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APRIL 25, 1936

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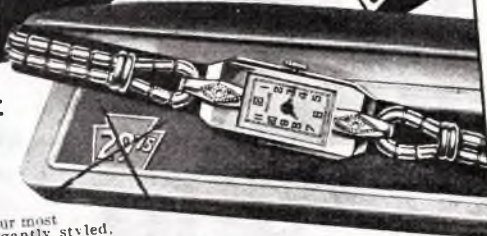
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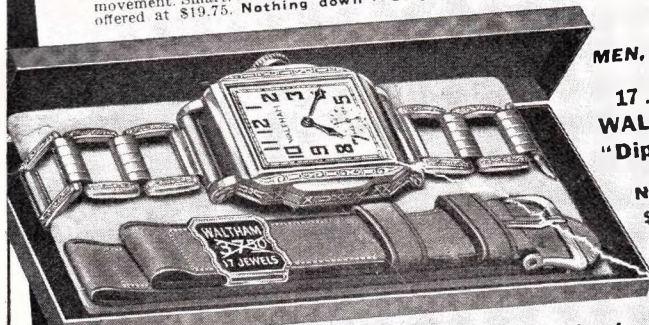
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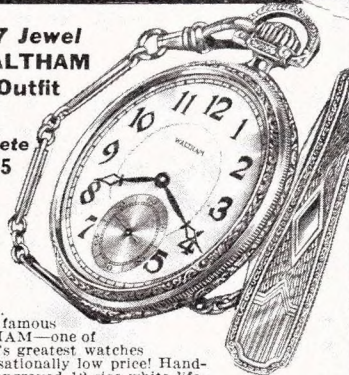


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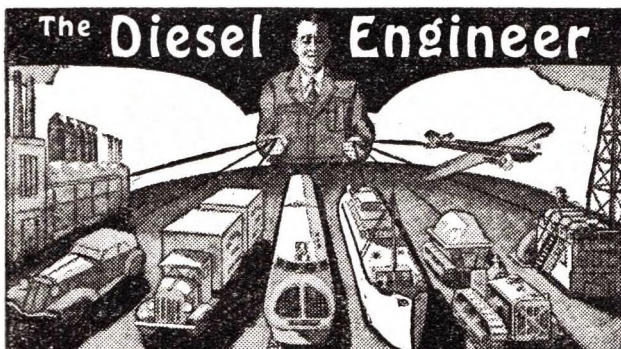
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A SERIAL—Part I.

# Imitation Honeymoon

By Jane Littell

## CHAPTER I.

**M**ARYANN THURSTON—  
going to marry a gangster!  
All about the latest society  
scandal!"

Cole Auburn thought at first it  
was a bad dream. Just one more

nightmare brought on by her un-  
fortunate resemblance to the society  
heiress. But the raucous voice of  
the newsboy came closer and closer.  
And Cole knew she was awake. The  
pale November sun was shining in  
her window. The alarm clock on  
the dresser said eight o'clock. She





sat up in bed and listened, and the voice went on and on. Yet she couldn't believe her ears.

Then she was out of bed, running to the window. She fumbled in her purse for change, flung down a dime and told the boy to ring the doorbell and throw the paper in.

Then she stuck her feet in slippers, pulled on her worn old bath robe and rushed down the stairs to get it.

Sure enough. There it was. Spread all over the first page of one of the more sensational dailies was a photograph that Cole might have posed for, except the hair in the photograph was lighter than Cole's bronze chestnut.

"Maryann to marry Gentleman Jack Bailey!"

That was important enough to crowd even the news that repeal was a fact over onto the second page!



This was the crowning escapade of madcap Maryann's thrill-hunting career. Wouldn't the girl stop at anything to get her name into the papers? And every crazy, wild thing Maryann did made it more and more impossible for Cole to earn a living.

The trouble for Cole began two years before, when Maryann was arrested for speeding, refused to pay her fine and spent thirty much publicized days in jail, with her picture in the papers every day.

The two years since had seen Cole slip from success as a highly paid photographic model, to a place where no advertising agency dared use her, because she looked so much like Maryann that Maryann herself might have posed for the advertising pictures. Just as Cole might have posed for that newspaper portrait of Maryann.

It was ghastly. And it was so unfair. Cole had worked hard for her success, only to have it slide away from her, through no fault of her own, like water running down a hill.

George Wilson, head of the Models' Guild, had even shown her a letter Maryann wrote to an advertiser, threatening to sue him if he didn't stop using those photographs. And George had regretfully told her she had better get into some other line of work.

But wherever she went, whatever she tried to do, people thought she was Maryann Thurston, up to some more devilment, and refused to be taken in by her pleas.

During the last two years, when Maryann had announced, and broken, engagement after engagement, to European royalty, to society men, even to a prize fighter and a floor walker, and once got as far as the altar and told the assembled wedding guests there in the

very church she had changed her mind, her face had become as well known as any famous movie star's.

Cole couldn't put her nose outside the door without being mistaken for Maryann. She couldn't get a job because people thought she was Maryann. And that morning as she sat on the edge of her hard bed in that cheap room, staring at that newspaper, there was exactly seven cents in her bank account and a dollar in her purse, and not a soul in the world to turn to. Something had to be done! Had to!

She read the story. Maryann had told reporters that she and Jack had loved each other for two years, but that he wouldn't marry her until the prohibition laws were repealed, and he could get out of his dangerous business of running rum. But now that the news had come from Washington that repeal would be a fact, she and Jack would be married, he would turn one of his rum ships into a honeymoon yacht and they would sail away to happiness.

"Hooey!" jeered poor Cole, hopeless tears stinging her eyelids. "Now you'll be in the paper every day." She shook her fist at the smiling photograph.

"I ought to make you pay for ruining my life," she told the picture. "All I wish is that you could change places with me for about a month. And probably starve, as I will."

Then she was face downward on that lumpy bed, sobbing out her forlorn despair. And presently, out of that despair came a desperate idea.

She sat up quickly.

Maybe if Maryann knew what she had done to Cole, Maryann would help her. Even a small loan would be a godsend. Or even some sort of help in getting a job. Well



why not try? She couldn't lose anything by trying.

Swiftly, before she should lose her courage, she bathed and dressed. She put on a hat with a polka-dot veil that sometimes kept people from thinking they recognized her. Then she was hurrying along Fifty-second Street toward Fifth Avenue, and the bus that went past the big pile of marble that was the Thurston home.

And there, right in the middle of the block, she stopped stock-still. On a marquee ahead of her rose big letters that spelled "Jack Bailey's Rendezvous!"

"Gentleman Jack" Bailey's night club! Speakeasy. She knew about the place. Who didn't in speakeasy days? It was one of the few speak-easies that blatantly proclaimed itself. A place of good food, better liquor and extravagant prices. The fact that nothing was done about closing it proved how important and dangerous Jack Bailey was.

There was a crowd there under the marquee. Cole saw a camera. Newspapermen there to interview Jack about his engagement to Maryann, probably. Cole pulled her collar up about her face and ducked across the street. She was thinking that if Maryann refused to see her, or help her, Jack Bailey might.

She was scooting along the other side of the street, intent only on getting away from there, when hurried footsteps caught up with her, a hand caught her arm, and a voice said:

"Out pretty early, aren't you, Maryann?"

She flashed one look at that hard, cruel face, and broke away running. Traffic was crossing Fifth Avenue when she got there. She crossed with it, and flung herself into a bus headed uptown, just as the lights

changed, and collapsed in her seat with a sobbing sigh of relief.

What kind of girl could Maryann be to know such awful creatures as that one who had grabbed her arm? Oh, she had to get away where no one had ever heard of Maryann Thurston. Somehow she had to!

She rode along, planning how she would appeal to Maryann—provided the Thurston servants would let her in—her heart hammering with despairing hope and frightened anticipation, staring unseeing out the window. She didn't pay any attention when some one sat down beside her.

Just when she became conscious of the long black car that stayed alongside, she didn't know. But presently, she realized it was keeping pace with her bus, that from its darkened interior a face was turned in her direction. Some one else who thought she was Maryann.

She flounced around in her seat and the man beside her said softly, out of the corner of his mouth.

"Have a fight with your sweetie, Maryann?"

She jerked around and looked. The same man who had grabbed her! That awful surge of terror half lifted her from her seat, and her heart did some spasmodic thing that almost choked her.

A lift of his eyebrows, a faint gesture of his head toward the window, made her look again. She had a glimpse of olive skin, black eyes, a wisp of a black mustache, and a flashing impression that the man in the car was taut with anxiety. Although the face, except for the burning black eyes, seemed to be expressionless.

Then that voice in her ear jerked her head around again and the hard cruelty in the face, together with the hard something that was poking



against her side, made her stifle a scream. For he said:

"We're getting off at the next red light, and into the taxi that pulls up at the step. And if you let out one single yip, it'll be your last. Get me?"

"I won't do it," she whispered, faint with terror. "I'm not Maryann. I——"

"Sure, I know. You're six other people. Here we are."

Steel fingers gripping her arm, that hard something—a gun of course—against her back, propelled the helpless, terrified girl to the steps of the bus.

A taxi just ahead of the long black car slowed down, crowding the black car away from the

bus. The taxi drew up to the steps, the door open. The man with the gun was about to force her in, when the taxi, brakes shrieking, was shoved ahead by the black car behind it. And the door of the black car opened.

The man in the black car called sharply, "Jump for it, Maryann!" If he was Jack Bailey, and they all thought she was Maryann, she'd be safer with him, came a terrified thought.



*Cole sat on her hard bed in her cheap room, hopeless tears stinging her eyelids. There was exactly seven cents in her bank account and a dollar in her purse, and not a soul in the world to turn to. Something had to be done! Had to!*



Recklessly she jumped. She landed in a huddled heap on the floor of the black car. And the door slammed shut.

"Stay there," her rescuer commanded sternly. And she stayed, partly because she was told to, and partly because what she saw in the hands of the black-eyed man almost paralyzed her with terror. A long, strange-looking gun with the barrel resting on the edge of the open window! A gun that held her would-be kidnaper a gaping prisoner on the bus steps, his hands in the air!

The light changed to green. The taxi must have got out of the way, for the black car leaped ahead. The black-eyed man put his gun on the seat and closed the window.

"You stay on the floor," he admonished her sternly. "This car is bullet proof, but even bullet-proof glass isn't bomb proof. If that one-cell brain of yours can comprehend it, you have declared a war to the death, and no quarter to be expected anywhere. Jack telephoned you and warned you. What's the idea of exposing yourself? Did you think that fool wig and rag of a veil would be any protection, Maryann!"

"Please!" she whimpered. "I—I'm not——"

"Listen, you irritating idiot," he went on grimly. "If they can't get Jack any other way, they can get him to come to terms if they kidnap you, can't they? Haven't you got any sense——"

He probably said more, but Cole didn't hear it. The heart and brain can stand just so much terror, and then nature mercifully draws a black curtain. Consciousness faded for Cole. She slumped against the door in a faint.

When the black curtain parted again, she was lying across his knees, her head lower than her body, and

he was admonishing the driver to hurry.

"Please!" she whispered, stirring. He lifted her carefully, sat her on the seat, but kept an arm about her. "Where are you taking me?"

"Home," he said. "It's the only safe place for you. And I'm pleading with you, if you love Jack, if you have any regard for our friendship, if you want us to have any chance at all, don't leave that house again. Promise?"

So he wasn't Jack Bailey! That much penetrated her numbed brain. But he thought she was Maryann and he was taking her home. Taking her to Maryann's home. And once she got there, what?

Before she could decide, he had snapped up one of the drawn shades, and was staring down at her, with an expression of shocked astonishment.

"Merciful heavens!" he murmured, under his breath. "You're not Maryann!"

He reached over and took her hat off. She waited in helpless terror while he set his fingers in her hair and pulled, as if he had to make himself believe that the brown hair wasn't a wig. Then, with his eyes frightening her even more, he demanded harshly:

"Who are you?"

"I—I'm Cole Auburn," she gasped. "This horrible resemblance has driven me almost mad. Things like this—I can't bear any more! I'll go crazy! I was on my way to the Thurstons to tell them they've got to help me. They——"

"Things like this have happened before?" he asked sharply.

"Not this bad, but in a restaurant one night, my escort had to knock a man down," she whimpered. "I can't get a job. People say things—do things——"

"Boy! I sure spilled the beans, didn't I?" he said ruefully. Then after a pause: "We saw you from the window, saw Lefty Polano grab you, and I came running. I saw him follow you onto that bus, saw three more of that mob follow in a taxi and——"

He broke off to smile at her, and the scar on his cheek was the only thing that kept that smile from being very reassuring. Even the sinister quirk it gave his handsome mouth couldn't quite spoil it, though. She shut her eyes, to let that first faint wave of relief calm her awful terror, if it would.

That twisted smile told her she could trust him. She had to trust him, but it was such a relief to know deep down in her heart that she could. He wasn't Jack Bailey, but he had saved her from that "Lefty" Polano, and he wouldn't let her down now.

Even the constant wary watch he kept out the windows was reassuring. He had to protect her to protect himself.

A wavering smile answered his.

"And I thought I was giving Maryann the bawling out I'd been aching to give her for months," he said ruefully. "Forgive me?"

Her trembling hands went fluttering out to him in helpless appeal. He caught them in his warm ones, held them, and it was as if his own warm courage sent courage rilling through her.

"Are we—are we safe now?" she quavered.

"I think so. We've got two carloads of bodyguards convoying us. I'll get you into the Thurston house, and the Thurstons will have to keep you there. Their servants have been replaced by secret-service operatives, and their house is like a fortress. All because one fool girl

wants her own way—and usually gets it."

"What's the matter with her, anyway?" asked Cole, almost breathless with the thrill of the warm contact of his hands. It was amazing what his touch did to her. "She certainly likes to see her name in the papers."

"She's crazy mad about Jack Bailey," he said. "And crazy mad is the exact wording for it. They've been in love for two years, and he refused to marry her, until prohibition was repealed, on account of scandal and"—he hesitated a moment, then said—"and danger. She told him—I heard it—that she'd make herself just as notorious as he was. And she has."

"I'll say she has!" Cole exclaimed resentfully. "And wrecked my life doing it."

"If we all live through this," he assured her, "she's pulled her last crazy stunt. Jack promised to marry her when repeal came and he could get out of the racket. Well, repeal came, and she announced the engagement. She announced, too, that Jack was quitting the racket, and the underworld declared war. Jack knows too much to be allowed to quit and live. So you see the crisis she has precipitated."

"Wh-what will happen?" Cole asked with a little gasp.

"War," he said with a shrug. "You went through the preliminary skirmish. But you've suffered more than enough on her account. The least the Thurstons can do is keep you in their home and give you the same protection they give her, until it's over. I'll see that they do."

Two long blasts of the horn made her jump.

"Ah!" he said with quite evident relief. "Here we are."

Tall iron gates opened for them and the car swept inside. Another





*Filled with terror, consciousness faded for Cole. When she came to, she was lying across the stranger's knees, and he was admonishing the driver of the car to hurry.*

car followed it. A third pulled up at the curb, and Cole, flinging a hasty glance around, saw a man with a gun at the window of the car at the curb. Four men got out of the car be-

hind them and came to surround them. Then reporters and cameramen seemed to swarm out of nowhere.

"Aw, come on, Maryann! You never were camera shy before. Come out from behind that brown wig. We know you. And you might as well give us a break, Jack. If you're quitting the racket you needn't be camera shy any longer."

Their bodyguard surrounding them, the dark man clutching Cole's arm, they hustled along. It was only a step from the car to the door.

"They—they called you Jack!" panted Cole, when they were safe inside.

"They called you Maryann, too," he said, with a grin.

She put her hand to her heart, as if to ease its sudden pounding ache. It was fantastic, unbelievable. But if it was true, a whole world of marvelous possibilities were opening up before her very eyes.

"You mean—you don't mean— Oh, you can't mean—he's got a double, too? You're in the same fix I am! Oh, do you mean that?"

If he was, where there was safety for him, there was safety for her! In that one flashing instant, she set her nails into her palms, closed her eyes, her whole being one frantic prayer. Like a dream that covers a lifetime in a few seconds, so came a burst of inspiration, a picture of what life could be for her. For them together!

"Why not?" he said with that twisted smile and a little shrug. "Nature must have her little joke. If she repeats a pattern once, she can do it twice, can't she? A little collodion makes a lovely scar, and make-up does the rest."

"But—why make yourself look like a gangster? I can't help looking like Maryann!"

The twisted smile died at her words, and was replaced by such grimness that all her terror came back with a rush.

"Please!" she whispered. "Don't be offended. I didn't mean——"

"Why?" he repeated, his black eyes narrow slits, his mouth a hard, thin line. "For money, my good girl. What else does a man ever risk his neck for? Yes, money. Lots of it."

The lightning change in his manner, his mood, his expression came too bewilderingly fast to comprehend.

"Oh!" she wailed, half under her breath. "Then you're a gangster, too! And I was hoping—hoping—you were in the same fix I am, so you'd help me."

That brought back his smile.

"Adventurer is a nicer word, isn't it?" he asked. "And I am in the same fix you are, only I got into it deliberately. But I'll help you. You can count on that and trust me. Yes, Benson?" he said to the butler who hovered at his elbow.

"In the library, Mr. Bailey," the servant said respectfully.

"And he called you Mr. Bailey," she whispered, bewildered.

"Not very many people know," he said, very low. "I'm trusting you with my life."

"Oh, you can trust me! I'll never, never tell," she vowed.

They had reached the top of the broad, curving stairs, when a small, flying figure flung itself upon the man.

"Darling! Darling!" Maryann cried. "Oh, you darling!"

"Now, now! How about looking before you leap?" he said, removing the arms that had flung themselves about his neck.

"O-oh." Maryann removed herself with a little wail of disappoint-



ment. "You even fooled Benson that time."

Then she turned to look at Cole, for the first time.

Her rouged lips fell apart. Her eyes—amber and so exactly like Cole's—almost bulged.

"For Pete's sake!" she gasped, and her hands went out to touch the girl, as if she couldn't possibly believe her eyes. "Stefan! Who—what——"

The man she had called Stefan laughed.

"I tried to pull her wig off myself," he said.

"Honestly, it's—it's more uncanny——" Maryann began, staring, touching, a thousand thoughts chasing themselves over her expressive little face.

Cole, staring back, was thinking, "Am I really that beautiful?"

It was like looking into a mirror. Staring into Maryann's amber eyes was like staring into her own, with the same haunting something in them, the same shadows about them. The same pert nose. The same high cheek bones. The same dimple in the determined chin. The only difference was the hair. Maryann's was a dull-bronze, not quite gold. Cole's was a dark, fluffy halo.

Suddenly Maryann smiled, and even their teeth were the same!

"Forgive me, but I never had such a shock in my life. And I never was so curious." Then, with a little gasp of amazement: "I'll bet you're a model! I wouldn't be surprised if the advertising people were telling the truth! I accused them of faking those pictures. You know, doctoring them, using my face and some other girl's figure——"

"And then I couldn't get any more work," Cole broke in.

"I'll make it up to you." Maryann slipped her arm through Cole's.

"Let's go show you to mother and dad. Oh, Stefan, the possibilities this opens up! Oh, dear! How much does she know?"

"She knows I'm Jack's double," he told her. "I let the cat out of the bag before I discovered she wasn't you."

"Then that's all right," said Maryann, with vast satisfaction. "Isn't it wonderful? Jack with a double and me with a double! Oh, we could slip away and be married and leave you two behind to fool the newspapers—— Stef, this is marvelous!"

"I doubt if Cole thinks so," said Stefan with a chuckle.

"Well, she will. You wait and see. Cole, how would you like to be me the rest of your life? Live here, and do the social stuff I'm supposed to do, all the money you want, loads of friends? While Jack and I—— Oh, Stef! I'll love you forever for finding her and bringing her here!"

"Yes? Suppose I told you I'd rescued her from mobsters who thought they'd snatched you? Suppose I told you the girl isn't safe any place on earth except in this house? And you aren't either."

"Not—really!" Maryann looked from one to the other.

"I wish it had been you, you little harum-scarum idiot," Stefan snapped. "It might have scared some sense into you."

"You should have heard the bawling out he gave me, before he found out I wasn't you," Cole told her.

"And I'm going to repeat it to the person it was intended for, too," said Stefan sternly.

Then they were in the library, and Mr. and Mrs. Thurston were as amazed as Maryann had been. Stefan didn't give them time to recover from their amazement before



*Cole and Stefan had just reached the top of the broad stairs, when a small flying figure flung itself upon him. "Darling! Darling!" she cried. Cole stared in amazement.*

he plunged into the story of the morning's adventure.

Mr. Thurston groaned. Mrs. Thurston cried and sat there wringing her hands, and whispering. "It

might have been Maryann. It might have been my very own baby. Oh, dear!"

"They wouldn't have hurt Maryann," Stefan went on, with cruel re-



lentlessness. "They'd hold her to threaten Jack with. But if they'd got away with Cole, and then found out she wasn't Maryann, do you think they'd have turned her loose to warn you and identify them? You owe Cole exactly the same protection you give Maryann."

"Of course! Of course!" Mr. Thurston declared hurriedly. "What a dreadful experience for you! You'll remain here as our guest, of course. We'll do everything we can to make it up to you."

So she had temporary safety, anyway, and a roof over her head and food to eat. For the moment, that seemed blessing enough. A little respite anyway. No more dodging the landlady for a while. No more going without meals. No more sleepless nights of worry.

And when Stefan smiled at her, with warm relief in his eyes—yes, even something better than relief—her heart turned over and a song of happiness wanted to bubble up.

## CHAPTER II.

In the luxurious room Mrs. Thurston had told her would be hers, Cole walked the floor, her elated relief at safety gone, conscious only that Stefan was somewhere in that house, alone with Maryann. Giving Maryann the message Jack had sent.

A strange loneliness, fraught with stabbing streaks of premonition, nagged at her. Maryann's first thought had been of how she could benefit from their amazing resemblance. There had been something crafty, something eager and secretive about the glances Mr. and Mrs. Thurston exchanged. Only Stefan seemed to have any real, unselfish concern for her. And Stefan wouldn't be there. Stefan! Stefan!

That growing uneasiness kept her  
**LS—2B**

pacing up and down. She tried to tell herself it was only the natural nervous reaction. The Thurstons, all of them, had been marvelous. They had given her shelter and protection when there wasn't any safety for her any place else in the world. Then why this nameless, creeping fear that seemed to be closing in on her? What did they expect of her? Would they leave her alone in this room day and night? Luxurious as the room was, it was a prison. How long would she be a prisoner there? What would happen to her when she left? Stefan! Stefan!

Almost in answer to her unspoken call, flying footsteps came down the hall. Maryann popped in.

"Stefan wants to say good-by to you. Come along to my sitting room," Maryann said.

And that was all it needed to send Cole's heart soaring again.

She hadn't any idea what banners of happiness were flaring in her eyes as she followed Maryann down the hall, or as she went in to meet Stefan. But she did see the flame that leaped into his eyes as he came across the room and caught her hands.

"Scram," Stefan said to Maryann. "This is a twosome."

"Oh! Oh! Like that, is it?" she said, as she went out.

"Cole, listen," he whispered urgently, when they were alone. "There will be wheels within wheels in this, intrigue upon intrigue. This is the one place you'll be safe from Jack's enemies, but you'll have to watch your step with Maryann's parents. They wouldn't stop at anything to break up her affair with Jack. They'd be glad to see his enemies get him, and they would betray him without the slightest compunction."

"They'd sacrifice you or me or Jack, or all of us, to keep Maryann from marrying Jack. They'll cook up some scheme and proposition you. Be prepared for that. You can always tell them you'll think it over. I'll be dropping in every day or so and you can tell me about it. But promise me you won't let them bribe you to leave this house."

"Of course, Stefan," she said.

That ardent something flamed in his eyes again, and she thought for a moment he was going to kiss her. She even lifted her lips in anticipation, but he only caught her close and laid his cheek against her hair.

After a moment he said: "You may think it is safer to ally yourself with people like the Thurstons than with the head of the rum ring, Cole, but it isn't. I've been with Jack since the market crash in 1929 and I've never known him to break his word or fail a friend. You can judge what sort of man he is when Maryann's published announcement of their engagement and his retirement is his death warrant, and he loves her enough to forgive her even that."

"How he must love her!" she said.

"He's mad about her, and he was trying to get everything set to disappear with her until she threw the monkey wrench into the machinery."

"And leave you—in his place?"

He laughed softly. "Maybe. You mustn't ask questions, pretty."

"But that was the first thing Maryann said!" she remembered. "That they could run away and leave us here in their places and then our danger would never end!"

"Yours would," he said, his black eyes burning down into hers. "It would be very simple. Maryann's parents would announce that the engagement was broken. You would

go about as Maryann, maybe get yourself engaged and married, and when there was no longer any connection between Maryann's name and Jack's, the mobs couldn't reach Jack through you."

"Oh!" she cried, new panic surging up. "I begin to see! Jack and Maryann would be gone and safe. Then if they kidnaped me, thinking I was Maryann, no one—the Thurstons or you—would do anything to save me! And if I told them I wasn't Maryann, they'd kill me!"

She was staring up at him in horrified understanding. Staring, but not seeing for the sheen of tears that misted her eyes.

"Cole, don't!" he groaned. "Do you think I'd sacrifice you? I wouldn't! I couldn't! I promise you—and I've never broken a promise—I'll protect you. With my life. Dear, dear Cole——"

"Am I dear to you?" she whispered, clinging to him.

He caught her closer, laid his cheek against her hair. Was it to keep her from seeing his face?—she wondered. She had to know. She lifted her head, offered her lips, so hungry for his kiss, that she'd have welcomed it, had it been a Judas kiss.

"Cole," he whispered. Was that anguish in his eyes? Something so full of pain that the pain transferred itself to the girl. Then he laid his lips on hers, and the pain died.

That thrilling, warming touch of his hands had only been a faint portent of what his kiss would be. Her arms crept up about his neck and held him fast. Her lips trembled beneath the breathtaking possessiveness of his.

"Cole, sweet," he murmured at last. "Don't tempt me so. Love has been denied me for so long. It is still denied me. I've sold my life,





*She had given her heart, her lips, all her love, to a man who had sold his life to a gangster! The only person she could trust to protect her was a man whose own life was in pawn!*

sold honor, sold my future to Jack. If they can be redeemed——”

He kissed her again, lightly. On the eyes, the throat, and finally with

light tenderness, the tip of her nose.

“See what you do to a man who ought to be figuring out how to save our lives,” he scolded her.

"I can't help it," she told him, with a happy sigh, the lovely rose flush deepening and paling. "I—I'm afraid I'm in love with you."

"I know I'm in love with you," he said.

"Oh, I'm glad! Glad! Glad!" she cried. "It's absolutely perfect! Wherever you'll be safe, I'll be safe, and it won't matter where, because we'll be together and we'll be happy."

"Sweet!" he said, kissing her again. "You almost make me forget we've got a war on our hands."

"Oh, Stefan!" she sighed, the amber eyes big with new anxiety. "One minute you make me feel so safe, and the next you frighten me to death."

"You and Maryann are perfectly safe just so long as you don't leave this house, and you've both promised."

"But you—and Jack?" she asked. "If anything happens to either of you, it will be Maryann's fault. Oh, Stefan! I—I couldn't bear it! Take care of yourself. Promise!"

"I'm just as anxious to live as you are, sweet."

"But you said you sold your life and——"

"I may not have to deliver it up," he said, kissing her again.

"Oh, Stefan! I'll never have a minute's peace when you're away from here. Can't you stay here, too?" she wailed.

"Neither Jack nor I ever stir without two cars trailing us, and plenty of guns in each. We take every possible precaution. Now I must go, sweet. I'll see you to-morrow or next day. And you take care of my new sweetheart."

"You take care of mine!" was her anguished farewell.

And then he was gone. He stopped in the library for a final

word with Maryann, a final promise that she wouldn't leave the house, and then the two girls stood at the window, side by side, and watched his brisk progress from the front door to his car. Maryann said:

"He's the bravest, the most fool-hardy, reckless man in the world."

"Stefan? Why?" cried Cole, with a little gasp of terror.

"They try to tell me it isn't so," said Maryann soberly. "But I know. I was there when most of it happened and I heard with my own ears. And they try to laugh me out of that. That's why I flung the announcement into the paper the very first chance I got. To try to save Stefan's life. Stefan has been doubling for Jack for years, just inviting Jack's enemies to kill him. And they pretend it's all to let Jack be two places at once. Or make people think he is."

"Maybe that's so," Cole said, trying to believe it herself.

"Don't be dumb," said Maryann impatiently. "If the mobs killed Stefan, thinking it was Jack, then Jack could disappear. And that's exactly what they intend! I'm mad about Jack, but I'll never be happy if Stefan is sacrificed. I couldn't be. And they just laugh at me when I talk about it. I can't understand men. Especially how a man like Jack could cold-bloodedly buy Stefan's life, or a man like Stefan who could sell it."

"Oh, stop!" shrieked Cole. "It isn't so! Say it isn't so!"

"It is so," Maryann insisted. "I heard them make the bargain. When Stef was still in college and I was a sub-deb, a crowd of us went to Jack's speakeasy because we'd heard that Stefan and Jack looked identically alike, except for Jack's scar. It's so. Jack took Stefan into his office and propositioned him that



night, and I stood outside and listened. Stefan turned it down then, but Jack said to come back if he ever changed his mind, that he could use Stefan to front for him.

"I fell for Jack that night and ran after him until I got him. And one day back in 1929 when I was there, Stefan came in. Jack's apartment is up over the club, and we were there.

"Stefan's father had been wiped out in the crash. He failed for an awful lot of money. His own and other people's. Stefan found him with a gun in his hand and suicide notes all written. Stefan took the gun away from him and came to Jack, and I was there. Jack stuffed a bag full of money and gave it to Stef, and said if that wasn't enough, there was more. And after that, Stefan was supposed to have gone to South America on a job, but there he was at Jack's sometimes with that scar stuck on his face and sometimes not. And his family and everybody else think Stef is still in South America. If you can say it isn't so after that, go ahead and say

it. Jack locked me in the bedroom while they talked, but I put my ear against the door and I heard."

"I—I don't believe it!" whispered Cole.

But she did believe it. Stefan had told her so with his own voice.

"I've sold my life, sold honor, sold my future to Jack," he said. "If they can be redeemed——"

And he had said: "Love has been denied me for so long. It is still denied me."

If those things didn't prove the truth of what Maryann had told her, what could?

And she had given her heart, her lips, all her love, to a man who had sold his life to a gangster! The only person she could trust to protect her was a man whose own life was in pawn!

"Stefan! Stefan!" she wailed, turning blindly to the door, as if she would go to him, as if she must beg him for reassurance. But her treacherous knees didn't carry her far. There in the middle of the Thurston library, they failed her, and she fell to the floor in a faint.

TO BE CONTINUED.



When you hit the pavement an awful smack  
There's a comforting taste in that yellow pack!

*Compose yourself*  
with



the  
Quality Gum



# Love At Midnight

By Fanny Locke Hatton

**D**ORIS woke suddenly with a curious feeling that some one was in her room. Trembling with apprehension she sat up in bed, her heart beating wildly. Then, she shrugged her shoulders and dismissed

her fear as a mere dream. She was just about to lie down again when she distinctly heard some one breathing.

She was out on the floor in a second and into her negligee which had



been thrown over the foot of the bed. Then, before the intruder could move, she had snapped on the bedside light.

He was sitting in a chair near the window. She never forgot that first impression of him. Even sitting, he impressed her as one of the biggest men she had ever seen, with great broad shoulders, a mass of smooth muscle rippling under the bronzed skin of his bare arms. He was amazingly handsome, his face clean-cut and lean, his blond hair curling flatly to his head, as he sat dressed only in undershirt, trousers and socks. His coat, shirt and tie hung over the chair, his shoes stood under it. His eyes were closed, his arms folded. At first Doris thought he was asleep.

Then, as if finally conscious of the light, he rose and looked at her intently, his gray eyes almost black with excitement. He stood silently, saying nothing, motionless as a statue.

Doris stared at him, fascinated. Who was he? And what was he doing in her room, half dressed?

She finally gasped, "Who—why—are you here? What—"

"Waiting," he interrupted briefly.

"But who are you? And how did you get in here?" She pulled her negligee closer about her and glared at him.

His voice was deep. "My name is Jim Trent, if that means anything. And I climbed up the fire escape and came through the window."

"Are you a ganglar, a gangster?" Doris gasped.

"Don't be alarmed. I didn't come to steal anything."

His eyes took in the girl's loveli-

ness scarcely hidden by the thin negligee and pajamas—the loveliness that had been reproduced on so many posters and in magazine advertisements, the loveliness that had earned a living for Doris ever since the day she had come to New York and answered a call for models.

Jim Trent's glance traveled over her, then rested on the beautiful face opposite his—on the deep-blue eyes with their long, dark lashes; on her superb black hair which was loosed for the night and hung over her shoulders; on her small feet with their tinted toenails and rounded heels—also famous in advertisements from coast to coast.

Doris Harcourt, standing there in her scanty night attire, was even more glamorous than he had heard she was. And she looked so young and girlish a wave of resentment swept over him. How could he have stooped so low? Then he remembered why he was there and squared his shoulders.

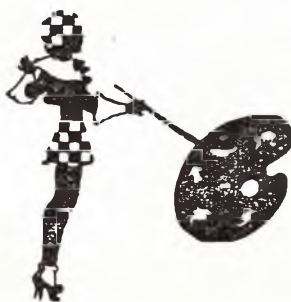
Somehow, despite her midnight visitor's powerful body and strange silence, Doris was not afraid of him—only indignant and outraged at his presence in her room.

"If you have not come to steal," she said, "surely you have some explanation for forcing your way in here. You've probably mistaken me for

some one else. Isn't that it?"

"I don't believe so. Aren't you Doris Harcourt? An artist's model? And you pose for Miles Gaffey?"

Her curiosity was so aroused by this she almost forgot her indignation at his intrusion. "Yes, I am Doris Harcourt. What do you want of me?"



A grim smile hovered over his lips as he said softly, "You'll find out soon enough. It won't be long now."

His calmness infuriated her. She stamped her bare foot. Then, realizing its nakedness, she hastily found her satin mules and put them on, saying as she did so:

"Get out of here this instant! If you don't, I'll scream and everybody in the apartments on this floor will come in."

Unmoved by her threat he shrugged his shoulders. "Go ahead. I shan't try to stop you. Perhaps you know a good explanation to give your neighbors when they find us alone together at this hour—you in your night clothes and me half undressed!"

"I'll tell them the truth—how I woke up and found you! How you came up the fire escape!"

"And do you think they'll believe you? It sounds rather fantastic, doesn't it?"

Doris stared at him blankly. She knew he was right. It was all too improbable for any one to credit. She hardly believed it herself, though he stood there opposite her, a living proof of it all. And she also realized that a girl model living alone was in no position to command belief or respect in such an amazing situation. She began to tremble. She felt so alone and helpless that her voice faltered.

"Please," she murmured brokenly, "I don't know why you're here, nor what this is all about, but I wish you'd go!" She was very near to tears.

"Don't you dare cry!" he said, sharply. "I can't stand that." He looked across at the clock on the night table. "I'll be gone in another five minutes. I promise you."

He walked rapidly to the hall door and unlocked it. Doris thought

he was leaving and sank down onto the bed, shaking with relief. But he stood silently at the door, as if listening. Suddenly he turned and crossed back to her. She looked up at him in alarm. From where she sat he seemed a giant, his blond head miles above her. Something in his face filled her with terror. Then before she sensed what he was doing he dropped down onto the bed beside her and drew her abruptly close to him.

Doris tried to scream, but no sound came from her dry throat. Terror seemed to have closed it. His arms were like steel bands about her. She could feel his heart beating rapidly as he held her close. Then there was the sound of some one at the door. Trent drew in his breath sharply. His eyes met hers. Even then she noticed the stark misery in his face. He bent his head and his mouth closed down on hers in a burning, fervent kiss—a kiss that shook her from head to foot.

Despite her humiliation a strange, sweet sensation went through her. The kiss was as tender as it was ardent. It made her too dizzy for an instant to remember anything else.

Then the door opened and closed and she heard the voice of her fiancé, Norman van Dyke, as he exclaimed wildly:

"Doris, I wouldn't believe them! But I see now that it's true."

Trent released her instantly and stood up. And as Doris staggered to her feet, her head still whirling, her pulses throbbing from Trent's embrace, she faced Norman and his father, Henry van Dyke. Behind them stood a thin, elderly man she did not know. Norman's face was tragic, his brows knit ominously. But on Henry van Dyke's face there was a supercilious, triumphant smile.



Doris ran to Norman's side, hung onto him as her tortured nerves gave way.

"Listen to me," she gasped, "I never saw this man before in all my life! You must believe me, dear! He came up the fire escape and climbed in through the window while I was asleep!"

Norman shook her clinging fingers from his arm. "Don't make it worse by lying," he said, tersely. "I saw you in his arms with my own eyes. And he was kissing you!"

Henry van Dyke nodded in confirmation. "I'm afraid your explanation is a little too thin for us to accept, Doris. Norman didn't want to come here, but I had heard of your intrigue with Trent and I persuaded my son to accompany me and see for himself." He turned and indicated the other man standing back of him. "This is Mr. Jackson, my attorney. I brought him as a witness."

But Doris could not believe that Norman would really doubt her. They loved each other so dearly. For three months, now, they had been engaged. She knew Henry van Dyke did not like her, but Norman — She appealed to him again, her lovely face working with emotion.

"Please, Norman," she begged, "believe me! I know how it looks, but I never saw this man before—never! I don't even know why he's here. But I do know that there is some ghastly plot back of all this to separate us!"

Norman's handsome face was a mask of tragedy, his voice full of despair as he answered her. "I might have believed that he forced his way in, that you didn't know him, if that were all. But I saw you in his arms, held close to him, his lips on yours! And girls like you don't let

strange men make love to them that way!"

"But, Norman," she cried, "he held me! I couldn't get away. Look how big and strong he is. What chance did I have against him? I tell you I don't even *know* him!" Her voice grew desperate. "You must believe me, Norman. I love you—no other man means anything to me!"

She turned on Trent who stood motionless, his arms taut, his fists clenched, and spoke sharply to him. "Oh, why don't you act like a man and make him understand that I'm telling the truth? He thinks you're my lover and you know it's a lie! Why won't you help me? What have I ever done to you that you should ruin my life?"

Attorney Jackson's voice, dry, emotionless, interrupted her then. "You're quite an actress, Miss Harcourt, but I think Mr. van Dyke and his father have seen quite enough to convince the most skeptical mind."

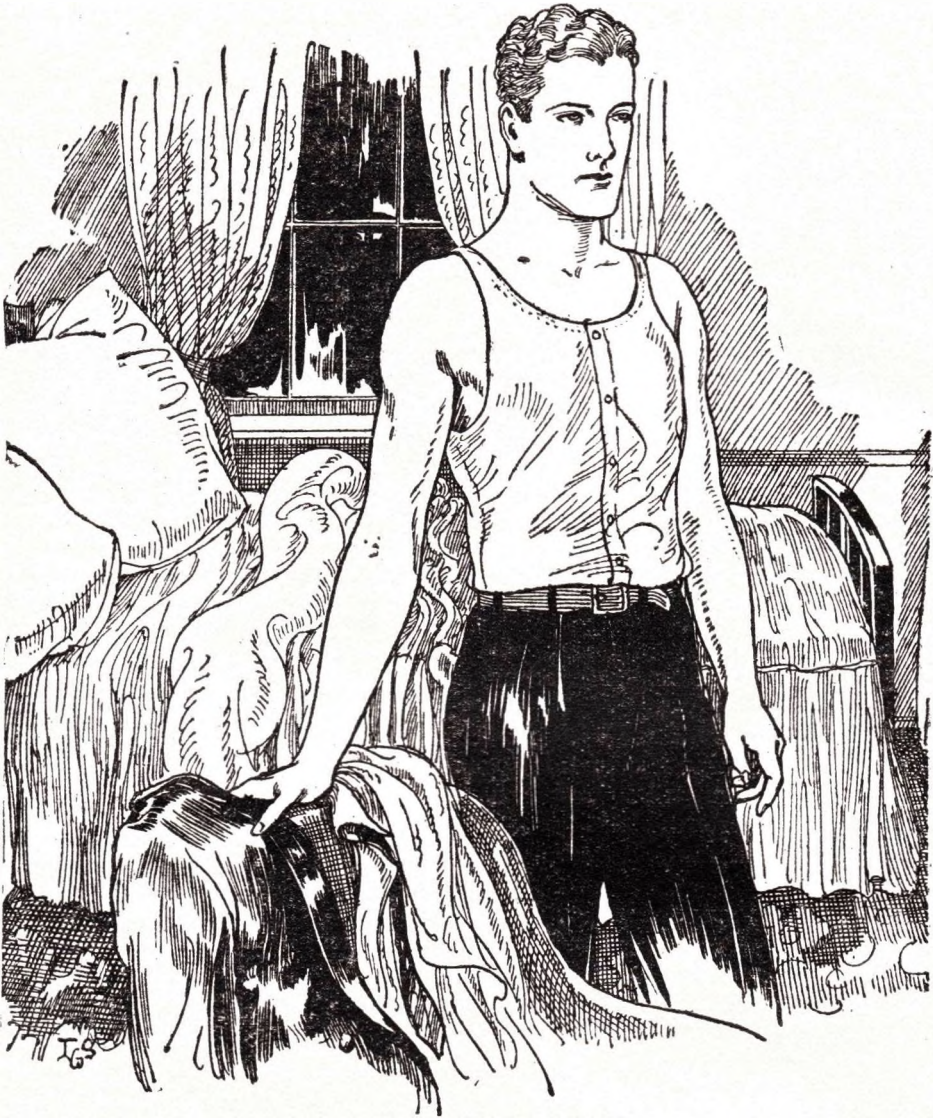
Doris saw her happiness slipping away from her. Great waves of despair shook her slender body. "Norman," she begged, "I thought you loved me! How can you doubt me so easily?"

A sarcastic smile crept over the elder Van Dyke's face. "Easily?" he asked with meaning. "How far must a girl go to make a man distrust her?"

Doris faced him with a frantic courage.

"I know you never liked me, Mr. van Dyke. You didn't think I was good enough for Norman. You've always wanted him to marry Eloise Hunt, some one with a social position equal to his."

Norman interrupted. "Eloise has nothing to do with this, Doris. I was mistaken about you, that's all, and there's no more to be said."



She looked wildly at the relentless faces of the three men. Then she stepped close to Norman. "Please, darling," she whispered, "have them all go away and let me talk to you alone. At least I have a right to ask that."

She seemed so young and pathetic that a wave of pity swept over Nor-

man. He moved a step toward her. Henry van Dyke put a firm hand on his son's arm, holding him back. He said:

"Don't let her make a fool of you twice, my boy. She is like all her kind—weak about men, and"—his eyes swept over Trent's figure with unwilling admiration—"you must





*Doris ran to Norman's side. "I never saw this man before in all my life!" she gasped. "He climbed in through the window while I was asleep! You must believe me, dear! I love you—no other man means anything to me!"*

admit that this time she has picked herself a very handsome specimen."

Doris flinched.

Norman looked at Trent and nodded. "I guess he has everything

it takes—except gallantry! He just stands there like a dummy!"

Doris whirled on Trent, the tears running down her cheeks. "Won't you tell them I never saw you be-

fore? Don't you see what you're doing to me?"

Then he spoke to her, his deep voice full of feeling, as if he were near and dear to her. "What's the use, darling? After what they saw they'd never believe me."

Doris knew she was beaten. Whoever this man Trent was or what his motive, it was evident he intended to play his part out to the end.

She made a weary, hopeless gesture. "Then that's that. And now will you all be good enough to go?"

Norman crossed to the door and walked out, not even glancing back at her. Henry van Dyke said "good night" coldly, formally, and followed his son. But Attorney Jackson lingered, placing a card on the center table.

"Of course," he said, "Mr. van Dyke wants to recompense you in some way—for your—shall we say disappointment? Come to my office in the morning and I'll take care of the matter."

Doris tore up the card and threw the pieces at him. "I don't want Mr. van Dyke's money!" she cried. "All I ask is never to see any of you again!"

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders, then bowed his way out, closing the door behind him. Doris turned on Trent, her face working with emotion. "And you go with them—get out! I've had all I can bear!"

He picked up his things and walked toward the screen hiding the kitchenette. "Just as soon as I put these on," he said.

Doris moved back and forth wildly. The whole ghastly episode seemed so unreal, it was like a hideous dream! Her brain was dizzy trying to solve the mystery of this cruel thing that had happened. Suddenly she felt weak and faint. She

sat down on the bed, trembling violently, as Trent appeared from behind the screen fully dressed. Her eyes rested on him.

"Why," she asked unsteadily, "why did you smash up my whole life? I've never done you any harm, and you know, even if they don't, that we're total strangers!"

His face was white and set as he answered her. "I couldn't help it. I was forced to do it. Don't you realize yet it was just a frame?"

"A frame!" Doris stared at him blankly, not understanding what he said.

"It was all arranged," he went on, "that they would find you here with me alone—at night. A put-up job! Mr. van Dyke wanted your engagement to his son ended, and this was his way of doing it!"

Her eyes were filled with horror. "You mean—Norman planned it?"

Trent shook his head. "Young Van Dyke knew nothing about that. His father and the lawyer arranged it all—and brought him here. And I was the goat!"

"But why you? Why should Mr. van Dyke send you here? I don't understand."

He hesitated a moment before answering her. "I can't tell you that now, but I had no choice."

"And doesn't it mean anything to you that you've hurt me so? A girl you'd never seen before. What kind of man are you?"

Trent's face flushed, as he said, "The lowest kind that lives! There's no excuse for me except that I didn't know you were the sort of girl you are. Mr. van Dyke said you were just a gold digger and not worth considering and that he must save his son from you. Like a fool I believed him. But when I saw you I realized what a rotten, cowardly thing I'd done!"



He stood before her tall and straight, his features grim and set as he looked down at her.

Doris still was trying to figure it out in her mind. "But I don't see why? Did Mr. van Dyke pay you to do it?"

"Not in money, but another way." He hesitated, then went on, "Of course there is an explanation that concerns only myself, but I don't suppose you'd be interested to hear it."

Again a wave of indignation swept over her. "I'm not interested in anything about a rotter like you. Why do you stand there talking to me? Get out of here! Get out—at once! I loathe the very sight of you!"

Trent picked up his hat. "I hate myself more than you can possibly hate me."

Suddenly she burst into tears. He took a step toward her. "Don't!" she cried out. "I'm ready to die of shame now!"

As he came close to her she beat at him wildly with her fists. He took her hands gently in his own.

"That won't help," he said, quietly. "And you'll just wear yourself out. I don't expect you to believe me, but I'll make it up to you some day."

Then he left her—to a night of weeping and utter wretchedness. Toward dawn she fell asleep from utter exhaustion. But ten o'clock found her at Miles Gaffey's studio. She was pale and shaken, big shadows under her lovely eyes, but determined to carry on. She would put Norman out of her mind and heart. If he didn't have faith in her, let him go. But as she came into the lobby of the studio building she saw Jim Trent standing near the elevator door. She shuddered and shrank away from him. The mere sight of his tall figure brought back

the sickening reality of the night before.

"Haven't you any shame at all?" she demanded. "Why did you follow me here? How——"

But his eyes were so full of unhappiness that the words died on her lips. He came very close to her.

"I came because I've been nearly frantic," he said. "I walked the floor all night wondering what I could do to make Norman van Dyke understand that you've done nothing, that it was all a plot of his father's. And I've made up my mind that no matter what happens to me I'll tell the truth to him and to you."

But Doris brushed past him and pushed the elevator bell. "I don't want to hear it and if you had any sense of decency left in you you'd stay away from me. As for Norman—he's out of my life. I'll never forgive him for not trusting me."

"Won't you listen—just for a moment?" he begged. "If you knew the spot I was in perhaps you'd understand why I went to your place last night?"

"It's too late for explanations now," she answered. "And I have a job which I hope to keep even if I have lost everything else on which I counted." She tried to get by him. "Kindly move out of my way. I do not want to talk to you!"

The elevator door opened and Doris stepped into the car.

Miles Gaffey, for whom Doris worked, was one of the best-known commercial artists in the country. He was a big, burly Irishman with a rough tongue and a heart as soft as mush. As he began work, he joked with Doris.

"And what's all the gloom for?" he asked her. "For the love of Mike let's have a smile. The magazines wouldn't accept you with that dark cloud hangin' over you."



*"Get out of here!" she cried. "Get out—at once! I loathe the very sight of you! You've smashed up my whole life."*

"I'm all right," she said, dully, as she forced a smile to her lips. "Can't a girl look serious once in a while?"

The work went on as usual. Doris had posed so long it was second nature to her. One of his other models,

Bernice Morton, rushed in full of excitement. She hurried over to Gaffey.

"You're late again," he roared at her, but she paid no attention to that.



She spoke eagerly. "Stop barking at me and listen. There's a man sitting in the lobby downstairs who is handsomer than any Greek god ever was! Would he make a swell model for that bathing-suit job of yours! I'll tell the world!"

Miles Gaffey was interested. He'd been delaying that particular set of drawings for want of a suitable model and Bernice knew it.

"All right," he said, "I'll bite. Why didn't you bring him up? I'd like to have a look at him."

Bernice shook her head. "That's out. He said he didn't come here to pose. He's just waiting for somebody."

"Do you really think I could use him?"

"Don't you think I know a good he-shape when I see one? I tell you he's marvelous! What I could do to a boy like that! But he's not even interested. He was cold as ice and as good as told me to let him alone and go mind my own business."

Doris listened, her face flushing. She knew only too well it was Trent Bernice was describing. But if he dared to follow her up to the studio she'd leave.

Gaffey pushed back his easel and got to his feet. "I think I'll have a look for myself," he said. "Male beauties are few and far between." He went out to the elevator as Bernice chattered on.

"You wait until you see him," she assured Doris. "He's just too good-looking to be true!"

Down in the hall Jim Trent looked up as the elevator door opened. A huge red-haired man emerged, attired in a smock smudged with paint and crayon, and crossed quickly to him. The two men eyed each other for a second. Then Gaffey smiled. That little brat, Bernice, was right. Here was a find!

"I'm Miles Gaffey," he told Jim, who smiled back courteously and said, "How do you do? Hope you don't mind my waiting here?"

"Come up with me to the studio. I want to have a little business talk with you."

Trent rose eagerly. He would have a chance to see Doris.

"Busy?" Gaffey asked.

"No, I lost my job this morning."

The artist grinned. "That's fine. I've got another one for you to step right into. I need an athletic model and you certainly fill the bill! Good pay and not a thing to do but stand still in a pair of bathin' trunks or shorts."

"But I know nothing about posing, Mr. Gaffey. I'm an accountant. Besides. I'm not good-looking enough for a model."

At this Gaffey threw back his head and roared with amusement. "Boy," he chuckled, "I'll take a chance on that. Come along up to the studio with me and we'll talk it over."

Doris's heart missed a beat when Gaffey introduced his new model. But her voice was like ice. "I know Mr. Trent," she said, stiffly. Then she turned and walked rapidly away. The artist whistled.

"She doesn't seem to care for you, my boy."

"No," Jim returned grimly, "she hates me and she has plenty of reason to, although I couldn't help it."

"Oh, she'll get over it," Gaffey assured him. "Girls change their minds with their clothes these days."

During the next few days Doris saw Jim Trent everywhere she looked. Gaffey had his staff of artists working overtime on delayed commissions and Jim's face stared out at her from easels and drawing boards. He posed in front of painted oceans on prop surf boards, on boats, on piers, he lolled on beaches, he

emerged from *cabañas*. And if her eyes wandered to the model stand there was Jim himself, wearing only the sketchiest of trunks, showing his splendid torso and firm straight legs—a very different Jim from the grim unhappy one she first saw in her apartment. For Gaffey insisted on painting Jim's flashing smile, his face gay, his head up. And even in her silent resentment Doris had to admit to herself his amazing good looks.

Jim tried vainly to get Doris to talk to him. He waited for her when she went to lunch, he hung about when the day's work was done. But she always managed to evade him. And when, once, Gaffey tried to pose them together she refused flatly, saying she would leave the studio rather than do so. The artist didn't press the issue. He was getting splendid reactions to the first sketches he sent out of his new model and the demand for the figures of Jim was tremendous. New orders poured in. Jim's pay was raised. Soon he was making more money than he ever had before.

He accepted it gratefully and it went, where the major part of his earnings had always gone, to the two people dependent on him. The whole studio soon knew that Bernice was crazy about him, but he hardly noticed her. She couldn't understand why Doris disliked him so.

"Say," she asked one morning while she and Doris were alone in the dressing room, "what makes you so terribly mean to Jim? If he threw me half a look I'd fall right on his neck! But he doesn't even know I'm alive. He never takes his eyes off you. If you don't want a Greek masterpiece like him, what do you want?"

"I don't want any part of Jim Trent!" Doris told her, coldly. "I wish he'd never come into this

studio. I hate to work here now." She shuddered.

Bernice persisted. "But what did he ever do to you to make you dislike him so?" Then she looked up and saw that there were tears in the other girl's eyes.

"Please, Bernice," Doris begged unsteadily, "don't talk to me about him. I'm miserable enough as it is."

"I guess you're still crazy about that Norman van Dyke, aren't you?"

Doris walked out of the dressing room without answering the question.

This put a new thought into the busy little brain of Bernice. She wondered if Jim knew that Doris was in love with another man. And later that day she sounded him out.

"Listen, handsome," she began. "Doris is just eating her heart out over that Van Dyke boy. She was crying about him this morning. It's a shame. I just wish I could do something. But perhaps you don't know about her and Norman van Dyke?" She looked up at him and suddenly discovered that, for the first time since they had met, she had his undivided attention.

"Yes," he admitted, "I knew. But I thought she was getting over it."

"Oh, no!" Bernice assured him. "She's just crazy about him. She'll never love anybody else or be happy until she has him back."

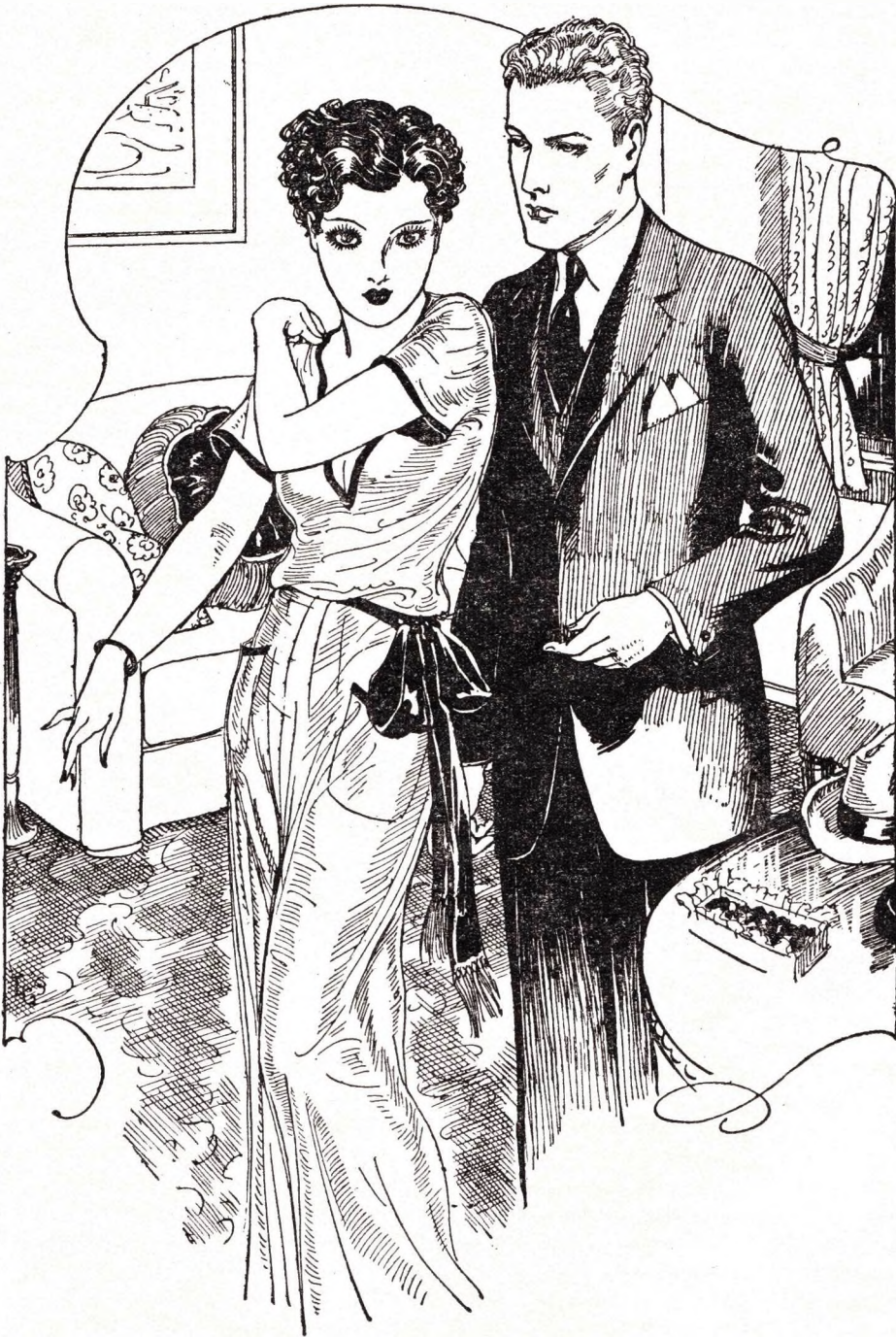
Jim's eyes frightened her. "Did Doris tell you that?" he demanded.

Bernice evaded his gaze. "Oh," she exclaimed, "I shouldn't have told you that, should I? It wasn't a bit nice of me. After all, it's no business of ours, is it?"

"I'm not so sure it isn't my business," he said, curtly. "At all events I'll make it so. But you keep out of it."

Bernice resented his tone. "Well,





*"You're not going to marry Norman. I'll never let any other man have you. I'm going to be your husband—or you won't have one. I'm so jealous of you I'd kill any man who so much as touched you."*

you needn't bark at me. Doris certainly wouldn't want you to butt into her private affairs. Any one can see how she feels about you."

But Jim had walked away and left her. Late that night Doris was at home alone, worn out with a trying day's work, depressed and unhappy as she always was now. Life seemed so dull and meaningless. She got into lounging pajamas and tried to read. Her doorbell rang sharply. She rose to answer it and found Norman van Dyke—not the stern, unrelenting young man she had implored to believe in her, but the cheerful suitor she had known so well before their break-up. His voice was full of its old warmth.

"Doris," he exclaimed, "it's wonderful to see you again."

In the long days since he had given her up she had often imagined his coming back to ask her forgiveness. She had pictured herself radiant, overjoyed, ready to forgive him and rush into his arms. But now that he was before her, she found herself curiously calm and unemotional. She did not even think of offering him her hand. Instead she said quietly, "Why, Norman, you're the last person I expected to see. Come in, won't you?" They sat on the couch, Norman's eyes warm with admiration. But she felt cold and unforgiving.

"I don't know how you are, Doris," he said, "but you look more beautiful than ever!"

She spoke quietly. "Thank you, Norman. What brought you here to-night? Have you made up your mind that I deserve a little better treatment than you gave me the last time you were here?"

His face flushed. "I'm very much ashamed about that, but I was so hurt and jealous I couldn't seem to think straight. Won't you forgive

me, darling, and take me back? I promise never to let anything like that happen again."

"But what about your father, Norman? Has he changed his mind about me?"

He hesitated. "No, but that doesn't matter to me now." He tried to pull her into his arms but she shook her head. "No, please don't do that, Norman. There is too much to be cleared up between you and me. I want to know first how you happened to come here this evening. Did you suddenly realize how you had misjudged me?"

He cleared his throat nervously. "Not exactly, but I'm not going to lie to you, dear. I've found out what father did. I know the whole thing was a frame-up. Of course, it was rotten of him, but he thought he was doing the wisest thing for my future. And, after all, he is my dad. And I must forgive him."

"Then you wouldn't have come if you hadn't found out the truth?"

"Oh, let's not go into that, darling. It's all over now and you must be a sweet child and forgive me for my stupidity."

"And who told you the truth—about that night?" she went on, still unyielding.

"Jim Trent. And father certainly was pretty hard on him. But I suppose he's told you all about that?"

Doris forced herself to speak as if she were not interested in Trent or anything he might have to say. "Oh, he told me something, of course, but I'd rather hear it from you, Norman."

"There isn't a great deal to tell. Trent worked in the office. Dad found him beside the open office safe with a package of bills in his hand. He said he was just about to place them in the drawer, but father accused him of being a thief and said



he'd have him arrested and sent to jail. Trent begged and pleaded, said he was innocent, and that he simply had to keep his job."

Doris tried to keep all feeling out of her voice. "Perhaps he has a wife dependent on him?"

Norman shook his head. "Not a wife, but a mother and a kid brother, who is in a sanitarium out in Arizona. Trent has to pay all the bills there; it was the one chance of saving the boy."

"Yes?" There was no change in the girl's voice.

"Well, father knew all that, so he offered to forget the whole thing if Trent would force his way in here and let us find him with you. It was that or jail!"

"He didn't have much chance," Doris said, unsteadily, remembering Trent's frantic, "I had to do it!"

"You mustn't hold it against Trent," he went on. "He had to carry on because of his kid brother. It's all right now. Father knew Trent never did mean to steal the money, but he was determined to prevent our marriage and he didn't care how. He made Trent believe you'd wreck my life."

Doris felt faint, ill. "How could your father hate me that way?" she cried. "It's unbelievable that any man would do such a thing to a girl who earns her living honorably as I do!"

"I know," Norman said, easily. "Dad went a little crazy, I guess. He knows you're all right, but he's always wanted me to marry Eloise. However, just to convince you I want to square things for Trent—dad's old friend, Robinson Porter, has a fine job for him at a very good salary, the sort of position Trent really wants. I saw Mr. Porter myself and explained the whole matter to him. He said he'd be glad to

have Trent in his office and to send him over at once."

"But Jim already has a fine job modeling for Miles Gaffey," Doris said.

Norman nodded. "I know, but Trent doesn't want to keep on doing that. He doesn't think it's any way for a man to earn his living. Don't worry about him, dear. He's all set and there's a fine chance for advancement in Porter's office."

Doris spoke sharply. "Your father ought to take care of Jim Trent for life after what he did to him!"

Norman smiled at her. "Trent wouldn't work for him again and you can't blame him. But dad's sorry now about the whole mess."

Doris rose to her feet and faced him, her eyes blazing. "Sorry! And does he think that settles everything? You better marry Eloise Hunt. Then he won't have any more excuse to injure other girls you might admire!" The thought of the wrong Norman's father had done her swept over her afresh.

"But I don't want to marry Eloise," he explained. "She's a charming girl, and I think a lot of her, but it's you I love. I want things to be with us as they were before."

But Doris couldn't dismiss it all so easily. "I'll think it over, Norman. I feel now I'll never trust any man again!"

He smiled at her. "Oh, you'll get over it, darling. And some day you and dad will be great friends."

Doris laughed bitterly. "Somehow I don't seem to believe that. Please go now, Norman. I'll call you to-morrow."

"Promise?" he demanded.

She nodded. "I promise."

"After all, darling, it wasn't exactly my fault."

"Perhaps it wasn't your fault, but you doubted me! You wouldn't even give me a chance to explain!"

"I'm terribly sorry, sweet, but I'll make it up to you. Now, if you'll give me one nice big kiss, I'll go."

Doris pushed him toward the door. "You'll go without a kiss," she said, firmly. "And wait until you hear from me to-morrow."

He realized it would do no good to force matters. "All right, darling," he said, "but don't forget to call me to-morrow."

When Norman had gone Doris walked up and down the room thinking deeply. He might be a little weak, but he was a dear and she knew he was sorry. At one time life without him had been a total blank. Now she wondered if she could ever forget that he had not trusted her. Suddenly she was startled by a sharp knock on the door. She crossed and asked: "Who is it?"

Jim Trent's voice answered her from the outside. "I want to talk to you. Let me in."

"No," she returned, quickly. "It's too late."

"You'll have to see me no matter how late it is!"

His voice came through defiantly. "I won't go away until I've seen you. If you don't open this door I'll use the fire escape. I've done that before, you know, and I can do it again."

Doris knew he meant it. She opened the door and let him in. Jim strode in, his face white and haggard.

"Lock that door and come here to me," he ordered. "For I'm not going until I've said all I came to say."

His tone annoyed her and she faced him defiantly. "If you're here to tell me about that—first night—I know all about it. Norman was here and told me. I understand why you did it, because of your brother."

"And did your friend Norman tell you I gave up my job the next morning because I couldn't work for his father after what I'd done?"

"Yes, he did. But he also said you were going to work for a friend of his now."

"It's a swell chance and I have Norman to thank for it. I couldn't keep on posing as a model even if there is money in it."

Doris answered him dully, "I'm glad Norman did something to make up to you for all you went through."

His voice grew tense. "Norman's all right, but I wish he'd keep away from you. I knew he'd try to see you to-night and I was on the other side of the street, watching, when he came. I thought he'd never leave."

"Why?" she demanded. "What do *you* want of me?"

Jim's eyes frightened her. Little flames seemed to be burning and leaping in them.

"Would you really like to know?" he asked her, fiercely.

"Yes," she replied, faintly. She had not really been afraid that first night. Angry, humiliated, but not frightened. But now she was. He looked so big and his face was so desperate. He gave her a little push and said, "Then sit down and listen!"

"How dare you order me about, Jim Trent?" She tried to be defiant, but her knees were so weak she sank down on the couch.

"So you still love Van Dyke, do you?"

Doris was trembling. "I—I don't know," she faltered.

Jim moved close to her. "Are you going to marry him?"

Her mouth quivered. She was very near to tears. "I don't know that, either."

"Well, you're not!" he said, un-



steadily. "I was almost out of my mind while he was in here. I thought I wanted you to have him back, if it would make you happy, but I don't! I'll never let any other man have you. I'm going to be your husband—or you won't have one. I'm so jealous of you I'd kill any man who so much as touched you."

Every word of his sent a thrill through Doris, but her voice was full of scorn. "Don't be absurd," she said airily. "I'll never marry you! We're miles apart!"

She laughed mockingly.

Suddenly he dropped down beside her and gathered her close to him. "Does that seem miles apart?" he whispered, his voice full of passion. "I love you so! I have, since that first night I came here. Nothing else means anything, sweet."

She pulled away from him. "Don't!" she protested. "I don't want you to touch me!"

Jim rose, drawing her to her feet. He took her in his arms and murmured incoherent love words to her. It sent a strange new feeling through her, and she fought against this wildly. "Let me go, I hate you!" she cried out. For answer he kissed her

and his lips seemed to touch her very soul. She could fight him no longer. She relaxed in his arms and gave him back his kiss ardently. "Oh, darling, darling," he said brokenly. "Hate me some more, it's wonderful!"

"I suppose I just didn't know the difference," she said dreamily. "But I know now and I don't want any one but you—ever!" Suddenly her eye fell on the clock. It was a minute before twelve. "See," she said, pointing. "That's just the hour you gave me that first terrible, disgraceful, insulting kiss." Jim groaned with remorse as he remembered. Doris went on, "Jim, I have a confession to make, though I never meant you to know it. I—I loved that first kiss!"

"Darling," he cried, as his arms closed around her again. "Then please adore this one!"

And, as the clock chimed the hour, their lips met and in the sweetness of that moment they forgot anything so unimportant as time, forgot all the heartache and sorrow and knew only that all eternity stretched ahead for them and their love.

## BUTTERFLIES

**B**ELOW my window there are beds of flowers.  
 All pink and lavender and blue, I'm told  
 They've blossomed since I have been ill, but then  
 I knew from fluttering of happy wings  
 That flowers were there. "All butterflies, you know,  
 Seek lavender," some one remarked. Perhaps,  
 But I had thought because I loved them so  
 They came to sip their honey here that I  
 Might watch them from my bed. Their colored wings  
 In zigzag flashes flutter, rise and fall,  
 Or dance upon the sunbeams joyously.  
 I keep my face turned window-ward. They are  
 A host of cheerful thoughts God sent to me.

ISLA P. RICHARDSON.



# Lifetime Job

By F. W. Campbell

**I**T was little more than daylight that warm Saturday morning in May, when Jatha Cromwell came bounding out the back door. She filled the watering can and began watering her plants. The verbenas and snapdragons and stocks that she had set out the afternoon before would require careful watching until they started to grow.

Presently a pair of tweed trousers swung over the garden wall, cleared

the tall blue iris, and a pair of size eleven shoes landed in the middle of the new verbenas plants.

"Hey, get out of there!" shrieked Jatha.

With brown eyes blazing she ran forward to count the casualties.

"Hello, Jatha," boomed the cordial baritone voice.

She stopped. Glanced up. "I could beat you, Mike Shaw!" she exploded.

"Like to try?" he offered.





She surveyed his six feet of brawny friendliness. Even with his hat rakishly on the back of his sleek black head and a broad grin on his naturally good-natured face, her sense of humor remained out of joint.

"Look," she sputtered, bending over the crushed plants in each of the sunken footprints. "See what you've done. Killed them."

Mike looked from the girl to the tiny plants and back again. He preferred looking at the girl. Already

she was a light bronze from working out in the sun. By midsummer her short, belligerent hair would look fair against her smooth coat of tan.

"Gee," he apologized, "I didn't think they were anything. Thought I was being careful when I missed those blue things back of them."

But she wasn't half as annoyed as she pretended. And suddenly it dawned on her how grand it was that Mike was actually here. With her. Not down in Chicago.

"When did you come? How did you get here?" she asked, wrinkling up her nose with pleasure.

Now that her mind was on him at last, and off her plants, he grinned more comfortably. "Just got off the train," he expanded. "It's getting warm in the city. Thought I'd run up for the week-end and cool off."

For years the small college town had expected Jatha and Michael to announce their engagement. That they hadn't, was Jatha's fault. Michael had been her first and only serious beau. He had been telling her off and on, ever since she was a freshman and he a junior, that he loved her. She took it for granted that as soon as he was earning enough money they would be married. He finished college two years ahead of her, and went to work for a steel company in Chicago. Since then he had developed the habit of week-ending with her.

Most girls would have extracted a definite proposal before they let a man like Mike leave town. But Jatha wasn't the usual sort. To her the idea of a girl deliberately setting out to "catch" a man was vulgar. In fact, she was very shy about such things. Only Aunt Elly, with whom she lived, saw through her.

The back door closed quietly and

a slim, middle-aged woman with smartly combed gray hair, emerged. Mike sprang to meet her.

"Greetings, darling!" he exclaimed, sweeping her off her feet. "You're as beautiful as a rose this morning, Aunt Elly."

"Stow it, Mike, and put me down." Aunt Elly loved Mike for disregarding her dignity, but always pretended not to. "Thought I'd better come out and save your life, when I heard Jatha shriek."

"She did sound pretty dangerous, at that," he said, laughing. "The trouble is, she thinks more of her garden than she does of me."

Jatha walked over to a flower bed and extracted a weed. She didn't want Mike to see he had hurt her. Why couldn't she do things well without giving the impression she was a hard-fisted virago? She wasn't even tall. The impression was purely imaginary.

"Why don't you go in and persuade Hanna to give us waffles for breakfast?" diverted Aunt Elly tactfully.

"No sooner said than done!" laughed Mike. He patted Aunt Elly on the head and departed to flatter Hanna.

Hanna's pecan waffles went a long way toward putting Mike in high spirits. It was such a sparkling spring morning, that Jatha suggested they go riding.

They rented horses from the local stables, and turned off the lake drive onto the bridle path through the woods. Jatha on a horse gave the same impression she did with her gardening—that there was nothing to it. When it was riding, instead of watering plants, Mike gave the same impression. They were a small figure in green and a large one in brown, carelessly graceful, obviously happy.



"You know, Jatha," Mike was saying, "when you don't make me feel too superfluous, I think that me being in Chicago and you being here is all wrong. We ought to do something about it."

Jatha was all for signing on the dotted line, but she was too diffident.

"But you manage to get up for week-ends rather often," she stalled weakly, and muffed her chance.

He watched her as she leaned forward and straightened the horse's mane. It meant nothing to him that she always found something to distract her just when she should have responded. Instead, it made his own eagerness seem unnecessary.

Neither of them noticed a solitary rider gaining on them from behind.

"The horses always run here, you know," she said, indicating the open sod ahead. "Let's take it across the ditch and fence."

"Right," he agreed. "Last one to the top of the hill is a lemon!"

Away they flew, horses and riders racing for sheer exuberance. They had not heard the lone person coming up behind them. It was a girl who had rented a horse from the same stables. Like all horses that follow the same paths day after day, this one had become accustomed to running in certain places and loitering in others. The urge to join the other horses, and a knowledge that its rider knew little about riding, sent it streaking in pursuit.

Jatha reached the ditch first, shot over it and sailed over the fence. Mike's horse refused the fence. Mike was in too much of a hurry for discipline and let it go around by the opening. His back was turned as the pursuing horse cleared the ditch and the fence and tore after Jatha.

Jatha heard a scream. "I don't know how I did it! I don't know how I stayed on." She saw a girl

streak past her, frantically hanging onto leather and horse's mane, stirrup flapping.

Jatha burned her horse's flanks with her crop. The horse ahead kept on racing, up into the woods, over the top of the hill. Jatha finally edged past, reined her horse's head into the path of the other, caught the other's reins and came to a stop.

"Are you hurt?" she asked anxiously. And waited for the fair-haired girl in a rust-colored habit to catch her breath.

Mike bore down upon them, leaped off his horse, and tossed the reins to Jatha. The girl slid limply into his arms. He placed her gently on the ground, holding her hand solicitously. The color began to come back into her frightened face.

"Oh, thank you so much—for stopping my horse," she said helplessly between breaths.

"Jatha stopped it, I didn't," corrected Mike honestly.

The girl widened her eyes that were the color of wood violets and turned them in Jatha's direction.

"I'm so ashamed," she drawled, returning her gaze to Mike. "You must think I'm dreadful, letting another girl save me."

"Forget it," encouraged Mike. "When you need saving, the thing to do is to get saved."

The girl smiled approval and began tucking her hair under her hat. Jatha stood by.

"How do you feel now?" asked Mike with concern.

"I don't know—let me see." Her blue eyes smiled into his. She held out her hand for assistance. Mike responded eagerly.

"Maybe I'd better ride back and bring a car out for you," he suggested generously. "Jatha can wait here with you."



*Mike helped Betsy to mount. Jatha reflected ironically that Mike always let her get on a horse any way she could. She had a sinking feeling, for she knew that Betsy was out to catch Mike.*

Jatha was about to volunteer to go after the car when she thought better of it. She had suddenly gotten suspicious.

"Jatha—what a pretty name," murmured the girl.

"Pretty gal," added Mike enthusiastically.

That embarrassed Jatha, and she began sorting the bridle reins.

"I suppose," said the girl half to herself but for Mike's benefit, "it would be good for me to ride back to the stables. They say it's the thing to do when you get a scare. Bolsters up your nerve."



Mike's dark-blue eyes responded with a gleam of admiration. "That's the spirit," he said. "Sure you aren't hurt?"

"No! Shall we shove off?" The girl smiled cordially to both Mike and Jatha.

Mike helped her to mount. Jatha reflected ironically that Mike always let her get on a horse any way she could.

"My name is Betsy Milton," announced the girl as they started off.

"And I'm Mike Shaw," he returned. "This is Jatha Cromwell."

The two girls smiled at each other. So this was Betsy Milton, thought Jatha. She might as well fold up as far as Mike was concerned. Betsy Milton was supposed to have a perfect batting average with men. Jatha had a sinking feeling. Theoretically, Mike would be free again as soon as Betsy got through with him. But you never could tell about a girl like Betsy. Sometimes they didn't get through with men like Mike.

Jatha rode on ahead. The path was too narrow for three abreast. With insidious subtlety, Betsy seemed to hold Mike beside her. Although apparently she spurred on by her own volition, Jatha felt as though she were being pushed on.

They were nearing the cut across the open sod again. Jatha's horse began to quicken its pace. She let it run.

Turning in her saddle, she called to them: "I'm going on back. Take your time. I'll wait at the stables."

"O. K.," returned Mike, unaware of her misery.

It seemed to take them ages. Jatha sat on a bench outside the stables and read the newspaper from the day before from front page to back before they returned.

"Waiting long?" asked Mike.

Jatha wondered whether he sounded anxious or just polite.

"Not very," she reassured him.

He smiled gratefully to her.

Betsy looked at her watch. "I thought there must be some reason why I felt so woozy," she remarked. "It's nearly noon. And I got up too late for breakfast." Her face lighted up with a sudden inspiration. "Why don't you two dash on home and then come over and have lunch with me? I'd be thrilled to death after the way you saved me this morning. Bring your bathing suits and we'll go swimming later." Then she looked disappointed. "Or maybe you can't. Maybe you have something else to do?"

Mike looked eagerly at Jatha. She hesitated, didn't take advantage of her opportunity. Then:

"That's awfully sweet of you, Betsy," she said. She graciously called her Betsy. "If it wouldn't be too much trouble, we'd like to. Wouldn't we, Mike?"

Mike beamed at her. Good old Jatha!

After lunch at Betsy's house, they sat around and talked for a while. Later they got into their suits and went down to the lake.

Betsy was striking in bright lemon-colored trunks and orange top. Mike and Jatha wore brief one-piece black suits with white belts. Betsy dropped her yellow terrycloth cape onto the pier and began tucking her fluffy blond hair under an orange bathing cap.

"First time I've been in this year," she remarked apprehensively. "Do you think it's awfully cold?"

Mike glanced up at the warm sun and stretched a toe downward to the water. "Just right for me," he said dubiously. "But I like cold water. What do you think, Jatha?"

Jatha sampled the water. Then

she looked at Betsy and wondered. "It is cold, Betsy. Mike and I always jump in and swim till we warm up."

Betsy laughed good-naturedly. "If I stay around with you two long enough"—her glance at Mike contained just the right amount of flattery—"I'll develop an awful inferiority complex."

Mike's gallantry leaped forth. "Don't let her get you down," he teased. "Jatha's just too darned good. Makes me feel like a Model T half the time!"

Betsy rippled out into appreciative laughter. Jatha jammed her cap down over her hair. Mike looked at her approvingly. He mistook her hurt for modesty.

"But she puts up with me," he hastened. "She's kind to dogs and old people, aren't you, Jatha?"

He was very proud of her at that moment, but Jatha felt only criticism.

"Sure," she agreed.

And walking to the end of the diving board, she bounced high into the air and cut the water in a jack-knife dive.

"Perfect," applauded Mike, and followed her.

For a few minutes, they plowed through the water in a slow, easy crawl. Then Jatha rolled over on her back. He caught up with her, plunged beneath the surface, and came up beyond.

Betsy stood on the pier and waved at them. The gesture conveyed hearty approval, and just the least hint of wistfulness. Mike got the hint and swam back to shore.

But Jatha remained out.

She watched Mike and Betsy playing tag in shallow water. And noticed that Betsy was very good at it. Very quick. Very elusive. She made it worth Mike's while to

keep up with her. From time to time Betsy's rippling laughter rang out over the water. It was a contagious, inviting kind of laughter. Jatha hated it.

When they got tired, they called Jatha in, and Betsy took them home and insisted on giving them tea. Toward the end of the afternoon Mike got inspired to make an evening of it. Just how it was brought about, Jatha never did know. Not that she was above taking lessons from Betsy. Only she didn't know the tricks.

She would have sworn that it was Betsy's doing. But the way it happened, Betsy seemed as surprised as Jatha herself. When Mike suggested that they get a fourth and go some place for dinner and dancing, Betsy's wood-violet blue eyes opened wide. They expressed delight and modesty.

Mike was quick to pursue the implication. "How about it, Betsy, can't you bring your date along?"

Betsy responded with one of her rippling laughs. "Well," she hesitated, flattered that Mike knew that a girl like her was never without a date for Saturday night, "it isn't that kind of date, exactly."

Jatha wandered over to the edge of the veranda where they had been sitting. Mike recoiled as Betsy had intended him to. But not without hope.

"Just a party a crowd of us were going on," Betsy explained, and waited to be coaxed.

"Chuck it then," decided Mike. "Phone 'em you can't come, and call up somebody else."

Jatha began to think about getting home to water her plants. Even in her mind she thought of something to do when things got uncomfortable.

Betsy began to look terribly help-



less. "Funny"—she smiled—"I can't seem to think of any one who'd fit in."

Mike caught the inference. "What shall we do, Jatha?" He in turn turned dependently to her. "Whom shall we invite?"

Jatha mentally put down her watering can. "I don't know," she felt like saying. "It's your headache, not mine." But she didn't. She wasn't proof against Mike's expectant confidence. "How about Herb Nelson?" she suggested obligingly.

"Bright girl!" he applauded with relief. "Herb's just the boy. Where's the telephone, Betsy? I'll go inform him that he's got a date."

Betsy went with him. They were chuckling over Mike's success when they returned.

"Any luck?" Jatha queried, trying not to feel left out of it.

"Not a matter of luck," swaggered Mike. "Herb didn't have a chance to do anything but gasp."

Mentally Jatha picked up the watering can again. "Sorry, children"—her voice managed to sound hearty—"but I'll have to rush now if we're going out for dinner. My garden, you know." She smiled at Mike.

"Remind me to tell you about Jatha's garden," Mike called to Betsy as they left the house.

Jatha barely had time to get her plants watered and change, before it was time to collect Herbert and Betsy.

Herbert Nelson was a sandy-haired, quiet young man. His mother and Aunt Elly belonged to a lot of clubs together. He was very agreeable, and didn't mind being rushed out at the last minute. He was taking his master's degree in something or other. Unfortunately, he couldn't talk about much of any-

thing but his work, and no one was ever able to remember what that was.

They drove out to one of the favorite student road houses. Jatha's brown arms and shoulders looked even browner against the white taffeta. The long slim skirt made her seem almost tall. She noticed in a mirror that the boyish Jatha of early morning had become very gorgeous. She wished that she felt as gay as she looked.

Mike kept looking at her, as if seeing her beauty for the first time. She noticed how much fun he had ordering the dinner. "Two years in Chicago have taught him how to get service," she thought admiringly.

The dance music struck up. Mike pushed back his chair and turned to Jatha. "What say?" he murmured. "Let's."

She had almost forgotten what fun it was to dance with him. He slipped in tricky little steps, and then laughed softly with appreciation as she matched them. Mike made dancing exciting.

As they returned to their table Betsy and Herbert followed them. Betsy gave the impression that she was trying hard not to show how dull she found Herbert. Her tones were icily cordial. As they were seated, Herbert turned to Jatha as a sensitive child would to a friend in the midst of strangers. In one dance Betsy had thoroughly frightened him.

Jatha felt sorry for him. "How's the work coming, Herbert?" she asked mercifully. He flushed with pleasure and was off.

Mike and Betsy listened for a while. Then Betsy began thinking of funny things to say to Mike. From time to time that rippling laugh of hers peaked forth. Then they danced. Jatha preferred the

master's degree to dancing with Herbert. He danced as if he didn't like to.

In a kind of nightmare Jatha murmured: "Oh—— Hm-m-m, nice——" Betsy's rippling laughter became more and more frequent. Jatha began to feel that murder would be justified on the grounds of too much rippling laughter!

The music started again. Mike looked at Jatha. Her assumed interest in Herbert completely deceived him. Betsy looked at them, then at Mike, smiled and shrugged.

Jatha put intense interest into her voice. Murmured: "Really, Herb?" Took a drink of water.

Mike and Betsy slipped away onto the dance floor.

It went on that way for Jatha all the rest of that terrible evening. She kept praying that she wouldn't lose her temper or cry, or show how miserable she was. When they finally went home she was so exhausted that she was grateful to be rid of them and go to sleep.

But she was up early the next morning and went out to water her plants. Then she went to church. She had dreamed so much of Betsy's rippling laughter, that she felt it wouldn't dare follow her there. Mike she knew would sleep until noon.

The church service soothed her, and she returned home at peace with herself. A sort of fatalistic peace. What was to be, would be.

As she went into the house, she noticed a strange car parked across the street. She wondered who was calling on the neighbors. Then she went on through to the kitchen.

"Anybody up, Hanna?" she asked.

Hanna looked like a thundercloud and pointed in the direction of the garden. Jatha went to the back

door. Suddenly she had to lean against the door jamb for support.

"Hello, Jatha," sang Betsy. "I've been waiting for you to come and scold Mike."

Mike glanced sheepishly up at her. The two were sitting at a table with the remains of breakfast between them. There was an empty chair placed for her. She stooped to tie her shoe lace. She needed that moment to get control. So it was Betsy's car. Funny it hadn't warned her.

Then she stood up, walked to the chair and sat down smiling.

"Any coffee left?" she asked, looking into the pot.

Mike and Betsy relaxed back into their chairs.

"My dear," rippled Betsy, "I'm worried about Mike. He's so absent-minded! He spent the whole evening last night raving to me about you and your garden—painted such a gorgeous picture that the least I could do was to say I'd like to see it." Jatha knew the technique by now. "So he invited me to have breakfast here this morning. I warned him not to forget to tell you, didn't I, Mike?"

Mike grinned hopefully. Jatha laughed.

"When you've known him as long as I have, Betsy"—her eyes scolded Mike, but her voice was still laughing—"you'll never expect him to remember anything!"

"Aw, say," spluttered Mike.

Betsy stayed to lunch. To her horror, Jatha heard herself joining Mike in inviting her. There was something hypnotic about the way it worked. First she would have a feeling of apprehension. Then she would hear herself glibly flinging out the invitation.

"Gee, but I like you kids," exclaimed Betsy after one of these



transitions. "Aren't we having fun?"

That was one of the tricks of Betsy's method. The whole-hearted way she included Jatha. Jatha thought she had to be a good sport.

And that was what prolonged the agony.

Aunt Elly joined them later in the afternoon. She sniffed the situation immediately and waded in. What with having had two husbands, and proposals even yet, she knew a few tricks of her own.

"Jatha told me what a marvelous time you all had last night," said Aunt Elly to Betsy.

Jatha opened her mouth and stared. Aunt Elly shot her a dirty look.

Mike grinned in amaze-



"Leave me alone!" Jatha blazed at him. "I'm sick and tired of you. The sooner you get out of here, the better I'll like it. I hope I never see you again!"

ment as if something had just dawned on him. "She seemed to be," he remarked.

"Didn't she though?" rippled Betsy. "I thought Herb was my date, but I couldn't pry him loose from her all evening!"

"Master's degree in something or other, wasn't it?" asked Mike mischievously.

Jatha started to protest. Aunt Elly cut in on her.

"Herbert's the most remarkable boy," she boasted. "We expect great things of him. His mother tells me that his department has as good as offered him a position as soon as he receives his degree. And he's so devoted to Jatha!"

Jatha laughed out loud. Aunt Elly shot her another stern look.

"Well, at least he's nobody's fool," Jatha hurled at Mike.

"Who said he was?" grumbled Mike.

"And of course, you know," interposed Aunt Elly, "he doesn't have to work at all if he doesn't want to. Many young men in his position would waste their time traveling and playing around. But Herbert is too unusual for that!"

"Yes, isn't he?" agreed Betsy. Jatha had a feeling that it would take more than Aunt Elly to down her. "I liked him ever so much. But me?—I'm too dumb to know what he's talking about. Hasn't he the nicest hands though? Did you ever notice them?"

"Scholar's hands," prompted Aunt Elly. "Slim and sensitive."

Mike regarded his own well-shaped hands dubiously.

"But Jatha seemed to understand everything he was telling her." Betsy conveyed a tone of envy.

"Practice!" Jatha bounced at her. She felt as if she were going down

for the third time. She ignored Aunt Elly's pointed looks.

Mike glanced at his watch. "Gosh!" he exploded, "I've got to catch that five-thirty train. Will you run me down, Jatha? Wait till I grab my bag."

But Jatha had stood all she could. If Mike Shaw thought he could lead her around by the nose, he was crazy. If Aunt Elly thought a little transparent deceit would bring Mike to his senses, she was crazy. If that little blond piece of poison ivy thought she was going to let her make a fool of her any longer, she was crazy. They were all crazy!

"No!" Jatha almost yelled in Mike's face.

Mike recoiled as if she had slapped him. "Jatha!" he exclaimed, horrified.

"Well, I won't!" stamped Jatha. "Get Betsy to. Her car's out front. She'd like to. I wouldn't!"

Aunt Elly groaned. Betsy hung onto her chair. Mike tried to get his hands onto Jatha to shake her. But she rushed out of the room and took the stairs two at a time. Mike bolted after her. She turned on the top step and defied him.

"Leave me alone!" she blazed at him. "I'm sick and tired of you and your sweet little violets! I'm fed up!"

"So that's it?" he asked with hurt sarcasm. "Take it easy, kid. You're just tired."

"Sure I'm tired," she flared at him. "Sick and tired of being walked on! And the sooner Betsy gets you out of here, the better I'll like it. I hope I never see either of you again!"

"Do you mean that, Jatha?"

She mistook the iron control in his voice for cruelty. "I mean just that, Mike Shaw!"

She stopped and looked at him in



horror. Then she turned and fled to her room before he should see the tears coming. Immediately she would have given half her life to have the words back, but it wasn't in her to let Mike see her misery.

She flung herself on the bed and held her breath, listening to Mike tiptoe into his room and hurry down the stairs. Betsy's car purred maliciously as it drove away.

Aunt Elly, who understood her suffering, said nothing that night.

But at luncheon the next day she called Jatha a fool. "She wouldn't have lasted five minutes if you had wanted to exert yourself. You were a little idiot to let her impose on you," said Aunt Elly. "What's a bit of competition? Heavens, you get out of practice without it!"

That night Jatha read late. She couldn't bear to think. The idea was to sit up until she couldn't keep her eyes open, and then fall asleep. Probably in a few days the hopeless, depressed feeling that had been choking her would go away.

About midnight the telephone rang. She slipped out of bed and ran to the upstairs extension. Mike's voice answered her "hello."

She was so excited she could hardly hold the phone.

"Listen, Jatha," came Mike's husky voice, "I've spent the whole evening writing letters to you. They're all in the wastebasket. I'm so sorry about what happened, I wanted to explain. But I'm no good at it on paper. Jatha, dear, you've had me scared cold all day. Guess I need some one to look after me. Do you feel up to the job for life?"

For the first time Jatha got a thrill out of the telephone. She pressed the instrument close to her ear, trying to bring Mike nearer.

"What, Mike?" Her heart pounded until she couldn't hear. "Do I want a job?" What did he think she wanted with a job?

"Sure." He hesitated. Laughed softly to her over the wire. It was like a caress. "Jatha, I started to propose to you the other morning when we were out riding, but I got sidetracked."

"Yes, I noticed," she replied, recollecting violently.

"But, Jatha, it was only a side-track. That's what I wanted to explain. I'm sorry about Betsy. Honestly I am. I thought you saw through it. Thought you were having a good time, too. But you're just too darned good at keeping things to yourself. Please, Jatha, will you marry me?"

She heard him that time. She had to say something quickly. No more stalling. "Mike, I'm sorry, too—about yesterday. I didn't mean it."

"Forget it." Mike's voice wavered penitently. "I guess I had it coming. But you will marry me? You gave me such a scare yesterday, I've got to know."

"Yes." She almost choked with relief. "But, Mike, I'm no good at competition. That's what made me blow up. I couldn't stand it."

"Who said anything about competition?" he demanded jubilantly. "I distinctly forbid you to ever try anything of the sort. I couldn't take it either." His voice lowered. "Jatha, I love you. Good night, sweet."

She replaced the telephone, her heart singing. Oh, what a relief it was! What an agony it would have been to have had to wait for his letter! But at that, she would have liked to read all the letters that went into his wastebasket!



# Whirlpool Of Happiness

By Ruth Aston

SHE had worn the new red velvet evening gown with the slit skirt because Jimmy had never seen it. She had dressed her sleek black hair in a new way, with a riot of small, glistening curls covering the back of her head because she thought Jimmy would like it. And just as she was turning from checking the evening wrap that matched her gown, she saw him.

"Hello, Jimmy!" she cried, trying not to appear too eager at seeing him. But she could not keep the starriness out of her eyes that came just to the man's well-shaped, proud chin.

"Hi, Manon," he greeted her. "Glad you're here. There's a swell little girl I want you to meet. Oh, there you are!"

He was looking past Manon to a



dainty blonde with round blue eyes and moist, childish lips, in a gown that was all wrong.

"Manon, this is Betty Lou. Betty Lou, Manon." Pride rang in his voice.

A strange fear crept into Manon's heart. Jimmy was always exhibiting some new girl, but somehow she felt that this time it was serious. Betty Lou was such a gentle, feminine little thing, adorable-looking, and sort of wistfully helpless—just the kind of girl to appeal to Jimmy, who petted every stray dog he met.

Betty Lou murmured, "How do you do?"

"I'll be seeing you," said Manon. "And I'll save you a dance, Jimmy."

She turned away toward the ballroom, where Ben Carter was waiting for her. But the lilt had gone from her walk as her spike heels clicked across the floor.

"Jimmy has a new girl," she moaned in her heart. "Won't he ever give me a tumble?"

The evening was a mad, riotous jumble of dancing, with some one cutting in from the stag line before she had gone a dozen paces with her new partner. She even lost track of whom she was dancing with at times, as her eyes swept the ballroom trying to locate Jimmy. Usually, she found him dancing with Betty Lou. That was bad, though she was a tiny bit pleased that the men weren't cutting in on the blonde. Then one time she couldn't find Jimmy, or Betty Lou.

She took to watching the doors with anxious eyes, and after a few more turns around the room, she saw them coming in from the veranda. Betty Lou's hair was mussed. Manon's heart sank miserably.

Yet, all the time she danced and laughed as though there were not that awful pain in her heart.

Already it was eleven thirty, and Jimmy hadn't even asked her to dance.

Ben Carter was crossing the room, apparently searching for some one. He saw her, and hurried over to where she was standing.

He smiled warmly.

"Here you are!" he said in his deep voice. He had a way of gazing at her intently, which made his slightest remark seem important.

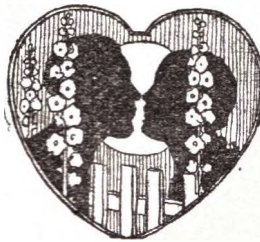
There was a peculiar fascination about this man. He was a stranger in Beverly Hills and Manon had known him only a few days. But he had begun to rush her and she couldn't help being pleased. His deep-set eyes, which were a little too close together, his high cheek bones, his sharp, pale features, had a magnetic quality that was somehow frightening.

He had come into the shop a few days before with his sister Fay, a substantially built, and red-headed woman with very long garnet finger nails. She had tried on a number of fur coats, but could not seem to find anything to her liking, while Ben seemed to find something very much to his liking—namely, Manon.

She had inherited the shop from her mother, and the fact that it was still flourishing was due to Manon's innate artistic sense, as well as her natural business ability.

"I can manage my business, but I can't manage my love," she thought wistfully.

When Ben Carter asked her to go to the country club dance, she accepted eagerly. Jimmy Blake would



be there, and maybe if he saw her with a new man instead of some one of the old crowd, he might just possibly be a little jealous.

But, Manon thought wretchedly, Jimmy hadn't paid enough attention to know whom she was with, so absorbed was he in Betty Lou. "You look like a thundercloud," said Ben. "What's the matter, sweetheart?"

Manon pulled herself together and flashed him a party smile.

"Let's dance," she begged. Anything to keep from thinking of Jimmy! Anything to prevent that big lump in her chest from swelling, bursting, and loosing a torrent of scalding tears!

"You don't have this dance?" asked Ben in surprise. "Lucky me!"

"No," answered Manon. Then she saw Jimmy. He was coming toward her with Betty Lou. "Yes," she corrected herself hurriedly. "I do have the dance. I forgot."

She held her breath while Betty Lou was being introduced to Ben. Suppose Jimmy didn't ask her to dance, after all?

But he did. With a heart that soared and sang with elation, Manon sailed away in his arms.

"Who is that man?" Jimmy asked gruffly.

A thrill of joy nearly caused her to miss a step. Was Jimmy jealous?

"I don't know much about him," she admitted, and added wickedly, "He's very fascinating, isn't he?"

"I wouldn't know," was the scathing reply. "He looks like a pain in the neck to me."

Manon hid a happy smile against the shoulder of his tuxedo. They danced to the door, then Jimmy led her out onto the veranda.

The grassy fairways, shining like sheets of water in the moonlight, and

shadowed romantically by occasional sprawling oak trees, beckoned invitingly.

"Let's take a walk," suggested Manon.

"I'm sorry." Jimmy's voice was suddenly a bit crisp, and he ran his fingers through his curly hair, as he often did when embarrassed. "I don't want to be away from Betty Lou that long. She's such a scared little thing."

Manon's lips twisted into a wry smile. "Let's not pretend, Jimmy. You just don't like me well enough."

"Who says I don't?" he demanded, his voice tense.

In a dark corner of the veranda, he drew her into his arms. His lips brushed her cheeks and forehead with the gentlest of kisses. But his arms held her from him just a little, and his lips did not meet hers. She longed to be held close to his hard, young body. She longed to have those arms gripping her until it hurt. She crept closer, raised her face in invitation.

His eyes were devouring hers. Quite suddenly, he pressed his lips against hers fiercely. For an instant, Manon knew breathless, insane ecstasy. Then without warning, she was released.

"Forgive me," he murmured, and turning abruptly, started for the ballroom with swift strides.

Manon leaned against the wall, weak and trembling. Why had he kissed her so passionately, only to leave her as though he didn't care? He had no right to kiss her at all if he didn't mean it. Slowly, anger took the place of the deep hurt in her heart.

Her heels clicked the length of the veranda in quick staccato as she hurried to the ballroom, her chin rigid with determination. Delib-





*Manon stared at him in sharp surprise. Was this the Jimmy she had loved? She hated him now! Turning away quickly, she headed for the dressing room, hot tears blinding her eyes.*

erately, she crossed to where Jimmy was standing alone, watching the dancers. She stood before him.

Red spots burned in each of her cheeks, and her voice was as cold as ice. "You're very rude," she flung

at him. "Also, entirely too bold. It's a bad combination."

Jimmy flushed, unhappiness in his deep-brown eyes. "I'm sorry, Manon. I know I was rude and bold. Please forgive me."

For a moment she weakened. "Why did you do it?" she asked intently.

His eyes left her face. His voice grew suddenly flat, lifeless, cold. "You're making a mountain out of a molehill. I promise you it won't happen again."

Was there disgust in his tone? Manon stared at him in sharp surprise. Was this the Jimmy she had loved? She hated him!

Turning away quickly, she headed for the dressing room, hot tears blinding her eyes.

She was bathing her face in cold water, when there was a frightened little voice behind her saying, "Manon."

Turning, she saw Betty Lou watching her unhappily.

"Manon, I wish you'd help me." Betty Lou's lips were trembling, and there were unshed tears in her blue eyes. "Jimmy's been stuck with me all evening. No one ever cuts in. What's the matter with me?" She was gazing in bewildered self-pity at her reflection in the mirror.

Manon dried her face and studied the girl. Finally she said, "Your hair is all wrong. It sticks out too far at the sides. And your dress is too short."

Betty Lou winced a little, and Manon felt sorry for her.

"You're really pretty, Betty Lou. Come down to my shop. I can fix you up so that all the boys will fall for you, and not just Jimmy."

The blonde's face brightened. "You're awfully nice. I don't see why——" She caught herself, her face flushing.

"You don't see what?" demanded Manon suspiciously.

"I—I don't see why Jimmy doesn't like you better. I mean, I should think he'd want to dance with you a lot, instead of avoiding you the way he does. Oh, dear! I shouldn't have said that. But you know he does avoid you."

"Yes, I know." Manon's voice was surprisingly calm considering the dull, throbbing ache in her chest. Jimmy had been avoiding her all evening. Even this baby had noticed it.

Well, she didn't love Jimmy any more anyway. So it was all right with her. But her shoulders drooped tiredly as she went back to the ballroom.

"Let's go home," she told Ben. "I'm terribly tired."

"Sure, sweetheart." Ben seemed delighted with the idea. "I've hardly seen a thing of you all evening. Maybe I'll have a chance to talk to you now."

He waited with her at the checking booth and tipped the girl a silver dollar which rang noisily across the counter.

As he helped Manon into the car he said, "Sorry I haven't a better-looking vehicle to escort a fair lady."

Manon thought the medium-sized streamline car very smart-looking, and told him so.

"I'm going to get a new one," he replied, "but I want to take my time about picking it out. I'm never satisfied with anything less than the best." He started the car, then reached for her hand and squeezed it. "That's why I picked you out."

His touch was repulsive. She removed her hand on the pretense of getting a handkerchief out of her bag.

Closing her eyes, she laid her head against the back of the seat. She



was tired and miserable. Every turn of the wheels was taking her farther from Jimmy—Jimmy and his blonde. Well, that was better than making herself wretched by watching them together.

Jimmy had kissed her, as she so often had dreamed he would some day. In her dreams, though, he had not left her like that. Always, in her dreams, he had said that he loved her. But Jimmy hadn't learned his part. And she had thought she was the leading lady, when she was only—only scenery!

Suddenly she began to laugh—a trembling, shaky cloak of a laugh, with tears hiding in its folds.

"What's the joke?" asked Ben.

Try as she would, she could not stop the sobbing laugh that was shaking her body. She opened her eyes to blink away the tears.

She sat up quickly. Her hysteria left her. "Where are you taking me?" she cried.

They had turned up a narrow road darkly shaded by trees.

"Just for a little ride," Ben explained. "We like to ride, don't we?"

But he applied the brakes and stopped the car as he spoke.

"Let's ride then," urged Manon, laughing nervously.

"What's your hurry?" His arms circled her shoulders, and he forcibly drew her to him.

"Don't!" she begged. She was filled with sudden fear. What did she know about this man, really? Why had she ever come out with him alone like this?

"What's the matter?" he demanded in an injured tone. "We're friends, aren't we?"

"Yes—oh, yes!" Safer not to fight a man like this. Tact—that was the thing. "We haven't known each other very long. I'm rather shy, I

guess. When I know you better, then maybe—"

"O. K.," he said sulkily. "If that's the way you feel." But he did not remove his arm.

"Please take me home!"

"What's your hurry?"

"I—I have a headache."

"Is that nice?" he drawled. "And just when I was going to let you in on something good!"

Manon looked at him curiously. His bony face was strangely skull-like in the moonlight that filtered through the trees. She had no idea what he was going to suggest, but she intuitively distrusted this man.

"You work awfully hard for your living," he declared. "And I don't have to work at all. How do you suppose I can buy fur coats for my sister, and new cars for myself?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," she answered haughtily. "I don't consider it any of my business."

He laughed hollowly. "That's a good line. But I never saw the woman yet that wasn't curious. And because I like you so much, sweetheart, I'm going to let you in on the secret."

She waited impatiently while he took out a cigarette and lighted it. Then he began talking. He explained that a friend of his had invented a very valuable instrument. All you had to do was to put it to the earth and it would register whether or not there was oil underground, and how far down you had to drill to get it.

"Do you see what that means?" he demanded excitedly. "It means no more dry holes. It means knowing exactly how much dough it will take to get the oil. And it means knowing to the day, maybe even to the hour, when the oil will start coming in."

"Very interesting!" observed Manon, yawning.

"You're darned right it's interesting!" he exploded. "It will make us millions!"

"You've tested it, I presume?" murmured the girl.

"Certainly we've tested it. Why, we have oil wells right now where no one dreamed there was oil, that are producing two thousand barrels a day."

"Where are your wells?"

"All over!" he replied.

Manon smiled wisely to herself at his evasive answer.

"And how much," she inquired, "was I to put in?"

"We're letting you in for fifteen hundred dollars. That's sixty shares. I'd like to let you have a larger block, but I'm afraid the other stockholders would object." He looked at her closely. She kept all expression out of her face. "Maybe I could get you a hundred shares," he reflected.

"Oh, no!" she hastened to say. "I shouldn't want to deprive the other stockholders."

"O. K. Then you can give me the check to-night, and I'll deliver the shares to-morrow."

"To-morrow is Sunday," she hedged. "I never do business on Sunday." She had an inspiration. "I don't know just what the balance is in my checking account. Suppose you come for the check Monday evening?"

"Good! I'll take you to dinner. Would you like that?"

Manon agreed complacently enough, but within, she was seething with anger. She could see the whole thing so clearly—his coming to her shop that day presumably to buy his sister furs, but in reality to try to put across his crooked scheme. Thank Heaven for her inheritance of

business ability from her mother. Many girls might have been taken in by the glowing picture he painted.

He drove her safely home, and on parting reminded her, "Be seeing you Monday night."

"You just think so," she murmured to herself.

Sunday, it rained. From the large studio window in her apartment, Manon unhappily watched the continuous sheets of water pouring from the skies. Drops joined together and rippled in little streams down the windowpane, like tears down a child's face, and Manon found herself wiping her own cheeks, surprised that she had been crying.

There was really no reason to cry. Jimmy didn't love her, and she hated him. She should be happy that she had entirely recovered from a love that was so one-sided. Jimmy meant nothing to her now! The more she thought about how little he meant in her life, the harder she cried, until finally she threw herself face down on the chaise longue and sobbed into the pillows.

"Jimmy! Jimmy! I can't give you up! I want to hate you, but I love you. I'll never love anybody else."

Then she sat up and dabbed her eyes, feeling much better for having told herself the truth.

She began planning how she would make over Betty Lou. Her artistic sense rebelled at the way the blond girl dressed. But that could be changed. She could make Betty Lou into a baby doll over whom men would go wild.

Manon knew she would be running a big risk. She hoped that Jimmy would lose his feeling of sympathy and responsibility toward the pretty child if she were suddenly to blossom into a stunning young



woman. But there was the danger that he might fall madly in love with the new Betty Lou and marry her. In that case, every day would be like to-day—bleak, cold, cheerless.

The sun was shining the next morning, a fact which Manon considered a good omen. She was raising the Venetian blinds in the front windows of the shop to let in the welcome rays, when Betty Lou opened the door. She stood there timidly in a blue suit that was too large for her, her blue eyes round with eagerness.

"I haven't much money," she told Manon wistfully. "Only about fifteen dollars."

Manon smiled to herself. Fifteen dollars would not go very far.

"That will be plenty," she replied. "Luckily I'm having a half-price sale. You can get a nice evening dress and a sports dress, too."

From the back room, Manon brought some unmarked merchandise that had recently come in. Betty Lou must never know what bargains she was getting.

The small blonde gasped at the exquisite beauty of the evening gown Manon held up for her to see. It was of midnight-blue, flecked with tiny white stars. In the dressing room, Betty Lou watched her reflection eagerly as the soft, Grecian folds molded to her body in modest allurements.

Even Manon was surprised at what the graceful lines did for the other girl's figure, turning her from an awkward schoolgirl into a siren. Her hair, too, took on new radiant beauty, for the deep-blue of the dress brought out all its golden sheen.

Betty Lou turned to admire herself in the triple mirrors, as she unconsciously stood a little straighter and held her chin a little higher.

"I'm really beautiful!" she declared with the innocent pleasure of a child. "I never dreamed I could be so lovely."

Manon felt a stab of pain akin to jealousy. It was true. Betty Lou was stunning. The men would all know it now. Jimmy would know it and adore her.

Manon sighed. "You may have it for ten dollars," she said. "And now we'll try a sports suit."

There was a yellow knit sweater and skirt which Betty Lou loved instantly, and which made her look sweetly sophisticated and entirely lovable.

"Jimmy ought to like me now," purred Betty Lou. "He told me last night that I needed a man to look after me."

Manon turned away sickened, her lips trembling, her eyes near to tears. So Jimmy had already come so close to proposing to Betty Lou!

The blonde's voice was bubbling on, "He said you were so self-sufficient that you didn't need a man to look out for you. He said that a boy with not much salary could never be interesting to you, because you were so successful yourself."

Manon's eyes widened in astonishment. Her eyes sparkled with sudden renewed vitality, and for the first time since the dance, she smiled broadly, radiantly.

"Did Jimmy say that?"

She couldn't get Betty Lou's dress off quickly enough. She dashed to the rear of the store with both dresses and flung them to one of the salesgirls.

"Wrap these, Santa. I have to make a phone call." She was rapidly forming a plan.

She called the bank, and finally got Jimmy on the line.

"Jimmy," she said, "I don't know the balance in my checking account.



*Ben swung at Jimmy, but Jimmy was too quick for him. A mighty punch knocked Ben unconscious. And then Fay sprang at Jimmy like a tigress.*



Could I write a check for fifteen hundred dollars?"

Jimmy's reply came a moment later. "Your balance is seventeen hundred thirty dollars and twenty-seven cents."

"How odd!" she said, purposely naïve. "I don't remember depositing any twenty-seven cents. But I'm glad I can write the check. Ben Carter is letting me in on something good."

"Ben Carter?" Jimmy's voice sounded dubious. "What's he selling you?"

"Stock in a company or something. It's a perfectly wonderful invention! It tells you just where the oil is, and everything like that."

"Manon!" thundered Jimmy. "Don't be a ninny! You're not going into it, are you?"

"Of course." She managed to produce a pout that would register over the wire. "I want to make a lot of money, and it sounds like an easy way to do it. I'm going to give him a check to-night when he takes me to dinner."

"Manon!" Jimmy's exclamation was a moan. "Please wait, Manon. Please don't do anything foolish. Let me at least investigate him."

"I think you're terrible to be so suspicious"—was her haughty reply. "He's a very nice man, and I'm going to give him the check to-night. At seven thirty," she added distinctly.

"Yes?" Jimmy's voice had grown suddenly cold. "We'll see about that."

Manon gently hung up the receiver and threw a kiss into the mouthpiece with the tips of her fingers.

"Come on, Jimmy," she said softly. "I need rescuing. There is a maiden in distress, and a dragon to slay!"

Ben Carter called promptly that evening at seven thirty. Manon was somewhat nervous as she let him into the apartment—he carried his brief case with such a determined air.

"I've got some pictures here of the oil wells," he announced, without sitting down.

He handed her a long envelope which she opened. There were several impressive pictures of oil wells. The last picture was of a peculiar-looking instrument that looked something like a thermometer. On one side of the machine stood a long-nosed man with black curly hair, and on the other side stood Ben. Manon could not help smiling at this intended evidence of his integrity.

But why didn't Jimmy come? Ben was getting out some important-looking documents which she gathered were stock certificates.

"Well, here we are!" he said jovially. "All ready to be delivered. Now all we need is your check."

"Yes?" Manon glanced about the room nervously. How could she kill time until Jimmy got there? Surely he would come!

She crossed the room slowly and turned on the radio, took a rose from the bouquet on the table and put it in Ben's buttonhole.

The man frowned down at her. "Not stalling, are you?" he demanded.

She gave a little start of surprise. "Oh, no!" she declared innocently. "I didn't realize you were in a hurry."

She opened the desk, took out a check book and pen, and gave the pen a few unnecessary shakes. Then there was nothing to do but write the check. She felt miserably disappointed in Jimmy. Her whole plan had failed! He didn't care enough about her to try to save her.

As she handed Ben the check, she felt only mildly regretful about the loss of the fifteen hundred dollars. That was nothing compared to the loss of Jimmy. For surely she had lost him. If he loved her, if he felt even real friendship for her, he would make every effort to keep her from making this mistake. A sense of utter futility came over her. All she knew anything about was business. She had used business methods in love, and had failed.

Ben took the check, scanned it eagerly, and put it in his wallet. His arms closed about Manon's shoulders like steel bars. He pressed his lips against hers, fiercely. She struggled helplessly, bruised by the tense muscles of his arms, by the iron grip of his fingers.

He relaxed his hold a little to stare into her pale, frightened face.

"You little sweetheart," he whispered huskily. "I've been wanting to do this ever since I first saw you."

"Stop!" she begged, trying to push away. "Stop, please!"

The doorbell rang. Ben didn't seem to hear it, but Manon's heart gave a throb of hope. Her helpless, frightened eyes shot to the door.

"Jimmy," she prayed, "Jimmy, come quickly."

The door opened. Manon stared in amazed disappointment. Her heart contracted sharply. It wasn't Jimmy at all, but Ben's sister!

Fay came into the room, her fat face flushed with anger.

Ben quickly dropped his arms. For just an instant he lost his usual perfect poise. Then he said casually and steadily, "Hello, sis. Manon has just bought some of our stock."

His eyes had grown strangely dark as they held Fay's almost hypnotically, as though in warning.

"Oh, I didn't know," returned the

red-haired woman. She seemed embarrassed at her angry entrance.

At that instant, the door opened and in burst Jimmy.

Dear, darling Jimmy! He had come after all! He was panting as though he had been running. Closing the door, he leaned against it to get his breath, and flashed a grin at the startled faces of Ben and Fay.

"So your friends are still here," he exclaimed with relish to Manon. "Perhaps they'd like to hear the report I just got from the Johns Detective Agency."

"I'm not in the least interested," replied Ben with great dignity. "Come on, Manon, let's get started." He took her arm, and with his free hand gave Jimmy a push.

It was an unwise move. Jimmy grabbed Ben's arm, twisting it painfully.

"Did you give him the check?" Jimmy asked Manon.

"Yes, I did, Jimmy."

"Can you get it?"

She tried to reach into the inside pocket of Ben's coat, when Fay's hands grabbed her from behind and held her. Manon struggled and kicked, but to no avail.

Carter had broken loose from Jimmy's grasp. With fists tightly clenched, he swung at Jimmy.

But Jimmy was too quick for him. A mighty punch that landed square to the jaw sent Ben sprawling. He was knocked unconscious. Fay sprang at Jimmy like a tigress, and with her long, pointed nails tried to claw his face.

Jimmy opened the door, shoved her out, and locked it.

"Jimmy"—Manon's face was white—"she scratched you!"

He grinned. "Nice set of weapons she carries."

Kneeling beside Ben, he found the wallet and took out the check. The





*His arms tightened about her and his lips found hers and clung to them in a long, fierce kiss that made her pulses throb madly, her senses swim in a glorious whirlpool of happiness.*

man was beginning to recover. Quickly, Jimmy opened the door and dragged him into the hall. Fay had disappeared.

Back in the room, Jimmy looked at Manon a little sheepishly.

"Sorry I had to bust up your date and make such a scene. I've stopped payment on the check, but he might have gotten some poor devil to cash

it to-night. He's certainly anxious to get rid of that woman."

"Of Fay—his sister?" Manon asked blankly.

"She's not his sister," scoffed Jimmy. "She's his common-law wife, and he's trying to buy her off. Much to his embarrassment she trails him wherever he goes. According to the detective agency, he

makes plenty of money selling bad oil stock, and always manages to keep within the law. He likes the ladies pretty well"—Jimmy grinned—"but this one is always coming along and busting up the show."

Manon gazed admiringly at Jimmy. "I've been such a fool," she declared. "I need some one to look after"—she caught herself just in time—"after my business affairs. Couldn't you be a sort of business manager for me, Jimmy? I mean on the side, of course."

He looked into her upturned face, his eyes filled with wonder and a new kind of joy. "There's only one thing I'd like better," he replied, taking her in his arms.

"And that?" she whispered, as his warm cheek rested against hers.

"From now on, don't write any checks without consulting your husband!"

His arms tightened about her. She could feel his heart beating against hers. His lips found hers and clung to them in a long, fierce kiss that made her pulses throb madly, her senses swim in a glorious whirlpool of happiness.

After a while, when he held her silently in his arms, she pulled her-

self out of her radiant world for a moment to ask Jimmy in a fearful voice:

"What about Betty Lou?"

"Betty Lou?" He looked puzzled a moment, as though his mind were having difficulty in focusing itself on any one but Manon. "Oh, yes, Betty Lou! She came into the bank to-day."

Manon's heart seemed to stop. Betty Lou wasn't losing any time.

Jimmy continued, "She looks nice in her new sports suit. You were a peach to fix her up. I won't have to worry about her unpopularity any more. She's sure to make a hit."

"Then you—you don't love her?" Manon asked anxiously.

Jimmy's face was very sober, almost stern. "Darling girl," he told her, "I've never loved any one but you since the first time I saw you—that first day you came into the bank. And I've been fighting all the time to keep from making love to you, because I thought——"

"I know." Manon stopped his words with a kiss. "You didn't know that I needed you in my business."

"That's not really a lie," she told herself, as he crushed her close to him. "Love is my business."



### BELOVED

IN the stillness of the night,  
 My lips called your name ever so softly, beloved,  
 My heart longing for the shelter of your arms  
 To protect me against the storm  
 Brewing within,  
 And threatening to swirl me  
 Into an emotional whirlpool  
 To my undoing.  
 In the stillness of the night,  
 My heart cried out to you, my rock of strength,  
 My lips calling your name ever so softly, beloved.

MAGDA BRANDON.





# Lady Snob

By Beth Farrell

**A**RE you riding for a fall, my Lady Snob?"

"Well, it won't be through a man named Lace, if I get it. Lace. Lace!" Simonné's rich voice rose in derisive laughter.

"You called me?" an amused voice asked, and a tall, rather too slender young man appeared at the table where the two girls were enjoying the famous Orchil five o'clocks.

Simonné looked the young man over, gray eyes amazed. He should have wilted in his tracks, but he didn't. Merely stood at smiling attention, one brow quizzically raised.

There was so much about him

that displeased Simonné Orchil, that she hadn't time to catalogue all his faults. He was too tall or maybe he made Bob Chauncey look pudgy by comparison. He was too fair. His hair actually had waves on the temples, waves that were pale-gold. Bob could have broken him in two; then, too, there was his ridiculous name, Lace Flowers, which it seemed he did his best to live up to. Not one man in the famous Mirror Bar of Orchil House wore his clothes so well, or was so immaculately turned out.

Simonné's small scornful mouth twisted. "No, I didn't call you.

When you hear me saying your name you can be very sure of one thing, I am not calling you."

Her sarcasm, it seemed, did not register. He merely stared at her quizzically and Simonné saw that his eyes were the exact color of the English violets she was wearing, then he half closed them again as though the effort had been too great for his slender strength.

"Then I will be very careful not to come when I hear my name," he drawled. "A bore, too, for I shall undoubtedly hear it a great many times from you. Too bad you dislike me so, I am really quite amiable." With that amazing statement, her father's new employee gave her a ridiculous, dancing school bow and strolled off, brushing something from his sleeve.

"Well, I never!" gasped Simonné.

"He's adorable," giggled Poppy Cain, and Simonné looked at her with actual dislike.

"Adorably conceited, the egotistical puppy!" Simonné's voice died away and in its place came a very especial smile, reserved, Poppy knew, for Robert Chauncey, Simonné's fiancé.

Bob Chauncey was manager of the Orchil House, but, if Simonné had her way, would soon be a partner with her father, and she usually had her way. He was everything she admired in a man, and handsome in a sturdy, dark way. He preferred to work, too, instead of idling as other young men in his position would.

"Has dad lost his mind, Bob?" she demanded. "I never knew him to employ any one like that before. I mean that ridiculous Flowers person."

"Has he been annoying you?" Bob demanded eagerly.

"Put the old sword up, Bob," murmured Poppy, fishing for the

cherry in her glass. "He merely refused to kotow to the princess of Orchil House."

"Well, he should," Bob said loyally.

"Yes, yes," grinned Poppy, then: "If you don't want to add him to your collection, Simonné, I'll do my best to add him to mine."

"You do, and we part," Simonné said pettishly, and flushed as Poppy's candid brown eyes stared at her. She was acting ridiculous, she knew.

"He's English, which is the greatest drawback," fretted Bob. "I told your father it was disloyal, in these hard times, to employ an Englishman. And for no reason, that I can see. He has no particular job, you see, but your father claims he adds tone. Your father is in his dotage to believe Orchil House needs a simpering dandy out of the French Revolution, to add tone."

"But you said he was English, I believe," murmured Poppy, "and I don't remember the English ever revolted."

"I shall tell dad to fire him," Simonné said eagerly. "If I tell him customers are laughing at his silly Lace Flowers——"

"But they aren't," Poppy interrupted meaningly, and the group looked toward the man under discussion. Several debts were talking, with undisguised eagerness, to him, and he was listening, fair head bent, his eyebrow lifted, as though he wore a monocle, Simonné decided. He actually acted as though he was doing them a favor when he associated with them, and they liked it.

"We don't need their trade," Simonné said shortly.

But it seemed Orchil House did, for David Orchil, usually so tractable where his lovely daughter was concerned, proved adamant about



firing his new employee, and she had waited for him to have a good breakfast before tackling him.

"Orchil House isn't the same prosperous place it was, my dear. We've had losses you know nothing about. People are flocking to talk to our new host and dance with him."

"Gigolo! You should be host if any one!" Simonné declared, hotly.

Mr. Orchil ruffled her short black curls. "Imagine me! A man of sixty with a paunch and retiring hairs, trying to attract the ladies."

"Imagine me! I'll bet he says that!" cried the angry heiress of Orchil.

Her father flushed, but grinned. "He's really a swell guy, Simmy. He's got Boy interested in horse-back riding. They've been at it every morning for the two weeks you've been gone."

"I didn't know that. I'd have said this Flowers would fall off a horse. What does he ride, a Shetland pony? Boy," she added hastily, seeing her father's growing frown, "could have ridden with Bob. He wanted him to."

"And brought him a pony to ride," her father reminded her.

"But he's a sick boy."

Mr. Orchil winced, and Simonné contritely put a comforting hand on his arm. Because she hated a silly fool, she had hurt her father. Boy was her father's heartache, a semi-invalid, fretful, spoiled and whining, at fourteen.

There was no time for more because Boy came in, a trace of color in his thin, white face. "I can handle Trim, and he's a kicker, too," he boasted.

Simonné turned quickly away. She knew all the horses at the local riding stables. She couldn't stand it to hear her father praise his son's

horsemanship as measured by riding one of the meekest horses in the stables.

Outdoors she came face to face with the man she had been discussing.

Of all things, he held a rose cupped between his long, slender hands.

Simonné's lip curled as her gray glance flicked over his smart English tweeds and shining boots, a white rose in his lapel.

"How could you let Boy believe he was doing wonders, mastering a horse as meek as Trim, unless you touch Trim in the right place to make him kick?" she asked imperiously.

Lace caught Simonné's wrists and held them and she winced, for his was a grip of steel.

"Keep still! Let him continue to believe himself a man. Why turn him back into a sissy?"

"Like you?" Simonné flashed, then gasped, horrified at her unexplainable rudeness.

"Exactly. One of my type is enough, don't you think?" He dropped her wrists and turned absorbedly back to his study of the rose and actually seemed to forget her.

Simonné stared thoughtfully at him. She knew she was looking her exquisite best in pale-rose satin pajamas, slim feet in rose mules, a rose ribbon tied about her curls, and he hadn't even seen her as a pretty girl, he'd been so intent on reprimanding her. She wasn't used to being snubbed by a blond sissy who was far more interested in her father's choice roses than in the lovely daughter.

Simonné turned and left him but when she reached the window she looked back, and found he actually

wasn't posing, for he was still absorbedly examining the rose tree.

"I say," he called, and, as Simonné wheeled, "Mr. Orchil, there seems to be a family of rose hoppers on these lower buds."

Simonné saw then that her father was standing in the window. He passed his daughter without a look, and the two men bent absorbedly over the rose tree, then started toward the gardener's shed.

Hands clutching her black hair, utterly ruining her careful hairdress, Simonné started after them. Her father looked actually fat beside Lace and waddled, and Lace walked—why, he walked like a panther. Then she laughed shortly and stepped out of the window to meet the returning men.

"I'll help you, dad," she impulsively offered. "I'm sure Flowers should be on his way home to get ready for work." There was no mistaking her placing of her father's employee in the servant class.

"Hold these then, we want to save them and burn them," Lace said cheerfully, and dropped three healthy specimens of rose hoppers into her hand.

Simonné dropped them, stifling a shriek, and turned and ran, at her father's shout of laughter, into the house.

"D'you know, that was rather rough on her," Lace said regretfully. "She's really all right, only you've handled her with too slack a rein."

The mask of airy laughter had dropped from the young man's handsome face and for a moment the two men stared at each other.

"No luck, yet?" Mr. Orchil asked anxiously.

"Not a spot of luck," Lace whispered thoughtfully. "Not a drop even."

"I could maybe find a few drops," Poppy's gay voice offered, and she came through the hedge between the two estates, a gay, impudent figure in scarlet slacks and saucily brief, plaid halter.

"Wrong kind of drops unless you care to try these," Lace said, offering his handful of beetles.

"Give me the little dears," Poppy said gayly. "Want 'em bottle raised?"

Simonné, watching from her window upstairs, stamped her foot. The little fool, looking so transparently adoring. She was tired of silly dandies who made no secret of rose worship. He was worse than her father, and any decent man could see through Poppy.

Well, Bob was a good antidote. She turned to the telephone and thoughtlessly dialed the office of Orchil House. She was about to hang up having remembered Bob was never supposed to be at the office before noon, but Bob's voice answered.

She made a luncheon date and felt decidedly better. There was nothing about dear old Bob to remind her of Lace, or the fact that twice he had got the better of her that morning.

Nevertheless, when she was dressed in new violet tweeds, pert hat tilted over one beautiful gray eye, she went to her car by way of the grounds. Poppy and Lace and Mr. Orchil were lovingly examining a plumed tree.

"I am lunching with Bob," she offered.

"Where'd you find him at this hour?" asked her father. "In bed?"

"Working, of course. Believe it or not, he works when he doesn't have to." Simonné's voice was cutting.

Instead of being overcome with





shame at his own idling, Lace looked at Mr. Orchil.

"The girl has given me an idea," he said oddly.

"No!" Simonné's voice was amazed. "Then you needn't have any more ideas for several weeks, need you? You wouldn't want to overwork."

"Right you are," Lace agreed, over her father's angry exclamation. "I'll ride along to my rooms with you if you don't mind." He held open the door of her car and she

*The minute Lace's arm went around her, Simonné was sorry she had agreed to dance with him. He seemed to possess her so completely. Her hand burned in his cool clasp.*

could do no less than get in.

She started the car with a jerk and they tore down the quiet street.

Scarcely three blocks along, Lace leaned forward and turned off the ignition.

"Might run over a child, driving like that," he observed, getting out. He went around to her side and before she knew what he planned, lifted her and set her in the place he had

vacated, and took his place behind the wheel.

Angry as she was, Simonné was startled at the ease with which he had lifted her. A tiny fear of him

reared its head. He was so ornamental and useless, yet he got under her skin. She'd find herself remembering the deep cleft in his chin and the look about his mouth as he worshiped at the shrine of her father's prize-winning rose. His mouth had been so tender, and curled up at the corners in a way she would have liked in another person. Bob, for instance. His mouth was likely to be sulky and he kissed her with heavy, evident passion.

Simonné's cheeks grew scarlet at her vagrant thought, then the car rolled smoothly to a stop before Lace's apartment hotel.

"Thanks for the lift. Do you know, I like to ride with a girl who doesn't chatter like a starling." Lace ran lightly up the steps and disappeared within, without looking back.

"Beg pardon, but wasn't that a person called Flowers, who just left you?" a brisk voice asked, and Simonné turned to see a girl in smart tweeds stepping from a taxi.

"Yes," Simonné replied, unwillingly.

"Thanks. I was afraid I'd lost my knack of trailing him. When Lace wants to hide, well—" The girl laughed and did not finish.

"Is he hiding, now?" Simonné asked, with ill-concealed eagerness.

"Is he? And in the most unusual place. Right in plain sight. Y'see, he ran away from me. Utterly refused to bring me. Care to go in with me while I confront him?"

Simonné was tempted. She'd like to see Lace's face when the girl he had run away from, confronted him.

"Confront me here, Bettina, you priceless pest!" Lace had retraced his steps, evidently having heard the girl's voice.

Bettina threw her arms around his neck. "I was in an awful stew when

I found you gone. Suppose something had happened to you?"

Simonné saw Lace's face grow incredibly tender and grave. He stooped and kissed the lovely mouth gently, thoroughly, and, realizing she was an intruder, Simonné reluctantly drove away.

There must be something wrong with her. Poppy was mad about Lace, and now this Bettina. Who was she, anyway, and why was she alarmed over Lace? Was he such a weakling he couldn't look after himself? That was probably it.

He had kissed her without passion, and they had been separated weeks because Lace had been at Orchil House a month. She couldn't be his wife so she must be his sweetheart or sister, Simonné decided.

"Why did dad and Lace look so queer when I said you were working?" Simonné asked her fiancé over the luncheon table.

"Did they?" Bob paled. "I don't know. Yes, I do. I am not supposed to have a key to the office. I answered the telephone without thinking and gave myself away. I've been doing a little secret checking up of the employees, so I had a key made. Simonné, we've suffered some terrific thefts in the past year. Stockholders' negotiable bonds and so on. Your father has had to make good and it has crippled him badly, financially."

"And you are working to find the culprit," Simonné said, with warm approval. "If dad asks about your having a key, I'll tell him I let you take mine, as we were working together. I'll teach him to shut me out of his troubles."

"You're a swell girl, Simmy. See here, why can't we step out and get this wedding business over this afternoon? I'll have a right then to



really help your father. He won't let me now, except as I work on the sly. Rotten of him, too, when I know he trusts Flowers."

"Could it be this Lace Flowers?" Simonné asked, then bit her lip at the sound of the ridiculous name.

"You've given me an idea!" exclaimed Bob, but Simonné knew it wasn't because he thought Lace guilty of the thefts. "What a pair we'll make. Let's get a license now and get married."

Simonné shook her head. "No, I want dad standing by when I'm married, but I'll help you. When will you be working again on the records?"

"Perhaps to-morrow morning," Bob said reluctantly, obviously not too eager to have Simonné help him with the ticklish work. "See here, Simmy, about this marriage business. There's a boat sailing to-morrow at midnight for Europe. We could take it. Don't you want to get away? You are always saying so."

Simonné looked thoughtful. That was queer. She'd always been so bored and eager to get away and now she wasn't. She was too interested in showing Lace Flowers how thoroughly she despised his type. He was so egotistical it took a lot to penetrate his skin.

"I'll tell you at Poppy's party to-night," she promised.

Poppy's party was to be a brilliant affair held in the Silver Room of the Orchil House. Simonné was purposely late, so gay music came out to meet her and Bob as they entered.

The orchestra caught sight of her and the music changed to "The Lady in Red," though all the red Simonné wore was her dancing slippers and the lei of crimson roses against the white crêpe of her gown.

Lace was there, as Poppy's partner. Of Bettina there was no sign.

Somehow, Simonné hadn't expected there would be. Lace would smuggle her out of sight quickly and probably ask Simonné, when he got the chance, to keep quiet about her presence in the city.

That was why Simonné did not object to Lace's name on her card when Bob brought it to her filled. She was sorry though the minute Lace's arm went around her. He seemed to possess her so completely. Her hand burned in his cool clasp and instead of fitting his step to hers, he swung her into a step peculiarly his own. It drove everything from her thoughts, keeping her step attuned to his, and not until the dance was over did she discover the floor had cleared and their dance had taken on all the aspects of an exhibition.

"How dared you make me part of your everlasting showing off?" Simonné demanded furiously, as the applause thundered about them.

He smiled, his eyebrow quirked. "I couldn't resist. What you'd call my everlasting ego, took things into its own hands. You make a perfect foil, Simonné."

"Miss Orchil," flared Simonné. "Please do not ask me to dance with you again."

He gave her a boyish, dancing-school bow that made near-by guests chuckle, then handed her over to Bob. Simonné's cheeks were flaming.

Lace did not come near her again and disappeared with Poppy toward the end of the evening, coming back just in time for Poppy to bid her guests good night.

Everywhere Simonné went as she made her own good nights, she heard Lace's and Poppy's names coupled and no one seemed to consider it an unsuitable match for the rich, young deb.

"I'll marry you to-morrow, Bob, and sail with you," Simonné said impulsively, as he took her home.

"That's my girl. I'll call you to-morrow. I already have the license, but asked them to suppress it for a few days."

Simonné went to her room but not to sleep. She had rashly made her decision. It would hurt her father having her go away this way, but Boy would more than take her place. Boy was talking military school now and eagerly deciding on first one, then another. That, too, was Lace's doings. Boy had said so. It was so funny Simonné laughed aloud, then looked startled because it had such a queer sound.

Her telephone tinkled and she cautiously lifted the receiver thinking Bob was calling her, but it was her father's hushed voice instead.

"What luck, Flowers?"

"Fakes were substituted for the bonds he thought real. The receipts for the Cain ball are missing, too. It was to go to charity, you know, except the House's share. He dropped two steamer tickets on the office floor in his hurry to get away. It is evident he isn't leaving alone."

"That poor, fool baby of mine!" exploded Mr. Orchil.

"Don't let her know," advised Lace. "We'll arrest him quietly. You might take her away on a short trip. This will be a bad blow to her pride but, fortunately, whatever their plans, they haven't taken any one into their confidence, so no one will know, save the four of us."

Simonné softly replaced the receiver. Her eyes smarted from tears of angry pain. Bob was a thief. He was to be arrested by that sissy, who dared plan to save her embarrassment by getting her out of town. Guilty or not, Lace should not put that shame on Bob.

Simonné dressed with frantic haste and packed a bag, then tip-toed to her father's room. He was sleeping like a baby, his worries dissipated. Simonné quietly knelt and snipped the telephone wires leading to his phone, then went out and back to her room where she rang Bob.

He wasn't asleep yet for he answered instantly.

"Bob, I know you're in trouble. I'm coming to take you away. I know a place where you can hide indefinitely and that smarty Englishman can never find you. I want to help you, Bob."

"Good girl, I can explain everything," Bob said eagerly. "Better get started before daylight. We can stop in some small town and get married."

Simonné's beautiful face was troubled as she went quietly down to get her car. How lucky she had left it in the drive that afternoon and that the careless chauffeur had left it there overnight.

She'd help Bob escape, but marrying him was another matter. Always she had demanded perfection. Probably that was why she had so thoroughly disliked the Englishman and his sissy ways, that so well suited his ridiculous name. He was too perfect in his rôle.

After all, no man had to live up to a dimpled chin, babyish golden hair and violet eyes. Any real man could live them down, but Lace didn't even try. He even made capital of it.

Her car was fast, faster than anything left in her father's garages. Simonné carefully opened her coupé door.

"Stow the bag at my feet," a suave voice advised. "We'll be a little crowded, riding three in a seat,



but Bob won't mind, and I can stand such hardships better than you think." Lace leaned over and turned on the dash lights and she could see the whimsical smile she so detested, lighting his face.

"Oh, you!" fairly wept Simonné. "What are you doing here?"

"I might be eloping with you, but I'm not. There's your vile temper, quite shrewish, in fact; besides, Bettina might object. She picks my playmates carefully."

Simonné choked back a sob and turned and ran into the house and up the stairs. Nervously, she paced the floor. Bob would be waiting. He'd think she'd let him down. He might do something rash. Then her face lighted.

Once, after a bad fire in a house near by, her father had installed ornamental iron fire escapes which had become overgrown with ivy until painters had uncovered them a week ago. Nothing had been done about them since.

Simonné let down a length of ladder and stooped to remove her shoes. Carrying them and her bag, she went softly down and did not draw a free breath until she safely reached the nearest taxi stand and was inside a taxi.

"Cruise about this address until I tell you to stop," she directed, and was glad she had done so, for as they passed Bob's address, her own car drew up and Lace leisurely got out and took up his stand in the doorway.

As the taxi passed and rounded the rear, Bob stepped out of the employees' entrance and obeyed her signal with a sigh of profound relief. When the taxi dashed past the front of the building again, Lace had disappeared and left the empty coupé unlocked. Bob paid off the driver and the two runaways took pos-

session of Simonné's care and drove away.

They shot through the sleeping city and into the open country, not stopping even to talk until Simonné drove her car upon the ferry. No one had passed or followed them, and the ferry took its unhampered way across the wide river.

"I'll never forget the way you've stood by me without understanding why I did such an awful thing," Bob said fervently.

"I don't understand why you, of all people, did it," wailed Simonné, leaning her tired head against the car cushions. "Dad's old college friend's son."

"But you see, I wasn't," Bob said sullenly. "I never belonged to his precious San Francisco Chaunceys, unless it was by the back door. I was a poor kid and when I got a stake I came to your town, and was lucky enough to get a job at the Orchil House right away. It was your father's mistake, taking me for a son of his old chum, and I let it ride because he said my father was dead, so he couldn't check up. Then I met you and to take you around I needed more money than I earned."

"But if you'd told me I would have understood," Simonné said uncomfortably. "We could have done simpler things."

"If we had, it would have turned you against me. I've seen your nose go up at the sight of poverty."

"You make me out a horrid snob!" cried the indignant Simonné.

"Well, you are one—not horrid, though. I hate poverty, too. Well, we'll lay low at this place we're going, and you can bargain with your dad. He can't be too harsh with his son-in-law. I'll return the bonds. I only cashed a few."

Simonné's cheeks burned. What a sham Bob was under his hand-



*"So you're a sneak as well as a sissy!" cried Simonné. "If you knew how I despise you!" She had thought that she and Bob were alone and safe, only to find that Lace Flowers had learned of their plans and followed them.*

some, rugged mask. She had admired him because he worked hard for her father's huge outfit though he, seemingly, was a rich man's son. All the time he had been begging her father to take her dancing.

Did every man have another man behind his mask? Did Lace Flowers? Was he something besides a sissy under that gay mask of his? She'd never know because he de-

spised her. She saw it now. That was why she could never make a dent in that seeming overinflated ego of his.

The car rolled northward by devious side roads until late afternoon when they came to a wide, madly rushing river, swollen by rains to flood pitch. In the center of it was a rocky island, to which a frail bridge led, and the bridge teetered





with every thud of the maddened river.

"They'll never look for you on the island," Simonné said wearily. "Dad gave me this place when I was a little girl and has probably forgotten it by now."

"That bridge looks deuced unsafe!" Bob nervously exclaimed.

"Oh, don't talk like Lace Flowers, for Heaven's sake!" cried the tired

girl. "Even dad uses his expressions now and Boy is a walking encyclopedia of English slang. There! We're safely over"—her lips twisting sarcastically at Bob's exhibition of cowardice.

"Yes, and no one can follow," Bob added queerly.

Simonné whirled about in time to see the bridge, loosened from its moorings, by the vibration of the heavy car, start downstream.

She shrugged and drove the car under the shed attached to the sturdy log cabin. "I wired the caretaker to clean up the place and put in the usual supplies, and he evidently has done so and gone," Simonné said, trying to hide her dismay at being a prisoner on the island with this different Bob. "They'll be watching the boats that sail."

"We're alone then and safe. We can't get off and no one can get to us. Precious, you've saved me!" Bob caught her in his arms and kissed her with rough passion.

Simonné pulled free, a frightened look coming into her gray eyes. Bob's mask was slipping fast. There had been something in his kisses that scared and repulsed her.

"We'll talk later. I'm tired and hungry," Simonné said crossly. "I left word for dad that I was going up country for a few days, so he won't suspect. Only dad's English dude suspected, but I don't believe he'll tell dad."

"No, I don't believe he would. Your dad thinks his daughter a pretty good egg—above aiding thieves," a silky voice said, from one of the bunks, and Lace got leisurely to his feet and looked at the guilty pair, something unreadable in his expression.

Simonné burst into hysterical laughter at the ludicrousness of the

situation. Marooned, until the flood waters subsided, with a man she despised, and Bob, whom she felt pity for, but nothing deeper. Yet she was relieved to see Lace, because she had been horribly afraid, for a few seconds, of the man revealed by Bob's abandoned mask.

"How did you get here?" she asked, stifling her laughter.

"By a direct route. I did not have to take the side roads, you see. After I obtained a copy of your telegram to the caretaker, I knew exactly where you'd head for."

"So you're a sneak as well as a sissy!" cried the furious girl. "If you knew how I despise you!"

"It's very evident, has been, from the start, but the feeling is mutual."

Simonné gasped and Bob thrust himself belligerently forward, bristling.

Lace put out a long arm and seemed to do no more than touch Bob, who went reeling back. It looked like a simple gesture yet it seemed to stagger Bob in more ways than one.

"Suppose we eat," suggested Lace, wiping his hands on an immaculate handkerchief. "I'm deuced hungry. The caretaker fixed fried chicken that smells like an answer to a hungry man's prayer."

"Aren't you ever serious? Don't you realize we are marooned here, maybe for weeks? Even a boat can't live on the Little Sinning Brave when it is at flood," Simonné said nervously.

"A good name for the river surrounding us," Lace remarked easily. "Shall we eat?" He drew out a chair and Simonné dropped into it, too spent for further argument. To argue with Lace was like trying to catch quicksilver.

Bob sulkily took the remaining place at the table and the meal

progressed, with Lace keeping up a ceaseless flow of nonsense.

"Oh, stop!" Simonné cried, at last, pushing away her plate and dropping her head onto the checkered cloth.

Bob, with a look of fury at the heedless Englishman, got up and put his arms around Simonné, trying to make her stop her sobbing.

"That's what I wanted her to do. She'll feel better, now," Lace observed, and with his odd, one-sided smile, went outside.

Simonné, slightly ashamed of her outburst, but feeling greatly relieved, lifted her head to meet Bob's eager kisses. She pushed him rudely away.

"We're through with that, Bob," she said quietly, without anger. "I set you on a pedestal. You seemed different from the rest of us idlers. You worked hard, like my dad. You hadn't the backbone though, to be honest with me, make me share the amusements you could afford. I didn't care about running with the herd. I never have. I've been bored to death, but you kept me with them and because I admired you, I let you."

"You'd have hated my sort of fun," Bob retorted sullenly. "And now——"

Simonné shook her head. "Now I see you in your true colors, a cheap crook building for yourself a place not your own, on other people's reputation and my father's money. I'll help you get away because I was a fool, too, and partly to blame for your stealing, but after that we're through."

"Then suppose you come out and see a beautiful sunset," Lace's voice advised, from the open window.

"Yes," sneered Bob. "Go out and play with papa's fashion plate."

Simonné looked at him. "Why, I



believe I will," she said slowly. "At least he doesn't pretend to be anything but a butterfly." She went out to where Lace sat on a flat rock studying something at his feet.

He rose. "Sorry I had to overhear. Have to swim to get out of the sound of your voice on this rock."

"Are you a detective?" Simonné asked, looking at him closely.

He flicked an insect off an immaculately shined field boot. "No, I don't believe I am. I'm not clever enough. Something was under my nose all the time and I never saw it. Are you interested in the intimate life of the ant? There's a colony here. They'll amuse you frightfully if you have the patience to watch them long enough."

"Oh, can't you be serious?" cried Simonné, getting unnecessarily angry. "Isn't there anything to you, either, except make-believe?"

"Poor child," soothed Lace, touching her cheek with his hand. "There is nothing in you to demand anything except make-believe. That's why all your pretty fairy castles go tumbling." His touch was velvet against her cheek, and he drew her head down on his shoulder. "Rest," he commanded, "and don't think. Thinking makes wrinkles, and wrinkles keep beauticians busy, and beauticians, quite often, are awful, don't you think? Hennaed hair and varnished faces and la-de-dah ways?"

Simonné laughed helplessly, if ruefully. For just a fleeting glance she had had a glimpse of the man behind the laughing mask, but before she could really see his true self, he was gone. Just the same, she felt better; young and silly and not worried any more. If trouble came, amazing as it seemed, Lace would be there to meet it.

He had released her. "Elected myself dishwasher so I'd better be at it." He disappeared inside the cabin.

With his will-o'-the-wisp presence gone, the night was unaccountably cold and gray. The water, churning into foam at her feet, looked sinister. Sitting there on the rocks, Simonné took out the girl Simonné, tearing away the beautiful, snobbish mask, and pulled her apart. She tore off the silver wings and crown an adoring father and brother had put on her, and found there was nothing left save a pretty shell.

Simonné shuddered and went inside at last. The cabin was quiet. Bob's door was closed and Lace was busy in the kitchen. She went into the room where her bag was and closed the door. She'd shut out the interloper as Bob had done. His spying had disrupted her whole life. If he hadn't, through her babbling about Bob's presence at the office in early morning, decided Bob was the guilty one, they might have gone on and been married. Now she knew she had put Bob wise to the real occupation Lace had at Orchil House, a spy's position, whether he admitted to being a detective or not.

Simonné went to bed and finally slept after hours of lying awake staring into the darkness. In her dreams she was trying to sleep, her head on Lace's shoulder, his hand on her cheek, but could not for crying. She awakened to find her face wet with tears, and Lace, in a dark dressing gown, sitting on the edge of her bed, holding her.

He looked very young and tired and did not at once notice she had awakened. Without his mask, and stripped of his silly ways, he was merely a very attractive person.

"You were crying frightfully," he said, laying her back on her pillows.

"My sister Bettina sometimes does that in her sleep after she has foolishly worried about my safety. Try and get some sleep now. Almost morning."

He went quickly out and this time left her door open. Simmonné did not close it, either. How could she shut him out when even in her dreams he was present?

It was a queer, mad existence on that rocky isle. There was the question of

food, but the first day Lace rigged up a slingshot arrangement he pitched to the caretaker standing helplessly on the shore, and to this



*"Don't laugh at me, and don't hate me," pleaded Simmonné, suddenly shameless. "I can't live if you go on hating me. I'll do everything you say from now on."*



they attached a rope; and, with a basket on a pulley, provisions came across promptly and also the daily papers.

It was queer how many things Lace could accomplish while he discoursed lightly on the habits of fish or ants or some equally insane subject. Simonné caught herself watching for the brief glimpse of the real Lace, when his mouth lost its look of careless laughter and his eyes deepened. But it never lasted. There was a real man behind the mask, but he did not think either of his companions worthy of a sight of him, it was evident.

"I can't stand this, Bob," Simonné cried, one night, as they watched Lace's fair head bent over his precious ant hill. "I feel as though I'd go mad if we didn't get away soon."

"If we weren't watched I could try out the water at the back of the cabin. It looks as though it was quieter there. There's a rock comes out in a half circle and shuts off the worst of the flood. If it was safe, I could come back for you. Flowers would have to be quieted though, so he wouldn't see me trying."

"I can go and talk to him," Simonné offered. "Though he really prefers the domestic life of the ants to talking to me."

"He's a fool. All right, go along," Bob said. "No time like the present."

Simonné left his side and went out to kneel beside Lace. "It must be wonderful to be interested in anything so simple," she said wistfully.

"There's so much under our eyes to interest us," he said quietly. "Boy, for instance. If you'd believed in him, he'd have snapped out long ago from that neurotic state he was in. It's purely mental. More of a way to get attention when his beautiful

sister is around, than invalidism. Get him to ride and hunt and fish with you. He adores you, but knows you do everything better than he does. He's learned a lot from books you could have him tell you about. You may already know the same things, but he needs to think he is helping you." Lace paused, and a funny smile tugged at his mouth, almost as though he was laughing at himself for being earnest.

"Don't—oh, don't go back into your shell as though I was dirt under your feet. I——" Simonné looked away, biting her lips. Her eyes filled with tears at her own blindness concerning Boy, but even through the mist she saw Bob balanced in the window over their heads, a thick stick of firewood in his hands.

Her scream came too late, but the keen violet eyes had read her changing face and Lace was on his feet like a cat, just as the cudgel descended.

The shock of his victim's not being there, momentarily overbalanced Bob, then steel hands closed on the thick wrists, jerking him out of the window onto the rocks.

"Two very nice playmates I've chosen," murmured Lace. "Sad, but do you know, I don't believe a mere stick would hurt me. Nothing in the head to be injured. Quite empty. I was even believing you had changed, Simonné. Sit down, you two, and we'll talk this over."

"You don't think I knew he intended to do that?" cried the horrified girl, staring at Lace, who had lost his gay look and seemed a stranger who looked at her with icy, hostile eyes.

"Must I explain that everything that is said in the cabin carries out here? Atmospheric conditions, I imagine. I heard you agreeing I must be quieted. Queer, I forgot it

for a moment and actually thought you might be worth while. All right, Chauncey," his voice was like a whiplash. "I sent the bonds back in the basket the second day and that's all Orchil House wants of you. You can clear out to-night and keep on going."

"Leave Simonné here?" leered Bob, scrambling to his feet. "I suppose you two planned all this. A little love nest with me out of the way and——"

"Rotten, aren't you? Can't stand for your polluting the evening air," murmured Lace, rocking forward then back, and in between Bob somehow found himself sprawled on the rocks, winded by a blow he hadn't looked for.

Lace took out his handkerchief and wiped his hands, saying smoothly, "On your way, fellow, or I'll change Mr. Orchil's mind about your disposal. Must I say more?"

"No, you simpering excuse for a man!" bellowed Bob, and scrambled away, vanishing behind the cabin.

With difficulty, Simonné managed to look at Lace. He was studying her as she had seen him study the ants and it brought a burning flush to her face.

"I didn't know he meant to hit you," she cried defensively. "You should know——"

"But you've agreed I don't know anything. Right? Shall we get to bed? We'll be making an early start out of here in the morning."

"Oh, how I hate you!" wailed Simonné, rushing past him into the cabin.

She looked like a scared little girl as she prepared for bed. For once she had met a situation she couldn't handle. Convincing Lace she had had no idea Bob intended to kill him, was like beating her head against a stone wall.

"I can't bear it. He's got to believe me," she wailed, throwing herself face down on the bed. But he wouldn't. From the first he had had nothing but rudeness from her, and why? Because she had detested his careful dress, his perfect manners, his youthful beauty for which he wasn't to blame? No, because he hadn't fallen for her as other men had, worshiping her beauty. Of course he traded on his looks to mask his real purpose. Who would ever pick him out as a detective? Yet, having once seen him without his mask, Simonné would always see through it now to the real man.

She cried hopelessly, over and over, making plans to convince him of her innocence and always coming back to that damning agreement she had made consenting to Bob's silencing Lace, even though she had had no idea what he meant by his words.

As she cried, she remembered suddenly how Lace had come to her in her sleep and comforted her, and Simonné's gray eyes grew soft and thoughtful. An idea had come to her suddenly.

She lay still a long time. It was quiet out there and easy to sob loud enough to reach Lace's ears in the room across the living quarters. She prayed that he wouldn't detect the falsity of her sobs, that he would be as dense once as he pretended to be.

He came in quietly and sat down on the edge of the bed and lifted her against his shoulder. "Hush, little darlin'," he soothed gently, and after an instant's hesitation put a cool cheek against her hot one. "Everything is all right. Papa Orchil will find you another play-boy."

"I don't want another," Simonné said shamelessly, setting her fingers



in his sleeve to keep his arm about her.

"What do you want?" Lace was smiling oddly as she could see by the light streaming from the living room. The smile he had used for his sister when she had successfully trailed him.

"I want to start over—friends," Simonné said frankly.

"Too late, darlin', my work's done here and I'm moving on." He was laughing at her as he always did.

"Don't laugh, and don't hate me," pleaded Simonné, suddenly shameless.

Why, it was only yesterday a glittering silver balloon had slipped from her childish fingers and floated away into the never-never land of balloons. She lifted her head and bravely looked at him. "I can't live if you go on hating me. I'll do everything you say about Boy, about everything."

"What will you do about a priceless idiot who's in love with you?" Lace asked lightly. "Who loves every stubborn, ebony curl, and every stormy flash of gray eyes?"

Simonné grew deathly still, afraid to hope. If he meant Bob loved her she'd die. "Who?" she breathed, afraid of the answer.

"There's only one fool born at a time. The name doesn't matter. When I made up that of Lace Flowers I rather fancied it; dainty, you see. It's a good thing it was never really mine, it would never do for a wife."

"Lace, don't fool any longer, I can't stand it," pleaded Simonné. "You've punished me enough for being a horrid, sneering——"

Lace's hand touched her lips. "I never fool any one who loves me. Take Bettina now——"

"Take me," breathed Simonné, shamelessly, then trembled, because if he laughed, as he had every right to, after the way she'd treated him, she'd die.

He wasn't laughing. His fingers under her chin were steel under velvet as he lifted her face. The mask was off and behind it was a young man, rather tired, rather wistful, but wholly serious. A young man whose tender mouth said, "You love me, Simonné?"

Color stained Simonné's face, but she could be brave if it meant life itself, as this did.

"So much," said a small, shaken voice.

"Then kiss me, Simonné." There was a stern note in the gay, clear voice that told her she was no longer ruler of all she surveyed, never would be again.

She lifted her face, her heart beating fast, felt Lace gather her close with that deceptive strength of his. Everything seemed to stop—the rush of white water, the cry of the gulls. It wasn't a kiss of flame, but one of such gentleness that all the careless kisses in Simonné's life seemed crude affairs.

This one went on and on, while Lace's heart beat strongly against hers, and his arms cradled her with all the gentleness in the world, yet behind all the gentleness was strength that would be her shield against the world she was to enter as this man's wife.

She was behind the mask at last. Never again would he be just a silver-tongued trifler without a thought above nonsense. He was her lover, the tenderest, gentlest, yet most demanding lover in the world; and heaven, for a high-tempered, willful girl, was in his arms.



# You Are Mine

By Mary Imlay Taylor

**T**OINETTE paused for an instant in the corner of the garden and drew a breath of relief. All the tea tables were filled with tourists, there was a pleasant jingle of glass and china, a subdued murmur of voices. They all seemed pleased with the place and the food!

Yellow jasmine clung to the arch of the patio in this old house in the French quarter, the quarter where so many years ago the French had entertained and made merry. Toinette thought of the tales her grandmother still told of the old days when the Sancerres were wealthy. As she thought of it she saw the green shutters of the room upstairs

move cautiously. Grandmother was there, of course, peeping down at these new rich people whom she so despised, who came to stare at old New Orleans and knew nothing of family, of tradition! Grandmother hated the tea room, she moved about upstairs, leaning on her ivory-headed cane and grumbling because her granddaughter must make money to give them bread.

"A Sancerre feeding these creatures!" she lamented. "Toinette, never talk with them outside the garden!"

Toinette smiled, looking at the tiny iron gate in the garden, remembering how she had had to bribe



Babette, who took in washing next door, to move her tubs farther away that the smell of soap might not spoil the fragrance of old black Victorine's excellent cooking.

The sun was shining on the back of the old house, showing its cracks and crevices, its faded green shutters, the ancient patio and the garden wall where an apricot clung with its yellow fruit growing ripe.

The guests at the tables were not too busy with the delicious Creole cooking to forget to look at Toinette.

"Lovely, isn't she?" a fat woman whispered to her neighbor. "And so French! One can scarcely believe that one is in the United States!"

"A beautiful complexion, quite natural, too," her friend whispered back. "I wonder if she'd sell me this recipe for gumbo?"

Their words floated upward to old madame, who sat behind her faded green shutters.

"The idea," she murmured indignantly. "The idea of that vulgar person buying things from a Sancerre! Would she like, perhaps, to buy my old shoes or my chemise?"

Toinette, who had sensed the indignation raging behind those green shutters, was gracious to the fat woman, avoiding the adoring eyes of the artist at the next table. He was no tourist, but lived in the next street and wanted Toinette to pose for him. She did not like him, his collar was frequently dirty, and it did not matter to her that he was an Evremond. He had been making love to her for five years, so had Raymond who wrote articles for the

newspapers and was quite bitter about politics. It was too warm today, Toinette thought, and the scent of the yellow jasmine was overwhelming. She was tired, too, and here were more people. She knew what the guide had been telling them— "*Oui, mesdames*, that's the pet shop over there; you can get crocodile eggs, also little alligators. Here is the Yellow Jasmine Tea Room kept by very fine French lady, elegant food. The house? Two—three hundred years old—" And grandmother fuming upstairs!

"They look at me as if I'd been hatched out of a crocodile egg!" Toinette thought indignantly, and then she wanted to laugh and to cry all at once, she was so tired and weary.

She looked up from seating the new guests and saw Reginald Cornwell. "Reggie" his friends called him; old gentlemen usually called him "son," and old ladies asked him to help them at street crossings. He was tall and lean and rather brown,

but his hair was red and his eyes were blue. He had appeared a week before with a party of tourists; since then he had come every day.

"Never talk to any of these creatures outside of the garden, Toinette," her grandmother admonished her again and again.

So far she had not, but it was true that she had let Reggie come in one evening when she closed her tea room and they had sat in the garden and talked. Since then it had been hard to make excuses to keep Reggie out, even when grandmother walked in the garden at dusk, pok-



ing indignantly at the tables with her cane.

"One of your ancestors was a marshal of France, Toinette!" she cried bitterly.

Toinette thought that old black Victorine in the kitchen was of more use to her than this mythical ancestor, but she did not say so. She had not told grandmother much about Reggie; she would, the girl knew, say he was just one of those creatures who came to insult them.

"Didn't that vulgar woman want to buy your grandfather's mahogany table?" she cried. "And that pig of a creature from Chicago thought she'd like the portrait of General Sancerre!"

Toinette dared not tell her that Reggie's mother, who had married again, lived in Chicago.

To-day Toinette pretended to be a little startled when Reggie appeared at her elbow.

"I'm starving," he said, "but I shan't eat unless you pour my tea."

Toinette went to the table under the jasmine vine and made tea for him, thankful that the artist and his messy collar had been gone half an hour.

"I'm going to stay until you close up to-day and then we'll go to the movies," Reggie said.

"Oh, I couldn't to-night!" Toinette blushed beautifully.

"Well, I won't go then. I've got a lot to tell you."

Toinette felt his strong fingers closing over hers, surreptitiously, under the table. Suddenly the little old garden was the loveliest place in the world and the scent of yellow jasmine sweet as the roses of Kashmir. Then she heard those old green shutters opening softly.

"You must go away and come back after eight o'clock, m'sieu'," she said firmly. "My grandmother

walks in the garden at seven, and she doesn't like to meet strangers. You must pardon her, she is old."

"I'd pardon your grandmother anything—even murder!" Reggie declared; in his heart he was beginning to understand. This lovely young creature was a bit of the old New Orleans. "And she's lovely, she's dear!" he thought ardently.

He tried later in the evening to tell her what he thought of her. They were sitting together in the garden, it was sweet and cool and dusky, with only the light of the lantern suspended on chains in the arch of the patio. Overhead there was the light of the stars. Victorine was upstairs helping old madame to go to bed.

Toinette looked up pensively at the sky. "There's a falling star. Do you remember the Arab superstition? They thought falling stars were fiery javelins that the angels cast at the evil ones when they tried to approach too near to heaven."

"I've an idea that Madame Sancerre wouldn't mind throwing a fiery dart at me for coming into this little heaven," Reggie said.

Toinette laughed. "Grandmother's old-fashioned, and so am I. So is old New Orleans. Here, in the French quarter, walls are crumbling, roofs leak. Once, m'sieu', we were very grand!" She laughed merrily now. "So grand that I, the great-granddaughter, sell things to eat to the tourists, I"—she threw out her pretty hands—"I am the waitress, old Victorine cooks, and I, Marie Antoinette Sancerre, wait on the tables!"

"Toinette," he whispered, "I'm head over heels in love with the waitress— Will you marry me?"

In the darkness he could not see the tenderness in those dark eyes.

"I must take care of grand-



mother," she answered quietly, "and I'm a poor girl. I——"

"Nonsense, Toinette! I've got money enough for us all. We'll take care of your grandmother. Father was a rich brewer in Illinois years ago. Mother's married a rich automobile manufacturer and I'm going into business with him. I love you,

"His father a brewer!" Old madame sank back in her chair. "Toinette, my child, you're crazy; no Sancerre can marry into a family of tradespeople! No, I don't wish to see the young man; send him away."

But when she did see him she had a sneaking liking for Reggie's blue



*"Toinette," he whispered, "I'm head over heels in love with you. Will you marry me, darling?"*

darling. I'm going to bring mother to see you; she's driving through in a day or two, going to California. You—you like me a little?"

Toinette looked up and saw the stars shining, then she felt Reggie's arms around her.

"Toinette, do you love me?"

She did not answer, but put up her hand and touched his cheek softly. It was beautiful to be young and to be loved!

It was days before she dared to hint it to grandmother.

eyes and his frank deference to her age.

"There's no one in the world like Toinette," he told her. "Of course, I'm not fit to tie her shoe but I adore her!"

"He's quite a nice young man, Toinette," she admitted reluctantly, "but he hasn't an ancestor—I asked him!"

"I'm so glad he hasn't an ancestor," Toinette cried, tried beyond endurance. "I've got a lot and I can't eat them!"

The old lady looked at her with horror. "If you're determined to marry this boy, I'll sell the house and go to California to live with Cousin Lazarre," she said.

Toinette's heart leaped, then she was repentant and went over and kissed the old tyrant's pale cheek. "Darling, I'll always take care of you!"

"We'll get married and then she'll see how much I'll do for her," Reggie cried joyfully. "I'm bringing mother to see you to-morrow. She'll adore you, darling!"

"Will she?" Toinette was nervous, she dreaded the ordeal. Suppose Reggie's mother didn't like her? And there was grandmother!

Toinette lay awake and thought of it all. Reggie was a darling but he was, after all, only a man. He could not understand women, especially cranky old women!

The next day was beautiful, sunlight mellowed the old house, the jasmines were drooping a little, but there were roses, always roses.

Toinette gathered some for one table, and set it carefully herself. She was looking her loveliest in pale-green voile. She never wore jewelry in the tea room, but to-day she put on her grandmother's seed pearls, because a bit of white jewelry was fashionable.

The poor artist was beside himself, and so lost in admiration that he jogged Toinette's elbow and upset a cup of hot chocolate down the side of her green skirt.

"Oh, Toinette!" He nearly wept over the mess.

"Never mind, Pierre!" Toinette could not stop to change, the garden and even the patio were crowded. Amelie, who lived across the street, had come over to help, but even she was too busy.

The heat was stifling, the sun

made vivid patches in the garden. Toinette was busy and tired, her soft hair was damp on the forehead, her chocolate-stained dress was hopeless, she was carrying a tray full of dishes and there, just at the wrong moment, stood Reggie and his mother.

Toinette looked up into his blue eyes and, in spite of herself, her heart leaped; then she looked at the tall woman beside him and it went down into her shoes. Toinette saw a formidable person, whose appearance had already caused a slight sensation. The tourists were openly staring, old-timers were a bit amused. Mrs. Scranton, looking like a million dollars, walked into the shabby tea room as if she expected them all to rise and salaam.

"Toinette darling, come and meet mother," Reggie whispered.

Toinette put down her tray and came. She knew that horrid stain had ruined her appearance, and she was so hot, so tired, so—— She could not think. She met the cold eyes of the older woman, who held out a condescending hand.

"Mother, this is the dearest girl in the world," Reggie told her, his young voice thrilling with the words.

"How do you do, my dear," Mrs. Scranton said evenly. "Could I possibly have a glass of ice tea?"

Reggie's face flushed crimson, his mother was treating Toinette like a waitress! But, of course, she did not mean it and Toinette did not seem to notice it. "She's a tramp!" he thought.

"Won't you sit here?" Toinette led them to the rose-decked table that she had fought so hard to keep reserved. "Will you also take ice tea, m'sieu'?" she asked Reggie politely.

"Toinette!" he cried indignantly, but she was gone and he turned on



his mother. "How could you? You treated her like a servant!"

His mother leaned back in the shade and relaxed. "My darling boy," she replied in a faintly tired voice, "what did I do? Nothing at all! I'm perishing with heat and asked for ice tea; is that a sin?"

"You said nothing else to her!" he cried warmly. "You know I love her! Now come, confess, isn't she adorable?"

His mother smiled. "You're such a boy, Reggie! She's certainly extremely pretty, but I don't know her yet; give me a little time." Her voice was suave and gentle; inwardly she thought: "A little French minx, thinks she has him hooked, does she? Well, we'll see!"

"I'm going to marry her," Reggie declared ardently.

A fat man seated near them suddenly rapped on his table. "Waitress," he shouted at Toinette good-naturedly, "bring us some more of this gumbo stuff, it's the goods!"

Mrs. Scranton shuddered. "I hope that doesn't happen often, Reggie!"

"Oh, well, all kinds of people come into a tea room," Reggie said apologetically, "but I'd like to push his face in for calling Toinette 'waitress'!"

His mother merely raised her eyebrows.

Toinette brought the tea and Amelie a tray full of delicate cakes. Amelie's presence saved the situation. Nothing intimate could be said in front of her, Toinette knew. She was exquisitely solicitous for Mrs. Scranton's comfort and Reggie's mother was as exquisitely polite. She admired the roses. Toinette said the apricots were ripe and brought her a few. The older woman pronounced them delicious, while she took in every detail of the

shabby old house, the ruined wall of the garden that was inclined to bulge in spots. Poverty grinned at her from every side, and the girl was dangerously lovely; she had seen that at a glance, and there was a grandmother somewhere!

"Reggie is going away for a day or two," she said sweetly to Toinette. "He is to meet my husband in Nashville, but I'll be here at the hotel. You must come to see me." She was in a hurry to go.

"Can't even get in for a minute to-night," Reggie whispered. "Got to catch a train, some matter mother arranged with my stepfather, automobiles, darn 'em! But I'll be back inside the week. Meanwhile, you and mother must get to love each other."

Toinette turned back to her tea garden. Suddenly the sunshine seemed to be obscured, her heart was heavy, she had so wanted to love Reggie's mother!

"She doesn't like me!" she thought wistfully.

"Who was that horrid old snob?" Amelie whispered.

Toinette pretended not to hear. She was busy all afternoon and thankful that her grandmother had not been behind the shutters, watching. The old lady had felt the heat and stayed in bed.

The next day passed and the next. "I suppose I ought to go to see her," Toinette sighed. She would not hurt Reggie's feelings for the world. "If she'd only like me, but she won't!"

After all, Toinette was so busy she had a good excuse for staying away from the hotel, yet her conscience was giving her trouble when, on the third evening, she closed her garden and sat down in the patio to think. Grandmother had gone to bed early, old Victorine had waddled off to



*"Mother, this is the dearest girl in the world," Reggie said, his young voice thrilling with the words. Toinette met Mrs. Scranton's cold eyes and knew that the older woman didn't like her.*

visit her grandchildren in another street, and Toinette was alone with her dreams of Reggie.

"I'm so glad I don't have to marry his mother," she thought.

The patio was a sweet cool spot; one could look up and see the stars, and Toinette loved it. Suddenly the street bell rang. She was startled. So few came at night. Could Reg-



gie be back?—she wondered. She flew to the door. The narrow street was poorly lighted but she saw a big car, with a chauffeur at the wheel. At the threshold stood Reggie's mother!

"Oh, madame!" Toinette's heart pounded. She was a little frightened, and it seemed to her that something dreadful must be going to happen.

"You wouldn't come to see me," Mrs. Scranton said suavely, "so I came to see you and, perhaps, also your grandmother."

"She's in bed," Toinette explained, leading her visitor into the patio, pushing forward a shabby wicker chair. "She's quite old and feels the heat."

Reggie's mother took the shabby chair and made it look still more shabby. Toinette sat on the edge of the old fountain where no water played any more.

"I've expected you every evening," Mrs. Scranton said.

"I've been so busy!"

"I thought perhaps you understood and thought it best to let things drop," Mrs. Scranton continued pointedly.

Toinette flushed and paled. "I don't understand, madame!"

Mrs. Scranton hesitated. The girl's simple manner disarmed her, but she was determined. Reggie must be saved.

"I sent my son away on purpose," she said. "I wanted to talk to you. You've established a business here. It seems successful; you must have plans for the future. I think you'll see things as I do, in the end."

Toinette was perplexed. Something was coming, she knew; something that might hurt her, but she was still unprepared.

Mrs. Scranton touched her hand gently.

"Now, my dear, you're a very nice girl, but of course, you know this engagement between you and my son is impossible. It simply won't do at all! You see that, don't you, my child?"

Toinette lifted her beautiful eyes slowly to the older woman's flushed face.

"You mean you don't want me to marry Reggie?" she said simply. "Yes, I knew it the moment I saw you."

Reggie's mother looked relieved. "Oh, you saw it? I was afraid you couldn't understand, that you'd be unhappy about it. Now, then, we'll settle everything; we'll just say the engagement's off and you and Reggie are both free."

Toinette's large eyes still studied her.

"I didn't say I wouldn't marry Reggie," she replied quietly. "I only said I knew you didn't want me to marry him."

"But, my good girl, you can't think such a marriage could be happy!"

"We love each other," Toinette said bravely.

"You think so! Love doesn't last in the face of such an unsuitable connection. Reggie's just out of college. A boy of his age doesn't know his own mind. In a few years he'll tire of it all and fall in love with—with some one, with——"

"With some rich girl?" suggested Toinette coldly.

"Oh, it isn't that; you couldn't understand. I can't let him get into a youthful entanglement!" His mother was a little out of breath. It was horribly difficult after all, but she was determined. Reggie was her only son! "My dear child"—she glanced about her, poverty seemed to grin at her, shabbiness reigned supreme; these people should

be thankful for a little material help—"I can make it so worth your while. I'm quite rich. I'd be so grateful I'd do anything in reason!"

There was a little silence and the anxious mother misunderstood it.

"If you promise just to give Reggie up and say nothing I'll—I'll settle twenty-five thousand on you—thirty!"

Toinette was mute.

"That's a good deal of money for a young girl like you," Mrs. Scranton went on hurriedly, a little red and uncomfortable, "but if you really want more——"

Toinette rose slowly to her feet. She crossed the patio and opened the door upon the street.

"Madame," she said courteously, "your car is waiting. I bid you good evening."

Crestfallen, Reggie's mother rose, too, and without another word rustled out to her car, her face flushed.

Toinette shut the old door and shot the bolt. She was shaking from head to foot, and she had a sensation of suffocation. She went into the room beside the door, where there was an old mahogany desk, and began to write a note. It did not satisfy her, and she tore it up, wrote another and tore that up also. It was the third note that she allowed to stand. It was quite simple.

I have thought it all over. We are not suited to each other and must not think of our engagement again. I return your ring. *Adieu!*

MARIE ANTOINETTE SANCERRE.

It had no beginning, but she took out a long envelope and addressed it to "Reginald Cornwell, Esq." She stamped it and, still trembling from head to foot, went out to mail it.

On her way back Babette, who had moved a tub out into her front yard, addressed her amiably.

"It's very hot, mamselle!"

"Is it?" Toinette was so cold that her teeth were chattering.

That letter brought Reggie back in a tumult, but he did not see Toinette. For a week Amelie ran the tea room and Babette came in to help. Toinette hid herself in the house of an old friend, leaving Victorine to care for her grandmother. Storming at his mother, who pretended ignorance, and at fate generally, Reggie insisted on seeing Toinette's grandmother.

"Where is she? I must see her!" he stormed.

Old madame was stoutly loyal to her own. "Toinette is away. That's as it should be, young man. She couldn't marry you. I don't approve of unequal matches and your people are in trade. A Sancerre was a marshal of France. I think Toinette is wise. I bid you good evening, my boy. Look elsewhere; there are so many girls in your class."

Hot with anger, Reggie finally broke away from them all. He told his mother he was going to Africa, hunting.

"That girl's deep, she's making him hate me!" Mrs. Scranton thought shrewdly, but she was heart-broken when he went off without bidding her good-by.

"I believe you're at the bottom of it," he cried angrily. "I swear I'll marry a cannibal's daughter!"

When she was certain that Reggie had gone, Toinette came back, a little pale and a little thin. She was kind to the wild-eyed artist.

"Toinette, I spoiled that lovely dress!"

"I washed it all out, Pierre; don't worry!"

"Sometime you'll pose for me in it," he besought her.

"Perhaps, Pierre. Have some soup—it's green turtle. Raymond



brought one when he came back from the island."

"That pig of a reporter! Beware of him, Toinette. Such men are not to be trusted. I——"

But Toinette had hurried away. The garden was a success this year. She worked hard. She did not spare herself and only slept at night when she was tired out. Reggie haunted her dreams. He wrote her long letters which she never answered. Had not his mother insulted her? Could any girl with self-respect go into a family after that? The thought of it made her turn hot, then cold. She heard nothing at all about Mrs. Scranton and hoped she had gone when Reggie went. Summer days were wearing on, winter would bring even more trade. If she could take black Victorine and go to Florida she might make more money, but old madame still lived, frail in body but mighty in spirit.

Weeks had passed when Toinette got another of Reggie's stormy letters. If his mother had meddled he wanted to know it; why couldn't Toinette be a good sport and answer at least one letter? Toinette took it with trembling hands and put it in a fresh envelope, addressed it to the sender and went out to mail it herself. Her fury against Reggie's mother had hardened Toinette's heart. She had offered to buy her off! Incredible insult!

The mail box stood at the corner of a crowded thoroughfare. It was dusk and the street lights hung like white jewels on the curtain of the night, shrill Creole voices chattered, children played, half naked, in the gutters. Just as Toinette lifted the lid of the mail box there was a crash, screams and groans. Instantly a

crowd gathered. A bus had crashed into a private town car. Toinette saw a chauffeur in livery lying in the street, a few feet from a woman. There was the clang of ambulances, the police pushing people back. But Toinette went through them, and stood looking down.

A policeman was bending over Reggie's mother.

The bus had been crowded, and several of the passengers had been badly hurt. A white-coated interne knelt beside Mrs. Scranton.

"Sprained ankle and broken arm," he said. "She can go next time; carry her in somewhere."

Toinette stood looking down at her enemy. The police were busy, so were the doctors. One full ambulance had gone, into another they were putting the chauffeur.

"He's pretty bad off."

"The old lady?"

"Next ambulance——"

There was a stretcher; they were putting the woman on it.

"Take her to my house," said Toinette. "I know her; it's Mrs. Scranton."

Reggie's mother was carried into the old house, into the big pleasant room behind the patio, gently undressed, and put to bed. A doctor came and set her arm and bandaged her ankle.

"Six weeks. You'd better send her to the hospital in the morning. She isn't young and she's had a bad shock. They tell me the chauffeur may die."

"I know her son," Toinette said quietly, and went upstairs to tell old madame.

It was old madame, dressed in her shiny black silk, a cobweb of rare lace on her white head, who came in



to make the sufferer cordially welcome.

Mrs. Scranton, awake now and bewildered at her surroundings, gazed at the quaint, dignified figure and felt more uneasy than ever.

"Why didn't they send me to my hotel?" she asked anxiously. "Mrs. Sancerre, you must tell me your price for this room and my food?"

The delicate old face flushed. "Madame, you're our guest; we charge nothing for our hospitality. The tea room is Toinette's foolishness. A Sancerre would never take a penny for this room. Pray don't offend me by suggesting it!"

Mrs. Scranton's face reddened. "Then I mustn't stay— Why, it's folly; we pay our way these days!"

The old lady turned to her granddaughter, who had just entered bearing a tray with daintily arranged food upon it. "Toinette, please make it plain to madame that we accept no money for our hospitality."

Toinette set down the tray and began to pour a cup of tea.

"You're our guest, Mrs. Scranton," she said with gentle dignity. "Pray set your mind at rest—it's nothing—a room until you can be moved."

Old madame, indignant, had left the room. Mrs. Scranton winced with the pain in her arm, but she looked up at the girl's calm face and wondered.

"You showed me the door last time," she said, with a twisted smile.

"We won't speak of that," Toinette replied. "I've been to the hospital and they tell me your chauffeur will live, but it will be months before he can drive you again."

"You thought of him?" Reggie's mother exclaimed.

"Wasn't it a duty? Your car, too,

is ruined. You'll wish to see about the insurance?"

Mrs. Scranton sank back. "You're a business woman, eh? Give me a bit of paper and a pencil, please. I must ask you to send telegrams for me."

Toinette arranged the paper and pencil so that Mrs. Scranton could write without holding the paper, for it was her left arm which was in a sling.

"I want you to send these for me," Reggie's mother said grimly. "I've wired to my husband—or rather you will—to send a new car and a chauffeur, and not to let Reggie come. It's not necessary." As she spoke she looked sharply at Toinette, but the girl was calm. She took the papers and went out without a word.

Mrs. Scranton, left to herself, looked about her at the cool old room, the wonderful mahogany furniture, and stirred uneasily.

After that she showed no great desire to be moved to the hotel. Her maid came and was sent back to look after the baggage.

"I don't dare to ask that old lady to harbor a servant free," she thought. "The idea that I can't pay! I don't dare to offer it again!"

She did not dare. Old madame came in at intervals and talked to her with delicate condescension. To her this widow of a wealthy brewer and wife of an automobile manufacturer was, in fact, a parvenue. The parvenue began to feel it. Old madame, standing under the portrait of an ancestor who had known Lafayette, told her of her descent from a marshal of France.

"In the time of the Thirteenth Louis, madame!"

Mrs. Scranton, who had descended from an eminently respectable shoemaker, began to feel exceedingly underbred. She spoke casually of



millions and old madame sniffed. She had no idea that this was Reggie's mother. Toinette had maintained a discreet silence, and the name was not the same. Warmed into confidence about Toinette she told of the girl's many admirers.

"There's an artist crazy about her, poor fellow," old madame boasted. "He's an Evremond, and there are Jacques and Raymond, poor boys, they get no hope. There was, also, quite a nice young man, a—Reginald Cornwell—yes, that was his name, but he was of no family at all. I was opposed. I told Toinette so and finally he went—to my relief! A good boy, madame, but, unhappily common."

"What?" Mrs. Scranton tried to sit up but fell back. "You mean to say—you think Reggie common?" she shrilled.

The two old snobs, the snob with money and the snob with ancestors, glared at each other indignantly.

"Why assuredly, madame," Madame Sancerre replied coldly. "Only picture to yourself the granddaughter of General Sancerre, the descendant of Marechal Sancerre, the daughter of that eminent jurist, Etienne Sancerre, who was my son,

*Toinette wore her grandmother's wedding gown of white satin brocade, a veil of tulle, a cap of real rose-point lace, and lovely matched pearls that every bride in her family had worn for generations back.*



marrying into a family who made beer? Beer!"

Mrs. Scranton had not even the courage to admit that her first husband was a brewer. Her only refuge at such a moment was to feign exhaustion, and she asked feebly for a glass of water and Toinette brought her ice tea.

Reggie's mother had been watching the girl. She saw her often tired, always busy, always thoughtful of that terrifying grandmother. As she lay there in the big four-poster Mrs. Scranton heard the pleasant tinkle of glass and china, the sound of distant voices. The garden was full these days, and Toinette never ceased from her labors except to look after her guest with an exquisite but distant courtesy. Seen thus, day by day, simple, unassuming, never talking of those dreadful ancestors, always efficient, the girl had a charm that could not be denied. Mrs. Scranton was in pain and fretful. Toinette was patient. At last Reggie's mother broke out.

"Toinette, do you still love my boy?"

"You've no right to ask that question," Toinette replied, but she flushed and trembled under the older woman's keen eyes.

"You turned me out of the house that night," Mrs. Scranton said grimly, "and I know all about that ancestor, the marshal, but I simply had to ask. His father made beer, child! I mean Reggie's—not the— the thingumbob in France."

Toinette slipped out of the room. Nor did she return that day; old black Victorine brought in the tray.

"Thank heavens, there's some one who'll take a dollar!" the harassed invalid thought devoutly.

That evening Victorine waddled to the nearest telegraph office and sent a telegram.

In duty bound, the girl waited on Reggie's mother, wondering, now that she was better, that she made no move to go back to the hotel. Toinette knew she had to wait for Mr. Scranton, who was coming down with a new car, but why wait here?

"She seems too nice to have been so insulting," Toinette thought and wiped her eyes.

She was not usually weak enough for tears, but to-night she was so tired! It had been a hard day and she had had to refuse the artist again. She sat alone in the patio; old madame, having given Mrs. Scranton another lecture on the fine points of class distinction in old New Orleans, had gone triumphantly to bed. Toinette sat down on the edge of the fountain and wished she could make money enough to have it flow again. She was pensive, she tried hard not to think of Reggie, and then, abruptly, the bell rang.

The girl rose listlessly and opened the door.

"Toinette—Toinette darling!"

It was Reggie!

Toinette struggled to escape from his arms. "Your mother——" she gasped.

"Mother wired for me to come and get you," Reggie said. "Where is she?"

A voice called from the room beyond the patio. "Reggie, bring her here. I—I want to humbly beg her pardon!"

Half dragging Toinette, Reggie obeyed.

His mother was sitting up in bed, her face flushed.

"Toinette, I beg your pardon for everything. I beg of you to marry my son," she said earnestly. "I've seen you here day by day and you're the finest girl in the world! Forgive me, Toinette, forgive a blundering old woman for Reggie's sake!"



Toinette looked down at her for a long moment, then she slipped out of Reggie's arms and kissed her.

Reggie seized his mother's right hand. "Mother——" he began radiantly, but there was suddenly the sound of a cane tapping on the floor overhead.

Mrs. Scranton gasped. "Toinette, I've been thinking and thinking. I do believe I have an ancestor—he carried a letter once to General Washington—for Heaven's sake tell Madame Sancerre—and—and, Toinette darling, don't tell her it was about a pair of shoes—that didn't fit!"

Toinette laughed softly, happily. "Grandmother loves me!" was all she said.

And every one was sure of that when they saw with what a lavish hand old Madame Sancerre gave of the beautiful things that she herself had worn when she became a bride.

Toinette wore the old-fashioned

wedding gown of white satin brocade, a veil of tulle, the cap of real rose-point lace that Madame Sancerre had brought from France with her and lovely matched pearls that every bride in the family had worn for generations back. Her bouquet was of orchids, ordered by Reggie, white pansies and roses picked from her own garden.

It was a subdued and almost shy Reggie who took his bride in his arms after the ceremony. "Darling, you're so beautiful I'm afraid almost to touch you."

Toinette rested in his arms, her face uplifted to his. She laughed softly and a deep flush dyed her face and throat as she murmured timidly: "Don't be, Reggie. I want to feel your arms around me, to know that at last I am really yours."

"Sweet, you're all mine—mine, until death do us part," he whispered reverently as he crushed her lips with his.



#### EVENSONG

SUNDOWN painting the alder trees,  
Larks come home from their world of blue;  
And haunting the twilight's velvet breeze,  
My heart is calling, "Love, come home, too!"

Whatever you be, wherever you are,  
However you walk on the roads of men,  
Love, here is your haven and guiding star—  
Return to your home in my arms again!

Shadows asleep in the orchard rows,  
Moonlight spread on the woodland track;  
And ever, forever, my heart-call goes:  
"On road or on sea, dear one, come back!"

Just as you left them, the brown birds sing,  
The wild rose blossoms on hill and fen—  
Come back to the castle where you are king,  
Come back to the land of my love again!

GLORIA BERTHAL.



# Bright Barriers

By Frances Sprague

A SERIAL—Part II.

## CHAPTER IV.

CONSTANCE, worn out and miserable, hugged her corner of the seat. Now that she had been rescued from the station platform, she abandoned herself to complete exhaustion. The tortuous winding of the Cape road, the backrush of houses and trees, the lurch-

ing and jouncing of the truck—she scarcely heeded them as she huddled there, replying to her companion's occasional attempts at polite conversation with listless monosyllables.

"You haven't yet told me who you are." His voice, deep yet vibrant, finally penetrated her numb detachment.



She gave a start. "Oh, yes, of course. I'm Constance Waring."

"Where from?" he pursued, his eyes steady on the road ahead.

"Fort Jaffray." She supposed she ought to explain herself more fully, but could not summon the energy to do so.

"Uh-huh." From his tone she inferred that he hadn't the slightest idea where Fort Jaffray was. "W-"

he continued, as I told you, my name's Hathaway. Norman Hathaway. But, of course, nobody calls me anything but Red." An expressive backward toss of his fiery head emphasized this announcement. "My brother Allison and I run this wholesale fishery. He's married, but I live with mother."

He sounded as if he were filling out a license blank, Constance thought mechanically, but aloud she merely said: "Yes, I see."

"Yeah," he went on, "Al and I run this business together. Ordinarily my job's in the office, but we're short-handed to-day—one of our men fell sick, so I'm driving in his place."

Abruptly he stopped speaking, for now they had rounded the crest of a hill and were coasting down a steep incline toward a tiny village which nestled close to a shining strip of beach that rimmed a blue expanse of bay. It was a pretty town, Constance noted as they swerved around

an angle of its small square—an almost toylike collection of paved streets, diminutive green-shuttered white cottages, and rows of stately elms. With its prim atmosphere of colonial reserve it was a far cry from the cold sophistication of New York and the military stiffness of Fort Jaffray.

As they rumbled up a wide avenue

lined with green-lawned houses.

"Red" Hathaway said: "There's no hotel open now. It is after the season, you know. So I'll have to take you to Mrs. Ramsay's; I'm sure she can rent you a room until you can make better arrangements." With the last words he stopped in front of a house, larger than the rest, and wrenched open the truck door. "You wait here," he told her, "while I go in and see what I can do."

Constance smiled her thanks and watched his tall,

lithe figure as he sprinted up the walk and pounded the brass knocker of the door.

His imperative summons was answered by a portly, middle-aged woman in a flowered cotton dress and starched white apron. Presently he turned, grinning broadly. "Come on, Miss Waring!" he called. "Mrs. Ramsay will fix you up!"

Miss Waring. Well, what of it? Later she would tell him she *was* married, but now she had only one thought—to find a place to rest, to

THE STORY SO FAR: Constance Waring, just married to Major George Waring at Fort Jaffray, runs away from the wedding reception when she sees her new husband drunk and openly paying attention to notorious Carmel Dorsay. Constance is in love with Jim Talbot, but married George Waring because her mother had extracted the promise from her on her deathbed. Constance suspects that George is interested only in her money. Before going away she leaves a note for her friend, Helen Chester, asking her to keep the contents secret. She boards a boat for Boston, but there is a fire and the passengers are landed near a small town on Cape Cod. In the turmoil, Constance's purse is stolen. Helpless, she is befriended by a young man who offers to drive her in his oyster truck to Seaton, where she can communicate for funds.

unravel the tangled threads of her life. Lightly she sprang from the truck and ran to join him on the porch.

While Red returned to the truck for her bags, Constance introduced herself to Mrs. Ramsay, who led her into the house, up a broad, white stairway and into a spacious, sunny room on the second floor. "You just freshen up a bit, now, my dear," she advised, "and when you come down I'll have a nice breakfast for you."

Then Red strode into the room, looking absurdly large and masculine among the dainty colonial furnishings, and set her bags in a corner.

When he straightened up to face her, Constance held out her hand. "Thank you so much, Mr. Hathaway," she said sincerely. "And now I won't detain you any longer. Those oysters—" Her voice trailed off as her fingers were clasped in his massive grip.

"Look," he said, drawing her with him toward the door. "I hope you won't think it's—well, nervy, but I wonder if you'd have dinner with me to-night? There aren't any good places in town, so I figured we might drive down the Cape to an inn where they have grand shore dinners. Will you?"

Constance hesitated. Ordinarily she would never have considered accepting an invitation from an almost total stranger, a man who had literally been a pick-up. But somehow she liked and trusted this big, smiling, shyly gentle, red-headed man. And besides, nothing was today as it ordinarily had been; her whole world was in chaos, from which his quiet friendliness seemed to offer refuge.

"I'd like to," she replied, gently freeing the hand which he still held. "Shall we say about seven?"

"Seven it is," he nodded, and turning, vanished, whistling, down the stairs.

Breakfast over, Constance ventured out into the autumn sunshine. First she must go to the local bank to arrange for money to be transferred from her New York account. Then she would explore the town, and perhaps in this calm, sun-drenched village she would be able to think clearly, to untangle her problems, to arrive at some decision about the future.

Her errand at the bank satisfactorily concluded, she wandered through the quiet streets of the town till she came to a fir-dotted bluff overhanging the ruffled blue waters of the bay. There she found a sun-warmed rock and sat down.

Now, what exactly was she going to do? Of course, it would be several days before she received her money, and meanwhile she must, perforce, remain in Seaton. But after that? Should she go to Boston?

Helen would be there in about two weeks, but she wouldn't remain long, for immediately after her marriage to Sam Talbot, she would sail for the Canal Zone where Sam was slated for duty. With Helen gone, Constance suddenly realized, she would be quite as alone in Boston as she was in Seaton.

Well, then, why not stay here? Certainly it was a lovely place, charming and peaceful. Shading her eyes, she gazed out across the shimmering water to the little cat boats, bobbing against the dark luxuriance of the opposite shore. All at once she made up her mind. She *would* stay here.

Back in her room, she sat down to write Helen. She wrote hurriedly, concisely, explaining what had made her run away, giving her address,



and asking that her trunks be forwarded at once. Her friend, she knew, would reply with an account of George's reaction to her flight.

It was only after she had signed her name that she realized she had forgotten something—something which she was half afraid to add, and yet longed with all her heart to write.

For, with the summoning of Fort Jaffray to mind, the memory of Jim Talbot stamped itself vividly on her consciousness. The way he had smiled at her as he had taken her hand on the chapel steps—knowingly, yet with touching wistfulness. The way his deep, blue-green eyes had searched her own, even as he phrased the conventional banalities of congratulation. And the way his arms about her had quickened her pulses as they stood in the dusky silence of the alcove, with the lights and music of the celebration beyond the half-open door, the beat of his heart under her tear-wet cheeks as his lips had touched her hair, whispering: "I love you."

Suddenly her head fell forward on the desk and two scalding tears dropped onto the smooth writing paper.

But the postscript, when she finally wrote it, read merely: "My best to Jim."

For it was as Mrs. George Waring that she must send this letter.

The rest of the day passed uneventfully. Constance unpacked her things from the water-stained suitcases and put them away in the closet, where they reposed, bright, painful reminders of the life with George for which they had been purchased, and from which she had escaped. Later, in a flame-colored chiffon negligee and matching mules, she lay across the bed and dozed until the village clock, chiming six,

warned her that she must dress for her engagement with Red Hathaway.

Had any one prophesied that on the day following her marriage to George Waring she would have a dinner date with another man, and that man a stranger, Constance would have called that person crazy.

Yet here she was, barely twenty-four hours after the ceremony, arraying herself in her best, preparatory to going out with Red.

Twenty-four hours? It seemed more like twenty-four years. For in the brief space of a night and a day, everything had changed. Even the face which gazed calmly at her from the depths of the mirror as she applied lipstick and braided her fine, golden hair, did not resemble in the least the distraught countenance she had glimpsed while making her feverish preparations to leave Fort Jaffray.

Feeling rested and serene after her idle day, she decided to wear a sea-green dinner gown, and was just slipping it over her head when Mrs. Ramsay knocked on the door to announce Red's arrival.

She found him in the firelit living room, a tall figure in brown, his auburn hair which that morning had flamed wild and free above his dark eyes, now brushed to burnished smoothness.

"I was afraid you'd change your mind," he greeted her, crushing her proffered hand in his powerful grip.

Smilingly, Constance shook her head. "No," she said. "I was very glad you invited me."

This was true, she reflected, as she permitted him to help her into her green wool cape and take her arm to escort her to the door. She *was* glad to be spending the evening with him, despite her slight feeling



*Constance remembered Jim's arms about her, the beat of his heart under her tear-wet cheeks as his lips had touched her hair, whispering: "I love you." And suddenly two scalding tears dropped on the letter she held.*

of uneasiness—was it apprehension, or guilt? For there was something about him which attracted her, something at once rugged and gentle, a quality which made her feel both feminine and utterly secure.

She had half expected he would take her in the lumbering truck, but it was a low, gleaming roadster which awaited them at the curb.

As if he had read her thoughts, he said, as he opened the car door:





"We're really not as small-town in Seaton as you might suppose. And to prove it, I'm taking you to a place that's famous from Bangor to Miami for its shore dinners."

They were silent, mostly, as they sped along; Red, his huge shoulders

slouched over the wheel, watched the winding road intently; Constance, curled in her corner of the seat, admired the dusk-shadowed landscape of tall trees and sunset-streaked water.

From afar she spied the inn, a

rambling white building outlined in clustered lights that blinked and beckoned.

Inside it was studiously colonial, but cheerful. Red indicated a table between chintz-draped windows, and it was not until they had ordered and the buxom waitress had scurried away, that Constance realized they were almost the only patrons.

Almost. But not quite. For suddenly she became aware of some one staring at her.

Covertly she glanced about. And seated at the next table she saw a man with rough black hair and savage blue eyes, who gazed at her with fixed intensity, as if he were seeing a ghost. An expression in his eyes, in the bitter line of his mouth, a cold look—was it hatred?—sent a shiver down her spine.

Yet she must be mistaken. This man could not hate her, because she was sure she had never seen him before in her life. Curious!

While she was still pondering the man's strange regard, Red turned to him and with casual friendliness remarked: "Hello, Mac. How's the boy?"

Constance arched inquiring brows at Red who whispered, under cover of the menu card he still held: "Alan McKendrick. Queer duck. Hates women."

"Oh." With relief Constance relaxed against the back of her chair. So there was nothing personal in the venomous stare which he was leveling at her. Absently she tasted the clam chowder which the waitress set down before her.

All at once she became aware that McKendrick had pushed back his chair, risen, and crossed to stand at their table. Without preliminary he said: "You remind me of a girl I used to know, years ago, back home

in Kansas." His voice was like frozen acid.

Startled, Constance glanced up hastily, but she managed to acknowledge Red's introduction and to murmur laughingly: "I'm afraid I'm not the same girl. You see, I've never been to Kansas. As a matter of fact, I've just come from Fort Jaffray."

"Of course, you're not the same girl," snapped McKendrick, and without further comment pulled out a chair and sat down.

Before she could recover from this rudeness, still another man was hovering at the edge of their table.

"Fort Jaffray? I know a feller who's stationed there. Sergeant O'Flaherty, his name is. Know him?"

Well, really—Constance thought in protest. The newcomer was a small, thin man, blond, with sharp features that twitched constantly. The obviously reluctant Red introduced him as Mr. Callahan.

"No, I don't know Sergeant O'Flaherty," replied Constance, nodding coolly to Callahan. She was rapidly revising the favorable opinion she had formed of the Seatonites from Mrs. Ramsay and Red. McKendrick, who had sharply ordered the waitress to serve his dinner at their table, continued to stare at her with a mixture of interest and revulsion which she found extremely disconcerting. While Callahan, she thought, with his tough, nasal twang and his cheap, flashy clothes, might have stepped straight from a gangster rôle in a movie.

There was some consolation in the fact that Red appeared quite as much put out as she, herself. Apparently McKendrick and Callahan were not intimates of his, for his manner was subdued, and more



than once he glanced askance at Callahan who, between courses, fidgeted with scraps of paper and the stub of a pencil which he concealed furtively.

As for McKendrick, he did little more than stare. Apparently he was attracted to women, even as he feared and hated them.

The conversation was not stimulating. Red looked embarrassed while McKendrick glowered, and Callahan fired questions at Constance which she answered as briefly as possible.

"So you just come from Fort Jaffray, did you, Miss Waring?"

"Yes."

"Live there long?"

"Not very."

"Know many people there?"

"A few."

"Don't know O'Flaherty, you say? Well, who do you know at the post?"

All the while he kept up a constant fidgeting with the paper and pencil.

At last the dessert arrived, and with it cups of steaming coffee. As soon as possible, Constance indicated to Red that she wished to leave.

While Red was assisting her with her coat McKendrick rose, and with a look that missed no detail of her figure from the crown of her flippant French hat to the toes of her green suede sandals, remarked: "It's funny, after all these years, to meet a girl who looks so much like Evelyn."

Constance flushed but made no reply, for his tone had been anything but flattering.

Presently she and Red were in the car, driving back to Seaton along moon-drenched bluffs. At last Red spoke: "I'm sorry they joined us to-night, but there wasn't anything

I could do about it. Snoopy Callahan's a pretty tough customer, but we went to school together, so I have to be decent to him."

"And Alan McKendrick?" she prompted.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, as I told you, he hates women. Come to think of it, to-night's the first time I ever saw him speak to a girl, and he's been kicking around Seaton for six or seven years now."

"What does he do?" inquired Constance.

"I don't know," evaded Red. "Has a little money of his own, I guess. He never seems to work."

If he doesn't know them well and doesn't like them, why did he allow them to sit with us?—she wondered. Jimmy Talbot, she knew, would never have endured the presence of two people whom he did not like. He would have made it clear that they were not welcome.

A sudden wave of longing for Jim swept over her, leaving her shaken and frightened.

Forcibly she wrenched her mind away from Jim and turned once more to Red. He had stopped the car, for they were once again outside Mrs. Ramsay's. In the bright darkness the end of his cigarette glowed.

"I'm awfully glad you decided to stay in Seaton," he was saying. His voice sounded oddly husky as gently he touched her hand.

Constance withdrew her fingers, but her tone was gentle as she replied: "I'm glad, too. You've been very kind to me, Red."

"You're the sort of girl any man would want to be kind to, Miss Waring."

Miss Waring. Why hadn't she told him she was married? Was it because he held a certain attraction for her?

"You're the sort of girl any man

would——” He stopped abruptly as once more he reached for her hand and this time clasped it warmly in his. “I want to see a lot of you, if you’ll let me,” he murmured.

Lifting her hand, he laid the fingers gently to his lips. “You will let me, won’t you?” he pleaded. “Constance?”

The nearness of him, big and strong and quiet, the pressure of his hand, the almost reverent touch of his lips, sent her pulses tingling.

But what was she permitting herself to feel? She, a married woman?

Swiftly she wrenched free of his clasp and sprang, tense, from the car.

“I’ll have to go now,” she exclaimed breathlessly. “It must be getting late.”

Quickly she ran up the steps and grasped the knob of the door.

But quick as she was, Red was quicker, and he was beside her before she could turn it, holding her arms tightly in the darkness. “Constance!” he begged. “Tell me when you’ll let me see you. To-morrow night? Please!”

In terror of the attraction he exerted over her, she cowered in the doorway. “I’ll let you know,” she faltered. “I——”

Again evading his touch, she turned the knob and slid into the house. “Good night, Red,” she called as she shut the door.

But she had meant “good-by.” For she knew she must not see Red Hathaway again.

## CHAPTER V.

Time passed swiftly and pleasantly for Constance in her new surroundings. As the bright, crisp days succeeded each other she began gradually to feel better, both physi-

cally and mentally. Gone was the paralyzing exhaustion that had sagged her shoulders and dulled her eyes; almost gone was the sickening fear of George that had stirred her emotions into a welter of revolt.

For, as she became rested and calm, the harrowing memory of her experience slowly dimmed until, after a week of contented idling, she could remember it almost impersonally, as if it had not happened to her at all, but had occurred in a movie or play.

Almost. But not quite. For, even though she tried to disregard them, reminders of her husband continually forced themselves onto her reluctant attention. There was the pain in her shoulder which lingered, even after the bruises made by George’s fingers had faded from the creamy whiteness of her flesh. And there were, too, her scuffed suitcases, eloquent souvenirs of her terrified flight.

And there were Helen’s letters. The first one came three days after her arrival in Seaton. It was a long and sympathetic letter, full of shocked commiseration and much-desired information. “Some pretty tall tales of George’s drinking are making the rounds,” Helen had written. “And there’s a rumor that he’s in some kind of official trouble, too. They say there’s a possibility of an investigation into the finances of his department—the commissary books are said to be in an awful jumble. All this may be merely service gossip, but I can vouch personally for the state of his feelings against you. He is furiously angry. Why, he even came over to the house and tried to force me to tell him where you’d gone, shouting at me, and banging his fist on the table. Of course, I pretended blank innocence. At the risking of sound-





*Constance Dorsay*

*Red held her arms tightly in the darkness. "Constance!" he begged. "Tell me when you'll let me see you again. Please!" The nearness of him, the touch of his hands, sent her pulses tingling.*

ing cynical, I must confess that I don't see why he behaves this way, unless he really is in some kind of jam and needs your money to get him out of it. Certainly he cannot

love you, for he's been in the company of that notorious Dorsay woman since you left."

There was more, but it was the postscript which contracted her

heart and brought tears to her eyes. Just a line, seemingly an afterthought, but it stirred Constance to the very depths of her being. "Jim Talbot came to see me yesterday," it ran, "and he said to tell you that if there is ever anything he can do for you, you have only to say the word."

That Helen, her oldest and closest friend should be loyal was a foregone conclusion. But that Jim, easy-going Jim with his offhand manner and casual charm, really cared so much for her, quickened her heart with ecstasy. Once again she put her head down on the desk and abandoned herself to an agony of longing for the lanky Texan with his slow, deep voice and his steady blue-green eyes.

But finally she conquered her emotion. For, although George had receded to a remote place in her consciousness, she could not entirely forget that she was still his wife.

Nevertheless, for the most part Constance was serene. She spent her days walking among the pines atop the rugged bluffs that ringed the Bay, or reading and sewing in her room. In the evening she went to a movie or played cribbage with Mrs. Ramsay in front of the leaping fire.

As for Red Hathaway, after the momentary pang of regret at not being able to see him again had passed, she put him completely from her thoughts.

So it was with a start that she realized one morning, in the post office, that he was standing beside her.

The first inkling she had of his presence was the sound of his voice as he towered above her, saying accusingly: "Why have you avoided me, Constance? I've telephoned a dozen times, and twice I went to

the house, but always Mrs. Ramsay said you were out."

A painful flush rose to her cheeks as slowly she raised her eyes to his reproachful brown gaze. How handsome he looked, with his crest of flaming hair above his dark face, his muscular throat bare and bronzed between the folds of his open shirt collar.

"I've been busy," she stammered feebly.

"Don't you like me?" he inquired abruptly, flashing white teeth in a disarming grin.

Before she realized it, she, too, had smiled and answered impulsively: "Of course, I like you, Red!"

"Then prove it by coming with me to the Grange party to-night," he commanded.

She hesitated a moment, torn between desire and caution. Had he asked her over the phone, she reflected ruefully, caution might have won. But how could she refuse while he was standing so close to her, smiling down at her, almost touching her?

"All right," she said at last. "I'll go."

On the way home she succeeded in summoning a dozen reasons to bolster her decision. After all, she mused, since she was living in Seaton, she must become acquainted with the townspeople. By the time she had reached the white-pillared house on West Central Avenue, she had not only justified her intention of going to the party, but had managed to convince herself that it was the only thing to do.

She took great pains with her appearance that evening, selecting one of her loveliest gowns, a filmy creation in midnight-blue chiffon, and choosing gay, modernistic accessories to go with it. When Red greeted her, his first words were:



"Constance! You're the most beautiful thing I've ever seen! You look like—like a gorgeous butterfly!"

Glowing with pleasure, she let him wrap her blue velvet cape about her shoulders and lead her to the car.

But she had not been long at the party before she regretted her impulsive decision to go. The dance was held in a huge, barnlike room above a store. Unshaded lights glared from the ceiling, the orchestra squeaked and scraped, and all about her pressed a crush of noisy humanity—women in print dresses, men in flannel shirts and slacks, giggling girls and little boys who scuffled among the dancers. In her chic finery Constance felt conspicuous and out of place among these plain country folk.

They were joined by Red's brother Allison, his wife, Lou, and a shy, appealing girl in starched gingham called Mary Burgess. Constance sensed at once that neither of the women liked her; pale, thin-lipped Lou sat silent while her exuberant, handsome husband, who was a larger, coarser edition of Red, paid the newcomer marked attention. And little, retiring Mary gazed after Red with a look in her eyes that could mean only one thing—she was in love with him. To her he was the sun, moon and stars.

Constance, feeling more and more self-conscious and out of place, danced once with Red, but after that would not dance with him again, preferring to sit out, hoping that he would ask Mary instead.

For to-night she realized, as never before, how different she was in background, manner and outlook from these Seatonites. Among them, aware of their hostile appraisal of her sophisticated clothes and cosmopolitan charm, she knew in-

stinctively that her original decision not to see Red had been right, that by prolonging the association she would only bring constraint upon herself and uneasiness, perhaps even unhappiness, on others.

So she sat quietly, refusing both Red and Allison as partners, until suddenly she felt a hand on her shoulder and, looking up, saw Alan McKendrick glowering above her.

He said nothing, did not even smile, but held out his hand, and she rose. Not that she wanted to dance with him, but she felt that to leave the others alone would be tactful.

He danced surprisingly well, and Constance would have enjoyed being with him, had he not persisted in eying her with that strange regard of his, staring at her as if he loathed the very sight of her.

"What are you doing at this shindig?" he demanded tersely as he swung her out into the crowd. "Did you come to show off?" With a shrug of his shoulder and an up-raised eyebrow he indicated her expensive gown, her glittering jewelry.

Hot fury flamed into her cheeks, but Constance managed to control her voice as she countered: "Did you invite me to dance, or to insult me?"

She made as if to leave him, but a jerk of his steellike arm forced her into the dance once more. "Cut the great-lady airs," he admonished. "I know your kind—beautiful but heartless, and not satisfied until you have every man crazy about you, and every woman miserable. Now pay attention to your dancing, and never mind the injured-innocence act."

But this was too much. Forcing him to stop, she stood still as she said coldly: "There's no law that obliges me to listen to such rudeness,

and what's more, I don't intend to. Good night, Mr. McKendrick."

And without another word she turned her back on him and walked away, holding her head high.

Strange man, she reflected, when her anger had subsided a little. Why did he wish to persecute her?—she wondered. Was it really because she resembled some girl he



*She took great pains with her appearance that evening. When Red greeted her, his first words were: "Constance! You're the most beautiful thing I've ever seen!" She glowed with pleasure.*



had known at one time? But how ridiculous!

Determined to avoid McKendrick, yet reluctant to join the others, Constance wandered aimlessly toward the refreshment stand. But there, while sipping an orangeade, she had another unpleasant encounter. For standing so close to her that his shoulder grazed hers, was "Snoopy" Callahan.

Much as Alan McKendrick's manner had irritated her, Callahan's proved even more distasteful, for it was not rude, but, rather, overpolite. With his small eyes fixed furtively on her face, he inquired in a smooth tone: "Good evening, Mrs. Waring. Had any news from Fort Jaffray?"

Constance gave a start, and a cold, menacing shiver ran down her spine. Had she heard correctly? Had he called her *Mrs.* Waring? It was always difficult to tell by the Cape Cod drawl whether the speaker meant *Mrs.* or *Miss.* "No, I haven't," she replied curtly, and sipped her drink.

"I had a letter from Sergeant O'Flaherty the other day," persisted Callahan, apparently unaware of her rebuff.

Constance put down her empty cup and turned away. Sergeant O'Flaherty—Fort Jaffray. The names conjured up an unwelcome picture. She'd get Red to take her home, and after this she'd stay away from Grange parties.

But when she reached the place where they had all sat, only Allison and his wife were there. "How about a twirl?" inquired Allison, his bold glance taking her in from slender ankles to golden braids.

She shook her head and turned to face the dancing crowd. And presently she saw Red, tall and broad, and in his arms Mary Burgess, her

small, dark head on his shoulder. The girl's face, half hidden, beamed utter contentment.

Once again Constance experienced a pang of regret that she had let Red bring her here. And once more she resolved never to see him again.

When the music stopped, and Red brought the flushed and smiling Mary back to them Constance said: "Would you mind awfully taking me home now, Red? You come back, but frankly, I'm terribly tired."

"So soon?" he cried. "Aw, come on, dance with me first!" And reaching down strong hands, he clasped her own and drew her to her feet.

But she was adamant. "No, really, Red. I want to leave."

Crestfallen, he held her wrap for her, and after a farewell smile at the others, Constance started for the door.

She did not wish to explain her decision to leave, so while they drove down the dark, silent streets of the town toward Mrs. Ramsay's, she asked about Mary. "She seems so nice!" Constance said enthusiastically. "And so pretty!"

"She's a good kid," Red admitted grudgingly. "But she isn't half as pretty as you."

"Oh, yes, she is," Constance contradicted. "She's a different type, that's all. Known her long?"

"We went to school together."

"I see." She nodded. "I thought you'd probably known each other always. She looks as if she'd be grand fun—you know, companionable."

For the first time Red spoke warmly. "She is! Why, I remember we used to go fishing together, and to all the dances and everything."

"Used to?" she prompted.

He shrugged. "Well, you know how it is."



The blood drained from her face, and her heart was struck with a paralysis of terror as she read the letter. It stated that unless she paid the sender five thousand dollars, her husband would be informed as to her whereabouts.



Constance said nothing. Yes, she knew how it was. But it mustn't be that way, if she could help it. Not for the sake of a mere infatuation.

When they reached Mrs. Ramsay's, Constance gathered her wrap about her and held out her hand. "Don't bother to get out of the car," she said. "We'll say good night here, because you'll be wanting to get back to the dance." In her mind she added: "To Mary."

"Oh, no!" All at once Red's arms were about her, straining her to him, and his lips, warm and seeking, touched her hair. "I don't want to go!" he breathed. "I'm so in love with you!"

And before she could protest, he had crushed his lips to hers.

A shudder, agonizingly thrilling, ran through her as for a moment she yielded to the pressure of his arms and lips.

But almost at once reason returned to her, and with quick, desperate movements she wrenched free of his hold and jerked open the door of the car.

Swiftly she raced up the walk, mounted the steps, turned the door-knob.

"Constance! Constance! You've got to listen to me!" Red called, close at her heels.

But before he could reach her, could envelop her once more in the potency of his nearness, she had slipped into the house and locked the door.

She leaned against the door a moment, her heart pounding wildly, every fiber of her being yearning for Red's touch even as her reason fought him off, till at last she heard his tread receding down the walk, and then the spurting rush of his car as it sped off down the avenue.

She heaved a sigh, shook herself as if to shake off any clinging tentacles of Red's attraction, and started for the stairs.

The house was utterly quiet and, save for one light glowing on a small table, dark.

She had climbed several steps before she happened to glance over the banister and saw, lying in the pool of radiance cast by the lamp, a letter. From where she stood she could barely decipher the address, but she could see it bore her name.

With clamoring pulses, she descended again to the hall and crossed to the table. Who could be writing her here?—she wondered. Helen? No, for already that day she had received one letter from her friend. George? Oh, no, no! He couldn't—he mustn't know where she was! Jim? "Please make it be from Jim!" she breathed, as she lifted the envelope in trembling hands.

But it wasn't from Jim. A glance told her that it was postmarked "Seaton."

Well, of all things!—she thought. Puzzled, she turned it over, scrutinizing the cheap, impersonal white stationery, the printed address. Who on earth—

With a deft motion she slit the envelope and withdrew the single sheet of paper it contained.

Then slowly, as her eyes scanned the few printed lines, the blood drained from her face and her heart was struck with a paralysis of terror.

"Unless," it ran, "you pay five thousand dollars to the sender of this letter at a time and place which will be made known to you later, Major Waring will be informed as to your whereabouts and also of your relationship with Norman Hathaway."

TO BE CONCLUDED.



# Waiting Arms

By James A. Roamer

**A**NN MAHONEY was disgusted. Just because she was pretty and Irish, she was supposed to fold up sweetly in some man's arms every time she had a date. She was expected to listen to a lot of

sentimental talk all evening and believe every word. Men seemed to think that her lips were for the express purpose of being kissed.

The more she thought of the blind date ahead of her, the angrier she



became. This time it was a friend of the floor manager, and if she gave him the cold shoulder it might mean her job.

Ann liked her job at the toilet-goods counter and thrilled at the compliments which came her way. Selling preparations to ladies with hopeless faces and sending them away with a smile to try again. Soaps and perfumes. Shaving creams and lotions for men. If only they wouldn't take her ready smile as an invitation.

Ann was no man hater. Far from it. She had dreamed a very particular dream since girlhood. And a man in that dream would come along some day to sweep her off her feet. And when he came she'd know him at once, and would give herself to him with all her heart.

She'd been waiting a long time now, and sometimes found herself getting impatient. She wished he'd hurry and show up.

To-night's date would probably be no better than the others. She and Billy had been fools to let Coxey catch them out together. She couldn't say she didn't know the company rules about employees having dates. The floor manager knew better. But Billy was the only man willing to take her out for an evening's enjoyment and not expect a reward. Only Billy worked at Harvey's, too.

How Coxey ever happened in on them at the Dutch Mill was still a mystery. Of all places for him to show up! Ann had a sneaking notion that it hadn't just happened, but that didn't help things. They were both subject to dismissal, and Billy had his mother to support and needed his job.

Ann's thoughts drifted to the new store manager they were expecting in from Cleveland, and wished that

it might be a new floor manager instead.

Ho-hum! Soon closing time. Ann wondered who the handsome devil at lingerie was. Picking up panties and other unmentionables, and looking over them. Mussing things up.

Coxey was eying him, too, as though he'd like to throw him out if he dared. Now he was at notions.

Ann snickered. He was laying a spool of thread down among the thimbles and a roll of tape among the ribbons. It was about time for Peggy's dynamite. She had already asked him sweetly, not to. Every girl in the store envied Peggy and her dynamite. When it exploded, people either bought or let things alone. They did it with a grin, and she got away with it.

It looked as though her sweet words had been sufficient, however, and now Ann's eyes were blazing. He was mixing her merchandise up and it was only ten minutes until closing. Would she dare try Peggy's tactics? Now was the time, if ever.

"Please, mister—" He raised his eyes and Ann's words died in her throat. And she'd always considered gray eyes dull and washed-out! She'd never supposed they could do things like this to a girl.

Dropping her glance hastily, Ann was positive that he could see her heart throbbing beneath her black silk dress. Heavens!

He had a real man's hands, too, even if they were dropping a tube of tooth paste into the shaving cream section. She wished he wouldn't. She raised her gaze again and then decided that it didn't matter. She had never seen such eyes before. They seemed to be speaking, saying:

"What an utterly lovely thing you are!" Over and over. Ann believed

his lips were asking for a skin lotion. One that she had never heard of before. She couldn't hear well, for blood was pounding in her ears.

How often she had complained about the narrow space inside the box counters where she had to work all day. She was thankful for their narrowness now. Jamming her toes against one side and half leaning against the other, she was keeping at least halfway erect. Her knees felt queer and something hurt inside where her heart was supposed to be.

"I don't know how to say what I want to. I've never asked a girl without——" He began to stammer and blush. Of all things for a man to do! He wanted a date. Ann was sure of it.

Again she breathed a thankful prayer for the narrow counters and wondered who he could be. If he lived in town, how had she missed him all this time? Those eyes would have been volcanoes even above a pair of overalls. He was stuttering now and about to give up.

"Eight o'clock at the transfer corner." She was gasping in embarrassment herself. And she'd just been in time, too. He had been turning to go. Funny how her voice squeaked. Her throat felt dry. He nodded and walked rapidly away. He stopped near the hardware and looked hesitantly, first toward the offices at the rear of the store and then toward the main doors.

Ann's heart stopped its wild hammering and her blood froze. Suppose he was a shopper from the office that checked the company's chain of stores! He would have to report her, and even a date with one of Coxey's friends wouldn't help. The result of a shopper's report was inevitable. She should have guessed what he was when she saw him at the lingerie.

But he didn't want to report her. Duty was saying he should, and the man in him was arguing the point. Ann wasn't fooled about that. His blushing and stammering hadn't been acting. Perhaps he was the new manager, but that could hardly be. Harvey & Co. made their executives work up from the bottom. He was too young. Surely not over twenty-five.

The big gong rang and Coxey took his station by the main door to let people out and prevent any more from coming in. As she covered her counter for the night, Ann looked at her date once more and her heart began throbbing again. His square chin was thrust forward, and his hands were clenching and unclenching as he hurried toward the street.

That cinched it. He probably was a shopper, but he was human, also. Suddenly she gasped. She had forgotten her date with Coxey's friend, and he'd be sure to do something about her not showing up. Ann had plenty to think about on the way home.

On the bus to Waynedale, all sorts of crazy things ran through her mind. To-night for the first time in her life she would nestle within a pair of strong arms and offer her lips freely. She would bury her head in the hollow of his shoulder and repose to his caresses.

This man might drop out of her life as quickly as he had come into it, and Ann didn't intend that their evening should be wasted. She wondered how she should act to keep him from knowing how brazen she really was.

But would he be like that? A blind girl could have sensed the wild blood surging in his veins, just as it had in hers. But that square chin and those gray eyes. They in-





icated a mighty reservoir of will power, and he might have ideas about himself—and pick-ups. Ann's ears burned as she remembered the rule she had kept so long. Pick-up. It would be her first time, but he would not know that.

She wished her folks didn't live so far from town. She could have made it an early date. Seven o'clock even. Ann chuckled at the thought. Nine was the time she usually specified. It shortened the silly part of an evening, for Daddy Mahoney saw to it that her

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*He raised his eyes suddenly, and Ann's words died in her throat. She had never seen such eyes before. They did queer things to her. Dropping her glance hastily, Ann was positive that he could see her heart throbbing beneath her silk dress.*

friends left at a respectable hour.

As Ann stood before her mirror after dinner, two tears of happy pride crept into her eyes. She remembered again what a pair of gray eyes had unmistakably declared a little earlier. She didn't mean to be vain, but she knew she was beautiful.

She smoothed her wavy, auburn hair with slender fingers and gazed at her red lips which needed no false lines to form a Cupid's bow. She noted her gracefully molded chin and even white teeth. She won-

dered with a happy thrill whether she might not be what an artist would term alluring.

Ann Mahoney was at the corner of Main and Calhoun, where the city car lines converged, fifteen minutes before the appointed time. A snicker escaped her as she glanced up at the Transfer Building clock. Her habit was to be from a half to a full hour late.

Would he come?—she wondered. She hoped so, and that he would be on time. Coxey and his friend would be showing up at nine, and they might be early.

She wondered what his name was, and whether he would be a good dancer. Her breath caught. Suppose her father found out? Her mother would understand, but he would be furious.

Ann gasped in happy surprise. He must have been as anxious as she. There he was, trying to appear unconcerned as he looked into a drug-store window. But the impatient glances he stole at the big clock across the street gave him away. She gave him another hasty appraisal.

How straight his shoulders were, and how well he carried himself. And how immaculately groomed he was—as though he had just stepped from a men's fashion magazine.

Ah! He'd seen her and was coming. His teeth flashed white as they set off his breath-taking smile. Ann hoped he'd be just a little more than friendly right away. Beginning with a movie, maybe. She had picked a sentimental title.

But nothing happened in the movie. Their hands had brushed accidentally and the contact had been like an electric shock, but neither of them had permitted the touch to linger. She mustn't let him

know how she felt yet. She was a poor actress and it wouldn't be safe for their eyes to meet for a while. A vague premonition persisted in worrying her.

The pride and character that shone in his face awed her. It was the sort of face she could picture across a breakfast table for life. It indicated high ideals. A man with a code regarding how a girl should be treated, even on a date like this.

Ann had always expected it to be like this. When she fell, there wouldn't be any two ways about it. She wished she had spent some time planning, instead of just daydreaming. Now her big moment was upon her, and she hadn't the least idea what she should do.

And something would have to be done. If he was a shopper he would be leaving to-morrow, maybe never to return. Of course, they could write, but that would be taking a terrible chance. Better to make sure of him now, while he was here. What should she do first?

She wouldn't dare start by being too bold. He would leave her flat, she was positive. He was asking where she wanted to go next. She thought quickly and chose the Spinning Wheel. It was a quiet place, neither ritzy nor expensive. Homer's band only consisted of four pieces, but they had something in the way of rhythm. Then there were the soft, hidden lights. Sweet-hearts liked them.

But neither the soft lights nor dreamy music seemed to register with him. He held her casually, almost stiffly, when they danced, and didn't so much as take her hands across the table.

Ann couldn't understand it. Emotion was burning in his eyes, but he wouldn't give in. She was getting frightened. Her watch told



her that it was almost time for the Spinning Wheel to close. She wondered how much money he had to spend. They could catch a bus at three, but a taxi might do the trick where everything else failed. She could fib a little and say the busses stopped at midnight.

The taxi got Ann a reassuring pat on the shoulder and thanks for a lovely evening. She was ready to scream as they climbed in. He was planning to say "good-by" on the front porch. So he thought. Ann had a sudden inspiration. If she got him into the house, there would still be a chance. But how? Suppose she couldn't get in and there would be a transom to be climbed through. Suppose——

Opening her purse, she felt stealthily inside for her key. As her fingers located it she sighed softly, and by way of excuse in case he had noticed, also extracted a cigarette and held it to her lips. Deftly then, and while he got his lighter, she dropped the key down the front of her dress.

Ann hoped it would catch on something. It would be awful if it didn't. As he held the flame before her their eyes met again, and this time their glances locked. Her heart wrenched, and she was ready to choke with happiness.

He was breaking down at last. The lighter burned long after it was needed, and he returned her steadfast gaze longingly. Then suddenly he snapped it out and threw his arms around her. Irresistibly his lips drew nearer and nearer as though he knew he shouldn't do this, but couldn't help himself. Ann could feel his hot breath on her face, and her lips were trembling in the ecstasy of anticipation. Then, with a squeal of brakes, suddenly applied, the cab came to a grinding halt.

"Here we are," the driver announced. The house beside them became a huge, dancing blur as Ann looked. A sob of disappointment shook her. She was home.

Anger and desperation seethed in her dark, violet eyes. The moonlight which had been flooding in through the cab windows, her bated breath as she had waited in breathless anticipation, had all been for nothing.

She leaped from the car and ran swiftly across the lawn, fighting to regain her composure before he should rejoin her. Things were turning out just as she had feared. He was telling the driver to wait.

At her side a moment later he was bidding her good night. Properly, Ann should have been thanking him for a lovely evening. Instead, she was searching frantically inside her purse. In a jam she was turning out a pretty fair actress, after all.

"Oh!" she gasped.

"Lose your key? Here." He flashed his lighter again. Ann turned her purse upside down on the steps but it was no use. Everything in the world except a key. Rising suddenly he started for the door.

"I'll ring the bell."

"Please! Don't!" Ann was really frantic now. Daddy Mahoney did things to men who dared bring his daughter home at this hour.

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know, but——" She stared at the transom. "It isn't locked. You could boost me up." The windows weren't locked, either, and Ann knew it, but they wouldn't do. A transom would be a man's job. She smothered a cry of relief. He was pulling himself upward now, pushing the wood frame in gently so as not to make any noise.

As his head and shoulders disappeared Ann turned quickly to-

ward the cab driver and waved him to drive off. Instead, he came running across the lawn toward her. He wanted his fare, of course. By the time he reached the porch Ann had a five-dollar bill in her hand and a finger across her lips warning him to silence.

"Bring my change to Harvey's store in the morning," she whispered. "Now scam! Quick!" With a knowing grin the driver was off for his cab again and just in time. The door stood open and framed in it was the climber-in-of-transoms, also grinning. The moon was shining on his face and Ann believed she detected a peculiar glint in his eyes. If her ears did not deceive her, she had also heard a sly chuckle.

He had stepped back into the gloom again now, and she couldn't be sure about anything. At any rate, he was in the house. Ann followed and hastily snapped on a light. Could she have been mistaken about the grin?—she wondered. From the look of it, his solemn face might never have smiled in its history.

"Guess I'll have to get another cab," he was saying. "Will you call it?" His voice was husky and trembled a little, but for all that his words were unmistakable. Ann felt her face burn. Pausing on her way to the phone, she reached to the bottom of the large front window and threw it upward. This time the chuckle was an outright laugh, but Ann didn't hear it. Gongs were banging in her ears.

Neither had she noticed her clumsy faux pas. Not even the cold, flat piece of metal sliding down her dress to strike her slipper with a tiny thud, had caught her notice.

An old-fashioned Irish heartache with all its stinging agony had enveloped her. One of her mother's oft-repeated warnings was flashing crazily through her mind.

"Remember the Irish in ye, colleen. We love better and grieve better than the common run, and never forget it."

Ann's faltering finger was dialing a dancing "A," when his strong hand closed firmly over hers. With his other he was removing the receiver from her quaking grasp and returning it to its hook.

Almost roughly he turned her about to face him. Hungrily he swept

her into his arms with an embrace that crushed the very breath from her lungs.

"I can't take it, darling. I've got to have you. I——" Whatever more he would have said died in his throat. His lips burned hers in a passionate caress. A groan welled within him—a groan of happiness and exultation.

Stooping low suddenly he swooped her up into his arms and carried her across the room to the one big armchair. There he sat down with her still in his arms. Again he looked down into her now tear-stained face. Then he pressed his cheek to hers.

"I love you, little what-ever-your-name-is," he whispered. "I did the







*He swept her into his arms and pressed his cheek to hers. "I love you, little whatever-your-name-is," he whispered. "I did the minute I saw you this afternoon, but it was so staggering I couldn't believe it."*

minute I saw you this afternoon, but it was so staggering I couldn't believe it. I didn't dare let myself. It seemed so impossible."

"Didn't you know? Couldn't you see how I felt?" Ann gasped as he

crushed her to him again, and she could hear the beating of his heart.

"Yes, sweetheart. I thought I did, and that was harder than ever to believe. You're so beautiful, I—"

Ann found his lips again and stopped his words. She didn't want him to talk. She wanted him to love her. To keep on loving her all the rest of her life.

Hours later it seemed, he finally released her. He was kneeling beside the chair and laughing happily.

"A new job in a new town and a wife picked out before I even know one street from another. I thought I was the luckiest man in the world when I got my promotion last week, but I didn't know how lucky, darling."

Ann stared at him in bewilderment. She must have been napping. Thoughts were racing madly through her mind but nothing would come straight, and everything from the phone on seemed hazy. New job, new town, a wife, luck—Ann shook her head and tried to get things pieced together.

He pulled down her head to plant another burning kiss on her hungry lips. Once more his arms were crushing her to him. Perhaps she'd fainted. She wouldn't be surprised if she fainted now from sheer happiness.

He was whispering that he'd have to hurry. Footsteps were shuffling about overhead and the sun was up. He would call a cab from a filling station so her folks wouldn't hear. Ann made a feeble effort to rise but her knees threatened to buckle under her, and she dropped back with a surprised, happy smile.

He kissed her fervently again and gazed longingly at her.

"Love is a powerful sickness, darling," he whispered. "I hope we never get over it. Now don't forget, the license bureau at the courthouse by eleven. We'll hire a new girl to take your place." Then he was gone.

The license bureau? Courthouse?

Hire a new girl? Slowly the light of understanding dawned. He was— They were— Footsteps sounded on the stairs. Ann glanced down at herself in terror. Her mother mustn't see that she had been up all this time. Her strength came back with a surge, and thankful that her room was on the ground floor, she fled into it.

Three quarters of an hour later Ann Mahoney entered the breakfast room and sat down at her usual place. Her mother was just coming in from the kitchen with the coffee.

Glancing down beside her plate, the girl uttered a low cry of surprise. An envelope, with the return address of Harvey & Co.'s New York office in the upper left-hand corner. It had been mailed to some one in Cleveland. Ann was just glancing at the name when her mother spoke.

"I found it in the living room, child," she explained. "Your friend of last night, no doubt. I thought they had a rule about employees going out together."

"Where's father?" Ann was evasive. She wanted to think. She had to, to get things straight.

"Your father? Putting the night lock back on the front door. If you remember, it's been to the shop two days for fixing. Came back last night, but he was too tired. By the way, he found your key stuck in the phone receiver, and the bay window open."

Ann gasped. She seemed to recollect dimly the key sliding down the front of her dress. She had made him climb through a transom, and then calmly opened an unlocked window without even so much as looking at the catch. There hadn't been any lock on the door in the first place, and a cab driver had departed, as far as he knew, without his fare.



"And I didn't want him to think I was brazen." Ann gulped and looking up, stared foolishly at her mother.

"By the way—what about employees keeping company?"

"Oh, yes, mother." Ann recovered herself quickly. "But it doesn't matter. I'm—I'm getting married at eleven o'clock."

Now it was Mrs. Mahoney's turn to stare. Almost, the large tray of wheat cakes she bore, crashed to the floor.

Mrs. Mahoney had always sworn that neither she nor Pat was to have a word to say when this time came. Their daughter was to make her choice without the slightest interference. Pat had met and married her all in the same day, with never a regret to show for it. Still, it was rather a bombshell of surprise and she couldn't help being a bit curious.

"And who is he? You wouldn't mind telling me, colleen?"

"Of course not, mother." Ann's face suddenly began to scorch. Who? What a predicament! Then she remembered the envelope. Sliding it from under her plate she read:

"Michael Hogan, mother. He just came in to take charge of the store. Things happened sort of quick, but I guess we—" The smile on her mother's face made further words seem foolish.

"I understand, colleen." Mrs. Mahoney was way ahead of her daughter already. Michael Hogan. A real mickey. Mrs. Mahoney wanted to shout "Glory be!" and fled to the kitchen to do just that.

Ann jabbed idly at a wheat cake and wondered who would get her job in toilet goods. Then with a happy sob she bowed her head, uttering a sigh of thanks for the Irish in her.

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#### ROSES

ROSES in the sea,  
Flung by your hand,  
From this high cliff to-night,  
Where we two stand.

Roses in the sea,  
That float and go,  
Make us think of love  
For well we know.

We will always have  
A memory,  
Though we're far apart,  
Of this white sea.

Where the moonlight lies  
Against the dark,  
While within your eyes  
Love lights a spark.

Roses in the sea  
Floating on the tide!  
Dear, where'er I roam  
I'll come back to your side.

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.



# Hard To Please

By Marietta Earle

**T**HE house looked bleak and forbidding. All the shades were drawn and dust lay thick on the floor and railing of the porch.

Gerry Baker fitted a key into the carved front door and swung it open gingerly. She dreaded entering. Yet there was nothing else for her to do. Necessity was back of her—pushing, driving, shoving her along.

She went in and stood forlornly in the wide hallway. She had forgotten it was so large. She felt lost and lonely. And she had never expected to feel lost and lonely in this house.

She remembered dimly when her father had built it for her mother. They had moved in, the three of them, when Gerry was just ready for kindergarten. And they had lived there with an army of servants until Gerry's mother died. Then Gerry had been sent off to boarding school and her father had traveled endlessly in an effort to forget his grief.

For several years now the place had been closed. Gerry's father had joined her mother several months ago and the lovely old house with all its furnishings had passed into Gerry's bewildered hands.



It was pretty crazy, she thought, as she crossed the hall and entered the long, carpeted living room. To own all this and yet be absolutely, hopelessly broke. If dad hadn't been so broken up over mother's death, he might have seen the financial storm approaching. As it was, even what he had left her would soon go into other hands. Back taxes and mortgage interest had piled up into enormous sums which Gerry couldn't possibly hope to pay, unless people were buying places like this, which they weren't.

She forced herself to go through all the darkened rooms with their familiar furniture. It was something like going to your own funeral, she reflected. You saw yourself, a happy, carefree girl romping through your childhood and into your early teens. And you felt that this sedate young woman you had grown into was a stranger in the house mourning the death of the other Gerry Baker. You felt so old and worried that you couldn't possibly have any connection with her.

Gerry ended her inspection in the kitchen. It was a room she had known little about in the old days. A mysterious place where an expert but short-tempered cook had ruled with a firm hand that would stand for no children underfoot.

She snapped up the window shades and seated herself on a white stool. There was a butler's pantry with cupboards to the ceiling and a special sink for washing dishes. A huge refrigerator stood in a special nook, and a combination range for coal and gas boasted silently of banquets cooked on its black top.

Beyond the stove, Gerry could see the cozy servants' dining room. She

got up and went in to examine it carefully, measuring the floor space with a folding yardstick.

"I can do it," she said aloud, finally. "The cot in the storeroom will fit in here nicely, and I can use the kitchen and this room for my living quarters. The rest of the house can be closed. The coal in the stove should give me enough heat. I can cook on it so I won't need the gas for a while. Well, it looks as though I'm settled, at least until I find a job."

She leaned against the wall then and began to laugh. It wasn't a mirthful laugh. But she had to have some outlet for her pent-up emotions. And she had used up all her tears the night before when she said "good-by" to Willis.

She had hung her last hopes on Willis Marvin. They had been engaged to be married for several years—ever since the senior prom at Stockton. He was a nice boy and knew how to give a girl the best kind of time. But he was completely under his mother's thumb. And his mother was impossible.

How delighted she had been at the prospect of his marrying Gerry Baker, the only daughter of the prominent investment man! But what a different song she had sung at the thought of a penniless daughter-in-law! Even though Willis Marvin would be rich in his own right, he must marry money. And Willis dared not cross her.

"She's sending me abroad—to study," he told Gerry ruefully. "She says we're young and can wait, but my education can't. It's rot, of course, but I can't touch my own money till I'm thirty. And dad and I both toe the line for mother, you know," he admitted honestly.



Gerry had tried to give him back his ring. But he wouldn't take it.

"I'll be back in a year," he said. "And I'll still be crazy about you. In the meantime, you'll have your job and we'll write often."

Her job! She stopped laughing suddenly and gazed fixedly out of the window at a dry vine that rustled in the wind. She had been afraid to tell him that the job she had counted on had failed to materialize. She didn't want his pity. She wouldn't let him know for anything in the world that the expensive purse she carried was almost as empty as her own heart at the moment. And that she didn't even have money enough to rent a decent room.

Well, Willis was gone now and with him, for a while at least, the last feeling of the old security. She was entirely on her own. She would move into the kitchen and servants' dining room here, and every day she would go job-hunting. Surely there must be something for a girl who was willing to do anything!

She didn't tell even the old friend who had handled her father's property what she was going to do. She simply said she was putting a caretaker in charge of the place and that she was going out of town for a while. That would explain the signs of occupation to any curious neighbors and her complete disappearance to her friends. And she could retain her pride and look for work without trying to use her father's name for an open-sesame.

It was lonely living by herself with the main part of the house closed. And sometimes the creaking silence at night was almost too much for her, and she was tempted to give up and throw herself on the charity of her friends. But mostly she was too tired at night to do anything

but sleep. The daily hunt for work was hard, and so was the unaccustomed tending of a coal stove and the learning to cook.

But the cooking Gerry really liked. And there was something cozy about the coals blinking cheerfully in the big stove. If only she hadn't laid her plans along such hermitlike lines!

She was experimenting with a cake one afternoon when the back doorbell rang. It was the first interruption to her solitary occupation. She hoped that it wasn't any one who would recognize her. Thank goodness, most of the neighbors were new and not interested in caretakers!

A young man stood on the doorstep. He smiled at her. "Any odd jobs to be done?" he asked. "Ashes or rubbish to be hauled?"

Gerry brushed back a loose strand of dark hair with the back of her hand. "No," she said. "I'm sorry."

But the young man was not to be dismissed so easily. "Surely," he persisted. "A big place like this—unless you have a regular man. Will you ask the lady of the house, please?"

"There isn't any 'lady of the house,'" Gerry said shortly. She hated the expression.

"No?" said the young man doubtfully.

"No," repeated Gerry, starting to close the door. There was something about him that irritated her.

"Wait a minute," he said. "I didn't mean to doubt your word. I was just surprised, that's all. Say—you look grand when you're mad."

"I'm not mad," Gerry assured him. It seemed too rude to shut the door smack in his face.

"Well, you look grand, anyway," he insisted. "Even with a smudge of flour on your cheek. I'll bet





*Gerry and Willis had been engaged ever since the senior prom at college. She remembered that night vividly—the thrill of his nearness while they danced, the tender look in his eyes, the whispered words of love.*

you're making a cake." He sniffed the air.

Gerry refused to smile. "It's a safe bet." She shut the door.

From behind the curtains at the window she watched him go down the steps and back to his car which stood in the alley. And suddenly

she wished she had been a little kinder. It came over her, too, why she was irritated with him. She liked him. And she didn't want to like him because he thought she was the maid in her own home. She wanted to be superior and haughty. Yet, why blame him for a natural mistake? What else was there for him to think?

She flung open the door impulsively and ran down the steps. "Wait a moment," she called.

The young man was sitting in his car but making no move to start it.

"Come back and have some cake," she invited.

He grinned and climbed out. "Thanks," he said. "I'm sorry if I sounded fresh."

He followed her into the kitchen.

"There's coffee, too, if you'd like some," she offered.

"Would I like some? Say, you don't know how much!"

She poured the steaming brown liquid into a cup and set a pitcher of cream and a bowl of sugar in front of him on the gay blue kitchen cloth.

She had almost forgotten how good companionship of any kind can be.

"I'm the only 'lady of the house,'" she volunteered. "But I'm also cook and maid and everything."

He looked at her incredulously. "You don't mean to tell me you live here all alone—in this big house?"

She nodded.

"I wouldn't tell that to every one," he warned solemnly. "It isn't exactly a—safe idea."

"I don't tell every one," she assured him. She was surprised at herself for telling him, a stranger whom she knew absolutely nothing about. But his eyes were so blue and candid. There was something about him that inspired trust.

"Your car," she hazarded, wanting

to know more about him. "It isn't a regular truck. It isn't a truck at all. And where are your overalls?"

"My car," he said, starting on a second cup of coffee, "is worth very little to any one but me. I used to be an automobile salesman back in Westmore, my home town. Then I thought I'd try the city. But you know how salesmen were hit. I couldn't find a job anywhere. So I took the back seat out of my car and behold—a truck! I didn't own any overalls or regular work clothes, so I put on my oldest suit and hung my necktie away and behold—a truck driver! The car and I must eat!"

She was relieved somehow. "And where do you two live?" she asked.

He tossed back a lock of brown hair from a bronzed forehead. "Why, nowhere at present," he said slowly. "I think we'll push up out of the way in the alley to-night. You see, the car's tummy is empty."

Gerry looked alarmed.

He flung out a hand and smiled reassuringly. "Oh, we've slept out before," he said. "We make out very well. In the morning we'll find an odd job and we'll both eat and move on."

Gerry did some fast thinking. She wanted to help this young man, and also herself. It would be nice to have some one to talk to occasionally, the assurance of protection at night.

"The chauffeur's quarters over the garage are empty," she said. "If you want to live there, you could help me enough, I'm sure, to more than pay the rent."

He looked at her quizzically. Her face was flushed with eagerness and the yellow of her fluffy house dress made a contrasting sunny foil for the blue-black of her hair.

He rose slowly and Gerry noticed



that, although he was only of average height, he gave the impression of great strength. His shoulders were almost square beneath his coat.

"I think I'll take you up on that offer," he said. "My name is Rud Blair. If it's all right with you, I'll go out and push old *Prosperity* into her new home right now."

Gerry reached for her coat. "I'll steer for you," she offered, and went out into the November twilight with him.

The heating of the chauffeur's quarters bothered Gerry for the next few days. Her funds were almost gone, and the coal for the kitchen range disappearing fast. Then she thought of selling some of the furniture. There were fourteen rooms of it, much of which carried no special memories. If she married Willis she would be able to buy more. And if she didn't marry him, she wouldn't need such quantities of old stuff, anyway. So she argued with herself, and rode roughshod over all Rud Blair's objections.

"You expected your employer to heat your rooms, didn't you?" she protested. After all, she was really hiring him as a sort of watchman and odd-job man, and paying him in lodging. The coal problem was her lookout.

Rud gave up and laughed and stayed on, picking up what hauling jobs he could with his car.

At first they ate separately, each in informal solitude. But Gerry soon broke down the barrier of dignity between them. Here was some one from a world outside her old life, who could laugh with her, sympathize with her, share his meals with her—and later go his separate way. He would keep her from going mad with worry over the future.

She invited him into the warm

pleasant kitchen at meal time, never doubting the propriety of the arrangement. No one in all her protected life had ever questioned her conduct.

They made it a partnership agreement. When he had money, he bought the food. When he didn't, she broke into the meager funds which the sale of furniture brought. Always he helped with the dishes, and often showed her a trick or two about cooking. They got along famously.

Winter rushed in on the city. Rud carried coal for the range and emptied ashes. Breakfast and dinner they ate by candlelight. Gerry took delight in spreading the kitchen table with her mother's fine monogrammed linen and solid silver.

She told Rud all about Willis. It was a relief to unburden herself to some one. She was really fond of Willis. She wanted so much to believe that he would come back to her unchanged. His letters, which were forwarded to general delivery along with her other mail, were short and impersonal. But that didn't mean a thing. Willis was always tongue-tied on paper.

"When Willis comes back," she told Rud one night at dinner, "and we're married, we'll probably live here. He'll buy the house back for me even if they take it away before he gets home. We'll have a lot of servants, and there'll be so much for you to do—half a dozen cars to take care of for us."

Rud grinned, but there was a funny quizzical look in his eyes. "You think a great deal of money and what it buys, don't you?" he asked.

She nodded. "Doesn't every one?"

He shook his head. "No," he said shortly. Then almost curtly: "But

don't count on me after your Willis gets back. I'll be back in Westmore then, probably, and going home every night to the girl I left behind."

Gerry bent her head and the candlelight shone on her dark hair. "The girl you left behind?" she said in a low voice.

young man, Rud Blair, around, liking her more than any one else. She didn't want another girl in his heart all the time he was talking and laughing with her.

Spring came early and Gerry moved into the rest of the house.



*Willis admitted frankly that his mother was sending him abroad to prevent their marriage. "But I'll be back in a year," he said. "And I'll still be crazy about you. We'll be married then."*

Rud laughed, but his voice was gruff. "Sure," he answered. "You don't think I'm so terrible that no girl would fall for me, do you?"

Gerry said nothing. She knew she was being a dog in the manger. She wanted to marry Willis and go back to the security which money brought. But she also wanted this

There was no longer the necessity for heat. She slept luxuriously in her own bed once more, and reveled in bathing again in her own gleaming tub and glassed-in shower.

But the rooms from which she had sold the furniture were still closed, the shades still drawn. And she continued to use the back door



so that the neighbors would remain uninterested.

But she and Rud ate in the big paneled dining room with sometimes a fire crackling in the huge fireplace. They read together in the library or played the piano and sang in the music room. The evenings were long and light, and candles were no longer necessary until bedtime.

Gerry had almost stopped looking for a job. A delightful lethargy had come over her. She was very happy. There was enough money coming in whenever she decided to call the secondhand furniture man. In the beginning he had doubted her right to sell, but she had shown him a letter, which she wrote herself, authorizing the sale of anything in the house. So now he came eagerly whenever she sent for him.

She had almost forgotten how nice it was to live so comfortably, to dance to old phonograph records whenever the mood seized her and Rud happened to be present, to spend hours over the make-up table—and to be loving life again.

Willis would be coming home in a few months now, she told herself hopefully. She must look her best for him. He was her whole future, the assurance that the expensive things she loved would be hers always. She would marry him in spite of his unpleasant mother. She and Willis and his father, who was her friend, would wear Mrs. Marvin down. Perhaps it was foolish to let material things count so much. But she had always been accustomed to nice things until the last few hard months.

She was surprised at the way her cares had fallen off her shoulders with the coming of Rud. She wished he wouldn't worry so. He was finding more work to do daily

with the help of his old car, yet he was often silent and moody, just when she wanted him to be gay.

"My goodness, Rud," she urged once. "Let's play. Let's have fun together now. After Willis gets back and I'm Mrs. Marvin, I'll have to be dignified."

Rud looked at her glumly. "That's right," he said. "And I won't be here. No," he repeated, seeing her start to protest, "it's just like I told you. When 'he walks in, I walk out,' as the song says."

"And back to the 'home town gal'?" asked Gerry, trying to sound light-hearted.

"Naturally," said Rud.

They had just sat down to dinner one evening. It was a special occasion. Rud had brought home chicken and mushrooms. Gerry had made an angel cake and was going to send to the neighborhood store for ice cream. They were celebrating because Rud had found a part-time job as driver and handy man for a nice old lady. He was in his most lovable, joyous mood.

"Let's pretend you're Willis," began Gerry, and then hastily, as he frowned: "Oh, well, then just let's pretend that we're any old Mr. and Mrs. with a house full of servants."

Just then the doorbell rang—the front door. Rud grinned. "Let the maid answer it," he suggested.

Gerry waited. "Probably just an agent," she said, picking up her fork.

But the bell continued to ring. Gerry rose. "It might be something important," she said. "I'd better go." And she went down the heavily carpeted hall and threw open the front door.

Then she caught her breath in a gasp, and it flashed through her startled mind that she was glad she had dressed so carefully to-night.

"Hello, Mrs. Marvin," she said,

as she looked into the cold eyes of Willis's mother.

"Geraldine!" exclaimed Mrs. Marvin. "I thought I saw you turn in here this afternoon as I drove by. But I couldn't believe my eyes. I had to come back to make sure. Willis said you had some kind of work out of town. When did you get back?"

Now was the time when Gerry might have lied herself gracefully out of a trying situation. But some perverse instinct made her delight in saying: "I haven't been away at all. I didn't get the job I expected. So I've been right here."

"And you did not let your friends know?" said Mrs. Marvin. "How odd!" Her heavy brows could arch annoyingly.

"No," said Gerry, making no explanation. "I didn't." She knew she should invite the woman in. But there was Rud in the dining room. He might prove complicating. She hesitated. And while she hesitated, Mrs. Marvin walked past her and into the living room.

"My dear," she said in anything but an affectionate tone, as she sat down in the nearest chair. "Don't tell me you live here all alone!"

Before Gerry could answer she looked up to find Rud standing in the doorway. "Pardon me, Miss Baker," he said with a perfect servant's manner. "Shall I serve dinner? And shall I have Delia put on another plate?"

The corners of Gerry's mouth jerked as she tried to swallow a smile.

She turned to Mrs. Marvin.

"I should love to have you stay for dinner," she said, rejoicing in the confused look on Mrs. Marvin's face. The older woman seemed to be trying to gather her scattered wits.

"Why, yes," she accepted. "Yes, I could stay. I could telephone my home——"

Then Gerry thought fast. It would never do to let Mrs. Marvin know that she did not have a simple convenience like a telephone. "Wouldn't it be just as well to have your

chauffeur take the message home and come back for you later?" she suggested. "Rud will tell him."

Before Mrs. Marvin could answer, Rud was saying: "Certainly," and going down the front steps to the waiting limousine. And Gerry was explaining elaborately how she didn't require Rud to change to serve dinner as he and Delia had so many duties to perform.

When they went into the dining room, Gerry found that Rud had carried all the hot food back into the kitchen and reset the table for two. How priceless he was in this masquerade, she thought, as he moved deftly about serving the chicken and mushrooms cooked by an imaginary Delia!

Over the ice cream in crystal sherbet glasses, Mrs. Marvin melted





visibly. "My dear," she condescended, "I had forgotten you were so pretty. No wonder Willis quite lost his head over you."

Gerry smiled and looked up at Rud who was standing expectantly beside her.

"If you please, Miss Baker," he announced. "It's that lawyer on the phone again. He says he hates to bother you, but it's important. It's about that Western deal, he says, and there's a million at least at stake. He has to have your name on some papers right away."

Gerry laid down her napkin. She could hardly keep a straight face. "If Mrs. Marvin will excuse me——" she said. "Tell Mr. Deams I'll be right over. If he weren't so old and lame, I'd make him bring the papers out to me," she explained to the older woman.

Rud nodded. "It's too early for Mrs. Marvin's car to be back," he suggested. "But perhaps while you're changing, I could drive her home. That is, of course, if she doesn't mind riding in the small car. I have the tires off the big one."

Mrs. Marvin rose from the table. "Not at all," she said. "But I do hate to leave you, Geraldine, when I've just found you. You will come to dinner soon—to-morrow?" The mention of the million-dollar deal had thawed her out completely.

"I'm sorry," Gerry hedged, as she said good-by. "I—I'm going out of town for a while. I'll see you when I get back."

When Rud returned, Gerry sat with him while he ate his dinner.

"You were marvelous," she praised. "And was the old duchess impressed! I had no idea you were such a genius. But, Rud, I'll never dare answer the front door again. She'll tell all her friends how dear Geraldine has more money now than

ever before, and some of them are sure to try to see me even if she says I'm going away. On second thought, I don't believe I'll answer the back door much, either. I wouldn't dare attempt another act like we put on to-night."

Rud looked up from his plate. "You won't have to," he assured her. "The old lady's all set to throw her darling son at your head now. Marry him as soon as he gets back and face the music of discovery afterward."

Gerry's face clouded. "You're in an awful hurry to marry me off," she pouted.

Rud pretended to groan. "Gosh, you're hard to please," he commented. "I did my best to-night to clinch what you say you want—Willis and money and a bed of roses. Seems to me you're darned ungrateful." He pushed back his empty sherbet glass.

Gerry reached across and slipped her slim cool hands into his hard, firm ones. "I am," she agreed. "It's just—oh, darn it, I don't know what I want." She got up and began stacking dishes. "I don't know why it is," she said slowly, "that life can't bring you everything."

They tried to slip back into their friendly comradeship after that, but it was as if an invisible barrier had been raised between them.

Gerry wasn't happy any more, although she was sure that Willis would come back to her now. She woke up in the night sometimes thinking of him, wondering how it was going to seem to have him always under the same roof, eating across the table from him, submitting to his kisses. And she would get up and look out toward the garage where Rud slept, and try to tell herself what a fool she was.

A month later Willis came.

He rang the back doorbell, and when no one answered, he walked in. "Hello," he said to Gerry's back in the blue-and-gold apron. "I wonder if you could tell me when Miss Baker is coming home?"

Gerry swung around and dimpled at him. He caught her in his arms. "Gerry!" he cried. "It's good to see you again." And kissed her.

She pulled away from him and instinctively brushed a hand across her mouth.

"Hello," she said. "So you're home."

He laughed. She had forgotten he was so good-looking. "Not what I'd call a cordial welcome," he protested. "But it'll do for a while. Suppose you are surprised to see me home so early. Truth is, mother sent for me. Said she had seen you and you were worth a million and for me to come back. When did you get home!"

It was Gerry's turn to laugh. "I haven't been away, really," she said. And told him about the joke that she and Rud had played on his mother. As she talked she watched his face. His eyes were amused, indulgent. She had wondered sometimes if he would resent what they had done. But no, he was being an excellent sport.

"You certainly put one over on her," he said when Gerry had finished. "You've got her goofy about you. And she needn't ever know the difference. We can be married right away. She'll be very generous with us as long as we don't cross her. Your mythical million can stay in a mythical bank for a while. There's only one thing I don't like—this fellow, Rud. I don't understand about him. Where did he come from? And what was he doing in the house with you, anyway?" He frowned.

For half an hour Gerry tried to tell him. But the more she went into detail about Rud and their meals together and their friendly evenings and her loneliness, the more she floundered hopelessly. She hadn't realized before how bad it would all sound to any one who didn't know the truth.

"You've got to believe me," she ended desperately. "He's fine and good. And I'd have died of loneliness without him."

She looked aghast at Willis's pale face. It made her think of his mother's smug countenance.

He began to speak. It was as if he were snipping off each word with his white teeth for scissors. "You have been living here with this—this unknown ashman while I've been abroad, thinking you were working hard and waiting for me to come home. I loved you and all the time you were in the arms of this—this——" His face was as crimson as it had been white.

Gerry got up. She could see Rud in the yard outside. He was running the lawn mower. It reassured and comforted her to have him so close. She was beginning to understand a great many things.

She faced Willis. "You never loved me," she said. "If you had, you wouldn't be so quick to think all these evil things of me. You thought you loved Gerry Baker, the rich man's daughter, and later you loved the idea of defying your mother and being noble and marrying the poor girl in spite of her poverty. But you never loved *me*. Because trust goes with love, you know."

Willis looked at her in surprise. "You're being melodramatic, Gerry," he said coldly.

"I'm not," she assured him. "I'm just using my head for the first time."



I've tried to kid myself that I wanted to marry you, that I loved you. But I knew all the time that I didn't. Because I didn't really trust you to come back to me, unless your mother crooked her finger and ordered it. I didn't have any real faith in your feeling for me or mine for you."

Willis looked at her, blinking, as though he hardly followed her train of thought.

She smiled. She had a queer feeling of relief. She wanted to sing and shout.

"Go back to your mother, Willis," she said. "And tell her that I'm broke and you're free." She turned and left him, staring at the ring she had laid on the kitchen table.

Rud looked up and leaned on the lawn mower as she crossed the grass to him.

"Hello," he hailed. "Is it Christmas?"

She laughed. "I've just returned Willis's ring," she announced.

"You aren't running true to form. You should be in tears," he suggested.

"And I received a notice this morning that the bank is obliged to take the house away," she added jubilantly.

"What a nice joke," said Rud.

Neither of them heard Willis come quietly out of the back door and go around to where his long, gleaming car waited.

"Rud," asked Gerry, "that other girl back home—she was make-believe, wasn't she?"

His blue eyes laughed into hers. "How did you know?" he asked.

Gerry's dimples flashed. "Well, you never seemed to get any mail or

write any letters," she said. "And never made any effort to go home to visit. You didn't act restless or unhappy."

"That girl," Rud explained solemnly, "was made up as a sort of anchor to cling to when I found out you were engaged."

Gerry smiled, her mouth a crimson bow of tenderness.

"Rud," she told him, "something has happened to me. I don't care for a lot of money and a big house, and servants and cars any more. I would be satisfied with an old car without any back seat—if the driver came with it."

Rud gave the lawn mower a triumphant shove across the grass and caught her in his arms. "I love you, Gerry," he said. "I love you so. Oh, it's been terrible, living so close to you, loving you, and knowing all the time I'd have to turn you over to Willis in the end!"

"Sweet," said Gerry, her finger tips against his lips.

"We could be married to-morrow," he said eagerly. "I'm starting on a full-time job for that nice old lady next week. She's found out I know something about real estate, and is putting me in the office that manages her affairs. If I make good, I handle everything she owns, and that's plenty."

His breath was warm against her cheek. It made no difference to Gerry now what curious neighbors might think. "To-morrow, Rud," she whispered. "But now, kiss me."

And, as he kissed her again and again, and it seemed her heart would burst with happiness, she sighed: "Oh, Rud, darling, people do have everything after all, don't they? I have everything worth while."





# The Siren Type

By Margaret Dollison

**T**HE trouble with being in love with a man like Johnny Manners, Diane kept thinking, was the way he kissed you—gently, his big hands cradling your face and his warm gray eyes searching yours. His mouth, usually laughing, could harden in an instant to firmness when it was set against yours, but—oh, only for such a brief moment!

You couldn't be quite sure about Johnny. Sometimes Diane was scared, with tight bands of doubt fastening themselves about her heart, wondering how many other

girls he kissed that same way. Even getting ready for a date with him, as she was doing now, she couldn't help asking her reflection in the long bathroom mirror if she could possibly be anything more to Johnny, ever, than a nice way to spend an evening.

"And the answer," she stormed, stepping out of her tailored silk chemise, flinging it with a savage little thrust into the hamper, and stepping into her bath, "the answer is 'no!'"

"You're such a simple child," she decided, studying herself in the



glass—long, softly curled dark bangs and the rest of her short hair pinned up in a topknot of waving ends; blue eyes, nice enough, but with no mysterious shadows or intrigue about them, a satisfactory figure with curves—— But heavens, even the wax figures in shop windows had that!

"And a man," she told herself in her new determination, furiously splashing suds, "any man, will settle down into an easy routine of taking a girl for granted. Unless, of course, the girl does something about it."

Diane became thoughtful. The green sea of suds in the tub made her feel luxurious and lazy, but this was no time for dreaming. If she were ever going to be anything more to Johnny than a date and a dancing partner, if she were ever going to change the answer to her question from "no" to "yes," there was no time to lose.

But what could you do? How could simplicity and naturalness suddenly be changed to allure, so that a man would want to take you in his arms and keep you there forever, so that his kisses would be a lingering ecstasy against your lips?

Well, Diane had an idea. The thing was, men went for the siren type of woman, for the excitement she provoked and the mystery that she wrapped about herself like the folds of a slinky cloak. Diane got out of the tub and rubbed herself briskly with a towel. Johnny was taking her to the club dance to-night. This evening should be as good a time as any, the club as good a place as you could ask, to begin a campaign of allure.

Diane sat long at her dressing table. Outside, in the drive, she heard Johnny's roadster slide to a stop, heard his quick footsteps on the

porch, and then the muffled booming of his big voice asking for her.

Diane kept sitting there before the triple mirrors of her vanity. Diane, the siren, looked back at her—curly long bangs combed back now from a startling white sweep of forehead; hair smoothed down till it lay against her head like a shining dark cap; mascara heavy on silky lashes, and her mouth a startling red slash in an unrouged face. And dangling from her ears were carved copper rings which she had worn once in a gypsy pageant.

"You'll do, I guess," she said finally, and touching perfume on her chin and behind her ears, she stood up.

The gown she wore had been borrowed at the last minute from her aunt. A high neckline of soft black coming up to her chin, then falling away to a low waistline in back, it was a clever dress that did its best for curves and lithe loveliness.

"It's to-night or never," she told herself, catching up her evening bag and wrap, and starting down the stairs.

In the lower hall sat Johnny reading the evening paper. He rose as her light, not-too-hurried tread began to descend the stairs, and stood there, very tall and broad and exciting in his white dinner jacket. A wild, sweet trembling caught at Diane as she came around the curve of the stairs and met Johnny's eyes.

Johnny brushed a hand back along his head and whistled.

Coolly, or so it seemed, Diane came on down the stairs. "Hello, Johnny," she said.

He didn't kiss her. Somehow, even though she hungered for that quick, fleeting kiss of his, Diane felt exultant. Johnny Manners couldn't kiss this red, startling slash of mouth lightly.

"Ready?" he asked casually enough, but his eyes seemed to cling to her mouth as he put out a hand for her wrap and drew it about her white shoulders.

A half hour later, at the club, she knew that she was a success in her new rôle. The first dance, of course, she had with Johnny, and he turned a stony glance to all other males attempting to cut in. He held her with a new fierceness, his hand pressing heavily against her bare, cool back and drawing her close to him. But with the second dance he had to let her go, and in the next few minutes she had danced with half a dozen different men.

The last one to cut in was a new man with a bland smile, an amazing dancer. Being held in his arms was like drifting through a bright dream, and he was whispering down into Diane's ear almost at once, "You're a gorgeous, lovely child—ravishing! Can't we go off somewhere and talk?"

She should have been warned by that slight lift in his voice on the last word, that tight way he smiled at her. But he had told her that she was ravishing to-night, and that was what she wanted to know. She lifted her face with its vivid lips and dark lashes, and the bangles on her ears bumped about gayly when she shook her head.

"We can't run off right away," she said. But it was a promise of sorts and she was, she had to admit to herself, more than a little excited by Vane Powell, this new man who was a cousin of Lauren Carter's. Besides, didn't they tell you that a man needed the stimulus of a little rivalry? And Johnny Manners, as far as Diane was concerned, had had very little competition with other men.

"There's a late moon to-night," Vane Powell murmured to her during another dance later. "Moon ought to be coming up just about now. I've got my car here. Why don't we drive out to the bluffs and get a front-row seat for the show?"

Well, why not? Diane let her lashes brush back to meet his glance but in that moment, beyond his shoulder, she had a glimpse of Johnny Manners dancing with Lauren Carter. It wasn't the first time he had danced with her to-night, nor the second. Actually, it looked as if Johnny might be rushing Lauren. Diane winced. The Carter girl was such a plain little thing.

In Vane Powell's car, with a robe lightly tucked about her feet and the wind flinging a wild, gay tune through the night, she slid low in the seat and enjoyed the ease with which they were flying through the darkness. She liked Vane's easy conversation—so different from Johnny to-night. Johnny had driven her all the way to the club with hardly more than an observation about the weather.

A sigh escaped her lips, and instantly Vane put out a hand, covering one of hers.

"It's not a night to be unhappy," he told her.

"But I'm not unhappy."

She had to say that. She had to pretend that it didn't matter about Johnny. She told herself furiously, clenching the fingers of her free hand till the nails bit down into her palm, that if Johnny had found in Lauren Carter something he thought he wanted, that was all right with her. That would be simply that! She would go blithely on her way, for she wasn't going to have her heart permanently dented by any man. And if the lights out ahead had suddenly blurred with that decision, if



her bright young lips suddenly trembled under the fierce, sharp pain of that thought, nobody knew it there in the darkness.

Vane Powell parked the car high along the bluffs where stars hung close enough, it seemed, to touch.

"I'd get you a handful for your hair," Vane said, "except that you are perfect without them."

But he spoiled it by adding that quick, indulgent chuckle of his like a bright exclamation mark at the end. And all at once Diane knew that he had said this before to other girls.

Tiredly, she drew her wrap up close about her chin and slid down lower in the seat, letting her head rest against the back. A pale-silver mist hung over the world.

"Darling," murmured Vane, bending above her, "you are sad to-night, You must not be. You are far, far too lovely for despair. Here is the whole world to be gay in, and a moon out there to

show us the way."

She stirred in his arms. Probably he had said this, too, to other girls.

"But I—I can't see the moon," she protested frivolously, very softly against his shoulder. All she could see was the dim line of Vane Powell's very large attractive profile there in the darkness.

Oh, if only Johnny would appear miraculously out of nowhere now!

If only he would suddenly come upon her here in another man's arms and let go in a beautiful male rage, asserting claims upon her and dragging her into his own arms in thorough cave-man style. That was according to the formula, the way it happened in the movies and books—the hero dashing up at the crucial moment and rescuing the girl whom, he has suddenly discovered, he loves. But maybe Johnny hadn't seen her leaving with this new man. Maybe he had been too much engaged with Lauren Carter to notice or care.

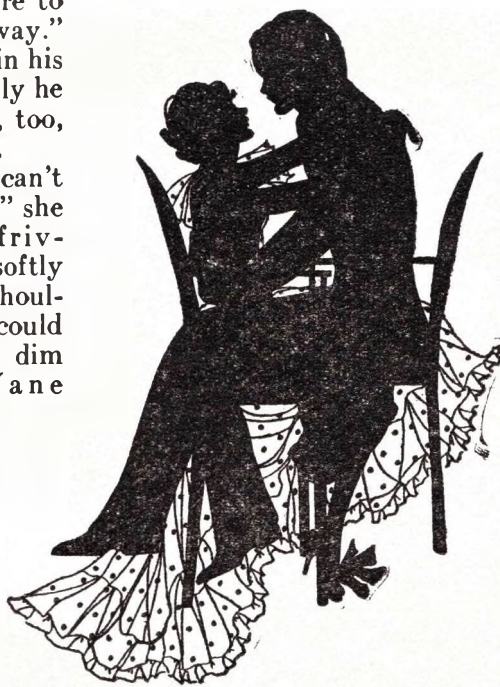
Vaguely, in the distance, she was aware of headlights streaking up along the road. Vane Powell's arms were holding her closely, and a strange excitement possessed her, setting her heart to a mad racing. The approaching headlights came closer, came abreast of the car, then flashed by. Diane's sense of disappointment was sickening. It hadn't been Johnny coming, after

all. Johnny was back there somewhere with a girl named Lauren.

She decided to forget Johnny. Wasn't there the whole wide world in which to be gay, and a romantic moon out there? Diane set her lips against the ache in her throat. She was terribly tired all at once, and closing her eyes, relaxed in the arms holding her.

"Sweet," Vane whispered. And then, suddenly, he was kissing her.

His mouth set



upon hers, his arms relentless, the kiss dissolved itself into a quivering eternity, demanding, mad, passionate. She tried to fight against it and could not; she wanted to cry out but her lips were sealed.

Finally his arms released her, and she was trembling with anger and helplessness. Now she understood, in a way, about Johnny.

Johnny's fineness, his sense of honor, wouldn't let him kiss a girl that way until he meant it. As for herself, at that moment she hated a girl named Diane—a girl who couldn't be satisfied with the honesty of a man like Johnny, a girl who wanted passion, and having found it, had discovered it could be cheap and shoddy.

She felt herself trembling, but her voice was calm enough. "Please," she said, "take me back to the club." She had left her evening bag back there. It had some money in it. She would get a taxi and go home. She wasn't quite up, at the moment, to seeing Lauren Clark taking her place with Johnny.

Vane protested. "Go back already? But, darling, why?"

She didn't tell him the real reason. No use cheapening herself still further by parading her emotions. She simply repeated that she thought it was time they were getting back.

Just as they got inside the terrace door at the club, there was Johnny. He seemed not to notice Vane Powell at all, but came striding across and stood towering above her. "This is our dance," he said quietly.

She let the wrap she wore slide from her shoulders and Johnny dropped it on a chair. Then she was in his arms.

A few minutes ago she wouldn't have believed that such rapture could be hers again—music like a sweet opiate, Johnny's chin fine and

stubborn so close above her dark head, his fingers crushing hers. She closed her eyes for a moment, just for the surging ecstasy of opening them and assuring herself that this was not a dream.

But where were they going? The music was all at once muted by distance, and they were out on the terrace. The moon, high now, was a silver radiance above the world. Johnny tucked Diane's hand under his elbow. Side by side, they went down the terrace steps and along a flagstone path to a pool which lay in the blue shadow of a wide-spreading tree.

Beside the pool was a white bench. Diane sat down. Something, she knew, was about to happen. What it was, she couldn't have said, except that one way or another it would settle the future for her, forever.

Johnny was standing there by the edge of the pool, his shoulders a wide bulk in his white dinner coat. Diane leaned back and flung back her head the better to measure the exciting nearness of him, the gypsy bangles on her ears dancing merrily.

Then Johnny was stuffing a hand down into the pocket of his coat. Like pulling rabbits from a hat, he drew out two or three bulky objects and dropped them on the bench. Diane saw, with something of amazement, that they were a wash cloth, soap and a towel.

"Getting hold of the soap and towel was simple enough," Johnny was saying matter-of-factly. "You can pick 'em up in any washroom. But I had a devil of a time chasing here and there on the trail of a wash cloth."

Some distant part of Diane's mind was thinking, "So that's where he was, off scouting for a wash cloth! That's why he didn't know I was out





*"Diane," he said, and his voice was husky, "I love you!" Cradling her face between his big hands, he pressed his lips down against hers. Diane moved into his arms and clung there rapturously.*

there with Vane Powell. He wasn't with Lauren, after all."

Then abruptly, she came awake. "What on earth," she asked, "did you want with these things?"

For answer Johnny picked up the wash cloth. At the slow stream of water which came trickling down over rocks at the edge of the pool, he

dampened it, came back and soaped it vigorously.

Then he held it out to Diane. "Now," he said, "will you wash some of that stuff off your mouth?"

Diane stared.

She stood up. "What," she gasped, "are you talking about?"

"That barn paint on your lips.

Make-up is O. K., but that's a mask. Take it off."

Fury burned in her. What right had Johnny Manners, or any one, to say such a thing to her?

"Will you, Diane?"

"No!"

Purposefully, he reached out and closed his fingers about her wrist. Suddenly, he had an arm about her shoulders and she could feel his heart thumping madly. His free hand, still clutching the wash cloth, was daubing at her mouth.

She struggled to free herself, to get away from the wild throbbing of that heart so close above hers. It was useless. But in a moment he had released her.

"Now," he ordered, "take off the Christmas tree trimmings."

She knew he meant her earrings. And she knew, too, that if she didn't take them off, he would.

With unsteady fingers she unfastened them, and turning away, flung them into the black water of the pool.

"Now," she sobbed, facing him again for a savage moment, "is there anything else you want?"

"Yes."

He took a step nearer so that she had no escape.

"Diane," he said, and his voice was

husky, "I love you! How much I've loved you all along, I didn't know until to-night—until I saw you suddenly a stranger. That scared me, Diane. I was afraid the real you was gone, and I couldn't let you go. I was desperate. I had to do something."

Still she fought away from him. She had to be sure this time. "You have a very queer way"—she spoke in a small, frightened voice—"of showing a girl that you love her."

"But there's another way, Diane." And then he kissed her. Cradling her face between his big hands, he pressed his lips down against hers, and all at once the doubt was gone out of her. She moved into his arms and clung there rapturously, sure at last of the answer to all her questioning. With Johnny's wide, white-coated shoulder a cushion for her dark head, his arms hard about her, she sighed happily.

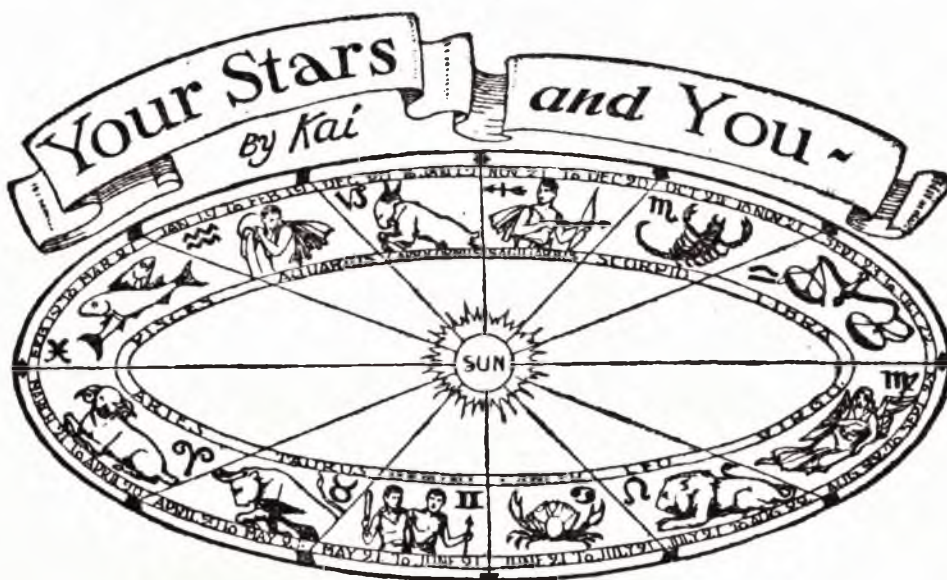
"Johnny," she whispered after a while, "I'm glad you didn't fall for the siren."

He brushed her lashes with his lips. "I did," he told her tenderly. "You're my siren, aren't you, sweet?"

She cuddled up against him wordlessly, her radiant answer reflected in a pair of star-studded eyes.







### YOUR WEEK

You will have to be alert during the week with respect to money matters. Mark time in matters of occupation and attend strictly to business. It is not a good week for matrimonial matters, so postpone decisions in this regard if it is possible to do so. Avoid unnecessary traveling and unnecessary dealings with lawyers. Unless watchful, you will spend too much money in matters that may involve traveling and amusements. Some monetary or property benefits may occur as a result of cooperation with others who are older than yourself, and it is possible that you may be assisted by such persons to make changes in your environment that will prove of benefit to you. It will be a rather unusual week for you in love matters, and your emotions will be stirred from several angles. Some one older than yourself will take an interest in you; but while the interest in many respects will be beneficial, yet it will be supervisory to such an extent as to prove irksome. Romance for a few hours may make its appearance. During the week you may meet some one of outstanding character who will have considerable bearing on your future life, and you may fall in love with him; or, failing in this, he may assist you in furthering your love interests in another direction. Mentally you will be above par; if you avoid doing things that will cause you worry, you should have a very pleasant week in social affairs and intellectual pursuits. Part of the week your thoughts are apt to be very romantic, but they will give way to sober thinking.

### DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time

Saturday,  
April  
25th

h

The morning hours will be rather uneventful, but about noon you may get a spending streak on if you are not careful; watch your finances closely. Between 4:15 p. m. and 5:30 p. m., something unexpected or unusual may occur that will affect your finances and occupational matters; matrimonial matters may also be affected. Be on the alert to turn things to benefit to yourself, as otherwise they may adversely affect you. Avoid unconventional conduct at this time. Opportunity for a hasty marriage may come to you and the influences for such a marriage will continue until about 6:45 p. m. Be sure you know your mind beforehand, if possible, so that you will not act wholly on impulse without considering the after effects. It may be that this will prove beneficial, as several influences are operating at this time, some of which are good and some of which are doubtful. From 8:00 p. m. to 9:30 p. m., watch your speech carefully and avoid signing papers that may obligate you financially.

Sunday,  
April  
26th



The early-morning hours are good for planning pleasure trips and also for planning changes in environment; but do not try to put them into effect at this time, as it will require time to mature your plans. You should mark time in love matters during the morning. From 9:00 a. m. to 10:00 a. m.; some benefits may come to you in a financial way; but they will not be as at first may seem, as there is liable to be some expense attached. Benefits in employment matters and also more harmonious home life conditions will occur between 9:30 a. m. and 10:30 a. m. The afternoon will be good for financial matters and also for making environmental adjustments. You may receive monetary benefits that will affect your home life. From 7:00 p. m. to 8:30 p. m., mark time in affairs of the heart. From 8:30 p. m. to 9:30 p. m., benefits that will affect your home life may come to you as a result of mental activity on your part.

Monday,  
April  
27th



The early-morning hours will find you mentally alert, and it will be a good time for you to bring more harmony into your home life and also to plan improved ways of doing your work. You can make some progress in employment matters at this time, but from noon on, mark time in matters of employment. From 1:00 p. m. to 2:00 p. m., you may be romantically inclined but will be very impractical about it. From 5:30 p. m. to 6:30 p. m., be careful in your household expenditures or you may incur obligations that later will be hard to meet. From 8:15 p. m. to 9:30 p. m., some benefit may come to you in a financial way that will enable you to improve your environment; but avoid any changes at this time, and in such matters, mark time from 10:00 p. m. to 11:00 p. m.

Tuesday,  
April  
28th



Also, be careful in your domestic relations.

The morning hours are very unfavorable in money matters, home life, occupation, marriage, and business matters generally, so mark time until 1:00 p. m., at which time a change for the better will take place. During the afternoon, you should make progress in marriage affairs and in your love interests. Also, working conditions will be more pleasant. Some happening between 3:30 p. m. and 4:30 p. m., may set you to romancing. Employment benefits may come to you during the afternoon. Avoid changes during the evening that will cost you money. Between 8:30 p. m. and 10:00 p. m., you may meet with some unexpected expense connected with your home life or the family circle.

Wednesday,  
April  
29th



The influences are adverse in matters of love, marriage, and finances until about 8:45 a. m., at which time you will come under more favorable influences that will affect your home life and domestic relations, and also they will benefit you in your heart interests. From 8:45 a. m. until evening, you will be under very good influences with respect to love, home life, travel, and matrimonial matters. From 9:30 p. m. until midnight, however, you should keep a close watch on your speech and be careful what you write or sign, particularly if it deals with money, or it may later cost you money.

Thursday,  
April  
30th



The early-morning hours are good to make plans that will advance your love interests, and you will mix considerable romance with them. Also, it is a good time for planning pleasure trips and business matters. You should mark time in matters of environment from 9:00 a. m. to



Friday,  
May  
1st

♀

10:30 a. m. Unexpected benefits may come to you in money matters and employment between noon and 2:00 p. m. Mark time in love and courtship from 8:00 p. m. to 9:30 p. m., from which time until midnight will be a good period for advancing your marriage interests.

The morning hours are favorable for romance and employment; and you may meet with romance in the course of your employment. From 8:45 a. m. to 10:00 a. m., you will be mentally alert in matters pertaining to business and travel, and you should plan pleasure trips at this time if intending to take them later. Better environmental conditions should be evident between noon and 2:00 p. m. Mark time in such matters, however, between 3:30 p. m. and 5:00 p. m. In the evening between 6:30 p. m. and 7:45 p. m., be careful in money matters; do nothing which may adversely affect your employment. You will be mentally alert to make beneficial changes in environment between 8:45 p. m. and 10:30 p. m., during which time you may have opportunity to increase your income. Also, it is a good time for correspondence which has been long deferred.



**IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN**  
**March 21st and April 20th**  
(Aries ♈)

—Aries people born between March 21st and 28th, will be mentally keen during the week and able to advance their interests in a number of respects. Some unexpected financial benefits may occur and also you will have opportunity to advance your interests in occupational matters and marriage. You will be able to adjust matters of environment more to your liking. The best day for you this week is Monday, during which time you can make very good progress in affairs of the heart. Mark time on Saturday, particularly with respect to matters involving your home life, domestic relations, and matrimonial matters. If

born between March 29th and April 5th, progress can be made by you in love, courtship, and marriage affairs. It is also a good week for occupational matters. Be alert, however, in your employment and attend strictly to your duties. The best day for you this week is Tuesday, on which day you should make good progress in affairs of the heart and marriage matters. Mark time on Sunday. If born between April 6th and 12th, you will find it an excellent week for love and courtship, and should make the most of your opportunities to advance your interests in heart affairs. Opportunity to make money will present itself. The best day for you this week is Wednesday, on which day you should advance your love and marriage interests. Mark time on Sunday. If born between April 13th and 20th, you will be able to make progress in affairs of the heart. You will be alert mentally in financial matters. You should mark time in matters affecting your home life. Considerable benefits may come to you in a business way, but they will not be as great as at first may seem. However, the net results should be satisfactory to you. The best day for you this week is Wednesday, on which day you should advance your love, marriage, and business interests. Mark time on Monday, and on this day be extremely careful in your conduct in your home life and family circle.

**April 20th and May 21st**  
(Taurus ♉)

—Taurus born between April 20th and 28th, will have unexpected opportunity to make changes that will affect finances and marriage. These changes, however, may not be for the better, so do not act on impulse but postpone your decision to a later date and think it over. Mentally you will be very efficient. Your environment will become more congenial and less restrictive of your personal liberties. The best day for you this week is Thursday, during which time you can advance your interests in employment matters and may receive unexpected financial benefits. Mark time on Monday, particularly with respect to love, courtship, and marriage matters. Also avoid financial transactions on this day, if possible, as complications may develop unexpectedly. If born between April 29th and May 6th, you will have opportunity to advance your matrimonial affairs and can make progress in employment and financial matters. However, in matters of finance, you should be on your

guard against unexpected developments which may prove disappointing or embarrassing to you. Working conditions will become much more pleasant, and in an intangible way, you will feel that your efforts are appreciated. The best day for you this week is Thursday, when marriage, employment, and money matters will be beneficially affected. Sunday is good for home life, domestic relations, marriage, and financial matters. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between May 7th and 13th, some progress can be made in love and courtship. You should guard against cuts and burns, especially on the face and neck. You will be mentally alert in financial matters but should restrain your impulsiveness. The best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between May 14th and 21st, you will have opportunity to make progress in love and courtship, but you will encounter cross-currents of a subtle nature which may be annoying for a while. Benefits of a minor nature may be received by you in business. The best day for you during this week is Monday. Mark time on Wednesday.

**May 21st and June 21st**  
(Gemini ♊)

—Geminians born between May 21st and 29th, will find this a week of mental activity in which cross-currents will be manifested. You should mark time in matters of environment and not try to make any changes at this time. Money matters will be unsettled and some good and bad breaks may come your way. Keep a little surplus money on hand, if possible, to meet any unexpected demands. Some unexpected developments may take place in marriage matters, but be sure you know what you are doing before you permit yourself to act on impulse. Be careful in your association with the opposite sex. The best day for you this week is Monday, on which day advancement can be made by you in affairs of the heart and marriage matters. Mark time on Thursday, particularly in matters of employment. If born between May 30th and June 6th, you will be able to advance your marriage interests, but should mark time in matters of employment. The best day for you this week is Tuesday, on which day take advantage of any opportunities to advance your interests in love and marriage. Mark time on Thursday and be careful in matters of employment. If born between June 7th and 13th, you will find it an excellent week for love and courtship.

Some financial benefits may come your way, largely through your mental ability to see and take advantage of them. The best day for you this week is Wednesday, on which day you may have opportunity to become engaged or to marry. Mark time on Friday, and be careful in matters of employment. If born between June 14th and 21st, you will find it an excellent week for love and courtship. You will be mentally alert in financial matters, more harmony will be evident in your home life, but in business affairs you should mark time and not try to force matters, as things will not go smoothly. The best days for you this week are Saturday and Wednesday. Saturday will be good for marriage matters and Wednesday for love and marriage.

**June 21st and July 23rd**  
(Cancer ♋)

—Cancerians born between June 21st and 29th, will find this a week of mixed influences for money matters, in which the unexpected will probably happen. Some of the happenings will be beneficial to you and some will be adverse or apparently so at the time. There is prospect of a hasty marriage which may prove beneficial to you; be careful in your association with the opposite sex that you do not become unconventional. This will be an excellent week to make adjustments in your environment in order to bring about more harmony; if adjustments cannot be made, change of environment, if necessary, will probably be made by you. The best day for you this week is Thursday, on which day benefits may be received in matters of employment. If born between June 30th and July 7th, you will find it an excellent week to advance your interests in marriage and occupational matters. Also, working conditions for you will become more pleasant and increased remuneration may come to you. The best days for you this week are Sunday and Thursday. If born between July 8th and 15th, you should mark time in love and courtship. In money matters, you may receive benefits due probably to your mental alertness at this time. The best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. If born between July 16th and 23rd, mark time in love and courtship. You will be mentally alert in financial matters, more harmony will come to you in home life, and some benefits may occur in a business way. The best day for you this week is Monday.



**July 23rd and August 23rd**

(Leo ♌)

—Leo people born between July 23rd and 31st, will find this a very unsettled week in occupational and marriage matters and your finances may be subjected to unusual strains. You should be extremely careful in your association with the opposite sex this week, and it will not be wise for you to marry hastily. The best day for you this week is Monday. If born between August 1st and 8th, you should mark time in occupational and marriage matters. Some minor benefits may come to you in the line of your employment, but they may be more apparent than real. The best day for you this week is Tuesday. If born between August 9th and 15th, you will find it an excellent week for love and courtship, but should mark time in financial matters, as you will be extravagant if you do not guard against it. The best day for you this week is Wednesday, on which day you may become engaged or make progress toward that end, or possibly may marry. If already married, an increase of harmony will come to you. If born between August 16th and 23rd, you will find it an excellent week for love and courtship. Your judgment will not be good in money matters. An increase of harmony will be evident in your home life. Benefits will probably be received by you in business matters, and you may take a journey, possibly a honeymoon trip. The best days for you this week are Saturday and Wednesday. Saturday will be good for love and marriage plans and Wednesday for carrying them into effect.

**August 23rd and September 23rd**

(Virgo ♍)

—Virgo people born between August 23rd and 31st will find this an excellent week in money matters and unexpected financial benefits will probably come to you. Also, a hasty marriage may take place; be careful in your association with the opposite sex. In matters of environment, you will be more or less restricted; but you should endure it in silence, as this is not a time to make drastic environmental changes. The best day for you this week is Saturday. Thursday may bring financial benefits, but will probably tax your patience in matters of environment. If born between September 1st and 8th, you will make progress in occupational matters and should reap some financial benefits therefrom. Also, marriage matters will be benefited and some advancement may take place in your em-

ployment. The best days for you this week are Sunday and Thursday. If born between September 9th and 15th, minor progress can be made in affairs of the heart, and financial benefits will come to you, but you will be extravagant if you are not careful. The best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. If born between September 16th and 23rd, minor progress can be made in affairs of the heart. You will be mentally alert in money matters. An increase of harmony will be evident in your home life. In business matters, you should mark time, as things will not go smoothly. The best day for you this week is Monday.

**September 23rd and October 23rd**

(Libra ♎)

—Librans born between September 23rd and 30th will have a week of mixed influences with relation to money matters and matrimonial affairs. Be careful in your association with the opposite sex. You will be mentally alert in matters of finance. Mark time in environmental matters. The best day for you this week is Monday, when heart interests may be advanced. Mark time on Saturday. If born between October 1st and 8th, minor advancement may be made in marriage and occupational matters, and working conditions will become more pleasant. The best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between October 9th and 16th, mark time in love and courtship. Some financial benefits may come to you, but you will be extravagant if you are not careful. The best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between October 17th and 23rd, mark time in love and courtship. You will be mentally alert in financial matters. Mark time in matters involving home life. Benefits will come to you in business matters and you may travel. The best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Monday.

**October 23rd and November 22nd**

(Scorpio ♏)

—Scorpio people born between October 23rd and 31st will find this a week of unexpected surprises in money matters and marriage affairs. A hasty marriage may come to you that you will probably afterward regret, so control your impulses. Mentally, you will be alert but without definite purpose. You will have opportunity to make adjustments that will benefit you in matters of environment, but do

this in calm thinking, not by impulse. The best days for you this week are Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday. If born between November 1st and 7th, mark time in marriage matters. Some benefits may occur in matters of employment. The best days for you this week are Sunday and Thursday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between November 8th and 15th, opportunity to advance your love interests in a minor way will present itself to you. Financial losses may come to you if you are not careful, and your judgment will be bad in money matters. The best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between November 16th and 22nd, minor benefits may come to you in matters of love and courtship. Your judgment will be bad in money matters. More harmony will come to you in your home life. Minor benefits in a business way will be yours if you are alert to take advantage of opportunities that may present themselves to you at this time. The best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Wednesday.

**November 22nd and December 22nd**  
(Sagittarius ♐)

—Sagittarians born between November 22nd and 29th should mark time in money matters and matrimonial affairs and avoid unnecessary travel, as it will prove more expensive than you can stand. Mentally you will be torn between conflicting emotions. In matters of environment, mark time and do not make changes, even though environmental conditions will be conflicting. The best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between November 30th and December 7th, minor benefits may come to you in money matters and matrimonial affairs. Be alert in your employment and attend strictly to your duties. The best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between December 8th and 14th, you will find this an excellent week to advance your interests in love and courtship and you may become engaged at this time. Marriage matters also should progress favorably for you. Mark time in money matters and avoid extravagance. Your judgment will be poor at this time in matters of finance. The best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between December 15th and 22nd, this will be an excellent week to advance your interests in love and marriage. Mark time in matters connected

with the home life. The best day for you this week is Wednesday.

**December 22nd and January 20th**  
(Capricorn ♑)

—Capricornians born between December 22nd and 29th will find this an excellent week to improve environmental conditions. Mark time in love and courtship. You will be alert mentally in money matters. Mark time in affairs connected with your home life. Minor benefits may come to you in a business way or by reason of travel. If born between December 30th and January 6th, you will find this an excellent week to advance your marriage interests. This is a time during which you can gain much in matters of employment and perhaps secure an increase in wages if you go about it properly. A gentle hint to your employer may be all that is necessary to secure an advance in salary; though do not expect too much, as he may not be in a financial condition to make the increase a large one. The best day for you this week is Thursday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between January 7th and 13th, mark time in love and courtship. Opportunity to benefit yourself will come to you in money matters and your judgment in matters of finance will be good; but you will be extravagant, so curb your inclination to spend too freely. The best day for you this week is Friday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between January 14th and 20th, mark time in love and courtship. You will be alert mentally in financial matters. Avoid strife in your home life. Minor benefits may come to you in a business way, or by means of travel. Mark time on Monday.

**January 20th and February 19th**  
(Aquarius ♒)

—Aquarians born between January 20th and 28th should mark time in money matters and marriage affairs. Opportunity for a hasty marriage may come to you, but it will probably prove disastrous if you take it. Avoid unconventional conduct with the opposite sex. Mentally you will be alert; this week is good for dealings with brothers and sisters and for correspondence. Mark time on Monday. If born between January 29th and February 5th, mark time in marriage and occupational matters. Be alert in attending to your employment duties. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between February 6th and 12th, it will be an excellent week to advance your love interests. You may have some financial



losses, chiefly through your own extravagance and lack of good financial judgment at this time. Do not sign papers and be careful of what you write. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between February 13th and 19th, it will be an excellent week to advance your love interests, though some heartaches may come to you in doing so. Your judgment will be poor in money matters. Mark time in matters involving your home life. Business benefits may come to you. It is a good time to deal with lawyers and for travel.

February 19th and March 21st  
(Pisces ♋)

—Pisceans born between February 19th and 27th may receive unexpected financial benefits. Unexpected developments in marriage matters may occur. A hasty marriage is in prospect which may or may not be successful, depending upon your previously laid plans. Your judgment will be poor and you should avoid disputes with close kindred. Environmental conditions will be restrictive, but it is not a time for change, so mark time in this respect. The best day for you this week is Saturday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between February 28th and March 6th, you can make considerable headway in marriage matters. Be alert mentally in matters of employment. The best day for you this week is Sunday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between March 7th and 13th, minor advancement in love and courtship may take place. Financial benefits may occur, but you will be extravagant if not careful. You will be alert mentally in financial matters. The best day for you this week is Sunday. Mark time on Friday. If born between March 14th and 21st, minor progress may be made in affairs of the heart. You will be mentally alert in matters of finance. More harmony will come to you in your home life. Mark time in matters of business, travel, and dealings with lawyers. The best day for you this week is Monday.

NOTE: The week referred to begins with Saturday, April 25th, and ends with Friday, May 1st, 1936. Compare with information given in "Your Week" and "Day by Day" to see what the general influences are.

### TAURUS

If you were born between April 20th and May 21st, you are a native of the zodiacal sign Taurus.

LS-10B

Taurus is ruled by Venus, symbolic of love. Love influences greatly the actions of Taurus natives. One who loves desires to serve and Taurus natives are always desirous of serving others. They make efficient servants, but serve best when serving for love rather than for money. They have strong bodies and are sturdy of spirit, built for carrying burdens and willing to do so. They are peace-loving but when aroused become dangerous. They listen rather than speak. They are patient in the face of delay and under the stress of sorrow. Suffering strengthens their character. They are deliberate in arriving at a conclusion. They are industrious and self-reliant, but do not undertake tasks greater than they can do. They are studious in thought and friendly unless antagonized.

### COMMENTS BY KAI

Love is a queer thing—it operates so unexpectedly and in so many different ways. Sometimes we meet people we feel we have known all our lives; sometimes we associate with people for years before finally one day we wake up to the fact that we are very much in love with them. Love draws people together. It may operate on the physical, the mental, or the spiritual planes. Physical love is sometimes called passion. It is quite an essential part of love, but where physical love is the only love between two people, it may last for days or weeks or months, but seldom for many years. Mental love is much finer, for where the mind is concerned, only lost mentality or death can destroy the attraction, unless the mind itself changes. Many people are in love mentally, but have no physical attraction for each other. Then there is the love of the soul—that part of us which is immortal. Love between souls is never-dying; it lasts for all eternity. Each soul has one definite mate that rounds out its qualities and supplements those in which it is deficient. Those mates seldom meet in this life; but people do meet who in many respects supply the needs of one's soul. Now when a man and a woman meet, whose souls are in harmony and whose minds are in harmony, their bodies must also be in harmony, for the body is but the product of the mind and soul. Such love does exist. Marriages between such people have occurred. And the result is as near an approach to heaven as most people will experience this side of death. Unfortunately, most people do not know that the bond between souls is greater

than any mere physical attraction, and so they rush pell mell into marriage, only to rush pell mell into the divorce courts, if the physical attraction was all that brought them together. Be sure when you marry that there is more to it than mere physical attraction, if you would have your marriage last. Have a community of mental interests, and deep down within you, feel something so subtly stirred, that the pain shakes your whole being when separated from your loved one. In the stars can be read the attractions and antagonisms on all planes of existence. Make use of them, if possible, and draw a royal flush in the game of love instead, possibly, of having to be satisfied with a pair of jacks.

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*Kai does not send answers by mail*

Miss M. M. S., born November 19, 1914, at noon: You state that you were born on Sunday, but November 19, 1914, fell on Thursday. Assuming that you gave me the correct birth data otherwise, although in error as to the day of the week, I may state that during 1936 love and romance will probably come into your life and you may marry during 1936, but if you do not, during 1937 you will have opportunity for marriage and such marriage, if entered into by you, will probably prove successful.

Miss B. T. R., born January 23, 1914, night time, Massachusetts: Yes, you will some day marry. This year is not so favorable for marriage; but 1937 will bring you opportunity for marriage.

Miss L. P., born March 27, 1916, 4:00 p. m., Michigan: Although you say that you are a "man-hater," I cannot picture you in that rôle. In fact I am very much inclined to think that you will marry during the latter part of 1937 or the fore part of 1938.

M. E. C., female, born August 15, 1915, 3:00 p. m., Canada: You did not give me the birth data of the young man you are considering marrying, so I cannot advise you whether or not you should marry him. This year will bring to you opportunity for marriage, but to whom I cannot say.

Miss E. D. K., born June 18, 1916, between 8:00 a. m. and noon: A marriage during 1936 will not prove successful for you; 1937 is no better. Opportunity for a happy marriage should come to you during 1938.

ANNA E., born October 30, 1904: This year will bring love and romance, but business and marriage matters will not run so smoothly; 1937 will bring changes that will not be of benefit to you, and mental uneasiness; 1938, marriage matters more favorable but romance will go on the rocks. A strong attachment. In 1939 marriage matters not so smoothly running but beneficial changes, probable travel, a steadier purpose in life. Possible financial difficulties. Difficulties in love but mentally alert. In 1940, marriage matters more smoothly running and probable gain thereby. Romance again to the fore. Changes that may prove beneficial.

Miss F. L. H., born March 8, 1917 at 10:20 p. m., Ohio: I would advise against your traveling during 1936, as you are not under good travel-influences; 1937 is a better year for you, with prospects of marriage. You will have to change your mental attitude and manner of treatment of the opposite sex if you will have them flocking to you. You antagonize them by your attitude. Try being agreeable and not contrary for a few months and you will notice a big change in the number of young men who will seek your society.

D. I. N., female, born November 5, 1912, 1:00 a. m., New Hampshire: November 5, 1912 fell on Tuesday, not on Thursday as stated in your letter. Assuming that the date you sent is correct, although you were in error in the day of the week, I may state that 1936 is not favorable, although opportunity for marriage may present itself. If you do not marry in 1936 you will probably marry in 1937.

Miss B. L., born August 23, 1917, 2:00 a. m., New York: You will have opportunity to marry during 1937.

A. M. D., female, born July 1, 1902, 6:30 a. m., Canada: You do not give your sweetheart's birth data so I cannot tell you whether or not you will marry him; but I can tell you this: You will marry. This year may bring a hasty marriage; 1937 may bring marriage to you but with obstacles to surmount. During 1938 mar-



riage will come easier for you. If you do not marry before 1938, you will probably marry in that year. I cannot tell how you will agree with your sweetheart without having his birth data, but if you are very much in love with him, take prompt advantage of any opportunity you may have to marry him.

W. J. O., female, born May 9, 1912, between 2:00 and 3:00 a. m.: During 1936 some financial benefits may be received by you in some way connected with the law, but it will not be so great as you anticipated and you will be very disappointed. May 9, 1912, fell on Thursday, not Wednesday, as stated in your letter.

Mrs. M. M. T., born March 6, 1887, Pennsylvania. "Midnight" might mean the dividing line between March 5th and 6th or between March 6th and 7th. I do not believe it would be advisable to sell your home and make changes at this time. Better influences are coming up. Matters will adjust themselves for you and you may wish you had your home in the country back again, if you should sell it.

MISS MARGE (DIMPLES), born April 4, 1920, 6:00 a. m., New Jersey: I have no way of telling who left the anonymous package in the hall. Some clue as to the person's description could be gained from a figure of the heavens erected for the exact time when you discovered the package. After two years you probably do not know the exact time when you discovered the package, and may not now even remember the date. Regarding your beauty-culture course: You will not be successful in that line. This year will bring to you little opportunity for marriage, or an unhappy

marriage, in most likelihood, if you do marry. The year 1937 is somewhat better; 1938 is unfavorable; 1939 will bring opportunity for marriage and you should take advantage of it and do not let a wrong mental attitude spoil your chances.

Miss A. R., born January 7, 1920, between 1:00 a. m. and 2:00 a. m.: You will marry sometime. During 1936 you can marry, if you choose to do so, and the mere fact that you are so young at this time should not deter you, if that is the only consideration. The year 1937 is not a good one for you for marriage; 1938 is no better; 1939 is very good for marriage for you. If you do not marry during 1936, I think it will be wise for you to wait until 1939, at which time romance will come into your life but will result in a practical marriage.

Miss E. A. K., born April 17, 1906, Massachusetts: I know of no way in which I can tell the nationality of your probable husband from the stars. I may have an idea as to his characteristics and general appearance, but individuals of all nationalities may possess similar traits. You chill the prospective suitor by your reserve and by your mental attitude. Your best bet for marriage during the near future is 1936. To take advantage of your opportunity, however, you will have to revise your viewpoint on some matters connected with love and marriage.

Miss G. U., born July 24, 1921, 8:00 a. m., New Jersey: I do not see for you any commercial or financial success in the drama or as a singer. It will not be profitable for you in later years. You would do better as a nurse in a maternity hospital or in the home.

**Editor's Note:** Questions for this department are answered only through Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine. Each reader is allowed to ask one question. Be sure to give the following data in your letter: date, month, year, and place of birth, the hour of the day or night, if possible, and sex. Address your letters to KAI, care of this magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.





*Do not mail letters to these Pen Pals after May 1st.*

**F**RIENDSHIP is not confined to the unusual people who can hold our interest by their adventures. Often it is some one like Sunny Ruth, a girl who is interested in life and people, who brings warmth and friendliness to those she knows, and lives a busy, full life in her own niche in the world. Write to her, girls; you will find her a sympathetic, warm-hearted Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS:

Although prizes I've never won,  
I am a young girl full of fun.  
And though I have true friends galore,  
I'd surely like to have some more.  
So I'll be waiting now to hear  
From many Pals from far and near.  
I have a car, and go places;  
I'd like to see the friendly faces  
Of those who do not live too far  
For me to drive out in my car.  
I dearly like all outdoor sports,  
And light amusements of all sorts.  
I think it would be simply grand  
To hear from girls from every land.  
I promise souvenirs, and card views,  
If for your Pals you will choose

SUNNY RUTH.

Geraldene resembles a famous movie star.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May another constant reader of your Corner put in a plea for Pen Pals? I'm a girl of twenty-two, with brown hair, hazel eyes, and some people say that I resemble a famous movie

star. I like all outdoor sports, and enjoy writing letters. Come on, gals; let's exchange letters and snapshots. I'm sure we can be friends.

GERALDENE.

This Pal sings over the radio.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here is a plea for Pen Pals from a young man of nineteen. I enjoy sports, am very fond of the movies, and sing over the radio at our local broadcasting station. As a hobby I collect postmarks from all over the world, and hope that Pals everywhere will get in touch with me.

CROONER.

A high-school senior.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of seventeen, a high-school senior, and want to hear from girls between fifteen and eighteen years of age. I have blond hair, blue eyes, a cheerful disposition, and love to write long letters. I am fond of skiing, hockey, skating, tennis, golf, and dancing. I will send a souvenir to the first five Pals who answer my plea, and promise replies to all letters.

FRIENDLY BETTY.

This Pal has plenty of spare time.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope you will help me find some Pen Pals. I'm a married woman twenty-six years of age, with dark hair and eyes, like all sports, but my favorite hobby is writing and receiving letters. I am not lonesome, but have lots of spare time and often don't know what to do with myself. I would appreciate hearing from Pals everywhere, and will make my letters as interesting as I can.

MRS. T. W.



She wants to hear from fourteen-year-olds.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to correspond with girls of fourteen. I am in the seventh grade, and intend to go to high school. I'm considered a friendly and good-natured girl, like all sports, and will exchange snapshots, stamps, and souvenirs with any one. Hurry, Pals, and let me hear from you. SWANSEA DOT.

Izzo is broad-minded and congenial.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: At times I get very lonely and would like to hear from young men everywhere. I'm a fellow of twenty-three, interested in art, the theater, and considered broad-minded and congenial. I will exchange snapshots, and promise prompt replies to all letters. IZZO.

Give her a chance to be your friend.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here is another S O S for Pen Pals. I'm a lonely girl of nineteen, anxious to join your Corner and find a few sincere Pen Pals. I'll tell you all about myself in my first letter, and promise to be a true friend to all. ETHELENA.

Girls, let her tell you about Florida.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't some one please write to me? I'm a happy girl of fifteen, live in Florida, enjoy swimming, dancing, drawing, and collect souvenirs. I would love to hear from Pals from all over, and promise to answer all letters. Come on, girls, and let me tell you all about Florida. MIAMI TEX.

Kitty W. will answer all letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope that you will help me find some Pen Pals. I'm a Polish-American girl of seventeen, with dark hair and blue eyes. I am fond of dancing, reading, sewing, shows, and most outdoor sports. I will exchange snapshots, picture post cards, and promise to answer all letters promptly. KITTY W.

Boys, you will surely like Major.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please print my plea in your Corner. I'm a young fellow of eighteen, greatly interested in reading, dancing, movies, and writing. I would very

much like to correspond with Pals between eighteen and twenty-five, regardless of where they hail from. I'll exchange snapshots, and try to make my replies interesting. MAJOR.

Pen Pals, help her to keep cheerful.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm an ardent reader of your Corner, and hope you will help me find some Pen Pals. I'm a young widow of twenty-four, enjoy music, sewing, dancing, taking snapshots, and consider myself a devoted radio fan. I'll exchange souvenirs and snapshots with any one. I live in sunny California, and promise to be a steady correspondent. HERMOSA EM.

Merry Mary lives up to her name.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am another young girl of seventeen who would love to have some Pen Pals. I have brown hair, blue eyes, and am considered jolly. My favorite hobbies are typing, collecting autographed pictures of radio and movie stars, and reading. I want to hear from girls from all over. MERRY MARY.

Chummy Lou has many hobbies.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please find room in your Corner for one more lonely Pen Pal. I am a girl of eighteen, live in Illinois, and have just graduated from high school. I am tall, blond, and happy. I have many hobbies, and like writing long letters. Come on, girls, and let's be friends! CHUMMY LOU.

Perrie wants real Pen Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is a plea from a young man of twenty-nine, who is not girl-crazy, and hopes to find a few real Pen Pals. I'm interested in the theater, swimming, boating, traveling, and like to make friends. I'll answer all letters promptly, and want to hear from Pals who live near New Bedford, Massachusetts. PERRIE.

Exchange snapshots with High-school Eula.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll write to a Pennsylvania girl of fifteen? I'm still in high school, will exchange snapshots, and promise to be a steady correspondent. I like sports, dancing, reading, and writing letters. So come on, girls, and do your stuff! HIGH-SCHOOL EULA.

### Tell Saginaw Pal about yourself.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is my first attempt to find Pen Pals, and I hope to hear from at least one Pal from every State in the Union. I am a girl of twenty-two, somewhat lonesome, enjoy sports, the theater, dancing, and writing letters. Please, girls, don't pass me by.

SAGINAW PAL.

### A Pal for you younger girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope some of the girls who read your Corner will make friends with a Canadian Pal. I am a girl of fourteen, like skiing, skating, hiking, baseball, hockey, and the movies. I am lively, love good times, and promise to answer all letters. Why not try me, girls?

EVY.

### Tennessee Bill wants lots of Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I want to hear from Pals everywhere. I'm a young man of twenty-two, enjoy sports, especially football, basket ball, and tennis. I also like dancing and music. I want to hear from Pals from all over the United States, and promise to answer all letters. Come on, boys, and let's get acquainted.

TENNESSEE BILL.

### She likes plenty of fun.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Although I am interested in many things, I would especially like to have some true-blue Pen Pals. I'm a girl still in high school, and want to hear from Pals between sixteen and twenty years of age. No matter what your hobbies are, girls, I would love to hear all about them. I like dancing, sports, and making friends.

NATHALEE.

### This Pal is in vaudeville.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please find room to print my S O S. I'm a young man of twenty-six, interested in singing and the worth-while things of life. At present I am traveling with a vaudeville show, and have plenty of time to answer all letters. I'll tell you more in my first letter. Pals, write to

TRAVELING SINGER.

### A friendly married Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a steady reader of Love Story Magazine, and as your Corner is so interesting I hope you will find room for my plea. I'm a married woman of thirty-five, live in Brooklyn, New

York, am fond of reading, listening to the radio, and can play the piano. I also enjoy the movies. I promise to answer all letters received.

A. D.

### An Irish lass from New Jersey.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think that some of the girls who read your Corner would like to correspond with an Irish lass of sixteen who lives in New Jersey? I'm a sophomore in high school, have black hair, hazel eyes, and am popular with boys and girls. I'm fond of sports, horseback riding, dancing, and love to write letters.

PADDY.

### She is interested in aviation.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm another girl who hopes to find some Pen Pals. I am eighteen, full of pep, like plenty of fun, enjoy sports, and am greatly interested in aviation. I want to hear from farm girls, but every one is welcome. I will exchange snapshots. How about it, Pals?

JOLLY JOSIE.

### Six feet of sincere friendship.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is a plea from a young man of twenty-one. I am a little over six feet tall, have a good-natured disposition, and like to write letters. I'm interested in reading, movies, collecting all sorts of things, and also enjoy sports. Stamp collectors from all over the world are especially welcome, but I promise prompt and interesting replies to all.

HAMPSTEADER.

### She'll send you a sketch of your favorite movie star.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am not lonely, but would like to have some Pen Pals. I'm a girl of fifteen, have blue eyes, brown hair, love a good time, but in my serious moments I like to draw. I'll send you a sketch of your favorite movie star, girls. All you have to do is answer my plea. Riding in an airplane is my favorite sport.

FLOSSIE.

### Ohio Jean likes outdoor sports.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please help me get in touch with some Pen Pals? I'm a young girl who enjoys outdoor sports, have red hair, blue eyes, am considered friendly, sociable, and love to make friends. I'll tell you all about myself in my first letter, Pals. Won't you try me?

OHIO JEAN.



Girls, don't pass her by.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Although I have several brothers and sisters, I am a very lonely girl. I'm eighteen years of age, interested in sports, enjoy writing long letters, and want to correspond with Pals everywhere. Please, girls, don't pass me by. I'll be waiting anxiously for your letters.

PINE CITY DEE.

Michael R. will make a sincere friend.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: For a long time I have wanted a few Pen Pals, so here's hoping that I won't be disappointed. I'm a young man twenty-five years of age, work in an office, have a quiet disposition, enjoy shows, music, hiking, reading, and writing letters. I want to hear from fellows near my age, and promise to answer all letters. I am Lithuanian-American.

MICHAEL R.

Zelda makes up scrapbooks.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is a plea for Pals from a young girl of eighteen. My hobbies are making up scrapbooks and writing letters. I want to hear from Pals from California and England, but promise to answer all letters received. I have lots of spare time, so here's hoping that all of you will write to me.

ZELDA.

Who'll write to this lonely nurse?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Have you room for one more lonely girl? I am in my twenties, a graduate nurse, and at present on a case thirty-two miles away from my home city. I want to hear from Pals from far and near, and those whose husbands and sweethearts are in the navy, as my own boy friend is on duty in China. I'll answer all letters promptly.

MAIBELLE.

Older Pals, you'll surely like Cheerful Anne.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am very lonely and hope that you will find room for my plea. I'm married, forty-five, have a son and daughter in another State, and my husband is wonderful to me. But I do get lonesome and want to correspond with Pals everywhere. I have many hobbies, such as collecting old books, writing poems, short stories, reading character from handwriting, and have also studied psychology.

CHEERFUL ANNE.

Ches has been collecting stamps for five years.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please help me find some Pen Pals. I'm a young married man of twenty-three, and for the past five years I have been collecting stamps. I would like to exchange some with other collectors, and promise to answer all letters. How about it, fellows? I live in Massachusetts.

CHES.

This Pen Pal is fond of reading, dancing, and music.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a nineteen-year-old colored girl living in Canada, enjoy all sports, dancing, reading, and music. I have lots of friends, but am fond of writing letters, and hope to hear from Pals everywhere. I'll exchange snapshots, and promise prompt replies.

B. G.

She has seen some interesting places in her travels.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here is an urgent plea for Pen Pals. I'm a married woman of twenty-four, have a four-year-old child, and feel sure that I can find many interesting things to write about. I have traveled quite a bit, visited the petrified forest and the painted desert, enjoy swimming, and love to make friends. I can also tell you about Hollywood and the movie studios.

BON BON.

Writing letters is her chief hobby.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a peppy girl of sixteen, go to high school, like all sports, and my chief hobby is writing letters. I would very much enjoy corresponding with high-school girls from all over the country, so here's hoping that some of you Pals will not hesitate to write to me. Let's go!

KINSTONETTE.

Young boys, write to Herb.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: For a long time I have wanted some Pen Pals, and have decided to ask you to print my plea in your Corner. I'm a young fellow of fifteen, live in North Carolina, and want to hear from boys near my age, regardless of where they live. I'll answer all letters, and will be a real friend.

HERB.

She wants to hear from married Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to correspond with married Pals near my age.

I am a married woman of thirty-three, and the mother of six children. I like to sew, read, write letters, and manage to find time for the things I enjoy. I'll answer all letters, and hope to hear from every one.

NEW BEDFORD MRS.

You can write to him in either French or English.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am greatly interested in your Friendliest Corner and hope you will find me some Pen Pals. I'm a young man of twenty-five, interested in all sports, will gladly exchange picture post cards, snapshots, and tell you about Canada. I will also send a drawing to all who answer my plea. Get busy, fellows; you can write to me in either French or English.

ANDRE.

She plays the piano and saxophone.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a lonesome girl of eighteen, have blond hair and brown eyes. I am fond of swimming, dancing, sailing, and can play the piano and saxophone. Won't some of you California Pals please write to me? I promise prompt replies to all letters received, and will also exchange snapshots. CALIFORNIA GIRL.

Let Simone solve your beauty problems.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please print my plea? I am a girl of seventeen, a beautician, and very fond of my work. I hope to become a skin specialist some day. I can play the piano, like outdoor sports, and want to hear from girls between sixteen and twenty-five years of age. I'll exchange photographs, and promise prompt replies to all letters. SIMONE.

Miss Mary Morris, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Morris will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. All reasonable care will be exercised in the introduction of correspondents. If any unsatisfactory letters are received by our readers, the publishers would appreciate their being sent to them. Please sign your name and address when writing. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Friendliest Corner, so that mail can be forwarded. We are not responsible for money (coins) sent through the mail.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

He's interested in the study of birds.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a man very much interested in the study of birds, not only in their wild state, but also the more uncommon varieties that are occasionally kept as pets. I am also fond of writing letters, and would be glad to hear from men who are interested in our feathered friends. I hail from Montana.

BIRD LOVER.

Cornwall Mrs. wants to hear from single and married Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is a plea for Pals from all over the United States. I am a married woman twenty-two years of age, have one child, enjoy dancing, swimming, tennis, and guarantee prompt and interesting replies to all letters. Come on, Pen Pals, and let's get acquainted.

CORNWALL MRS.

Who'll write to Lee of New York?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: My home is in Missouri, but for the past three years I have lived in New York City. I'm a young man twenty years of age, like all sports, but as my working hours are rather long, I haven't much time to go places. I would enjoy hearing from Pen Pals everywhere, and promise to answer all letters promptly.

LEE OF NEW YORK.

She finds New York City lonely.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a lonely girl twenty years of age, considered attractive, and would enjoy corresponding with girls between eighteen and twenty-five years of age who live in or near New York City. I enjoy tennis, dancing, swimming, and other sports, and love to write long, chummy letters. Please, Pals, won't you take me for your friend? D. B.



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# THE FRIEND IN NEED

Department Conducted by

Laura Alston Brown

*Well-known Authority on Love and Marriage*

Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve in these pages problems on which you desire advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.

Although Mrs. Brown receives more letters than she can possibly print in the department, she answers all the others by mail. So, lay your problem before her with the knowledge that it will have her full attention.

Address Mrs. Laura Alston Brown, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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**W**HAT is the lure of the big city? What is it that makes young girls and boys desert their people and friends, and come here to live alone, in dingy hall bedrooms, not a soul in all the millions who live here to care whether or not they are well or happy? Whether or not they have food to eat and clothes to wear?

Some of them stay on year after year, plugging away at uninteresting jobs, no homes to entertain friends in, no friends worth mentioning, no place to go but the movies, where they sit all alone, without even a companion to share their chuckles.

In the winter the streets are slippery avenues of dirty snow and skidding cars. In summer they are steamy, tarry, heat-stricken pavements, not a bit of green to suggest even an illusion of coolness, to help parched humanity bear the blazing, merciless, nearly tropical sun. Millions of human beings herd like cattle in airless, cheerless underground passages, and evidently love it.

How can that make up to these hopeful youngsters for the life they

leave behind them, the friends and the neighbors? How can it make up for the comfort of being mothered, your clothes looked after, and good food to eat. And yet many a girl and boy feels like "Undecided."

DEAR MRS. BROWN: My parents are old. Father is seventy-two and mother is sixty-five. I am twenty-five. I have no enjoyment in my home town. In fact, I hate every inch of land here.

These last three years I have gone away every summer to work in larger cities. I lived for six months in New York, but had to come home because my mother was ill and needed me to do the housework, which I detest.

I love my mother dearly, and therefore try to accustom myself to this small town again, but it is killing me by inches.

Mother is better, and able to do her own work, or she can hire a girl; but she wants me to stay home for good now. I am so unhappy, and I try so hard to forget New York and my friends there, and also my sweetheart, who wants to marry me.

What shall I do? Shall I sacrifice my life to please my mother during the last years of her life? She is such a wonderful mother, and I love her so much. Or shall I go back to New York and get married? Or perhaps go back there to work?

New York is heaven to me. I live such a gay, busy life there, and here such a lonely life.

I don't like the boys here. They are so unsophisticated and their manners are so terrible. What shall I do? If I stay here I will never marry one of these boys, because I would never want to live in this town.

I can't see any future for me here, and in New York I have had the best of opportunities and met the most wonderful men.

What shall I do?

UNDECIDED.

But, my dear girl, happiness isn't a matter of geography; it's a state of mind. Contentment comes, not from getting what you want—for you immediately want something else as soon as one desire is gratified—but in wanting what you have.

You'll be just as unhappy in New York in six months as you are at home now. In the first place, you'll have an uneasy conscience to bother you. In the second place, you'll find that this vaunted sophistication is merely the result of a sluggish digestive system, due to the city dweller's unhealthy mode of life, which takes all the thrill and joy out of everything, and leaves you full of a terrifying, unbearable boredom.

The job will peter out. For if it is anything worth doing, you can do it at home. If it's merchandising, your town has stores, and you'll find it easier to work up to a responsible place in the management in your home town than in a big city. If it is writing, or art, you can work at it even more successfully if you get away from the pseudo-intellectual atmosphere of bohemian circles, where people talk instead of doing. And if it is just a clerkship, then it isn't enough to keep you satisfied year after year. It's no substitute for a home.

That leaves just the sweetheart, and somehow, my dear, I can't believe that the girl who wrote that letter really cares for him very much. She finds him thrilling be-

cause he lives in a big city, but I don't think she is aching for him, unable to live without him, willing to suffer with him through any hardship, if it becomes necessary.

If he's just a way out, my dear, don't take it, because such avenues of escape invariably turn out to be blind alleys. And if your love is real, he will understand your obligation and be willing to wait a while, until your parents have learned to know and trust him and feel that they can give up their baby to him, in the knowledge that he will surely make her happy.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have read *Love Story Magazine* for over two years and your department is the first thing I turn to. Now I need some advice.

I am seventeen years old. My father died eight years ago, leaving my mother with five small children, and three married. He held a very responsible position with a large company and left my mother with quite a bit of money. But with the stock market crash, the money didn't hold out, and I started working at a night club. My older sister works at a dress shop. After working about a year, I met a man who fell madly in love with me.

I have always been a nice girl, and the people I worked for were awfully good and looked out for my welfare. They knew I had to help support my mother and two brothers who are younger than I.

However, I went with this boy for four or five months. I didn't love him, but he loved me and begged me to marry him. He had a good job, and his mother and sisters thought a lot of me.

Then I met a married man who is very well off financially. He liked me, and I fell in love with him. He said it wasn't right for him to go with me, but he and his wife didn't get along. Later he fell in love with me and said he couldn't give me up. Then we forgot everything except our love. He was the first man in my life.

He got a divorce from his wife after that, and we have been going together for over a year. He made me quit work and wanted me to go to college and make something of myself. I started a course in beauty culture in another State, but he couldn't come to see me, although every two weeks I went home.



He's crazy about my family, and they think there's no one like him. He gives me anything I want, and treats me like a baby. He is twice my age. He has been married twice and is disgusted with marriage, but he says we'll get married some day. However, I often wonder if he means it. He wants me to finish my course, so he can get me a shop. He also looks out for my mother and family.

I have also met his son, and his mother and sister. I think that they like me. There are two other boys I could marry. Both are only a little older than I. One is the boy I first mentioned, and the other is in South America, although he expects to be home in less than a year.

But it seems that the only one I can care for is this older man. We never quarrel, and whenever we are together we are very happy. He has a car and chauffeur, and I can go anywhere I want at any time.

I don't know what to do about this man. Whether to keep on going with him, or give him up. Please try to help me.

SOUTHERN J.

My dear, you must know that two wrongs never make a right. And although this man can help you financially and offer you material comforts, if he is not ready to marry you now that he is legally free, it is doubtful if he loves you. There is no arrangement as good as marriage; any so-called love that scorns the thought of marriage is not real love.

It is also hard to understand how your mother can tolerate and accept anything from this man, if she is aware of the actual circumstances. You are young and have your entire life before you, and although it might be harder for you to get ahead entirely through your own efforts, at least you would have a clear conscience.

One can never really get something for nothing in this world, my child. Everything has a price. If this man is not willing to marry you now, give him up. And some day when you find real love you

will be glad that you had the courage to stand on your own feet.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am only sixteen years old, but have been married, divorced, and have a child almost a year old. I've had enough troubles to last a lifetime.

I've always had many boy friends, mostly military camp boys, as somehow I could never find any others to my liking. Last fall I met a young man I liked very much, and I am sure that he liked me, too.

This boy, Jerry, and his brother are orphans. Jerry is working a farm with the understanding that if he works it for a certain length of time he will eventually own it. Jerry and his brother chum with a boy, Jimmy, who also lives in our town.

Here is my problem. My sister and I, Jerry, and Jimmy pal together. Jerry is twenty years old, his brother Eddie is twenty-three, and Jimmy is twenty-two. Eddie is in love with me, but Jerry and I are in love with one another. Eddie knows that I'm in love with his brother, but seems to think that I should fall in love with him. However, I love to be with him, and sometimes I wonder whether I'm not in love with Eddie instead of Jerry.

Lately everything seems to be going wrong. Jerry acts sullen and distant, and often seems actually angry. Another thing is that Jimmy has been rather insulting to me, and thinks that I'm the type of girl who pays no attention to conventions. Of course, he's all wrong.

What I want to know is what should I do? I hate to break up with Jerry; I really do care for him. But I know that if I refuse to go out with him when Eddie and Jimmy are along, my sister will get peeved, and Jerry might quarrel with me because he thinks the world of his brother and Jimmy.

We live in a small town, and there are not many young people here. I like to have fun and dance and enjoy myself. But it seems that fellows like Jimmy have the wrong opinion about me.

VIRGINIA.

But surely if you explained the situation to Jerry and your sister, they would consider your feelings in this matter? Perhaps if Jerry knew about Jimmy's actions toward you he would set him straight. There is no reason why any girl should put up with undue familiarity from a boy who pretends to be a friend, if

there was nothing in her attitude that might encourage him.

If you and Jerry are really in love with one another, then this should be made clear to his brother. It would not be fair on your part to in any way encourage Eddie. On the other hand, it is possible that you are in love with love, and not with any boy in particular. Although you have been married and divorced, and are the mother of a child, you might not have found real love.

I would suggest that you chum with the other young people in your town, and give yourself plenty of time to find some one with whom you can be really happy.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am very much in love with a boy who seems to have a poor reputation. He is nineteen, and I am seventeen. Every one tells me not to go with him, but I can't help myself.

He tells me that he loves me better than any one in the world. But when I ask him to stop some of the things he does, he either cannot or will not.

He has shown me in many ways that he cares. He's tried to be more steady in his work, and stop drinking and running around with a wild crowd of boys and girls. But whenever his old friends urge him to join them he can't seem to resist. Maybe the reason why he has no will power is because he has always had his own way.

My parents forbid me to date him, so I've had to discourage him from coming to the house, but I've kept on meeting him outside. We have been going together for eight months, and have been engaged twice. However, each time we set the wedding date something happened.

The last time we thought we would get married on Christmas, but he got drunk and I broke our engagement. He later told me that he was terribly sorry and asked me to forgive him. He promised that it wouldn't happen again, but it did.

He is also very jealous, and whenever he sees me talking to some boy I know, he raves. But he is very popular with girls, and doesn't want to stop dating them. He tells me that it's his nature.

I really don't know what to do about him. I have been seeing him at my sister's, and if my parents find out it will

mean that I won't be able to finish my education.

Which should I choose? Will you tell me whether I should keep on dating him? My sister doesn't like him at all; she thinks he is not good enough for me.

Do you think he cares for me, or is he only amusing himself? Please tell me whose word I should take—this boy's, or my sister's.

IN LOVE.

In most cases seventeen is not ripe enough an age for a girl to make a lifelong partnership decision. And although some girls are more mature than others, boys in their teens rarely know whether they are really in love, or if it is only a crush.

If you have been going with this boy for almost a year, you have had no chance to make sure that you cannot like some one else better. I would suggest that you have other friends, and not become engaged or go steady with any one for a while. Marriage is very serious, my dear, and should not be rushed into. You really have plenty of time to take love seriously.

You might continue to be friendly with this boy if he tries harder to break away from bad habits and makes a real effort to improve his reputation; but have other friends, too.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: You have helped me before, so here I am again. I am a girl of seventeen, but have always acted older than my age. At fourteen I had to leave school and go to work. I've missed many good times girls of my age enjoy, but I've managed to keep moderately happy.

Here is my problem. For the past two years I have been going with a boy of twenty-six. I knew he didn't love me, but I was so crazy about him that I did not even try to conceal my feelings from him.

Last summer, however, I seemed to care less for him, although I didn't want to become indifferent. Somehow or other we allowed our emotions to rule us. I think he knew that I didn't like him as well as before, and did not want to lose me.

I realize that I was very foolish. I would have married him before that happened, but he always said that I was too



young. After that incident, however, I almost hated him. Maybe I have never really loved him. Now he wants to marry me, but I don't want him, and I know I don't love him. Do you think that because of what happened I ought to marry him? If I married him I would be giving up all chance of ever finding real happiness. Or don't I deserve to be happy now?

My mother is very anxious for me to marry. I don't know why she should rush me. She has been married twice and has not found happiness. I don't care for my job, but much as I dislike it I find it preferable to marriage with any man I know. My mother always says that I am going to be an old maid, and I can't seem to make her understand that when I get married I want to be sure I am in love. Her constant nagging on this subject is making me very irritable. I think I have lots of time to marry, don't you?

What shall I do about this boy? I really don't want to go with him any longer, but I don't know how to tell him to stay away. I know he cares for me and will be hurt. Please tell me what you think of my problem.

ELSIE.

Of course, you deserve to be happy. However, you need not feel that you are obliged to marry this man because of what happened. It is a regrettable mistake, but you must consider the future. If you do not love him, you would not be happy together even if he loved you.

I quite agree with you that you have plenty of time for marriage. And in all fairness to yourself you should enjoy your youth and have other friends. Since you do not care for this young man, tell him frankly how you feel about the whole situation. After all, there is no use in pretending that you like him.

As for your mother's apparent anxiety to see you married, perhaps she is eager to see that you are taken care of and settled in a home of your own. However, you should not permit her attitude to rush you into a marriage you might later regret. Wait until you find a man you can really love; then only will you have a chance to be really happy.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: After reading Sime's letter I feel like "blowing up." I want him to know, first of all, that I am one of the nice girls who use their brains. But contrary to his ideas, using my brains has seemed detrimental to getting along with boys. So his remark about girls being dumb amuses me.

I haven't had many boy friends, but all the boys I've ever known seem to like dumb girls. The boys like to think they're so superior, that if a girl doesn't act dumb and make them think they're just about the greatest thing on earth, they drop her without consideration.

No one can tell me this is not so, because that's exactly what happened to the girls in my crowd. We refuse to act dumb, so the fellows drop us. By that I don't mean we become very intellectual with them, but we act like sensible girls in their late teens.

I also want Sime to know that my girl friends and I refuse to be taken to beer gardens, night clubs, and other such places. We wouldn't be seen in them! That's another reason why the boys do not rush us. If a girl doesn't go with them to those places, she is considered a snob.

And let me tell you, my boys, we're not old-fashioned about how boys should act, but we do like to go out with decent boys. Also, every girl I know is good-looking and pleasant, so it's not our looks or disposition that boys run away from.

Any boy should be tickled to death to be seen in our company. I think boys like you do not like girls like us because we're sensible and intelligent and refuse to flatter your vanity.

Two girls in my crowd are engaged, and take their engagement seriously. As a matter of fact, all the girls I know think love and marriage are sacred, and not bunk, as you say.

You said that girls lead men on and then complain of being insulted. Well, since you are not a girl, you can't know how readily fellows insult nice girls. Also, you ought to know that a nice girl wouldn't lead a fellow on.

As I've mentioned before, I'm a nice girl, come from a good family, and I've been "insulted"—but only once! And I want you to know I don't lead men on.

You also said that fellows are fools for trusting girls. Well, Sime, all I ask is, don't you think that girls are fools for trusting some men? I suppose that some day I'll find a man who will be nearly all I hope for. I know he won't be perfect; but then, no one is. But, let me tell you,

Sime, I'd never marry a fellow who has ideas like yours. You're the type I hope to stay away from. I believe that some day I'll find a man who doesn't believe "love is the bunk," and that girls can't be trusted and are not loyal.

As for the remark you made about girls preferring boys who have money—money doesn't make a man, and I'd take a decent fellow without a cent any time, rather than put up with an insulting rich one.

Although so far I've not met any of the nice boys mother always tells me about, I'm still hoping. This is certainly more than you are doing. Why don't you use some of those brains you think only men are endowed with? That might help you to realize there are nice girls in the world. Am I right, girls? **HOPEFUL PAT.**

That seems to be a clear and frank opinion of one girl who is not shy in expressing her ideas about boys who carelessly try to belittle modern girls. What do the rest of you think? Do you agree with Hopeful Pat? Let's hear from you.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a school-teacher in my twenties. When I was twenty years old I met John, who is four years my senior. I went with him for three years. Neither of us dated any one else, and he seemed to think the world of me and was always very attentive.

Then I went to teach in another county and started going out with the principal of the school. At first I didn't take Tom seriously, but later I realized that I liked him a lot, and when he asked me to marry him I said "Yes." At the same time I couldn't help wondering how John would feel about it; he had been so nice to me.

This happened in the spring, and Tom and I decided to wait until fall to get married. He seemed to be a really fine man, although two years my junior. He knew about John, but never mentioned him.

When I went home in the spring and John found out about my engagement he didn't like it, and tried to induce me to marry him. I couldn't forget Tom, although I wrote and told him to forget me. He wanted to know my reason for breaking off with him, so I told him that I was not sure whom I really loved. However, every once in a while Tom came to see me.

Then I had a job in another State, and wrote Tom where I was going to be. But when John found out that I was going away he begged me to stay, and I did.

Tom wrote to the place where I was supposed to be but his letter was returned, and he didn't write to me again until about a year ago, when John and I planned to be married.

But John started dating other girls, and we drifted apart. He told me that I was too good for him, and that he couldn't live up to being a good husband. I felt very bad, having trusted him as I did. But I think it was only my pride that was hurt.

Then I decided to try to win Tom's affections again. I answered his letter in a friendly way, but he waited a month before replying, although in his letter he said it would be nice if we could get together again. We exchanged several letters, then he went to another State to teach, and in his last letter said he would always be glad to hear from me.

I haven't had any reply to my last two letters, however. What shall I do now? I know now I like him better than I have ever liked John. How can I win him back? I'll appreciate your advice. **VI.**

It is never easy, and sometimes quite impossible to recapture lost affection. Love might knock twice at our door, and even a third time, and it is tragic when we fail to recognize it. However, try not to feel so bad. I know you are disappointed, and I sympathize with you; but we can never be sure that what happens is not for the best. It is very probable that you might not have been happy with either man.

If either Tom or John had really loved you, neither would have been willing to give you up so readily. Make an effort to put both men out of your thoughts, and interest yourself in some one else.

I doubt if it would be advisable for you to continue trying to win Tom back, if your efforts to renew the friendship were met with half-hearted interest.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I've read your department for some time, and noticed that many men come to you with their problems. Here is mine:

I am twenty-three, considered good-looking, and have been married for three years.



I met my wife through correspondence. After writing to each other for several years, I left California and went to visit her and her folks in Arkansas. We fell in love. I returned to California and stayed a month, then went back to Arkansas.

We were married and lived together a little over a year. Our first child died. We did not get along so well before its birth, and I hoped things would straighten out, but they became worse. Soon afterward I returned to California.

Seven months after I left another child was born; she is a year old now, and I have never seen her.

My wife and I still think we love each other. I had never looked at another woman before our marriage, nor since. However, my wife refuses to leave her folks and come to California where I am working. She also says I cannot come back to her until I have enough money to buy a house.

I am unable to save the amount necessary to buy the house. Can you advise me what to do? I can't concentrate on my work because of my longing to see my wife and child.

I feel these two years have been wasted, and several more will go the same way unless something can be done, as I don't think I can save enough within several more years to comply with her wish.

Don't you think she should come here, or would only divorce clear the atmosphere? Neither of us want a divorce, but sometimes I think that would be the best solution.

CONFUSED.

Many of us have the mistaken idea that divorce can cure all ills. But nine times out of ten it makes matters worse, especially if there is a child to be considered.

If you and your wife feel that you care enough for one another to go on with the marriage, then divorce would hardly solve your problem. However, your wife is unreasonable in her demands that you stay away until you can afford to buy a house for her, and it is time that you two reached an understanding about the whole situation.

A wife's place is always with her husband. She should be willing to share your life wherever you can find

work, and make a home for her and your child. She should also try to understand that the child has every right to your love and companionship.

Perhaps if you can manage to go to see your wife personally, you will be able to straighten out this tangle.

Merely guessing at things, and wondering whether one course or another is best, is not very helpful. After you and your wife have had a chance to talk things over, I am sure you will be able to decide what to do. Perhaps you will be able to convince her that living with you in California will bring her happiness.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Will you please give me some advice? I'm a young fellow of sixteen. Some months ago I met a girl with whom I should very much like to get better acquainted, only I am very self-conscious.

Until now I have been called a woman-hater, but that was only because I was very shy and didn't even know how to talk to girls. Whenever I meet this girl on the street she always speaks to me, so I think that she likes me.

Will you please tell me how I can become more friendly with her? I suppose I could act like some boys I know, but their ways make me sick, and I think too highly of this girl to be too forward. WARREN.

Since you are reasonably sure that this girl likes you, it is doubtful if she would feel offended by an invitation to a movie, or for a walk with you on a nice Sunday afternoon. That would give you a chance to become better acquainted with her.

It is not unusual for a young man of your age to feel self-conscious and sometimes find it hard to be at ease with girls. But you must not let that worry you. After you have become more friendly with girls who interest you, you will be able to find many things to talk about and forget your shyness.

It is also to your credit to avoid

being too forward in making the acquaintance of girls. All girls appreciate a boy who at all times conducts himself in a gentlemanly manner and is careful not to spoil a budding friendship. High ideals help us to find life more worth while.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I married when I was only fifteen years old, and at sixteen I became a mother. Two years after that my husband and I separated.

Then my husband told my sister that if I would make up with him he would treat me better, so for the sake of my baby I went back to him. But a few days later he started going out with other girls, so I left him again.

Since then I have met a young man who seems to love me very much. He is paying for my divorce, and we are planning to get married this year. We have been living together as man and wife, and he has been very good to my baby.

However, my husband wants me to come back to him. I have tried to think it over, and for our child's sake I sometimes feel that I ought to give my husband another chance, but I don't want to give up this other man.

I think he is very reliable, will support me and my baby, and I believe that we can be happy together. Once in a while my husband sends me a few dollars for the baby, and my friend doesn't like it at all. He wants to give me and my baby anything we need.

Mrs. Brown, what shall I do? I doubt very much if my husband and I could ever be happy together, especially after what has happened. I'm afraid that if I go back to him he will throw it up to me about this man; that would make me miserable. And I will lose the man I love. I am only nineteen, and this man is twenty-two. Should we go ahead with our plan

and get married as soon as I am free, or must I go back to my husband? VAL.

Dear Val, no one can force you to do anything unless you want to. You must, however, decide for yourself whether you should give your husband still another chance, or go through with the divorce and marry this other man.

However, if you were old enough to be married it seems to me that you were old enough to assume the responsibilities of marriage. And I do not think that either you or your husband, or this other man, realize what marriage means. Real happiness cannot be found by changing husbands as one does one's clothes. Happiness in life comes from working for a loved one, from sharing joy and sorrow together, from giving. Remember the biblical saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And one can give of one's sympathy and good thoughts as well as of material things.

You say in your letter that you "think this man is reliable, that he seems to love you, that you believe you will be happy together." You are not sure, are you? I cannot see into your heart, his heart, nor your husband's, but I do know that two wrongs do not make a right. And I can only say to you that before you go any farther, stop and consider very carefully the seriousness of what you are doing.





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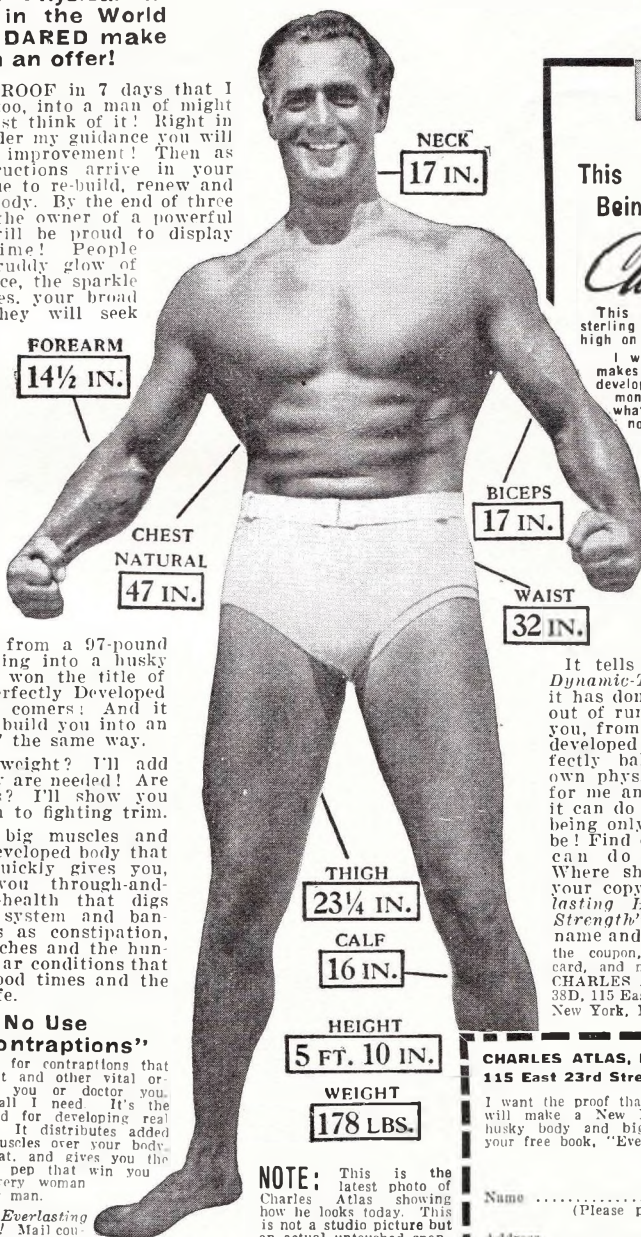
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# STOP <sup>THAT</sup> ITCHING AND SCRATCHING

According to the Government Health Bulletin No. E-28 at least 50% of the adult population of the United States are being attacked by the disease known as Athlete's Foot.

There are many other names given to this disease, but you can easily tell if you have it.

Usually the disease starts between the toes. Little watery blisters form and the skin cracks and peels. After a while the itching becomes intense and you feel as though you would like to scratch off all the skin.

## FOOT-ITCH (ATHLETE'S FOOT)

### Send Coupon-Don't Pay till Relieved

#### Beware of It Spreading

Often the disease travels all over the bottom of the feet. The soles of your feet become red and swollen. The skin also cracks and peels, and the itching becomes worse and worse.

It has been said that this disease originated in the trenches, so some people call it Trench Foot. Whatever name you give it, however, the thing to do is to get rid of it as quickly as possible, because it is very contagious and it may go to your hands or even to the under arm or crotch of the legs.

Most people who have Athlete's Foot have tried all kinds of remedies to cure it without success. Ordinary germicides, antiseptics, salve or ointments seldom do any good.

#### Here's How to Treat It

The germ that causes the disease is known as Tinea Trichophyton. It buries itself deep in the tissues of the skin and is very hard to kill. A test made shows that it takes 20 minutes of boiling to kill the germ, so you can see why the ordinary remedies are unsuccessful.

H. F. was developed solely for the purpose of treating Athlete's Foot. It is a liquid that penetrates and dries quickly. You just paint the affected parts. It peels off the infected skin and works its way deep into the tissue of the skin where the germ breeds.

#### Itching Stops Immediately

As soon as you apply H. F. you will find that the itching is immediately relieved. You should paint the infected parts with H. F. night and morning until your feet are well. Usually this takes from three to ten days, although in severe cases it may take longer or in mild cases less time.

H. F. will leave the skin soft and smooth. You will marvel at the quick way it brings you relief; especially if you are one of those who have tried for years to get rid of Athlete's Foot without success.



### H. F. Sent on FREE TRIAL

Sign and mail the coupon and a bottle of H. F. will be mailed you immediately. Don't send any money and don't pay the postman any money, don't pay anything any time unless H. F. is helping you. If it does help you we know that you will be glad to send us \$1.00 for the treatment at the end of ten days. That's how much faith we have in H. F. Read, sign and mail the coupon today.

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Please send me immediately a complete treatment for foot trouble as described above. I agree to use it according to directions. If at the end of 10 days my feet are getting better I will send you \$1.00. If I am not entirely satisfied I will return the unused portion of the bottle to you within 10 days from the time I receive it.

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