” He held up a hand as Anne started to protest. “Now, not a word! Can’t I do a little thing for a girl who never says, ‘Excuse it, please?’”

Anne could do nothing but obey, especially with that sneaking idea that here was her one and only chance to see how the really rich people who came down to Florida lived. It looked like her Cinderella chance.

But it was with trembling heart and a sense of fear that on her next day off, Anne finally went out to the island. She went, not with Claudia Brant, but with a uniformed crew in a small boat that had been sent to meet her.

The Brant estate on the island was beautiful, with a great, rambling, white house built of coral rock, and with tropical shrubs and brilliant flowers that reached to the edge of vari-hued Biscayne Bay. Then there was a little red-roofed boathouse, and the strip of bathing beach for those who would not venture too far.

Beyond, other islands lifted their tropically green-capped heads in solitary exclusiveness. There was another, smaller island nearby, and the man handling the wheel of the small boat told her that island belonged to Mr. Brant, too. There was a regular honeymoon-looking bungalow on it, but the sailor said Mr. Brant had had that built for his own private use. He went there to be alone and study his stock market reports when the going on the main island, with all the constant entertaining, got too strong.

It must be wonderful to have all the money that Mr. Brant had, Anne thought. But the next moment was thinking how much more wonderful it would be to be on that little island with someone you loved—someone, say, like Kerry Deane. The wistful memory of him made her blood sing. She could see his dark, laughing eyes, feel the warmth of his arms around her. Every pulse leaped at memory of the touch of his lips on hers—the kiss that he probably would never remember, the kiss that to him had perhaps meant only defiance for the death that was facing him.

But she remembered. She always would. Oh, if she only could see him again!

ANNE was entranced when she reached the Brant home on the lovely tropical island. She was also surprised and elated by her reception from the lively crowd of young people. They had all been swimming, and she joined them gaily.

Back in the room to which a primly uniformed colored girl had taken her, she could hear the light chatter of the others beneath her window. She hastily changed from her newly purchased bathing suit into the heavenly blue linen she had bought that afternoon, thanks to Mr. Brant’s generosity.

Someone was strumming a guitar
and humming. Someone else was insisting on reciting some lyrics he had just made up. Anne recognized Claudia's voice greeting someone else.

"So at last you're favoring us with your presence, Terence! Where have you been all afternoon?"

"Tapping a little ball with a stick, over at the Biltmore. Golf to you, honey. Ever try it?"

"There's Eric!" she heard Claudia cry mockingly. "Darling, is that you behind the monocle?"

"The better to see you with, my dear, even if you can't see me," came a masculine voice, light-hearted, gay.

That would be the Eric Rutherford to whom Anne had been introduced. It hadn't taken more than a glance to see that Eric was crazy about Claudia. How wonderful it must be to have someone care for you like that!

Marvelous, all of them, Anne thought as she slid her small feet into the new white pumps. And she had thought people with such a lot of money were snobs. How wrong she had been!

SWIFTLY she gave a last glance into the long mirror. The wood-violet eyes that looked back at her were dancing with happiness.

She ran downstairs and across the wide hall to the patio, where cocktails were being served. Her hand was on the half-closed French windows to swing them open and join the crowd, when the sound of her name on Claudia's lips brought her to a shocked standstill.

"I can take my heroine stuff only in small doses," the girl was saying. "But Dad goes out into the highways and byways looking for 'em. Heroine? What did she ever do except live through a crack-up? Dad seems to think any girl who doesn't drop dead in a pinch is a heroine. All right, I'll try to take it. But for heaven's sake, all of you do your prettiest for this Anne person. If any-

body's foot slips, Dad's going to have my scalp."

"She ought to be glad she's alive and kicking, after that crack-up she was in," Eric Rutherford said. "Plenty of 'em weren't so lucky. It's just come over the radio that Kerry Deane—he was in the same smash—couldn't make the grade. Cashed in."

"Tough luck," said Terence Barkley. "Swell chap. I've made the plane trip with him several times. He must have been in the hospital some time now."

"Funny he should have been cashed in on a bus," observed Eric.

The world for Anne grew as black as it had been when the bus crashed. She couldn't move, could hardly breathe. Kerry Deane—dead? It was impossible that she could feel such sudden, stark grief for a man she had seen but once in her life. But she did.

Tears blinding her eyes, she turned to stumble away, with still another hurt beating at her. She had thought them all wonderful, and they had said . . . In her grief for Kerry, everything was jumbled, even all that she had overheard.

One hand was out before her as she groped her way. She stumbled right into Claudia's mother.

"My dear!" Mrs. Brant cried, alarmed. "Why, whatever is the matter?"

The tears came in a flood then. Anne could not restrain the tears for Kerry, for herself. Now everyone in the patio knew she had heard what they had said. Mrs. Brant had helped her through the French windows and into the bright sunshine.

"Anne, dear"—Mrs. Brant shot a stern, accusing glance at the suddenly silenced group in the patio—"has anyone been unkind?"

Desperately Anne was groping for an excuse—anything that would save her wounded pride. And all the while in her heart was an aching moan:

"Kerry's dead! He's dead!"
CHAPTER III
DEATH OF LOVE

HE could not have told what made her say what she did, an instant later, on impulse. Everything was such abrupt, utter tragedy that she hardly knew what she was doing or saying. It was almost as if Kerry himself whispered to her what to say, the Kerry she had known for fleeting moments, and with whom she had faced death while he kissed her. The Kerry she would always remember, with his rugged strength, his candid eyes, his quizzically smiling lips.

“No, no!” she cried to Mrs. Brant, as the others shot startled glances at each other. “Everybody's been wonderful. It—it's... Oh, Mrs. Brant, it's Kerry! He's dead!”

Mrs. Brant's arms went about her comforting.

“There, there, dear. We all understand what a shock that awful accident was to you.” Her disapproving glance picked out Eric. “Eric Rutherford,” she said sternly, “I should think you would show a little gumption when you have news to break.”

Anne's sobs were rattling her slight body.

“You don’t understand, Kerry belonged to me, and now I'll never see him again!”

Terence Barkley whistled. “Y-you don't mean you were married to Deane, do you?”

Anne's head jerked up. She forgot her tear-stained face. Good heavens, she hadn't meant anything like that! Now what could she say? The next moment it was too late to think of anything, for from her silence they had taken wordless assent. She was in for it now. She had to carry it off somehow, until she could rush away from this mess. All she could do was try to keep from getting in any deeper. Anne knew she was not a good liar. She had to keep telling herself that he wouldn't mind.

“Why didn't you tell us?” Claudia broke out. “Married to Kerry Deane! Imagine! But I don't see how you managed to keep it a secret. Kerry Deane wasn't exactly unknown.”

“It—it was sudden,” Anne managed to murmur brokenly, hating herself for every word she said.

But it wouldn't hurt anybody, she thought wildly. Kerry hadn't been married. All the newspaper stories had said so, and they had reprinted a kidding interview with him that had said he was “too busy” even to have a girl friend. Of course that seemed impossible for a man like Kerry, but that was what he'd said, anyhow. And she was sure he wouldn't have minded letting these snooty girls and men think whatever they wanted to, until she could get away.

“It—it had just happened,” she said. “That was why we were on the bus. We'd just come from Alexandria, Virginia. We hadn't had a chance to tell his people. When he was taken home unconscious, how could I go dashing up there? I was going—next week. Every day I'd talked to him on long distance, and we had it planned... We were going to give his folks a surprise. He said they'd like me, and be glad I'd come on to my job. They liked girls who worked, and... I thought he was going to be all right, and now—”

She broke down, sobbing again, because that last part of what she had said had been so much true. That had been her hope, and she had been holding tight to her dim wish that some day, somehow, she would see Kerry again. That had seemed to be Fate, but now Fate had decided to give her a terrible doublecrossing. And in the meantime, here with these strangers who would never understand any of that, she was getting in deeper with every word she spoke.

What a tangled web she had woven...
for herself! It sounded like the wild-est story that had ever been told. But the whole crowd, absorbed in the tragic romance, didn’t seem to notice the glaring inconsistencies.

Anne took a deep, hard breath and clenched her small hands. Well, she’d done it now, and she would have to stick to it. She begged to be taken back to Miami as soon as possible.

Mrs. Brant said that Anne didn’t have anybody of her own down here, or back in New York, for that matter. Anne had told Mr. Brant she was an orphan, on her own, so Mrs. Brant wouldn’t hear of Anne’s leaving. It was better for her to stay right where she was, for now, anyway.

“And tomorrow,” Mrs. Brant said, “my husband will get in touch with Kerry’s people and arrange for somebody to go to his home with you. With a secret wedding and all, aside from your grief, Anne dear, it might be hard on you to face your husband’s people alone.”

Anne grimly promised herself that she would certainly be among the missing before any such arrangements could be made. This was getting worse all the time. She was broken-hearted about Kerry, and she probably wouldn’t even have a job now. If Mr. Brant told the hotel management about this and the truth became known, it would have been better for Anne Allen if she had never come out of that bus crash. Life didn’t look to be much worth living, anyhow.

Anne thought she would go crazy, trying to get through that afternoon. She simply couldn’t stand all the sympathy. If only Mr. Brant had been there, she would have blurted out the whole truth. She knew he would have understood. But he had flown to New York on business the night before, and would not be back until the day plane arrived at dusk.

Anne decided she would last it out somehow, but she was firmly deter-
mined to tell Evander Brant every-thing the minute he got there.

It was tough going in the meantime, though, with everyone so sym-pathetic and much too kind. Anne thought she would go mad if she couldn’t get out of it pretty soon. The only thing that was real was her grief for Kerry, and that was a dirge in her heart, repeating over and over, with a pounding ache at each word:

“He’s dead! He’s dead!”

Mrs. Brant was so considerate that it made Anne’s face blaze, despising herself. She hardly let Anne out of her sight. Anne thought she had never felt such relief in her life as when Mrs. Brant finally emerged from her boudoir, smiling as she an-nounced that the plane from New York had arrived and that she had just spoken to her husband at the Miami airport.

Mr. Brant would reach the island soon. He was coming on the Windemere, his small motor yacht that had been anchored in Biscayne Bay, waiting for him. Anne thought, as she waited, that she knew how Marie Antoinette had felt, waiting for her be-heading.

The tropical dusk was closing in, with all the dazzling jewel colors of sea, sky and white sand, when they trooped down to the beach to meet the Windemere. The trim, small white yacht headed in. Evander Brant was up forward, and somebody—a tall, commanding somebody who towered over the chubby little capitalist—stood by his side.

Something chillingly cold, like a premonition, swept over Anne. More trouble was ahead. She was sure of it.

Then the Windemere pulled in at the dock. The gangplank was laid down by the white-clad sailors, while the skipper stood smartly at attention. At last Mr. Brant was coming ashore. The man behind him walked springily down the gangplank. At sight of that man and his dark reck-
less eyes, all the blood in Anne’s veins turned to water.

SHE reeled. Eric Rutherford sprang forward and caught her before she slumped to the sand. Vaguely she heard Evander Brant’s voice saying cheerfully:

“Is that a way to greet a big surprise, Anne? Look what I’ve brought you! My favorite pilot, though he was a passenger this time. When we landed and I told him that his bride was our guest, and that he was supposed to be dead—didn’t know either one of those things until my wife phoned me at the airport—I thought he was going to flop on me himself. Then he was damn eager to come along. He was on his way to collect you, he said.”

The beaming Brant, intent on nothing except his own surprise, waved his hand majestically at Kerry Deane.

“Is he alive or is he alive? Tried to quote Mark Twain on me, he did, by jove! Said his death was grossly exaggerated. A phone call cleared that up. The guy that was dead was two other fellows. Seems the small town reporter at that little Carolina hospital got his dates mixed.”

In the midst of all the excitement, the shouting, the screamed congratulations, Anne could only stare at Kerry Deane—the man she had thought she was never going to see again! Apparently he had told some pretty big whoppers himself. Why?

“Well,” Kerry said, coming close to her, speaking low and wearing a cynical smile, “sorry your—er—husband’s death was exaggerated?”

She was holding her breath, wondering what he would say next. But he didn’t say a word. Instead his arms closed around her, and he kissed her until she was breathless. He kissed her as a man would kiss a bride with whom he was reunited, after death had threatened to keep them apart forever. She was furious. But in that outrageously ridiculous moment, she was conscious that his hypocritical kiss, the touch of his lips, was drawing her very soul from her, even as her consciousness mutely and desperately protested.

What kind of idiot was he trying to make of her, before telling them all what a terrible liar she was?

He let her go roughly.

“So we forgot to tell my folks we were married, did we?” he said in a jibing undertone that infuriated her. “We’ll have to rectify that. There are a lot of other things to settle, too.”

THE others had drawn away to the end of the dock, pretending not to see what they considered a tender reunion. Mrs. Brant was smiling delightedly. Evander Brant was bobbing around like a chubby shepherd who has just recovered a couple of lost lambs.

“Now I know why I’ve held on to Angel Island,” he kept repeating. His bald head nodded toward the little island lifting out of the bay like a glowing emerald. Glimpses of the little coral-rock bungalow were visible through the mangroves. “Now I know why I built that little place! Thought it was so I could be alone.” He lifted his voice and called, as he jerked a thumb toward the island: “What do you think of Honeymoon House over there, Deane? Guaranteed not to crack up on you, even if the weather reports do say a blow is on the way.”

“Good Lord, what a set-up!” murmured Kerry Deane under his breath, while his eyes glittered. “Couldn’t be more perfect if I’d thought of it myself.”

Evander Brant nodded his head at the captain of the Windemere.

“Don’t anchor, Captain. You’ve got a couple of passengers for Angel Island. We’ll be sending them dinner by motorboat, but you can drop them a dory in the morning. They won’t be needing it tonight.”

“Right!” Kerry’s voice had just the correct exultant ring.
He held Anne so she couldn’t speak. She couldn’t have said a word, anyway. What could a girl say in the midst of a nightmare like this?

Kerry’s head bent over hers. Though it may have looked like a loving gesture, Anne heard the ice in his voice.

“I’d advise you not to try to start anything.”

Anne gasped. He was actually letting those people think—But there was something terrible in his tone, too, something threatening. As if he were daring her to disobey him. She couldn’t, anyhow. She was too frightened.

CHAPTER IV
Honeymoon Island

Abruptly he scooped her up and carried her, terrified and trembling, across the sand, up the gangplank and down into the Windemere’s cabin. But he didn’t speak until the yacht had drawn away from the dock, and the happy shouting of those left behind had died away.

She looked at him, her lips dry, her throat aching. How could he—the man she had idealized from the first moment she had looked into his eyes—be so beastly?

“Well,” he said grimly at last, “I’ve run up against a lot of queer things in a lot of queer places, but this is the first time I’ve ever had a bride wished on me. Pardon me if I don’t seem to know the proper etiquette.”

Anne’s violet eyes blazed.

“You know well enough how—how horrible it is to drag a girl who can’t help herself off to a—a desert island!” she accused.

“Yeah?” He lifted his eyebrows. “You’re about as helpless as Joe Louis, in spite of those lovely blue eyes, and that goldy-looking hair. It’s tumbling into your eyes. Did you know? Anyhow, what’s the answer? Who are you, a movie nobody, a radio upstart who wants publicity out of my dead body? You should have known you couldn’t get away with it—not for long, anyway. But I suppose seeing your name in print as the weeping widow of a plane pilot a few people know and like would have been enough.

“That the game? You might as well tell me, because I’m going to know. You don’t even dare let out a yelp. Nope, not reunited with the loving husband you thought was dead and were spilling weeps about. Now suppose you come across. Who are you, and what’s the big idea?”

“I won’t tell you anything!” Anne fairly screamed. “Find out for yourself!”

“Okay,” he said carelessly.

Why did he have to turn out like this, when she had thought him so splendid? And why could she hate him, when he was doing this despicable thing to her?

“You’re going out of your way to be cruel to me!” she burst out.

He looked at her oddly, his eyes narrowed.

“The line,” he said, “is good. Fairly so. But I’ll have to get the whole picture.” He paused, lifting his head and listening. “We’re here at Angel Island—our honeymoon island. And I’d advise you to throw no tantrums for the captain’s benefit.”

He came toward her.

“Don’t you touch me!” Anne cried.

He paid no attention. Not only did he carry her ashore, keeping her head pressed so tightly against his shoulder that she thought she would suffocate, but he carried her to the white bungalow and across the sill. Anne was past screaming then. Her anger was choking her.

“Just like a bride brought home,” he said tauntingly as he dropped her and put his broad back against the door.

“Get away from that door!” she de-
manded. "Let me go. I'm going to get off this island right away! I'm going to tell—"

Suddenly she felt cold all over. He did mean to keep her here! The Windemere was already heading back to the other island, not far away, but too far for her cries for help to be heard.

"Why should you worry about being here alone with me?" he asked calmly. "You're the one who said we were married."

Her lips quivered as she said defiantly:

"You can't frighten me any more. I don't care whom you tell I'm a liar. You can't keep me here!"

Kerry laughed. "Think not? You said you were my wife, didn't you, Miss—er—Allen, isn't it? You thought I was dead, and 'wives' have been known to crop up under such circumstances. I've been pretty flat in saying to everybody who knows me that I wasn't interested in love or girls. I've got to go back to work, and I want to know why you wanted to make a sucker out of me before everybody. I got the cue from Mr. Brant. I played up to it. So I'm here, and you're here, and now—why? And who do you think is the sucker?"

He stared straight into her blazing eyes. She was speechless.

"I don't care what you think of me!" she flamed. "And I'll never tell you anything. You get out!"

"I'm going," Kerry said, and his lips quirked again. "The next move is yours. Honeymoon House is also yours. I'll sleep on the beach. But you'll stay here, my blushing bride, until you've made up your mind to talk. There's no boat, no telephone, and it's a long swim to Miami."

"Get out!" Anne repeated, her eyes furious.

She rushed to the window as his footsteps crushed the sand. He was just disappearing toward the mangroves.

Instantly she tore the front door open, began racing for the little sandy beach. The bay was getting rough. The threatened blow was on its way, and a blow on these usually placid blue waters was nothing to laugh off lightly.

The lights of Miami seemed frightfully far away, as if on another continent, but she had to make it. Somehow she had to get to Miami if she had to swim through a sea full of sharks. She didn't care! Let a blow come! Let a hurricane come! Some boat might pick her up, and she could say that... She was getting to be pretty adept at lying, anyhow. And she would show him, show everybody!

Anne was stripping off her smart little one-piece linen frock. Then she was tearing down to the water's edge.

She heard her name called, not in a harsh command, but anxiously. But she only ran faster. Slim and delicately curved in her flimsy shorts and brassiere, she cast one hurried glance over her shoulder. Kerry was coming! He was running through the mangroves, then pounding over the shell-strewn sand.

"Wait!" he was calling. "Wait!"

Kicking off her small pumps, Anne ran into the water and plunged. She came up, swimming frantically against the high waves that were crashing on the shore. The little island with the Brant home, and the lights of Miami, seemed farther away than ever. Miles away!

She battled on, the waves washing high over her, taking her breath away. She would never make it! She didn't seem to be getting ten feet away from the island. Each wave that washed over her swept her back. All she was doing was fighting them.

Had she come through that bus crash only to drown out here in Biscayne Bay, trying to run away from the man she was trying to loathe? But she could tell the truth to herself when she was drowning. She didn't loathe him. She loved him!
Again she went under a wave and came up, splashing wildly. Instantly another wave engulfed her, filling her lungs. She went down, down—into blackness...

ANNE didn’t even know when a strong, supporting arm slid under her, holding her head above those pounding waves. But the next moment she did know that Kerry was hauling her up on the little island beach. Then he caught her up in his arms, slim and shining as a little mermaid, her flimsy garments stuck tight to her satiny skin. He carried her away from the waves that were roll-

ing in high and laid her down on the patch of grass before the bungalow.

“You crazy little idiot, were you trying to drown yourself?” he was murmuring. “You—you... Oh, the devil with it! You’re safe. That’s all that counts. I don’t know who you are, what you are, what you’ve done, or why. But I love you, do you hear me? That’s why—”

Anne heard. She heard so well that she opened her eyes and struggled to sit up.

“But I thought you hated me! You said I was trying to get publicity out of your dead body. Why, I’m the only telephone operator in captivity who doesn’t even know how to play for tips! And you said—” Suddenly she caught sight of herself. “My clothes!” she screamed. “Go away!”

Swiftly he reached up and grabbed a handful of bougainvillea vines from off the bungalow wall. With a laugh he dropped the vines over her. They covered her completely, except for the wet red-gold head that rose above the green drapery.

“Eve, in her island garden,” he said, sitting down beside her. “Now tell me all about it—everything.”

Much to her own surprise, Anne did. All at once it didn’t seem strange to open her heart to him, to tell him why she had said she was his wife.

STRANGERS IN LOVE
A Complete Book-Length Romantic Novel
By MONA FARNSWORTH
FEATURED IN THE MARCH ISSUE OF OUR COMPANION MAGAZINE
POPULAR LOVE

NOW ON SALE 10¢ AT ALL STANDS

She knew he understood her humiliation.

“You poor little kid, and I had to go and make it worse,” he murmured when she had finished.

Then he couldn’t say anything more, for his arms were full of girl and vine leaves, and his lips were almost savage on hers in a kiss of understanding.

“You haven’t been out of my mind or heart a single minute since that bus crash,” he said, a long time after. “I fell in love with you the instant I looked into your eyes. I would have told you so if things hadn’t happened so fast. As soon as I was out of bed, I went straight back to the Carolina
town where you'd been taken, but you were gone before I got there. All anybody could tell me was that they thought Miss Anne Allen had gone on to Miami. You certainly didn't tell the newspapers boys much about yourself, did you?

“But I decided that if you were in Miami I'd find you, because I'm able to take up the night run down here again. And did I find you! Say, I almost passed out when I ran into Mr. Brant on the plane today. After he'd talked to his wife on the phone, he told me that you were the Brants' guest, and that you'd said you were my wife. Whew!”

“I don't know why I told that lie,” Anne said contritely, then smiled at him impishly. “Excuse it, please.”

“I know why you told it,” Kerry said promptly. “It was Fate. Why, I might never have found you, holed up in that hotel before a switchboard, if it hadn't been for that. Nothing else would have brought me out to the Brant island, anyhow. And when I found out that I had a wife, I had to get you alone to find out what it was all about. It did look a little as if you were trying to put over a fast one for some reason or other. Now didn't it?

“I was going to make you tell me why, but honestly all I could do was to keep on loving you. Couldn't make myself believe you were anything except the sweetest, most adorable girl in the world, even when I was mad at you, or righteously indignant or something. And as for making you come out to this island with me—well, I guess I thought maybe a little lesson would—”

Kerry didn't finish, for he was too busy giving Anne another lesson, the oldest lesson in the world, when two hearts beat in single rhythm while lips cling and linger.

“I forgot to ask you something, darling,” he whispered. “Do you love me?”

“Oh, Kerry, don't you know?” Anne said, her voice low, exultant.

And then, as the moonlight suddenly touched them and etched the bay and the main island, a startled expression came into her eyes.

“Kerry!” she cried. “What will they think, when they know—”

“Know what?” said Kerry, and laughed triumphantly. “That we're the happiest honeymooners who ever lived? Because, darling, that's all they'll ever know. Just as soon as you get into some dry clothes, we're heading for Miami. There is a boat in the mangroves. I found it, but I wasn't going to let you know. We'll be married and back here before they call us for breakfast!”

Anne's eyes vied with the stars as she looked at him. And then she was melting at the sweetness of his arms about her, limp and breathless as his lips met hers.

Her own yielding, soft red lips gave him her whole soul forever.
THE FRIENDLY SET (formerly the Get-Acquainted Club) is growing by leaps and bounds! Hundreds of readers are finding new friends who are sincere and worthwhile. You, too, may have correspondents with whom to share your experiences, joys and emotions!

THRILLING LOVE wants to banish loneliness among its readers—enriching lives with the charm of affectionate comradeship.

Join the Friendly Set. Receive interesting letters—no longer will the postman pass your door and leave you with that empty, dissatisfied feeling that comes when nobody writes you for a long time. Here’s how to join:

Write to Mrs. Elder, care of THRILLING LOVE, 10 East 40th Street, New York City. Introduce yourself. Write your letter in such a way that others will be eager to know more about you. Be sure to sign your full name and address for our files. Give us a nickname under which you want your letters to be published. It will be only under this name that other readers will know you.

They will write to you in care of us—and we will forward their letters.

No letter will be forwarded unless a stamped envelope is enclosed. Women and girls may write only to women and girls, and men only to men. After the first letters, direct correspondence between you and your new friends will have been established.

IMPORTANT: In writing to Mrs. Elder, or in asking her to forward your letter, do not neglect to give the following particulars:—
name, address, age, sex and supply at least one reference.

In asking that letters be forwarded clearly print the number assigned to your chosen friend on the stamped envelope which you enclose. All letters should be written neatly in ink. Do not seal the letter that you wish forwarded.

If any unwelcome letters are received by readers, we would appreciate having them forwarded to us.

WANTED: SINCERE FRIENDS
Dear Mrs. Elder: I am thirty years of age, have brown hair and eyes, and like everything that life has to offer. I am very lonely. I enjoy making and keeping friends, and would appreciate hearing from other young men who can be sincere friends. Will exchange snapshots and souvenirs.
LLEE. No. 5170.

TWO YOUNG GIRLS
Dear Mrs. Elder: We are a couple of young girls of sixteen, and would like very much to exchange letters and snaps. How about it?
CAROL and MARY ELIZABETH. No. 5171.

INTERESTED IN MUSIC
Dear Mrs. Elder: Fellows from twenty-five to fifty please write. Am interested in music. Also like to hike and am broadminded. Would like a lot of pen pals.
HERBERT. No. 5172.

LOVE SPORTS
Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl fifteen years of age. Have fair hair and gray eyes. I love sports. Please write.
SHIRLEY. No. 5173.

SOPHOMORE
Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl of fifteen and a sophomore. Have dark brown hair which is curly and blue eyes. I like the movies, reading, cooking, and writing letters. So come on, girls, with some letters.
KATHIE. No. 5174.

BEAUTY STUDENT
Dear Mrs. Elder: Please send me some pen pals. I am a girl in my teens and taking a beauty course. I like horseback riding, swimming, dancing and writing to unseen friends. If you write I will tell you all about Georgia.
MARY LOU. No. 5175.

LONELY SOLDIER
Dear Mrs. Elder: Could a lonely soldier join your club? Would love to get letters from all over. My hobbies are swimming and baseball.
BILMER. No. 5176.

WANTED: LOTS OF PEN PALS
Dear Mrs. Elder: May I join your club? I am a girl of eighteen, and my hobbies are music, dancing, reading and collecting stamps. I would like to hear from girls everywhere. I promise to answer each letter. Will exchange snapshots.
GRACE. No. 5177.

WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER
Dear Mrs. Elder: I have just finished reading your department, and I, too, would like to become a member. I'm fond of all sports, and love writing letters. Come on, girls, I'll be waiting for your letters.
OPHELIA. No. 5178.

WISH TO CORRESPOND
Dear Mrs. Elder: I'm a reader of THRILLING
LOVE and wish to correspond with a few pen pals. I am a young man of twenty-eight.

THOMAS. No. 5179.

LONELY

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl of thirteen and live in California. Will exchange snags with girls who write. Please!

MARY. No. 5180.

AN OLD STORY

Dear Mrs. Elder: After reading THRILLING LOVE, I thought I would write to you. It is an old story. By way of your column, I would like to find a few pen pals. I'm a young boy of twenty-one, with blue eyes and curly hair. If you wish to write to me, you will get a prompt answer.

WILFRED. No. 5181.

CANDID CAMERA FAN

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl of sixteen, and my hobby is taking candid shots of my friends. I also like collecting poetry and writing to pen pals. I would like to hear from girls, particularly Chinese girls, as I am one myself.

AUGUSTA. No. 5182.

CAN TALK ON MANY SUBJECTS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young man of twenty-five and would like to hear from many pen pals. I have a good deal, and can talk on all subjects. Come on, all, swing some letters my way, and I assure you you won't be disappointed, as I promise to answer all letters and will exchange snapshots.

HOMER. No. 5183.

LIKE ANIMALS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am fifteen and my hobby is collecting small statues of horses and dogs. I like all animals, especially dogs, horses and turtles. Have traveled and have many interesting things to write about.

EILEEN. No. 5184.

CONTRACTOR

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a bachelor of thirty-eight, have blue eyes and black hair. My work is contracting, and I work for contractors. Like all kinds of sports and Western movies. Would like to hear from pals all over the world.

ARNOLD. No. 5185.

INTERESTED IN AVIATION

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am eighteen years old, and interested in aviation. I don't consider myself handsome, but all my friends say I am. I have blond wavy hair. I will answer all letters.

FRANK. No. 5186.

HOBBY WRITING LETTERS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I would like to become a member of your club. I am twenty years old, five feet one, brown hair and brown eyes. My favorite hobby is answering pen pal's letters. So please, girls, give me a chance.

TINA. No. 5187.

FOND OF OUTDOORS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I have been impressed by your department for quite some time. I am eighteen years old and can tell many sports. Fond of outdoors and all sports. Will exchange postcards and snapshots.

BETTY JANE. No. 5188.

JUST RETURNED FROM HOSPITAL

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a sixteen-year-old girl who has just returned from the hospital after having my appendix removed, and feel very well. I want someone new to correspond with. I promise interesting letters and will answer all.

SUE. No. 5189.

LONELY

Dear Mrs. Elder: I will be sixteen years old on my next birthday. Love swing music and dancing, swimming and writing. Won't you write to a friend who is lonely?

BEETLE. No. 5190.

A REAL PAL

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl of twenty with brown curly hair and brown eyes. I am jolly and fun, and like interesting people. So, girls, please write to a real pal.

TINY. No. 5191.

A TRAVELER

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a traveler, and know only well what a lonely life it is. I am interested in having sincere pen pals. I am forty-two years old.

MARK. No. 5192.

SECRETARY

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young girl of twenty with auburn hair and green eyes. I love all sports and dancing. I am a secretary, and you can bet I'll answer all letters promptly.

MARY. No. 5193.

MUSICIAN

Dear Mrs. Elder: Who is interested in corresponding with a musician? I have played the piano all my life and have been teaching piano for several years. Have worked with a number of bands here in California. I also play the Hammond Organ. Am also very interested in all outdoor sports.

ROBERT. No. 5194.

LIVES IN A COAL MINING TOWN

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am an eighteen-year-old girl of a coal mining town and would like to tell any interested persons about it. I will answer all letters.

BILL. No. 5195.

JITTERBUG

Dear Mrs. Elder: If you don't print my plea, I'm afraid I'll have to get my jitterbug friends together to haunt you. I am a girl of eighteen and love dancing, horseback riding, swimming, and all sports. Please, girls, won't you write?

ETTA. No. 5196.

INTERESTED IN THE THEATER

Dear Mrs. Elder: I'm a young man of twenty-seven, and interested in movies and plays, also like good books and music. I'm especially interested in the theater. Also like to make friends, am broadminded and have a sense of humor for which I'm very thankful. Promise to answer all letters promptly.

FRANK. No. 5197.

LONELY WIDOW

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a lonely widow of twenty-seven. I live in the country and get so awfully lonesome. I love to receive and write letters, but my mailbox is always empty. Won't you pen pals write to me?

ALMA. No. 5198.

COLLECTS POSTCARDS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young girl of sixteen. My hobby is collecting postcards, and also souvenirs. I would like to hear from all girls, all ages.

PAULINE. No. 5199.

CAN YOU SPARE A FELLOW A LINE?

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am twenty-seven, slim but not in a skinny way. Like most everything under the sun, but especially friends who are fun. Want to find a pal, if not too late, so please answer my plea and see what kind of a friend you'll get.

ROBERT. No. 5200.

ENJOYS WRITING LETTERS

Dear Mrs. Elder: Will someone write to me? I am a young girl of seventeen, and enjoy writing letters. Would like to hear from everyone. Will answer all letters no matter how young or old you are.

MARGUERITE. No. 5201.
Maid to Order

By SHIRLEY MANNERS
Author of "Eager Heart," "Honeymoon By Proxy," etc.

Ruth Makes a Bid for a Servant's Role—to Discover She's Picked for Starring in a Man's Heart!

Repeat that line again, please, Miss Claire," Silver said gently. He was kind. Apparently he realized how jittery she was, though he must have been puzzled to know why.

"So, you have discovered at last that your husband loves me!" Ruth repeated. It was no good.

"Thanks, Miss Claire, that will do," Reed McLane said. He no longer

Ruth was happy as she served him dinner

RUTH didn't know her own voice, it sounded so monotonous and dull. She tried to put meaning into the script she held in her hand.

She tried to make it sound right, simply had to. Reed McLane, the famous young playwright, was listening—so was Irving Silver, the producer

87
troubled to conceal his boredom, nor did he give her a second glance as she stood rooted in the dim light.

"Mr. McLane!" Ruth said impulsively. "I don't know what's the matter with me! I couldn't have been worse if I'd been a rank amateur. I know it! But Mr. Silver will tell you I've never had stage-fright like this before! I've played in several of his productions."

She looked from one man to the other.

"I—I guess I was so thrilled and excited at the idea of perhaps having a part in one of your plays, Mr. McLane, that I just blew up."

Her blue eyes implored him to understand, but he was pre-occupied, his mind already turning to other things.

"We'll let you know," he said.

It was a dismissal and a verdict. There was no use pleading or arguing any more. She had not made the grade. More than anything else in the world she had wanted this part in Reed McLane's play, because it was his play, and the very intensity of her desire had made her muff it.

She said good-bye as gracefully as she could and hurried out to the corridor. She was waiting for the elevator, fighting back the tears, when she heard McLane and Silver coming down the hall. They must not see her like this! They must not even guess how much that rôle had meant to her!

Swiftly she darted through the open door of a vacant office. She leaned against the wall, breathing hard.

"The girl's no earthly good, Silver," she heard Reed McLane say shortly. "Why, the part of the maid is one of the best bits of the play. It practically plays itself, and she couldn't play it."

"I don't think she did herself justice," Irving Silver objected uncertainly.

Peeping out, Ruth saw McLane shrug.

"We'll find someone next week," he said. "Right now I'm going up to my place in Westport for the week-end. Sorry I can't ask you to come along, but my housekeeper is down with rheumatism and the maid left after a row with her. I couldn't even offer you a decent meal. I can't—"

The elevator door clanged shut and they were gone. Ruth came out of her refuge, a cold feeling of desolation clutching at her heart. An actress ought not to be a human being, she told herself. An actress ought not to fall in love with a playwright from a distance, and dream about him. It would be long before she could forget the boredom in his eyes as she had stumbled through that part. Maybe she wasn't an actress after all.

Her feet lagged as she started for the elevator. One of them kicked something. She looked down and saw a man's gold and tortoise-shelled cigarette case.

She picked it up and opened it. On one side were a few cigarettes, on the other some visiting cards.

It was Reed's. And staring at it, a queer expression came into Ruth's blue eyes, and a smile touched her lovely face. That cigarette case had given her an idea.

"I am an actress," she told herself. "I'll show him I am. I can do it—I know I can! So the great Reed McLane thinks I can't play the rôle of a maid, does he? I'll play it, all right! I'll play it up to the hilt!"

Spending only time enough to supply herself with the aprons and caps essential for a domestic, and a smart but obviously inexpensive frock and hat, Ruth headed for Westport. She also had a new hair-do which she was sure would be sufficient disguise. Reed McLane hadn't looked at her much, anyway, and it hadn't been too light in Silver's office.

When she left the train she was
told where she could get a bus to take her to McLane’s house.

The bus driver pointed out a lovely, rambling, green-shuttered house to her finally, and she got out. She felt strangely exhilarated.

She had just started across the road, toward the house, when a car came hurtling around a turn. Her heart leaped, and she stood stockstill, panic-stricken. The driver—and in that appalling, frightened instant she saw it was Reed!—swerved frantically to avoid her. The fender scraped a telephone pole, and the car crashed into the stone fence.

Ruth raced to it. Reed had been thrown against the windshield by the force of the impact, and lay limply across the steering wheel.

Terror seized her. She glanced up and down the empty road, then ran for the house, calling for help. But there was no answer. Nobody was there.

Bitterly she reproached herself. Was nothing to go right between Reed McLane and her? Not content with wrecking his lines, had she had to come out here and wreck his car, too?

She ran back to him. He moaned faintly. She took hold of his shoulders, exerted all her strength and dragged him from the car, up the driveway and into the house. She could not lift him to a sofa, so she went into the kitchen to search for liquor. There was a half-emptied bottle of rye.

Back at Reed’s side, she slipped her arm under his shoulder, lifted him, and poured a few drops of the liquor between his teeth. She held her breath, then let it out with a sigh of relief as Reed stirred. He opened his eyes, stared at her in bewilderment.

“Let me help you to the sofa,” Ruth said quietly. “Then I’ll telephone the doctor.”

“I hit the telephone pole trying to avoid you, didn’t I?” Reed said dazedly.

“I hope you’ll forgive me, sir,” Ruth said, suddenly remembering her rôle. “I shouldn’t have been walking in the middle of the road. I—I came after the place, sir, hoping it wasn’t yet filled.”

“The place?” echoed Reed.

“As a maid, sir. I heard at Mrs. Bridges’ employment agency that you needed one.”

RUTH watched him anxiously. She had made it a point to learn the name of the only employment bureau in town.

“Oh—er—I see,” Reed said dubiously. Her anxiety grew, yet there was a sweetness in it. She half-guessed his dilemma—he could not grasp the thought of a girl who looked as she did, being a servant to him, waiting on him, washing dishes. There was admiration in his eyes, an admiration he strove to veil. Perhaps—the thought sent a pang of delight through her—he was remembering how she held his head, close to her heart only a moment before.

“I hope the place is not filled, sir,” Ruth murmured.

“Lord, no!” he said quickly. “We’ll be darned glad to have you—Mrs. Higgs and myself. She’s my housekeeper—been laid up with rheumatism, and we couldn’t get a maid to stick around. They—” He broke off, listening. “There she is now!” He lifted his voice to call: “Mrs. Higgs!”

A big woman, with a harsh face and small, unpleasant eyes, hobbled into the room.

“I’ve been marketing,” she said. “Your car—I saw it. I hope you’re not hurt, sir.”

“I’m okay now,” Reed said. “Here’s a girl Mrs. Bridges sent for the maid’s job.”

“Well, I’ll look at her references,” Mrs. Higgs said. “What is your name?”

“Ann Field,” said Ruth glibly.

She dug from her handbag the glowing letter of reference that had
been written for her by a married friend. She handed it to Mrs. Higgs. This part wasn't so pleasant. She didn't like Mrs. Higgs. No wonder they couldn't keep a maid.

Evidently the reference suited Mrs. Higgs.

"I'll show you your room and you can start at once," she said.

Reed called Ruth back from the hall. She came and stood meekly before him.

"Say," he said, in a lowered voice, "perhaps you would like an advance on your first month's salary. Take this." A folded twenty-dollar bill was thrust into her hand.

"Thank you," she said demurely.

He was a darling, at that, she thought impulsively. Nice to a little servant, anyway—much nicer than he had been to an attractive actress who had been so anxious to win his favorable notice... .

RUTH had been there two days when Mrs. Higgs announced she was going to leave her in full charge for a day while she went to visit a sick sister.

"Don't worry," Ruth said briskly. "I'll see to everything."

"Huh!" was all Mrs. Higgs said.

She wasn't sure what she thought of Ruth—or Ann. Something about the girl baffled the housekeeper. And if this new maid wasn't wearing two-dollar real silk stockings, then Mrs. Higgs missed her guess.

It was afternoon when Mrs. Higgs left, and before long, Ruth tapped at the door of Reed's studio.

"Dinner is served," she announced.

In the kitchen—he insisted on eating there when he discovered she was doing all the work—she served him the soup, humming softly as she turned to the stove. It was wonderful, being alone with Reed, though she couldn't have told why, exactly. As she put a silver dish containing chops before him, he absentely stretched out his hand for the salt shaker. Quick to anticipate his wants, she pushed it toward him. Their fingers touched, and abruptly Reed pushed back his chair and rose.

"Ann! There's something wrong about all this. I've felt it from the first. You shouldn't be waiting on me. You—you're out of the picture."

Dismay flashed into Ruth's face. She had failed again. Her role as a maid was unconvincing. Her acting ability had once more fallen short.

"But—are you satisfied with me, sir?" she stammered. "I—I've done my best."

He seemed to be struggling to get a grip on himself. Once it almost seemed that he was about to reach out for her, only to fight down the impulse.

"I'm quite satisfied with you," he said stiffly. "But I don't want any more dinner, thanks. I've a lot of work to get through tonight."

He beat a hasty retreat. Ruth stared at the untasted meal. She felt her heart beating faster. Her cheeks were hot. The significance of his retreat was reaching her mind.

When the dishes were washed, she went out into the big yard and sat down on the flat stone wall beside a flowering lilac bush. The wind kissed her fevered face and stirred her hair.

She had not heard a footstep, but suddenly a hand fell on her shoulder.

"You'll catch cold, child," said Reed's voice.

"Oh, but it's lovely out here, isn't it?" Her voice was husky, sweet, and this time she forgot the "sir."

Reed stared down at the pale blossom of her face, her soft, curved lips, her dream-filled eyes, the loose masses of her dark hair. Suddenly his arms swept around her and lifted her from the wall.

"You're lovely," he whispered.

"And I'm glad you didn't say 'sir.' I can't bear it from you, Ann."

His arms held her closer, closer, and his head bent over hers.
"What have you done to me, you little witch!" he murmured. "I've tried to fight it, but I can't—I can't, Ann. You've seen what was happening to me, haven't you? Ever since you've been here?"

She nodded, hiding her head in his coat. This was a miracle, but with him holding her close she was ready to believe in miracles. Against her own heart she could feel the hard beating of his own. Every nerve in her was tingling, with the joy of being in his arms—the unexpected joy.

Then doubt came to her. Was he taking advantage of his position, of hers? Was this just a bit of philandering?

"Tell me you care," he whispered.

"I do, I do," she answered softly.

Slowly she raised her face and saw his lips coming nearer, nearer to her own. Then, involuntarily, she caught her breath, as his lips closed on hers fiercely. Helpless, she lay in his arms. When he released her at last, she was white and trembling. He held her off and looked down at her.

"Ann," he said soberly, "I want you to do something for me. I want you to give up this job and go back to New York. Do you know stenography and typing? No? Well then, you must learn. Then—"

HE PATTED her hand gently and stared into the night.

"No girl ever made me feel like this before," he said wonderingly. "You're the one girl in the world for me, Ann—nothing can alter that. But I want you to be sure when—I ask you something. Do you understand, sweet?"

Ruth nodded gravely. A tiny pang stirred through her. He didn't want to ask a housemaid to marry him! That was it! Did he think she wasn't good enough for him? Oh, surely he was not like that!

Should she confess who she was? But perhaps her deception, innocent and harmless enough to her, would turn him against her. He might rather marry his own maid than an ambitious young actress who had deliberately planned to deceive him for her own ends.

He slipped his arm through hers, to lead her to the house.

"Go in now, Ann," he said. "And go on up to your room. I can't stand seeing you any more tonight—you and your sweetness! It I take you in my arms again, I'll never be able to let you go!"

They had reached the house now. Ann ran ahead of him up the stairs. At the top she paused.

"I'm not sure I ever want you to!" she said.

"Ann!"

He leaped for the stairs himself, but she was gone with a laugh, fleeing down the hall for her own little room. He heard her door slam, heard the key turn—and grinned. Then with a happy sigh he turned slowly toward his work room.

The next morning Mrs. Higgs returned. Ruth was quite unaware of the malicious way in which the housekeeper eyed her, and had no idea that Mrs. Higgs wanted to get rid of her when she was sent down to buy some extra groceries.

The minute Ruth was out of the way, Mrs. Higgs went to the girl's room and began to explore Ruth's suitcase. She sniffed indignantly at the dainty underwear, handmade and exquisite. No "maid" ever bought such things out of her modest wages.

Delving to the bottom of the case, Mrs. Higgs suddenly gave a triumphant exclamation. For there, hidden away in a corner, was a gold and tortoise-shelled cigarette case which she recognized as Reed's.

"The—the little, thieving hussy!" she muttered tightly, and marched herself straight to Reed's studio.

"I always felt that Ann was too good to be true, Mr. McLane!" she snapped viciously. "So meek and sweet-tempered and goody-goody.
Now that she's turned out to be a thief, I'm not a whit surprised!"
"Mrs. Higgs! What are you saying?" Reed's voice was wrathful.
"Wait till you hear what I've got to tell you!" Mrs. Higgs interposed.
"Yesterday, on my way to my sister's, I stopped at the employment office. I found out they'd never sent her here at all! Didn't even know her! I telephoned the woman in New York she said had given her that reference. The woman wasn't home, but her maid told me she had been there for five years, and there'd never been a maid there named Ann Field."

A gray tinge stole over Reed's face.
"I suppose you felt it was your duty, Mrs. Higgs. But there must be some explanation."
"The only explanation is that she's no good—a thief! We're lucky to find her out before she got away with everything she could lay her hands on. Look! Here's what I found in her suitcase! Your gold cigarette-case!"
Triumphantly she slapped it down on the table. Reed stared at it. He had missed it, but since he often mislaid his belongings, he had not troubled about it.
"I'll attend to this, Mrs. Higgs," he said coldly. "When Ann returns, please ask her to come here at once."

When Mrs. Higgs gave Ruth that message, an eager light danced in the girl's eyes. She was totally unprepared for the stern and anguished face Reed McLane turned upon her.
"Well, the show's over," he said gruffly. "It was a good bluff while it lasted, but I'm wise to your masquerade now. What a fool I've been!" His laugh was short, hard. "Even telling me you loved me! You loved me?" He shrugged. "Well, I'm awake now!"

"Reed! What on earth's the matter? I do love you! I do! How can you act like this—be so cruel?"

Reed's voice was low and savage. "Well, at least you're a good actress. I'll admit that."

Tears swam in Ruth's eyes. Once, all she had wanted was to hear him say that. Now, saying it, he hated and despised her.

But suddenly his arms shot out and he gripped her tightly. Fiercely his lips fastened on hers. There was so much of love and renunciation and regret in that kiss that it was like a mighty wave. When he released her she staggered.

"For heaven's sake, go!" Reed said huskily. "While I can still let you!"

Her breath coming in little sobbing gasps, Ruth moved toward the door. So dazed was she that she didn't even see it open. She gazed stolidly at the man who entered, without recognizing him.

(Concluded on page 103)
CARIBBEAN RENDEZVOUS

By JOYCE HILTON
Author of "The Love Pirate," "Love Goes East," etc.

"Sorry I kept you and your brother waiting!" Tex said to Valerie

VALERIE, arriving by train from New York early in the morning, had spent a lonely day in New Orleans, until the ship sailed late in the afternoon. Her cabin, when she came aboard, was full of flowers and telegrams and radiograms—the last from Charlie.

The S. S. Quirigua, he had radioed,

Dan Cupid Turns Pirate and Upsets Valerie's Plans for a New Year's Eve Wedding!
would arrive in Panama on the afternoon of the thirty-first of December. They would be married immediately, and have their wedding supper on New Year's Eve. It would be a wedding celebration—he mentioned that in his radiogram, also—that would make Canal Zone history. A champagne bing that would float the Pacific Fleet through the Panama Canal.

Valerie Creswell read the message unsmilingly. She should have felt excited, should have been supremely happy in the knowledge that she was at last on the last lap of her trip to join her fiancé, and became his wife. Somehow, though, the prospect of becoming Mrs. Charles Putnam Tuthill III didn't seem so exciting down here—miles away from her friends and her mother—as it had seemed in New York.

Without her mother there to point out what a lucky girl she was, considering Charlie's money and name and social position, and all, she didn't seem to care so much. It was odd, for after all, she loved Charlie, in her way. She had never cared for any man as much, despite Charlie's faults. That was really why she had let her mother talk her into marrying him.

Charlie was crazy about her, and only she could straighten him out, her mother had insisted Charlie's mother had emphasized that also. And now she was going down to the Canal Zone where he was on his father's firm's business, to marry him. By next week—next year, really—she would be Mrs. Charlie Putnam Tuthill III, and everybody would be happy. Even herself. She was sure of that, or she would not have come in the first place.

By the time Valerie had finished unpacking, the Quirigua had slipped out of the harbor of New Orleans, and was heading down the Mississippi River toward the Gulf. She went on deck, and leaned on a rail, looking back at the Crescent City. There were a number of passengers aboard, many of them young, like herself, and mostly women. Already they were scraping up acquaintances with each other, chatting about the Caribbean cruise that lay ahead.

Valerie, solitary at the rail, suddenly felt lonely and depressed. Boarding the train in New York, with her friends to see her off, had been one thing. Boarding the ship alone, however, despite the waiting telegrams and flowers, had been quite another. Could it be because she was a little panicky, like all girls, at the imminence of actually getting married?

SHE sighed. The most eligible bachelor in New York, a man who adored her, and with whom she was in love, was anxiously waiting to marry her. What was the matter with her, anyway?

She wandered up to the boat-deck, watched the river scenery for awhile, then headed below decks again. As she began to descend the narrow, steep, ladderlike stair to the deck below, she saw a man standing at its foot, waiting for her to come down so that he might go up.

It was a little windy, and she held her skirts with one hand, instinctively, as she came down. As she neared the bottom, somehow her French heel caught in one of the perforated brass treads, and tripped her. She stumbled, then, with a little cry, pitched forward and downward—into the man's arms.

For an instant he held her in an inadvertent embrace, before he set her on her feet. He was a young man, tall and deeply-bronzed, with eyes that were deeply blue and teeth that were gleaming white. He set her upon her feet, releasing her. His arms had felt strong.

"Think of angels," he said whimsically, "and they drop down out of the very sky." He grinned. "It's lucky I was here, isn't it?"

Valerie colored, ignoring his earlier remark.
"I don't know how to thank you," she said, confused. "I can't imagine how I managed to trip like that."

"It wasn't your fault—it was the Fates," he told her. "I'm a great fatalist, you know. We were evidently meant to meet each other. Personally, I much prefer informal introductions, don't you?" He made a faint bow. "I'm Tex Sheridan, very much at your service—past tense, fortunately." He looked at her expectantly.

"Thank you again, Mr. Sheridan," said Valerie coldly. "It was lucky for me, as you say, that you happened to be here to—catch me. It would have been just as fortunate—and unimportant—if it had been anyone else. Good day."

She walked past him, her chin in the air, and made for her cabin. Who did that impertinent young man think she was, anyway? One of those female tourists, anxious, or at least willing to strike up a flirtation? She put him from her mind.

She was a little late when she went down to the dining saloon for dinner. The room was well filled. The head steward conducted her to a table which was already filled, presided over by one of the ship's officers. Only one other place beside her own place was vacant—the one next to hers.

The men rose as she took her chair. The ship's officer smilingly greeted her and introduced her to the others, starting on her right. Just as he finished, their missing fellow diner slipped into the seat beside her. It was Mr. "Tex" Sheridan.

"Miss Creswell—Mr. Sheridan," the man at the head of the table introduced them.

The young man with the impudent blue eyes smiled at her.

"How do you do, Miss Creswell."

Giving him a frigid nod, with the mental determination to have her table changed the next day, Valerie attacked her shrimp cocktail. Under cover of the general conversation, he spoke to her in lowered tones.

"I'm sorry about this afternoon, Miss Creswell. Won't you forgive me?"

Valerie said nothing, ignoring him completely. How dared he get a place at her table—and sit next to her, besides! It was obvious that he had arranged it.

"If you'd rather I left the table," he whispered, contrition in his voice, "I will. I can pretend I'm sea-sick."

"Whatever you choose to do is a matter of complete indifference to me," she told him, and turned toward the diner on her right.

Luckily, it was a woman. Valerie spoke only to her until the end of the meal. She was furious. Chiefly because she suspected that "that man" was laughing at her inwardly.

She was the first to leave the table, and went immediately to her cabin. She finished her unpacking, then went to bed...

Valerie spent the entire next day in her cabin, having her meals sent in. It would be embarrassing to change her table. Besides, she did not mind strict seclusion for the rest of the voyage. She had a lot of rest and reading to catch up on, not to mention neglected letter-writing to do.

That evening, lying in bed with a book, she heard the distant music of the ship's orchestra. Hours passed, and at last the music died out. Footsteps in the passage told that passengers were retiring. Valerie remained sleepless an hour longer, then rose and dressed, and went up on deck. She needed fresh air and exercise, she told herself.

It was a dark night, and the decks were apparently deserted, in the dim glow of the deck-lights.

She began to walk around the decks, circling the ship some ten or twelve times, breathing the sea air deeply into her lungs. It was later than she had thought, and she was glad. The last bridge players had left the card-
room, the last spooners had deserted the dark corners of the deck.

Tired of walking at last, she leaned against the rail, and stared down at the sea, where the pencils of light from the port-holes played across the inky swell. There was something almost hypnotic about the sea.

She stayed there many minutes. Of a sudden, to her left, a lighted cigarette butt went over the rail in a great arc, and she heard steps. She turned quickly, and saw a man approaching.

Tex Sheridan!

"Hello," he said, with gratified surprise. "I was beginning to think I had imagined you. Just getting your sea legs?"

"Certainly not!" said Valerie, in some indignation. "I just chose to stay below, today."

"Are you going to stay below tomorrow, too?"

"Probably," Valerie said coldly, and looked away.

"In that case, I'll have to make hay while the sun—no, the moon—shines," he told her calmly, and stopped beside her. "Look here, I owe you six hundred and fifty-six apologies. Will you accept them?" And as she remained stonily quiet, he went on: "Now, don't be that way. Suppose we hit an iceberg and sank? How would you like to go down to Davy Jones' Locker with the knowledge on your conscience that you had never forgiven me?"

She smothered a laugh, despite herself.

"There aren't any icebergs in the Gulf of Mexico," she said, and then was oddly realizing that she had missed not talking to anyone all day. She was a little bored.

"But there are pirates. This was the old Spanish Main, you know." He offered her a cigarette. She hesitated, then accepted it. "I shouldn't be surprised if we had to walk the plank, any minute." He grinned. "Now that we've smoked the pipe of peace—can't we be friends?"

"Why should we be, particularly?" she asked.

"Because all the brave men and beautiful women are dead—except ourselves," he told her solemnly. "The moment I laid eyes on you when you tumbled into my arms, I knew Fate had sent you there. To be friends, I mean. That's why Fate made me take the Quirigua, instead of last week's boat, which I had meant to take, I told myself." He smoked lazily, staring admiringly at her in the half-light. "By the way, I forgot to ask you a very personal question. Are you in love?"

Valerie hesitated, undecided whether to be angry or merely amused. She decided to punish him.

"I happen to be engaged to be married," she told him, on an impulse.

"Oh—engagements." He waved a hand expansively. "People have changed their minds often enough before." He looked at her quizzically. "Don't think I'm crazy, Miss Cresswell. I just happen never to have fallen in love before. Luckily, your fiancé isn't aboard to cramp my style."

Valerie gasped.

"It might interest you to know," she told him impulsively, "that I'm being married the very day we arrive in Panama. On New Year's Eve, in fact."

He whistled.

"Oh—oh! Not so good!"

"So you'd better find a new object for your affections."

"At least, you have to admit my intentions were honorable," he told her, grinning ruefully. "Well, now that romance has gone forever from my life, I repeat—why can't we be friends? First, tell me about yourself. Or would you like to hear about me, first?"

"Not particularly," she told him. But she had grudgingly to admit to herself that she did want to hear.
A huge golden moon like a Spanish doubloon had begun to roll up the ramp of the tropic sky. Tex Sheridan made himself comfortable against the rail beside her.

"I manage a banana plantation in Honduras," he said. "I get off the ship at Tela, by the way, after Panama. It's a pretty big plantation, and I own a small piece of it."

"What's it like, living in the tropics?" she asked, curiously. She was thinking of the few months she would have to spend in the Canal Zone with Charlie, before they returned to New York.

"Romantic as the devil, if you're interested in romance," he told her.

And he went on to describe life in the great Central American jungle. He had a gift for words, for making people see vividly in their minds' eye. He made her see the orchids growing wild, and the snakes and jaguars and monkeys. The toy railroads on the banana plantations, and the natives with their machetes, riding the banana cars. He described the dances for the whites on Saturday nights at the banana ports. The hurricanes. The occasional revolutions.

"It's a great life," he ended, as if a little ashamed of his seriousness. "Orchids growing wild on trees. That ought to interest a glamor girl like you. And bananas grow by the million for the banana-split trade in the ice-cream parlors up in the States. You ought to come down and see it for yourself sometime."

VALERIE ignored his jesting, her imagination touched.

"I've never seen a hurricane, or a revolution either. . . . Tell me, are the native women pretty?"

"Some of them are the prettiest women you can find anywhere," he informed her. "But they're all brunettes. That's why I want to marry a blonde." He looked at her pale blondness meaningly, then quickly changed the subject. "Look here, won't you tell me about New York—your New York? I've only passed through there."

Valerie began to talk about New York. About the night clubs and the theaters, the dinners and the cocktail parties, the sophisticated, super-civilized milieu that was her life. In retrospect, it all seemed exciting, and she made it so, telling about it with relish. At that moment she missed New York.

Tex listened, with as rapt interest as she had listened to him talk about the banana plantations. He had been to New York only once or twice, and then only on business. She was talking about a world of which he had read and heard, but never completely entered.

Valerie finally talked herself out. They stood there leaning on the rail for a long time, side by side, and silent, watching the moonlight on the tropic sea. The night was soft and balmy, like a night in June, instead of December.

Of a sudden, as they looked out over the forward deck, and over the bow, there was a movement in the shadows below them, far forward. They saw two figures then step into each others' arms, and deeply embrace, there in the shadows, unaware that from above they were silhouetted against the silver path of the sea. Two faces clinging, two bodies and heads as one.

Valerie was profoundly stirred. When she spoke, it was almost despite her will.

"Look! If only they knew—"

"It's the tropics," said Tex. "This is a hothouse world, where everything blooms more quickly and ardently than anywhere else; not only flowers, and fruits, and revolutions—but romance. Down here in this hot, humid climate everything is rich and warm and fruitful. It's the land of eternal summer."

He looked at her sideward and smiled.
“And summer is always mating time, isn’t it?” he murmured. “Don’t blame those two down there. Blame that yellow moon, if you have to blame anybody.” He kept looking at her, still smiling faintly. “Don’t you feel it in the air yourself?” he asked softly. “That magic—something?”

He did not touch her, or even move, but in that moment Valerie was aware of him beside her there, with an awareness that was at once sweet and exciting. Their eyes met, and held.

“It’s late—I think I’ll turn in.” She felt strangely upset, anxious to be alone. “Good night, Mr. Sheridan.”

Despite his expostulations, Valerie left him, and went to bed. But not to sleep. She lay wide-eyed, thinking of the man from Honduras. . . .

She debated with herself the next day as to whether or not to go above decks. The debate was ended when a steward arrived with a huge bouquet of gardenias, centered with one glowing red rose. With it was a note, from Tex Sheridan:

Dear Mystery Lady—I promise to be good, if only you’ll come up today. Please.

T. S.

She went up. It was a heavenly day, with the Gulf like an undulating sheet of blue velvet, and the coast of Yucatan a faint line on the horizon. The passengers, who had already fallen into congenial groups, looked at her curiously, but Tex, waiting for her, monopolized her at once.

They played deck tennis, swam in the pool, and lazed, talking, in adjacent deck chairs. He told her stories of what lay in the strange countries just over the horizon—Yucatan, British Honduras, Guatemala. Of the ancient Mayan ruins, deep in the jungle, relics of a long-lost civilization; of the patient archaeologists who were even now exploring them.

He talked interestingly, never once again getting personal. She began to enjoy the cruise hugely, began to relax with Tex, and allow herself to like him. It was impossible not to do so. It was a luxuriously long day.

That night she dined again in the dining saloon. But afterward, although Tex pleaded with her to remain up and dance, she gently but firmly refused, to his obvious disappointment, and went to bed.

But again not to sleep. For some reason, she could not get Tex out of her mind. She kept imagining what his life must be like, on his banana plantation in the jungle—wondering how lonely he really was, whether or not he must have some native sweetheart. To her surprise, the last thought made her a little jealous.

Valerie tried hard to go to sleep, but could not. As the evening wore on, the ship began to roll, then pitch and toss. They were evidently in for some choppy weather. Restless she arose and dressed and, as she had the night before, went above decks. The passages and lounges, dim-lit, were seemingly deserted, and so were the decks. She stepped out.

The moon had vanished, and a wind had come up. She began to walk around the deck, swaying with the movement of the ship, relishing the salt air. As she rounded the stern, she came on Tex, staring morosely overside. Her heart seemed to leap a little, treacherously, particularly at sight of his face when he caught sight of her. For his face lit up at sight of her.

“Hello, lady! What are you doing up so late?”

“I couldn’t sleep, what with the pitching and tossing.”

“It’s blowing up,” he told her. “It often does, in the Gulf of Honduras. Do you mind storms? I wouldn’t be surprised if we’re not in for a bit of one.”

“I love them,” she told him. “They’re exciting.”

They began to walk the deck together, arm in arm, to keep their balance.

(Continued on page 104)
SHIRLEY TEMPLE has given up the idea that she can be just another little girl in this land of ours, now that she's signed up again with her studio. ... Mickey Rooney is playing golf—not for pleasure but to take off a little excess poundage. ... Mrs. Hal Roach recently started divorce proceedings after twenty-four years of what everybody thought was a perfectly happy marriage. ...

Deanna Durbin and Vaughn Paul are going to say "I do" sometime in the early summer. ... Ann Sothern bought a sewing machine and she's taking real honest-to-goodness lessons on how to work it. ... There doesn't seem to be any truth in the rumor that Myrna Loy and husband Arthur Hornblow, Jr., are phft. ... Those in the know say that they won't be at all surprised if Bette Davis should re-marry her ex-husband one of these days. ...

Jane Withers is going to Montreal, Canada, to make a personal appearance for the benefit of the British War Relief Fund. ... Because he's so charming and so nice about everything or anything, Freddie Bartholomew is becoming one of the most popular of Hollywood's younger set. ... Kliegland is cheering muchly for Gene Raymond who, after two years' absence, is now back in films with a nice, juicy part. ... Bob Stack and Mary Beth Hughes are together very often these days. ...

At one of the recent charity affairs there was a hat-trimming contest for men only and Spencer Tracy, one of filmland's number one he-men, won the prize. ... Paul Muni confesses that he is a rubber-band picker-upper. ... The Charles Laughtons have decided to settle in Hollywood permanently. ... Arlene Judge is back in the swing again with a new lease on m'rem pitching.

George Raft never has a suit cleaned because he only wears it five times or so and then passes it on to a friend. ... Ida Lupino has written thirteen new waltzes. ... Jean Arthur always makes her own bed. ... Andy Devine owns more than one hundred racing pigeons.

One of Bing Crosby's numerous sons is named Gary, after Gary Cooper. ... Gene Autry has one of the biggest incomes in all of filmland. ... Brian Donlevy is building his new home next to a cemetery. ... Clark Gable ordered a cake for wife Carol's birthday and it was inscribed "To Ma—on her seventy-fifth birthday." ...

Lon Chaney, Jr., is authoring the life of his famous father. ... Constance Bennett raffled off her Persian lamb coat to get some money for British refugee children. ... Orson Welles is practically filing a petition of bankruptcy what with all the tradespeople camping on his front porch. ... Fred Astaire, who has never been in a screen clinic with his most popular leading lady, Ginger Rogers, will do a love scene in his next picture—with Paulette Goddard. ...

And now, dear readers, I'll toddle along—but do cast your orbs over this page again next month for more news and gossip, won't you?—Sally.
EVERY midwinter cruise and vacation tour is filled with honeymooners because the Planet Venus, which governs romance, is in the Air Sign Aquarius which rules far horizons. The Planet Mars, which symbolizes adventure, is in the Fire Sign Sagittarius, which rules travel. Every couple will come home laden with trophies and brimful of stories about thrilling experiences with strangers in distant places.

Astrologically, Venus is a feminine Planet and Mars a masculine Planet. One represents the soft pulsations of life such as beauty, art, and elegance. The other represents energy, ability, and determination. Mating under these vibrations is a boon to the newlyweds for they start life together with blended qualities, merging sympathy and courage for the welfare of the future.

Romance, Harmony and Beauty

More than ever must the young men and women who are marrying now think of their children. Love is indeed the handmaiden of history now, for Uranus and Neptune in glorious trine aspect to each other are aiding the rehabilitation of humanity by fostering a genius generation between 1935 and 1950.

Uranus brings idealism, and Neptune—the higher octave of Venus—activates the intuitive desire for nobility. So despite economic and war hazards, the young people who are about to become parents are indeed fortunate.

Not only the newlyweds but almost everyone else can have a wondrous revelation of love because of these beneficent vibrations. Go to the theater and to parties with your beloved. Buy new clothes. Play and listen to music, and in other ways relax in a stimulating atmosphere of romance, harmony, and beauty.

Selfish Bride

"My brother has just married a very pretty girl but she is selfish," writes Ollie N., "and she is trying to keep her own brother from being friendly with me. I was born April 18, 1921, and he was born September 28, 1918. Will she be able to break up our friendship?"

Inasmuch as you have Sun in the Fire Sign Aries and he has Sun in the Air Sign Libra, the probability is that you will remain friends. It is very likely that this friendship can ripen into romance, as you probably wish, inasmuch as his Sign occupies your zodiacal House which rules marriage, and your Sign occupies the same position in his birth chart. Therefore, from that viewpoint you are well matched.

But right now the Moon’s South Node is in your Sign, so it is possible that there are factors involved which are not to your advantage. What may seem to you to be the selfish interference of your sister-in-law may be the result of another set of circumstances. So do not attempt to quarrel with your brother's wife. If you do, it could easily start adverse vibrations that might prove harmful to you in the long run.

You are rather a tempestuous young person because your Sign is ruled by the fiery Planet Mars. So when your temper boils over, you are prone to let it rage. Inasmuch as matrimony is obviously your object, hold your emotions in check. The best way to get what you want is by being congenial and friendly with your sister-in-law, non-critical of her attitude—and mentally serene. If you can achieve all these seeming miracles, then the chance of at-
Be Guided by the Stars!

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

IN EVERYDAY ASTROLOGY

Now on Sale 10c At All Stands

Read Our Companion Magazines of Romance

POPULAR LOVE

and

EXCITING LOVE

Each 10c At All Stands

To People who want to write but can’t get started

Do you have that constant urge to write but the fear that a beginner hasn’t a chance? Then listen to what Fulton Oursler, editor of Liberty, has to say on the subject:

“TThere is more room for newcomers in the writing field today—and especially in Liberty Magazine—than ever before. Some of the greatest of writing men and women have passed from the scene in recent years. Who will take their places? Who will be the new Robert W. Chambers, Edgar Wallace, Rudyard Kipling, and many others whose work we have published? It is also true that more people are trying to write than ever before, but talent is still rare and the writer still must learn his craft, as few of the newcomers nowadays seem willing to do. Fame, riches and the happiness of achievement await the new men and women of power.”

—Edward Foster, Talihina, Okla.

THE Newspaper Institute of America offers a free Writing Aptitude Test. Its object is to discover recruits for the army of men and women who add to their income by fiction and article writing. The Writing Aptitude Test is a simple but expert analysis of your latent ability, your powers of imagination, logic, etc. Not all applicants pass this test. Those who do are qualified to take the famous N. I. A. course based on the practical training given by big metropo-

nlitan dailies.

This is the New York City Copy Desk Method which teaches you to write by writing! You develop your individual style instead of trying to copy that of others. You “cover” actual assignments such as metropolitan reporters get. Although you work at home, on your own time, you are constantly guided by experienced newspaper men.

It is really fascinating work. Each week you see new progress. In a matter of months you can acquire the coveted “professional” touch. Then you’re ready for market with greatly improved chances of making sales.

Mail the Coupon Now

But the first step is to take the Writing Aptitude Test. It requires but a few minutes and costs nothing. So mail the coupon now. Make the first move towards the most en-

joyable and profitable occupation—writing for publication! Newspaper Institute of America, One Park Avenue, New York. (Pouched 1929).

NOTICE

Men ‘21 to 35’

Newspaper Institute of America will refund in full the tuition of any student enrolled after October 16th, 1930, who is called for military service. Even though you are in the commission age limit, no need to hesitate if you want to test your writing ability.

Newspaper Institute of America

One Park Avenue, New York

Send me, without cost or obligation, your Writing Aptitude Test and further information about writing for profit.

Miss

Mrs.

Mr.

Address

All correspondence confidential. No salesman will call on you.
your personalities. If you are in accord about most things, then it would help you both. But if you are not tolerant of each other afterwards, it might destroy your mutual peace.

You are both Fixed Sign individuals—you with the Sun in the Fire Sign Leo and he with the Sun in the Air Sign Aquarius. You like to be dictatorial, he likes to be independent. You will want to tell him what to do, and he will dislike to be managed. While he is willing to be tractable, he must do things voluntarily. You have an urgency in your nature, a need of popular contacts, and a desire for stage effects which he lacks.

If you are both willing to compromise, this new cycle should result in a splendid union for both of you.

A Career in Danger

"I have a son who doesn't seem to get on with his wife," writes Mrs. Nettie F., "and my heart bleeds for him. I did so much for this boy, because he was the youngest. I sent him through college and he is now an engineer. But since he married, he has lost his ambition. My husband doesn't want me to butt in, but I hate to see his whole career smashed. He is my pride and joy. What can I do to help him? I was born July 1, 1884; he was born December 4, 1914, and his wife was born March 10, 1917."

Your maternal instincts are emphasized because you were born when the Sun was in the Water Sign Cancer which rules motherhood. In this instance you are not only his mother, but you feel almost emotionally possessive of him because he has Sun in your opposition Sign. You would resent his marriage to anyone. You are envious of his affection for another woman. You make his temporary employment slump an excuse to interfere in his marital arrangements.

There is nothing wrong with the girl. She is sympathetic, kind, and non-belligerent because she has Sun in the Water Sign Pisces. To an extent you understand her very well, and there is probably a foundation for a friendly bond between you because your Signs are zodiacally trine to each other. But you are being blinded by the fact that your son has belonged to you for so many years that you do not want to share him with anyone else.

If the marriage breaks up, the fault will be yours. Astrologically he is now in an excellent vibratory cycle due to the grand trine of Neptune and Uranus to his Sign, giving him inspiration and inventive creativity. These Planets rule invention, design, and modern appliances.

He might be able to invent a very unusual device, if he is not stopped by domestic bothers. His wife is quite all right for him. Her Sun is in his solar Third House which is a help to his intellectual production.

You, on the other hand, have Sun in his solar Seventh House which rules his lifemate so you want to be the dominant influence in his life—working on him through his wife. It is a very unbalanced situation.

He would do well to move as far away from you as possible. It might be painful for you to be told these truths, but you must give him a chance to live his own life. Otherwise he will become that most pathetic of all men—a holder of his mother's apron strings. Would you wish such a tragedy for him? If not, let his wife rather than you stand by him until he finds the right opening—professionally.

The Venus Aspect During February

The first half of the month the Planet Venus is speeding through the Fire Sign Sagittarius—and speed is the right verb for the emotional fire it evokes. There will be speed elopements, surprise bethrothals, and perhaps unexpected breaks in engagements due in the latter instance to the square between Venus and Neptune. Someone may say something innocently and so start scandal on the rampage.

But in mid-month Venus moves over for its transit through the Earth Sign Capricorn, so emotions calm down—gradually becoming attuned to the trine of Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus. There will be several marital alliances between distinguished families. Material assets will count quite a bit in some marriages contracted during the latter half of February. But Mars still promoted emotionalism and romance.

The favorable Venus aspects during February: 4, 5, 15, 17, 26, 27.

The less favorable Venus aspects during February: 2, 8, 10, 13, 16, 24.
“Ruth!” cried Irving Silver. “Why, what’s the matter?”

She burst into sobs and Silver gazed in amazement at Reed.

“What have you been doing or saying to upset the poor kid?”

“It’s all my fault!” Ruth sobbed. “I came here pretending to be a maid, because I wanted that part in Mr. McLane’s play so much, and I wanted to show him I could act. But he’s furious with me because I did!”

“Look here, Silver,” said Reed. “Please tell me this girl’s name.”

Silver was bewildered.

“She’s Ruth Claire—of course!”

“And I said she was a rotten actress!” Reed laughed shortly. He strode forward to Ruth. “Why on earth didn’t you explain?”

“You—you even thought I was acting when I said I loved you!” Ruth sobbed. “You just refused to understand!”

“You don’t understand, even now,” he said. “I wasn’t thinking about your deceiving me about being a maid. I thought you’d come here to rob the place. Mrs. Higgs found my cigarette case among your things. Found out, too, that your reference was phony and that you hadn’t been sent by the employment agency.”

Ruth quickly told of finding his case and forgetting she had it.

“Then she gets the rôle?” Silver asked, still a little bewildered.

“Certainly not,” said Reed. “She’s going to be starred! She’s going to give up the rôle of maid for that of—wife! And now, will you please make yourself scarce?”

Silver grinned and went out. Reed took Ruth gently in his arms. He bent down and kissed her eyelids.

“Curtain coming down, dear,” he whispered.

“And I’m not acting,” she whispered back, as her arms went around his neck.
CARIBBEAN RENDEZVOUS
(Continued from page 98)

It’s Easy
to Be A Contractor

Learn to estimate, to plan buildings, to take contracting; and make money on them. Here are 9 up-to-the-minute books on building, contracting, and construction—which cover in an interesting way, the subjects that contractors, builders, and contractors should know to make the most out of their jobs—Roof Framing, The Steel Industry, Architectural Drawing and Design, Estimating, Painting and Decorating, Heating, Air Conditioning, Building, Contracting, Concrete Forms and other subjects are all well covered.

"Boss" Carpenters in Demand

Vast public works jobs, immense projects, and the rapid growth of home building, are making jobs for MEN WHO KNOW. Every pair of hands that will add to your quick training. With them you shouldn’t be afraid to tackle any job, for needed facts can be found in a hurry.

Coupon Brings Nine Books FREE For Examination

AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY (Publishers—Home Study Courses)
Dept. 62-347, Drexel at 85th Street, Chicago, Illinois

You may ship me the Up-to-Date edition of your nine big books, "Building, Estimating, and Contracting" without any obligation to buy. I will pay the delivery charge only, and if fully satisfied in ten days, I will send you $10.00 and after that only $3.00 a month, until the total price of only $39.00 is paid. I am not obligated in any way unless I keep the books.

Name

Address

City

State

Please attach a letter stating your age, employer’s name and address, and that of at least one business man as a reference.

Sinus-Catarrh-Head Cold

TRY THIS TO CLEAN THE NASAL CONGESTION

Flood the nasal passage with SINASIPTEC. Different, it loosens and fluxes out the thick, sticky, mucous secretion that often blocks drainage and causes headaches. Corrects breathing, as it cools and soothes hot, irritated, swollen nasal tissue. Money back if first bottle doesn’t convince you. Ask your druggist for SINASIPTEC today.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY 25c MAIL OFFER

Send only 25c coin with your name, address for demonstration size of the regular SINASIPTEC plus a 25c value nasal applicator free of all extra charges. Write direct to American Drug Corp., Dept. A-52, 6069 Maple, St. Louis, Mo.

DICE. CARDS.

Specialties for Magician use. Inks, Shiners, Check-Cop, Daubs. Catalog ten cents, stamps or coin. HILL BROS., Box T, Salida, Colo.

Best Crime Mystery Thrillers in

THRILLING DETECTIVE

EVERY MONTH 10c AT ALL STANDS

104
probably not make port until late the next morning, on New Year’s Day, the purser told them.

“But that’s awful!” exclaimed Valerie. “I’ve got to be in Panama tonight! I have an—an important engagement!” She saw Tex look at her queerly, and flushed.

“I’m afraid about everybody on board is going to be mighty disappointed,” said the purser. “They’ve all made plans, naturally, for celebrating New Year’s Eve ashore.” He shrugged. “Well, it can’t be helped.”

He went away.

Valerie stared after him, disappointment in her face. Tex continued to look at her.

“It looks like you won’t be able to keep your wedding date on schedule, after all,” he said.

She nodded.

“Charlie will be frightfully disappointed.”

“What about—you yourself?” he asked. She colored.

“What do you think?” Tex Sheridan hesitated.

“If you want to know the truth, I think you’re just the tiniest bit relieved,” he said boldly. Valerie was suddenly angry. Perhaps because his statement was partially true.

“How dare you say that!”

“Because it’s true,” Tex said quietly. He glanced about. They were quite alone. “Valerie, tell me—are you quite sure you’re really enough in love with Tuthill to marry him? You may not know it, but you’ve told me a lot about yourself—and him—the past few days, without realizing it.”

She colored, slowly.

“You might try minding your own business,” she suggested icily.

It was Tex’s turn to redden.

“I guess I deserved that,” he said slowly. “I’m sorry I said what I did. After all, you’re not a child. You certainly must know your own mind. And I guess it really isn’t my business, much as I would like it to be. I apologize.”
He turned and walked away. Valerie looked after him, with conflicting emotions. How dared he, a mere shipboard acquaintance!

She went off to send a radiogram to Charlie, explaining why the ship would be late. During the next hour or two, however, alone in her cabin, she could not help but search her mind. Could it be that Tex was right, after all? Nonsense! Would she have come two thousand miles without being sure of herself? Sure of her rightness for Charlie, and Charlie's for her?

There was a knock on the door. It was the steward, with the information that the captain would be host that evening to an impromptu New Year’s Eve party in the grand salon. It would be a costume party. He went on to notify the passenger next door.

Valerie's spirits lifted a little. She had been looking forward to celebrating New Year’s in Panama with Charlie, quite aside from their marriage plans. She loved New Year's Eve parties.

She thought of Tex again. She would forgive Tex, would be kind to him. After all, he apparently had a crush on her. That fact was no insult. And she felt, instinctively, that he really wanted her to be happy. It was that knowledge, perhaps, that made her feel so tender toward Tex in that moment.

GOING to pick her costume, she ran into Tex again, and gave him a radiant smile.

“It’s our last day aboard,” she said quickly. “Let's not fight, shall we?”

He grinned from ear to ear.

“Okay by me, Beautiful.”

It was fun to be friends again. .

Valerie picked out a nautical dancer’s costume, and Tex, that of a gaucho. Other passengers were already there, or joining them, forgetting the recent bad weather in the prospect of a party. Everyone’s disappointment had been great, on learning that the
boat would not arrive in Panama on
time.

There was a gala dinner that night, with favors, and afterward, a gala
dance in the recreation salon. It was the first time Valerie had ever danced
with Tex, and she found that he danced well. There was much gaiety,
and the blowing of horns and the
throwing of confetti. Outside, the
storm was completely over. The moon
was rising, and the Caribbean was
smooth as glass.

Midnight approached, and the hili-
arity waxed gayer. Valerie, to her
surprise, was enjoying herself immen-
sely. Charlie, waiting for her in
Panama, her imminent marriage,
seemed unreal and far away. It was
hard to understand, and she did not
trouble to try to understand it. She
was content to be having such fun
with Tex.

As twelve o'clock neared, she was
dancing with the man from Honduras,
humming in acompanion to the
music. Suddenly the ship's whistle
began to blow, and bells to ring wildly.
Someone was yelling and cheering out
on deck. It was midnight. The or-
chestra stopped in mid-music, and
suddenly began to play "Auld Lang
Syne," as people began to shout
"Happy New Year!"

Every other dancing couple nearby,
seemed, began to kiss each other, in
the time-honored custom.
"Happy New Year, Valerie!"

Tex's arms tightened around Val-
erie, and his lips came down on hers,
clung, for a delicious, infinitesimal
moment. It was a short kiss, but it
did things to Valerie. Her blood
tingled until every nerve seemed singing,
and it was as if the big yellow disc of
moon riding high in the blue velvet
sky outside, and the the stars and
even the sheen on the purply-green
Caribbean waters had all got mixed
up and were inside the salon to add
their joyousness to the kiss while
Tex's warm lips clung to hers.

[Byron Page]
They came apart reluctantly, looking seriously in each others’ eyes. Valerie swallowed hard, then turning swiftly, made for the door.

Tex followed her, onto the deck. They crossed to the rail, oblivious to the happy excitement all about them. Tex’s hand came down on hers, on the rail, pressed down tightly.

“It’s no use, darling—I’ve got to tell you,” he told her, his voice husky, throbbing. He stared out into the bright sea. “I love you, Valerie. I mean it as I’ve never meant anything in my life when I tell you I’ve loved you since the minute I first saw you. When I kissed you just now, I knew that I could never let you go out of my life—at least, not without trying to keep you in it, with all my might.”

He looked at her, his eyes glowing so warmly into hers that she could not tear her gaze away. “Valerie, darling, I haven’t much to offer you. I know what I’m asking you to give up when I ask you to marry me—New York, your smart friends, your luxuries. All I can offer is a simple home on a banana plantation in a Central American jungle, for right now.” He hesitated, and when he went on his voice was strained. “I know it’s no use, but I’m asking you anyway, Valerie—because I’m crazy about you. Will you marry me?”

Valerie stared straight ahead, seeing many things. Behind them, the passengers were still singing the sweet, nostalgic strains of “Auld Lang Syne.” She felt infinitely lonely, and infinitely sad. There were tears in her heart and her throat and her eyes.

“Will you?” asked Tex again, urgently. “Will you?”

She came back to reality. She had known Charlie for months—Tex, for only a few days. She knew Charlie’s life, his ways. They spoke the same language. This, she told herself, was only a shipboard romance. It could only be a passing thing, despite the unaccustomed pain that was in her.
She must not lose her head and say something that she would ever regret.

"I'm sorry, Tex. But I can't. It—it's too late, now."

"Why can't you?" His voice was suddenly harsh.

She was confused, upset.

"Because we're strangers, really. In a way, I've felt I've known you always, but everyone feels that way on shipboard. There are other things. There are... Oh, it's no use, Tex! It would never work out!"

"Not with a poor man like me, you mean!" he told her cuttingly. "Well, I can't blame you for preferring Park Avenue to the jungle."

"Tex!"

"A rich man like Tuthill, to a devil of a banana planter! I thought you were different—of finer stuff! I should have known better! Women are all alike!"

It was then that she slapped him, hard.

Tex looked at her, very stiff and still.

"I suppose I ought to say I hope you'll be very happy," he told her levelly. "But I'll say the truth, instead. I only hope you get what you deserve."

He turned then, and stalked away.

Valerie fled to her cabin. Somehow, she felt cheap and ashamed. But she hated Tex Sheridan. She hated him! She never wanted to see him again.

She never meant to... .

When the Quirigua docked at Panama the next morning, Valerie was one of the first to leave the ship. She did not wish to see Tex again, if she could help it.

Preceded by her hand baggage, Valerie walked down the gangplank to the dock, anxiously trying to pick out Charlie's face in the crowd that waited below.

There was no Charlie. She stood there, hesitant, wondering what had happened, when suddenly a taxi... [Turn Page]
streaked up to the pier, and rolled toward the gangplank. A man leaned out the window, waving wildly.

"Valerie!"

It was Charlie. A disheveled, untidy Charlie, still in a white dinner jacket, evidently worn all night. A Charlie who was apparently celebrating New Year’s Eve, in a big way.

As he half-climbed, half sprawled out of the cab, Valerie stiffened with repulsion. She had seen him like this before, in New York night clubs, but it had seemed only somewhat of a joke then, where playboys who overindulged were commonplace. But here in the bright sunlight, with interested passengers and smiling bystanders looking curiously on, she suddenly felt humiliated as she had never been. Supposing Tex saw him as he was now—the man she was going to marry!

"Charlie—don’t get out! I’ll get in!"

She tried to urge him back into the cab, but it was too late. He was already on the dock, swaying uncertainly on his feet, his weakly handsome face pasty in the sunshine.

"Valerie, m’bride!” he flung his arms open wide to take her in his embrace. “Aren’t you going to kiss your bridegroom?” He succeeded in kissing her cheek noisily, as she tried not to draw back too obviously, so as not to attract attention. “Wha’sh the big idea of keepin’ away from your wedding, huh? Wha’sh the big idea of making the boat late? You trying to—"

"Charlie, you’re impossible!” In her anger, she drew her arm away from his clutch. Her voice was low, tense.

“How could you come down to meet me in this disgusting condition? How could you get like this, knowing I was coming? Even if last night was New Year’s Eve?”

"New Year’s—trash right—but it was my weddin’ night, too,” he told her owlishly. “Had to celebrate, even if my bride did stand me up.”

He swayed on his feet, grinning
stupidly at her. A woman onlooker tittered, and Charlie waved to her, then gestured toward Valerie.

"Meet my bride, folks. Step up and meet Mrs. Charles Putnam Tuthill, Third!"

ONE of Valerie’s fellow passengers grinned at her. She overheard a whispered remark.

"I didn’t know Miss Creswell was married, did you?"

"Get back into that cab," she pleaded, but Charlie refused to budge.

He wanted to kiss her again. She turned to leave him, but he clutched at her arm, and stubbornly held on. Tears of rage and humiliation stung her eyes.

"So there you are! Sorry I kept you and your brother waiting!"

It was Tex, bearing rapidly down on them. He came up, seized Charlie with a steadying hand, and shook hands with him.

"Glad you could make it, old boy, even if you are still celebrating!"

How he managed it, Valerie never quite knew, but before she could realize it, it was accomplished. Tex had somehow maneuvered Charlie into the cab, and hurried her in behind him. He hopped in himself, and signaled to the driver to go. The driver started off.

Valerie stared at Tex, with unutterable gratitude in her eyes. By quick thinking and quicker action,
Free for Asthma During Winter

If you suffer with those terrible attacks of Asthma when it is cold and damp; if raw, Wintry winds make you choke as if each gasp for breath was the very last; if painful sleep is impossible because of the struggle to breathe; if you feel the disease is slowly wearing your life away, don’t fail to send an entire to the Frontier Asthma Co., for a free trial of a remarkable method. No matter where you live or whether you have any faith in any remedy under the sun, send for this free trial. If you have suffered for a lifetime and tried everything, you could learn of without relief; even if you are utterly discouraged, do not abandon hope, but send today for this free trial. It will cost you nothing. Address: Frontier Asthma Co. 462 Niagara St. Buffalo, N. Y.

FALSE TEETH
LOW AS
90 DAYS’ TRIAL
TEST THEM
$6.85 EXAMINE THEM
We make FALSE TEETH for you by mail from your own impressions. You have satisfied ECTION OF MONEY BACK GUARANTEE. Customers in United States and Canada report SATISFACTION but you be your own JUDGE. WRITE TODAY FOR FREE BROCHURE and MATERIAL.
CLEVELAND DENTAL SUPPLY CO.
Dept. 2-C1, East St. Louis, Illinois

Tex had saved her from further humiliation, out there on the dock. He had even made it appear that Charlie was her brother, and had been celebrating too heartily to realize what he was saying.

“Who’sh thisth?” asked Charlie amicably, slumped supinely on the back seat beside Valerie.

“I’m sorry I barged in,” Tex said to her, ignoring Tuthill. “But I had to. I couldn’t let you be—”

“I can’t thank you enough,” said Valerie, very low. She wondered why her heart was suddenly pounding so.

“I came after you to tell you before you left how sorry I was for what I said to you last night,” he went on. “I had no right—”

“What’d you say?” asked Charlie. “You been makin’ love behind my back to my bride?”

Valerie looked with acute disgust and repulsion at the man she had come so far to marry. She had never felt so ashamed.

“You’re tight, Charlie,” she accused again. “Be quiet!”

“What if I am? Man’s got a right to drink when he wants to, hasn’t he?” He grew argumentative. “Don’t you go start nagging me about my behavior, Valerie Creswell. We’re not married, yet.” He looked at Tex, owlishly. “Are we, friend?”

In this, her most humiliating moment, Valerie at last saw the truth. The truth she had been dodging for so long. When she spoke, it was to her fiancé, but her eyes were on Tex.

“No, we’re not married yet, Charlie—and we’re never going to be, now. You’ve set me free.”

Tex’s face lit up. They looked into each others’ eyes, ignoring the man between them.

“Do you mean that? Are you sure?”

“Very sure,” said Valerie. “You were right, Tex. I was wrong.” She leaned forward suddenly, and tapped the driver. “Stop, please.”

The cab stopped, and Tex helped her out onto the street. They continued to ignore Charlie, who was now falling into a drunken doze, on the back seat of the cab.

“I’m going back to the ship,” said Valerie. “I’m going home. Will you please tell the driver to take Charlie back to his hotel?”

“Sure,” said Tex. He gave the driver an order, and a bill.

The cab slid off. They stood there, looking at one another.

“The ship’s next stop is at Tela, Honduras, where I get off,” Tex said. “It would be a shame if you didn’t stop over for awhile, and see what a banana plantation looks like.”

Valerie looked into his eyes. There was suddenly a great happiness in her heart, a sureness and contentment that she had never known before. She smiled, faintly.

“Maybe I would, if I were asked properly.”

“I have a hunch that you’re not going to be a free woman very long,” said Tex Sheridan.

There on the street, oblivious to onlookers and traffic alike, the man from Honduras asked her properly.
LISTEN, GIRLS!
(Concluded from page 69)

A bracelet that holds fare and ‘phone money in its round monogrammed charm. Three nickels slip in and out with the ease of a conductor’s change maker!

Look for old-fashioned letter seals that used to dangle from men’s watch chains. Wear as many as you can gather on a chain around your wrist. Or wear your heart lockets as charms. Engaged girls wear one. Other as many as they like!

Head Lines

Spring, even the first faint harbingers, have a way of going to your head. Try this new hair-do for excitement. Part the hair from ear to ear across the head. Front hair is brushed up straight from the ears — no rolls! — fastened with bobby pins in back of a fluffy bang, the ends brushed forward to join the bang. Back hair forms a roll that follows the line of the head from ear to ear. Nice change from all those little upward curls.

Experience Meets

Doris B. of Springfield, Ohio, wins this month’s prize for her helpful hint. “It will soon be time to put fur coats and fur-collared coats away,” writes Doris B. “Dampen a soft cloth in vinegar and rub lightly over the fur in the direction of the hairs, to restore lustre and keep the moths away during the summer.”

A check for $1.00 has gone out to Doris for her pet trick which comes just in time for all to profit by. Why not send in your own secret short cut or bright idea? A dollar is paid each month for the best.

Next Month’s Issue

Readers, be on hand to enjoy the delightful romances coming next month! You’ve no idea how utterly gay, charming and altogether delightful they are!

First—LOVE ON TRIAL, a really gripping novel of the experiences of a woman lawyer, by MARION WHITE. Full of scintillation and sparkle, it nevertheless presents some heart problems that will provide food for thought. Then—PROFESSIONAL BEAUTY, a bright, glamorous novelet by HELEN AHERN—and many other fascinating stories!

I’ll see you then—and we’ll all enjoy the gala April issue from cover to cover. Meanwhile, do read my Charm Column on page 12 of this issue, won’t you?
In business or industry, you’re paid for your ability to do a job. Small ability — small pay. Big ability — big pay.

The measure of your ability is your training for the job — the amount of practical knowledge you have in your head. How much do you have in yours?

You can increase “the price on your head” — and get a “head-start” on job-competition — by increasing and modernizing your training, through spare-time study of an I. C. S. course in your line of work. I. C. S. Courses have helped hundreds of thousands of men achieve security and success. They cover 400 business and technical subjects!

Mark this coupon, and mail it today — for a brighter tomorrow!

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO AMBITIOUS AMERICANS

BOX 3969-R, SCRANTON, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, “Who Wins and Why,” and full particulars about the course before which I have marked X:

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

- Agriculture
- Air Conditioning
- Architectural Drafting
- Architecture
- Auto Engineering
- Auto Technician
- Avionics
- Boilermaking
- Bridge Engineering
- Building Estimating
- Chemistry
- Civil Engineering
- Coal Mining
- Concrete Engineering
- Contracting and Building

- Cotton Manufacturing
- Diesel Engines
- Electrical Drafting
- Electrical Engineering
- Electric Lighting
- Fire Protection
- Foundry Work
- Fruit Growing
- Heating
- Heat Treatment of Metals
- Highway Engineering
- House Planning
- Locomotive Engineer
- Machinist
- Management of Inventions

BUSINESS COURSES

- Accounting
- Advertising
- Bookkeeping
- Business Correspondence
- Business Management
- Cartography
- Civil Service

- College Preparatory
- Commercial
- Cost Accounting
- C.P. Accounting
- First Year College

HOME ECONOMICS COURSES

- Advanced Dressmaking
- Home Dressmaking
- Professional Dressmaking and Designing

- Business Correspondence
- Business Management
- Cartography
- Civil Service

- College Preparatory
- Commercial
- Cost Accounting
- C.P. Accounting
- First Year College

- Advanced Dressmaking
- Home Dressmaking
- Professional Dressmaking and Designing

R.R. Section Foreman
R.R. Signalman
Refrigeration
Sanitary Engineering
Sheet Metal Work
Steam Electric
Steam Engines
Steam Fitting
Structural Drafting
Structural Engineering
Surveying and Mapping
Telegraph Engineering
Textile Designing
Toolmaking
Welding, Electric and Gas
Woolen Manufacturing
Railway Postal Clerk
Salesmanship
Secretarial
Sign Lettering
Traffic Management

Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools, Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada
British residents send coupon to I. O. B., 71 Kingsway, London, W. 6, England
Genuine-Late
UNDERWOOD
NOISELESS
Now
$3485
CASH

OR
EASY TERMS While THEY Last!

Truly an outstanding offer!
Only because of an exception!
only $34.85 cash, or
at only 70c a week on
my
easy term price.
Each one
carefully rebuilt so that
it looks like a new machine
costing as much as much.
The
mfrs. orig. selling price
was $125.00.

A NOISELESS MACHINE

Latest achievement in typewriters!
Provides writing perfection with
SILENCE. For those who want the
advantages of a quiet home or office.
This Underwood's "Noiseless"
mechanism eliminates the nerve-shattering
effect common to many models. An
aid to better work because it allows
clear thinking, reduces fatigue, im-
proves accuracy. This typewriter
disturbs no one, for it is almost
impossible to hear it operate a few
feet away. You get all the features
of an Underwood PLUS Noiseless
typing.

FIRST CHOICE OF TYPISTS

OVER 5,000,000 UNDERWOODS NOW IN USE!
Recognized as the finest, strongest built! Here is an
office-size Underwood with late modern features
that give you SILENT TYPING. Has all standard equip-
ment—keyboard, 2 color, back space, automatic reverse
and tabulator, etc. THERE IS NO RISK! SEE
BEFORE YOU BUY ON MY 10 DAY NO OBLIGA-
TION TRIAL PLAN. If you wish send the machine
back at my expense.

WIDE 14" CARRIAGES

Wide carriage machines for government re-
ports, large office forms, billing, etc., only
$2.00 extra with order. Takes paper 14"
wide, has 12" writing line. A Real Buy in
a rebuilt Underwood Noiseless!

International Typewriter Exchange
231 W. Monroe St. Dept. 380 Chicago, Ill.

EXTRA VALUE!
TYPEWRITER STAND

Mounted on

Two Wings
Correct
Working
Height
All Metal

For those who have no typewriter stand or
bundy place to use a machine. I make this spe-
cial offer. This attractive stand that ordinarily
sells for $4.85 can be yours for only 70c extra
to your account. Quality built. Note all
its convenient features. (See coupon.)

NO MONEY DOWN
10 DAY TRIAL

Easy Terms—10c A Day

No obligation. See before you buy
on wide open 10 day trial. Pay
no money until you test, inspect,
compare, and use this Underwood Noise-
less. Judge for yourself without
hurry and without risk. When you
are convinced that this is the biggest
typewriter bargain you have ever
seen then say, "I'll Buy." Send only
70c a week or $3.00 a month until
term price of only $38.85 is paid.
Try it first, enjoy a full 10 days'
steady use. There is no red tape
or investigation—My offer is exactly as
I state it.

2-YEAR GUARANTEE

I back this machine with my per-
sonal 2-yr. guarantee that it is in
A-1 condition in every respect—that
it will give first class service. Over
30 years of fair dealing and my
200,000 satisfied customers prove
the soundness of my golden rule policy
and prove that dealing direct with
me saves you money.

Touch Typing Course

A complete home study course of famous Van Zandt
Touch Typing system. Learn to type quickly and easily.
Carefully illustrated. Written expressly for home use.

MAIL COUPON NOW: Limited Quantity on Sale!

International Typewriter Exchange, Dept. 380, 231 W. Monroe St., Chicago, Ill.

Send Underwood Noiseless (P.O.R. Chicago) for ten days' trial. If I keep it, I will pay
$3.00 per month until easy term price ($38.85) is paid. If I am not satisfied I can return
it express collect.

Check for typewriter stand ($2.00 extra) and send on receipt of first payment on Underwood.

Name

Address

City

CAUTION—For quick shipment give occupation and reference.
WE SAVED OVER
1/2 50.00

136 Styles and Sizes
GAS RANGES
HEATERS
COAL AND WOOD RANGES
FURNACES
Combination Gas, Coal and Wood Ranges

KALAMAZOO GAVE US UP TO
18 MONTHS TO PAY

Write your name and address on coupon below. Mail today—Get sensational New Free Kalamazoo Catalog.

America's outstanding values in Ranges, Heaters, Furnaces—alive with new features, new ideas, new equipment. Easiest terms—up to 18 months to pay. Direct-to-You Factory Prices. 30 Days Trial. 24 hour shipments. Satisfaction or money back. More bargains than in 20 big stores. Over 1,600,000 satisfied users. 41 years in business.

Sparkling New Gas Ranges with every late feature (for bottled, manufactured, or natural gas)—New Coal and Wood Ranges that save you 1/3 to 1/2. Dual Oven Combination Coal-Wood and Gas Ranges (which can be equipped to burn oil). New Coal and Wood Heaters. New Oil Heater bargains. Oil Ranges. Nearly 300 Factory Stores in 14 states. Ask for address of store nearest you.

Kalamazoo Stove & Furnace Co., Manufacturers
493 Rochester Ave., Kalamazoo, Michigan

Dear Sirs: Send FREE FACTORY CATALOG.
Check articles in which you are interested:
☐ Combination Gas, Coal and Wood Ranges
☐ Coal and Wood Ranges
☐ Gas Ranges
☐ Oil Ranges
☐ Oil Heaters
☐ Furnaces

Name ...........................................................................
(Print name plainly)

Address ....................................................................

City ...........................................................................
State ..............