

15¢
IN U.S.A. **STREET & SMITH'S**
LOVE STORY ★

EVERY WEEK **MAGAZINE** MAY 7, 1932
ILLUSTRATED

*SHOPPING
FOR LOVE*

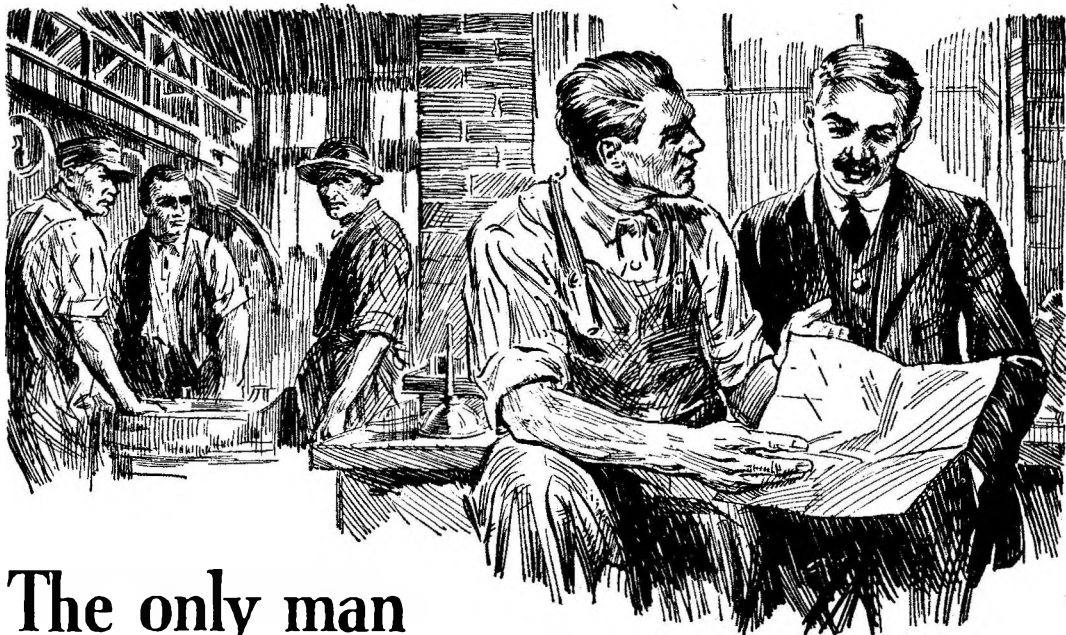


MODEST STEIN

ON THE AIR



**EVERY
THURSDAY
NIGHT**



The only man who could talk to the Superintendent

FOR several years, he was just like a score of other men in the plant—a good, honest, fairly capable worker, but only that. There was nothing distinctive about him or his ability—nothing to make him stand out from the crowd—no reason, as a matter of fact, why he should ever receive a raise in salary.

Then one fortunate day he decided that the reason he wasn't getting anywhere was because he lacked special training. He searched around a bit—asked a great many questions—and then enrolled for a home-study course with the International Correspondence Schools.

"Soon after I began studying," he wrote to us the other day, "we had a change in management at our plant. The new superintendent said that only men who had really studied their work were in line for positions as foremen.

"I certainly was glad then that I had decided to study in my spare time. For, thanks to my I. C. S. course, I was the only man in the organization who could talk to the superintendent in his own language. As a result, I was promoted over men who had been here from ten to twenty years. My salary has been increased 90% in the last ten months."

THAT'S a true story of what just one I. C. S. student has done. There are thousands of others. Every mail brings letters from men and

women telling of promotions and increases in salary due directly to spare-time study.

What are you doing with the hours after supper? Can you afford to let them slip by unimproved when you can easily make them mean so much?

One hour a day, spent with the I. C. S. in the quiet of your own home, will prepare you for success in the work you like best. *Yes, it will!* Put it up to us to prove it. Mail this coupon to-day.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

"The Universal University"

Box 2057-C, Scranton, Penna.

Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the subject before which I have marked X in the list below:

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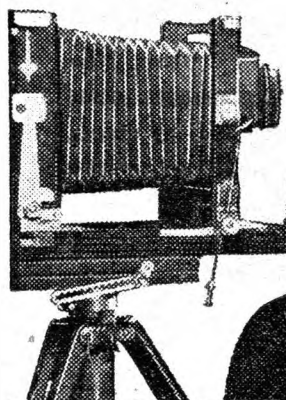
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**Some models are
terribly dumb**

"WE WERE talking about his beard when he stepped into the room. I'm afraid he overheard us. Anyway an awkward silence followed." This, briefly, was the story told us by a young woman a few days ago. The yarn intrigued us, so we decided to re-enact the scene before the camera and present it to our audience. But it was a really harrowing experience. Just try and get a good photograph of an embarrassed silence! So we decided to show you the picture in the making—and here it is.




Forgive us if this way of presenting our product seems informal. Life is largely serious and if we can get fun out of a difficult task, we feel sure you'll overlook it.

The fact is, we're *amazingly* serious about the present Gillette blades. **Emphatically, and without reservation, these are the sharpest, smoothest-shaving blades ever produced.** They make easy and comfortable the important duty of keeping clean shaven at all times. Use one or two blades. Then if you haven't changed your entire conception of shaving ease, return the package to your dealer and get your money back.

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Gillette

RAZORS  BLADES

THE GILLETTE BLUE SUPER-BLADE

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STREET & SMITH'S LOVE STORY MAGAZINE

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Vol. LXXXIX

EVERY WEEK

No. 5

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Laura Alston Brown is always ready to listen to your troubles.
All letters confidential.

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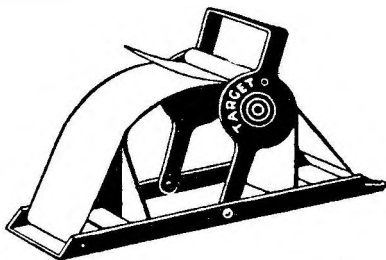
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THEY TASTE AND LOOK LIKE READY-MADES

PEOPLE will think you're smoking ready-mades. That's how perfect the cigarettes are that you make with the Target Roller.

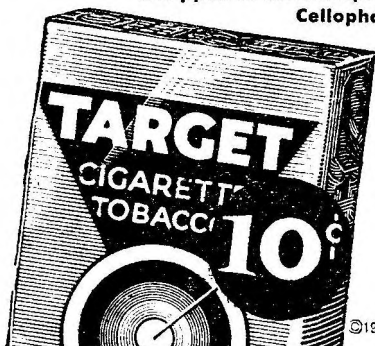
But even if you roll by hand, you'll have cigarettes that taste like ready-mades. Target is the same blend of tobaccos that the ready-mades use. The result is that you can enjoy the taste you've always enjoyed in cigarettes, and still save as much as fifty cents a week on your smokes.

A 10¢ pack of Target makes 30 or more cigarettes.



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Wrapped in Moistureproof
Cellophane



Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp., Louisville, Ky.

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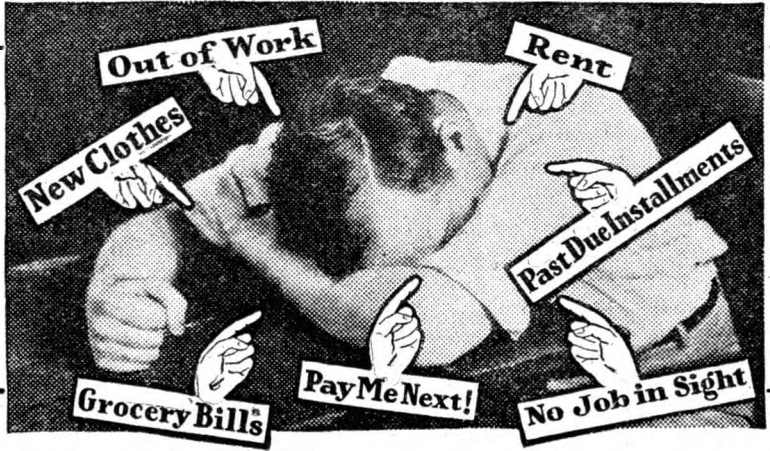
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You may wonder at making such big money as this even in the face of hard times. But my plan of operation, the Home "Chain Store" System is proving a sensation. Housewives are "wild" about it, because it's just like bringing two "chain stores" right into the home. Saves time, trouble and money. You simply call on regular customers once every two weeks on appointment,

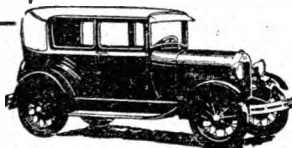
set up my Drug "Chain Store" and my Grocery "Chain Store," write down the order, handle the money and deliver the goods. You get a big part of every dollar we take in as your pay. And with an established Home Chain System, requiring only 30 calls a day, your pay can easily be \$15 a day, regular and steady.

Don't Send Any Money!

I don't want your money. All I want is a chance to lay the facts before you so you can decide for yourself. If you want a sure, steady chance to make \$15 a day—with an old, reliable, million-dollar manufacturing company—then mail the coupon and see how easy it is to start on my Home "Chain Store" System. You invest no money. Earnings start at once. Don't miss this chance. It doesn't cost a penny to investigate. You can't lose by mailing the coupon, so do it today—right now—before some neighbor gets in ahead of you!

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offer a brand-new
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or bonus—in addition
to their large
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coupon for particulars.

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Cincinnati, Ohio



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that offers a sure, steady chance to make
\$15 a day—starting at once. Also explain
your FREE Ford Offer.

Name

Address

© Z. P. Co. (Print or Write Plainly)

10 day SALE

FACTORY
Smashes
PRICE

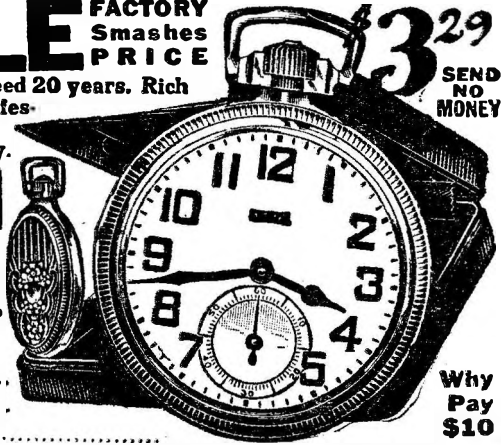
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Transference
Unusual Power

SECRET POWER



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Every Good Boy Deserves Fun **LOOK!**



Easy as A·B·C to learn music this way

JUST see how easy it is! The lines are always E-G-B-D-F. Memorize the sentence. "Every Good Boy Deserves Fun"—and there you are! Whenever a note appears on the first line, you know it is *e*. Whenever a note appears on the second line, you know it is *g*.

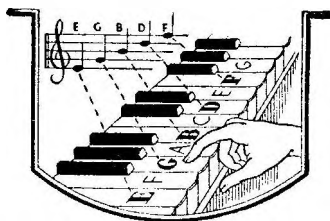
And the spaces—just as easy to remember. The four spaces are always F-A-C-E. That spells "face"—simple enough to remember, isn't it? Thus whenever a note appears in the first space, it is *f*. Whenever a note appears in the second space, it is *a*.

You have learned something already! Isn't it fun? You'll just love learning music this fascinating way! No long hours of tedious practice. No dull and uninteresting scales. No "tricks" or "secrets"—no theories—you learn to play real music from real notes.

You don't need a private teacher this pleasant way. In your own home, alone, without interruption or embarrassment, you study this fascinating, easy method of playing. Practice as much or as little as you like, to suit your own convenience, and enjoy every minute of it.

**You learn from the
start—Previous
training un-
necessary**

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The surest way to popularity

"Don't be just 'another one of the guests' at the next party you go to. Be the center of attraction! The most popular one at a party is always the person who can entertain—and there is no finer and more enjoyable kind of entertainment than music.

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**No alibis now for not
learning to play
your favorite
instrument**

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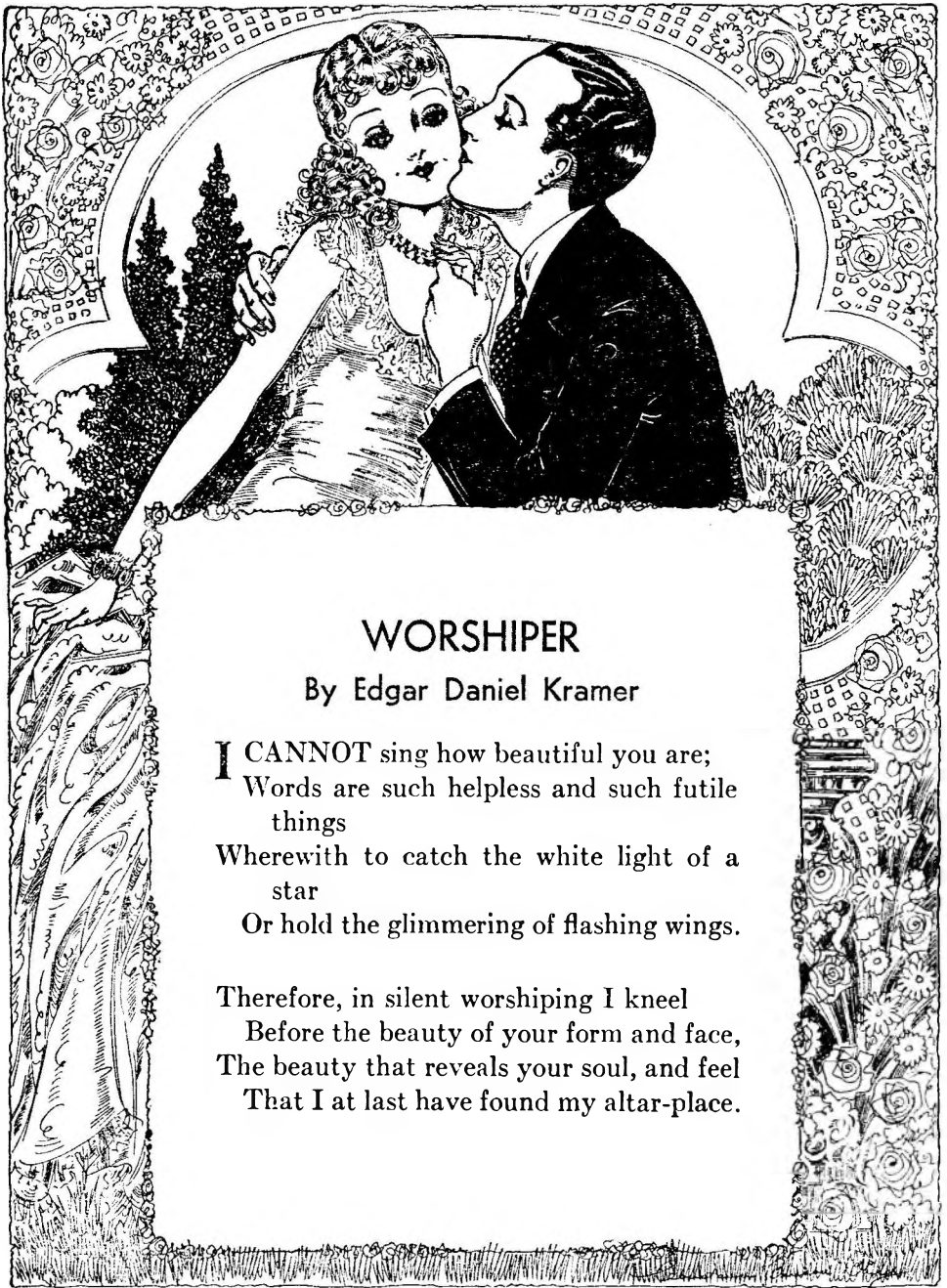
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LISTERINE ends HALITOSIS checks BODY ODORS



WORSHIPER

By Edgar Daniel Kramer

I CANNOT sing how beautiful you are;
Words are such helpless and such futile
things
Wherewith to catch the white light of a
star
Or hold the glimmering of flashing wings.

Therefore, in silent worshipping I kneel
Before the beauty of your form and face,
The beauty that reveals your soul, and feel
That I at last have found my altar-place.



The Star's Understudy

By Lorna Wentworth

THE girl out on the vine-screened veranda of the strange house hidden among the hills, saw the car as it turned into the gate under the trees. She was immediately interested. In spite of the miracle of her new job, Lisa Bond had already come to feel lonesome on the secluded farm behind the barrier of the Palisades. It was so near New York, and yet so far, she thought whimsically.

Behind her, the low, rambling house looked as if it had fallen asleep in the eight-o'clock dusk. The

shutters had been closed at every window so that none of the brilliant light she had left inside would be seen or suspected from the outside. It was a still unexplained precaution. Even the rising moon, round and glowing, shed merely a sparse and checkered light through the crowded leaves.

Its headlights dimmed, the car came up the rough driveway and stopped in front of the veranda steps. A young man sprang out from behind the wheel. Catching sight of her white figure at the top

of the steps, he rushed impetuously forward and clasped Lisa in his strong arms before she could utter any cry of surprise or warning. Yet in the dim light, she was little more than a vague shadow of waiting beauty.

"Oh, you lovely thing!" he cried, as he crushed her to him. "You did want to see me; you were waiting for me! This is the first time that ever happened, Marilyn! So it pays to stay away from you three weeks—but right here is where I get my reward for it!"

A storm of kisses fell on Lisa's hair, her cheeks, her closed eyes, and then on her lips.

Held very tightly, Lisa Bond could even feel his heart beating hard against hers. His kisses filled her with a strange ecstasy, until she suddenly realized that her own lips were weakly and unintentionally responding to his. Horrors! She pulled partly away from him, twisting her head with an hysterical little laugh.

"Please!" she gasped. "Oh, stop, Mr. Huntington! You've got the wrong girl. I'm not Marilyn Mountfort. You—you caught me so quickly, I couldn't stop you!"

"What?" he ejaculated, trying to stare at her in the faint light, although he still kept his arms around her. "And who are you? Why, I'd have sworn you were Marilyn. I'd almost believe it now, if——"

"If you weren't still holding me only an inch away, you mean?" asked Lisa with flushed cheeks and bright eyes. "I'd have thought that at least you might have told by the taste," she said wickedly, as he let her go. "Though we're quite alike, our lipsticks are different."

"Well, if you're not Marilyn," he demanded, "who are you? And how is it I never saw or heard of you

before? And how do you happen to know me in the dark, right off the bat? Don't tell me you knew me by the taste!" he grinned.

"Certainly not," Lisa assured him. "You were expected, weren't you? Just the same, you might remember seeing me, even if it was only once. For a few seconds I almost thought you'd overremembered me."

"Was I drunk or blind or both when I saw you? I'm ashamed to say that I can't seem to place you."

"You were in love, I think," said Lisa gravely. "And no wonder you couldn't see me! Don't you remember being with Marilyn Mountfort three weeks ago when she was picking out some gowns at Cyr's on Fifth Avenue? You're her Mr. Huntington, aren't you?"

"Kent Huntington. And you—why, you're the model who——"

"Who showed the gowns," Lisa interposed. "But don't you want to go in and see Miss Mountfort?"

"One girl, one thing at a time, please," smiled Kent Huntington. "Since it was you who came outside to welcome me——"

"She sent me," said Lisa simply.

"Oh! Then she must have wanted me to become acquainted with you. But how do you happen to be here, anyway? I thought her idea in picking this place was absolute seclusion. Are you helping her hide away from people?"

Lisa drew a deep breath.

"Isn't she perfectly wonderful?" she demanded. "What do you think? She picked me, as well as a lot of clothes at Madame Cyr's, just on account of my looks!"

"Yes, you do look like her," nodded Kent, "though I didn't notice it so much at the time as Marilyn seemed to."

"That's because since then she's been teaching me to act and move

and be like her, besides making me up to match her. Why, I may even be her understudy sometime! She says she can fix it so I can get a job in Hollywood. Just think of it—a famous movie star like Marilyn Mountfort picking me—nothing but a model in a gown shop—because of my looks!”

“Because you look like her,” frowned Kent Huntington, with a feeling of faint uneasiness, wondering what Marilyn’s idea was.

“But to take me in, pay me for playing secretary when there isn’t a thing to do, plan a wonderful career for me! Don’t you think she’s the dearest, sweetest, most generous person in the world?” Lisa’s voice was husky with tenderness and gratitude.

“I’ve heard her say that she’s been looking for a double for some time,” said Kent with strange reluctance. “I hope it doesn’t mean that there’ll be any dangerous stunts in her next picture—if there is to be a next one,” he added a little grimly.

“I’d jump out of a plane for her,” said Lisa enthusiastically.

“Well,” he shrugged, “if Marilyn was after a double, she got one. Look how you fooled me! I refuse to offer you even the shadow of an apology.”

Lisa crimsoned and bit her lip.

“You’d better go in to see her. She’s expecting you, you know. Please tell her I’m staying outside for a few minutes more.”

Kent parted his lips to speak, then closed them and opened the door.

Left alone out in the moonlight, Lisa considered a second miracle, while Kent Huntington’s kisses, which really belonged to Marilyn Mountfort, slowly cooled upon her lips.

Yet it was all one miracle, Lisa mused.

Three weeks before, Lisa Bond, model for Madame Cyr, New York’s most exclusive and expensive modiste, had been moving in a slow peacock parade before a new and promising customer. From under her lowered lashes, Lisa had seen the other girl lying languidly back in a chair. Beside her had been a handsome, well-groomed young man, nervously twirling his cane.

Suddenly raising her glittering golden head, the customer stared hard at Lisa herself, rather than at the gorgeous gown she was exhibiting. Then she turned and whispered something to her escort, who gazed, grinned, and seemed to agree.

Lisa ventured to stare at the customer a moment herself, and her heart almost stopped beating. She recognized the customer as Marilyn Mountfort, a screen star of the first magnitude. Lisa had seen and admired and envied her countless times on the silver sheet, and here was her idol in the flesh!

Unconsciously, Lisa changed her walk and held her head a little differently, in perfect imitation of the pose and poise she had so often studied in Marilyn Mountfort’s pictures.

“Well, wouldn’t that knock you for a row of ninepins!” exclaimed the Hollywood queen. “Darling, do you see what I see?”

“You bet I do! And what is it we see?” inquired the young man warily.

“Don’t be dumb!” said Miss Mountfort scornfully. “Wouldn’t you say that girl was Marilyn Mountfort, if you saw her from a bum projector?”

“Mistake anybody else for you, dear? Absolutely impossible!”

Nevertheless, he seemed to regard Lisa with increased interest.

“Well, of course,” Miss Mount-

fort shrugged, "she hasn't my style, and she's a little dumpy about the hips. But I'll bet I could make her up so you couldn't tell the difference after the first few drinks, darling. Maybe I could use her," she had added, narrowing her lovely eyes. "Model, come here!"

Lisa, trembling with excitement at having been spoken to by the great Marilyn Mountfort, obeyed the order.

"What's your name, girl?" drawled the star.

"Lisa Bond."

"Know who I am?"

"Of course," trembled Lisa. "Who wouldn't know Marilyn Mountfort? Everybody knows you!"

"She's got brains as well as beauty, Kent Huntington," Marilyn nodded, her red lips curving with satisfaction. "She's the first person in this town who's recognized me today! Listen, Lisa Bond; how would you like to break into pictures?"

"Me?" gasped Lisa. "What girl wouldn't, if she had the chance?"

"And the face, and the figure, and the glad rags," answered the star dryly. "And even at that, they most of them flop, unless they're somebody like me, or somebody I can give a hand to."

"Are you offering to—to help me?" the astounded Lisa asked.

"That depends," said the screen star, looking hard at her. "If you'd do just what you're told, I might. Want to come around and see me to-morrow morning?"

"Yes—of course—and thank you!" Lisa felt dizzy with the casual swiftness of it all.

"At twelve then—Hotel Royal," said Marilyn Mountfort. "I'll be having breakfast in bed, and they'll send you up. Only don't ask for me," she had frowned. "Ask for Mrs. Rayleigh, from Florida. That's

the name I'm registered under. I'm here incognito. Understand?"

Lisa nodded. Marilyn Mountfort rose.

"You can tell madame to send the clothes I picked to the same name," she said carelessly. "What you've got on and the others you showed. But keep quiet about me," she warned Lisa darkly. "I'm supposed to be abroad."

And then Marilyn Mountfort, taking the pleasing Kent Huntington in tow, sailed out of Madame Cyr's, leaving the most elated and flabbergasted girl in New York.

Lisa had kept the appointment the next day. She had found Marilyn Mountfort eating breakfast in bed surrounded by a dozen inane, long-legged silk dolls.

"I've got it all figured out," beamed the star. "Want to take a chance?"

"I'll do anything for you, Miss Mountfort!" Lisa exclaimed.

"It's a good thing you will," announced Marilyn. "We're going to bury ourselves in the country wilds, all right. I mean," she added hastily, "that I'm taking a sort of nerve cure, just keeping away from everybody."

"I understand," nodded Lisa, wide-eyed.

Of course! These popular screen stars simply had to get away by themselves sometimes. The fans never gave them a moment's peace otherwise.

"I've rented a place across the river in what they call Rockland County," explained Miss Mountfort sullenly, "up in the hills somewhere back of Stony Point. And I'll say a country churchyard is a high-class night club beside it!"

"Rockland County?" ventured Lisa. "Why, that's where my people come from!"



"What?" snapped Marilyn, sitting up. "They told me that whole section was completely off the map! That's why I——"

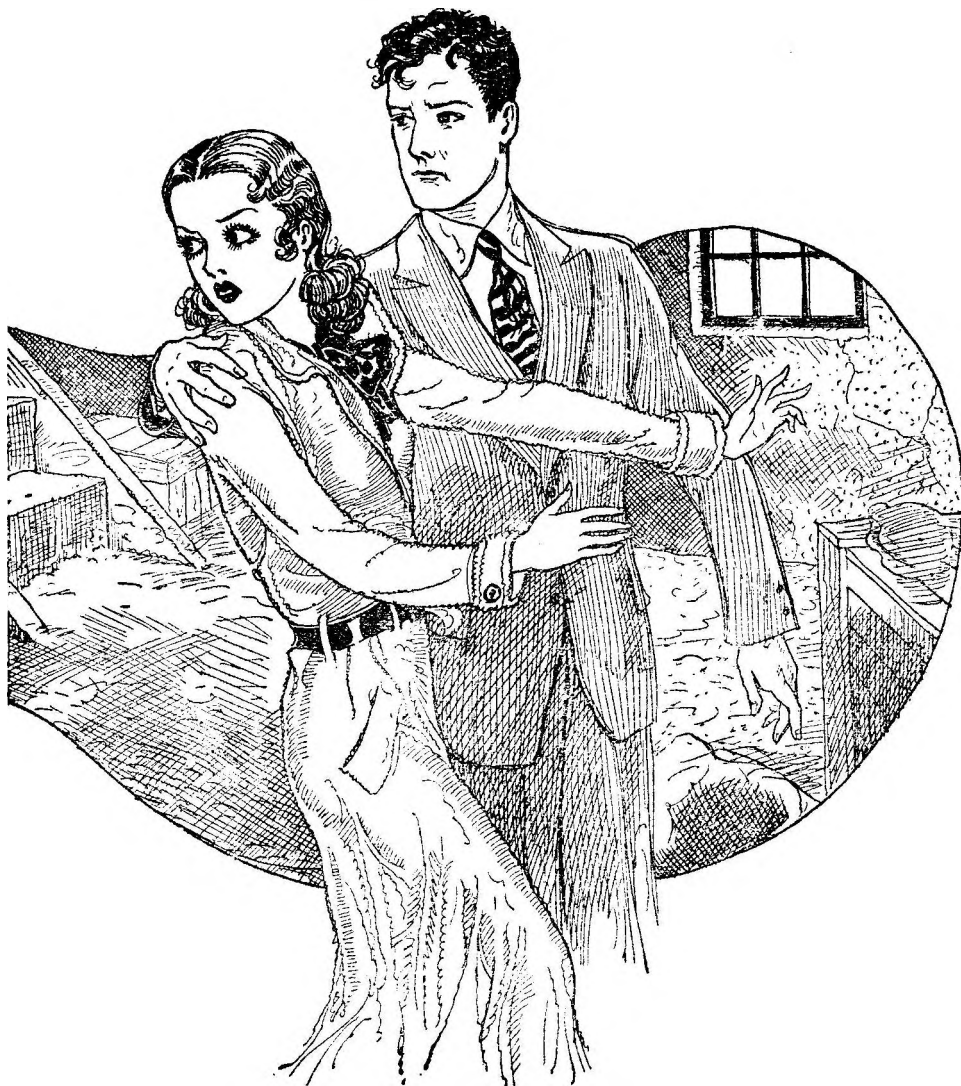
"Don't worry," Lisa soothed her. "Up in the hills where you're talking about, there are nothing but little abandoned farms like ours. Nobody's been on ours since I was eight years old. It's lonely enough up there."

"I'll say!" mocked Marilyn. "But it can't be helped yet. And as for you, darling, I'll train you till you're me, right down to the last raise of the eyebrow. Dolled up in my kind

of clothes, with the right kind of make-up and a few of my little tricks, you'll be able to double for me in pretty nearly anything but a close-up; see?"

Lisa saw. It was like seeing into heaven. At last all her girlhood dreams were coming true.

"You can call yourself my secretary or anything you like," said Marilyn, "and I'll pay you for it. I guess we'll beat it over to that rural retreat right now. I was a fool to come into this town at all—I might be recognized any minute! Don't worry about clothes. I've got



Lisa hurled herself at Kent. "Shoot!" she cried. "You'll have to kill me first, and then you won't get a cent!"

trunk loads that will fit you better than your own. Let's go!"

They had gone. And here was Lisa, waiting out on the veranda, because she suddenly couldn't bear to see Kent Huntington giving Marilyn Mountfort the kind of kisses he had given her.

That second encounter with him had affected Lisa curiously. She

was astonished to find how clear a picture of him had remained in her mind when if it had not been for the screen star's occasional references to him, she would have thought she had forgotten him entirely. Even before he had taken her in his arms, mistaking her for Marilyn, her heart had quickened as she recognized him. And when he

had kissed her, his kisses had seemed to bring out every look and line of him in an etching on her heart, just as heat makes sharp and clear the invisible acid of secret writing.

But he belonged to Marilyn Mountfort. Marilyn had made it plain enough even back at Madame Cyr's.

Lisa was startled by a call from within the house.

"Lisa! Come in!"

In the brightly lighted but closely shuttered living room, Lisa found Marilyn and Kent.

"We're going to get out of this place in a hurry," explained Marilyn shortly and nervously. "As I've been telling Kent, it isn't safe."

The screen star moved stealthily toward the door to listen. Then she opened it swiftly and closed it again. Lisa stared at her, wide-eyed.

"What's the matter?" she whispered. "What's wrong?"

Kent shook his head.

"Marilyn seems to think," he said slowly, "that she's in danger from something or somebody."

"I don't think; I know," said Marilyn desperately.

"And she won't tell me what it's about or let me call in the police."

"The police!" Marilyn snapped. "If I could go to the police, don't you suppose I'd have gone long ago? This is raw stuff. It's a plot to ruin me, to fix me so I can never sign another contract, to——"

"Oh!" cried Lisa. "Somebody's frightfully jealous of you, and I wouldn't wonder! Do you mean they'd even capture you and hold you until it was too late to sign one?"

Marilyn stared at her.

"I wouldn't put anything past them," she said somberly, almost contemptuously.

"Listen!" urged Lisa excitedly. "After all you've done for me and all you're going to do, shouldn't I do something for you? Tell me; are you afraid they'll try to get you here? Well, then, why don't you just slip out quietly with Mr. Huntington in his car, and leave me here—to double for you? You've said yourself that only a few people could tell the difference between us."

"No!" said Kent impulsively. "Marilyn wouldn't throw you to the wolves while she made her escape. I wouldn't—I mean she wouldn't stand for it!"

Marilyn flung him a lightning, murderous glance.

"Kent's right," she said stiffly. "I wouldn't think of it. Anyway, this place is being watched, and if I tried to leave, they'd grab me."

Lisa laughed.

"All right, then. I'll go with him and let them follow me, if they think I'm you! His car looks as if it could do eighty. The plan will work if you're sure that they'd be fooled, whoever they are, and that you'd be all right staying here. What's the use of being a double if you don't double?"

Kent started to protest again, but Lisa stopped him.

"Listen, boy friend," she smiled, "somebody's got to do something. It's either go or stay, and you take your choice. If Marilyn's right about their watching and waiting, then——"

"How about it?" Kent frowned at the movie star. "Do you really know what you're talking about, Marilyn? It sounds crazy to me!"

"Think I'm doping out a gangster scenario?" Marilyn snapped. "I've got too many easier things to do! I know mighty well what I'm talking about, and believe me, I wish I didn't! Why do you suppose I ever

hid myself in this hole and tried to pull it in after me?" said Marilyn bitterly. "Living with three servants and a useless secretary when I'm used to twenty and better out in California! And they planted one on me, at that! I caught my own maid at the phone the other day; that's why I wrote to you, Kent. And to-night, just before you came, I got some more dope. She even knew you were on your way, heading through Jersey, and she was passing it on. The only good thing is that the big shot won't be here for another day or so, and till then, they'll let the house alone."

Wild as the story sounded, it was impossible to discredit the movie actress. Her terror was too evident and too genuine.

"Then if we drew them off, you could slip out yourself all right tomorrow?" Lisa asked tensely.

"As you, yes," answered Marilyn, narrowing her eyes. "That is, if they chased you, thinking you were I. And you might get away from them, at that."

"It wouldn't really matter," grinned Lisa, "because when they found out who I really was, what could they do? And what an adventure it would be! Why, it would be like being in the movies already!"

"I don't like it!" growled Kent, looking from one girl to the other.

"But what you going to do about it?" asked Lisa demurely. "Do you object to taking me back to New York, or do we all wait here for the big shot? Is he some big rival to your crowd, Marilyn?"

Marilyn nodded, hardly hesitating at all.

"Let's go!" said Lisa, jumping up. "I'll take your hat and coat, Marilyn, just for luck, and you go and turn yourself into an innocent little dumb-bell of an ex-model."

Crossing over to Marilyn, she put her arms around her and kissed her.

"You don't know how glad I am to be able to do even one little thing for you, you beautiful thing! I've always admired you so! And you've been so good to me!"

Marilyn muttered a conventionally proper response. A moment later, Lisa pushed Kent ahead of her out on the dark veranda.

"Get that starter working," she whispered, "and then step on it! We'll give them a run for their money, if they happen to have a car down the road."

For an instant, they stood alone in the darkness as they heard Marilyn shut and bolt the heavy door behind them. Then Kent suddenly snatched Lisa to him and kissed her three times, hard.

"That's for courage and loyalty and—and love," he said hoarsely. "Marilyn owes you something, and I only hope she understands how much! If she ever forgets it——"

Two minutes later, the car purred down the driveway, turned through the gate, and opened up with a roar for the open road.

"In half an hour, we'll be across the State line and in a bunch of Jersey towns as close together as hens on a roost," said Kent a short time afterward. "And we haven't seen a thing behind us all the way!"

He had just time to jam his brakes on and turn the wheel before crashing into a red-lighted obstruction in the road ahead. As the big car jarred to a stop and he and Lisa recovered their balance and their breath, two dark figures appeared to right and left.

"Hands up and out you come, guy," ordered one of them, emphasizing the order with an automatic that glinted in the moonlight.

"And you, too, baby," snapped

the man on Lisa's side of the car. "No stalling."

Kent groaned in futile fury. Lisa, taking advantage of her sex, was bolder.

"Don't you dare touch me!" she cried angrily, nevertheless stepping out of the car without delay. "What do you think you're doing, holding up people on the road this way!"

Her man chuckled.

"This is no holdup, kid—at least, not the watch-and-pocketbook kind. It's going to cost you a bank and a jewelry store before you're through with it, if you get through with it! What will we do with the big guy, Sam—croak him and leave him in the car? No call for him, is there?"

Lisa's heart seemed to stop for an instant. She could see Kent across the machine, his captor's gun shoved between his shoulder blades.

"Not so far as I know," growled the other man reluctantly, "but maybe we'd better take him along, too, and let the boss decide. Run that car into the ditch and clear the road. Chuck this couple into the big box, boys, and get going."

From behind the barrier appeared another man and suddenly the lights of a big limousine. Barrier and red light were disposed of, and Kent's car was rolled into a deep ditch. Then Kent and Lisa were hustled into the limousine, two men following them. The third climbed in beside the driver, and the car began to move.

Kent ventured a plea which he knew would be perfectly useless.

"If you men will let this girl go, I'll guarantee to get you five thousand dollars, and you can keep me until I do."

"Don't make me laugh!" snarled one of the two men facing him. "Maybe you can buy your own skin for five grand; you can fight that

out with the higher-ups. But as for this crooked, double-crossing little movie skirt, five grand won't be a nickel to what she's going to cost herself, according to what I hear. So don't bother your head, brother."

"But you're making a terrible mistake!" Kent said recklessly. "She isn't——"

A little fist jabbed him in the ribs in the darkness, and his own common sense, plus his painfully divided loyalty, checked him.

The limousine, curtains down, was running fast, apparently back over the road by which they had just come. But suddenly it wheeled sharply to the left, and Kent lost all sense of direction after a few more turns. He couldn't see much more than the glint of light through the front window that fell on the two guns constantly pointed at him and Lisa. But the darkness of the back seat had its advantage. He gripped as comfortably as he could, a little hand that lay quite concealed in his.

"Are you all right, Lisa?" he whispered.

"Shut up!" snapped one of the silhouetted captors.

Kent shut up.

Three quarters of an hour later, the road began to get very rough and narrow, judging by the bouncing and twisting of the big car. And when it finally came to a stop, the moon was down, so that only deeper shadows were visible against the night. The door was opened, and they were ordered out into the feeble light of a small lantern. Grasped by the arms, the man and the girl were led across a stretch of grass to a black block that showed in the flicker of the lantern as a building. They were led inside and roughly shown down some steps into a damp depth. Then, a trapdoor was slammed and bolted above them.



Kent stared at her, horror in his eyes. "Do you mean to say, Marilyn, that you won't even make an effort to save the life of that girl who—whose little finger is worth your whole self?"

Kent took two steps in the blackness and fell over a barrel.

"Oh, don't leave me!" Lisa cried out. "Please hold onto me!"

He felt for her, and drew her into the circle of his arm. Then he felt his way forward until he struck a wall and stepped on straw.

"This must be a cellar of some sort, and we'd better camp here, dear, until we get some light—if we're ever going to."

He sat down carefully in the straw, drawing Lisa down beside him. She crept as closely as she could into his arms, trembling.

"Be brave, darling," he whispered. "It'll come out all right, somehow. Remember, you're not Marilyn. It was Marilyn they were after."

"I'm n-not afraid," chattered Lisa. "It's only because I'm c-cold. We must be high up in the hills again. I could feel we were climbing. Nights are cold in the hills, even in summer."

Kent wrapped his coat tightly around her, then drew her to him again. Lisa laid her head back on his shoulder with a little sigh.

"You said they were after Marilyn," offered Lisa presently. "Do you believe, Kent, that when they find out who I am, they'll let us go? Wouldn't they be afraid to?"

Kent stiffened.

"Perhaps it would be better if you let them think you were Marilyn for as long as possible," he said carefully. "It's apparently big money that they want from her. She's got it, of course."

"But I haven't."

"That wouldn't make any difference, if we could get word to her," he said. "She'd pay the sum they asked, if necessary. Marilyn's a fine person," he said stubbornly, "even if she is a little—unusual at times. You needn't be afraid, poor baby, that she wouldn't pay anything they asked for you if she had to."

"Oh, yes," said Lisa wearily. "But what about you?"

"I'll get myself out of this hole, if I can," answered Kent in a harder voice. "I wouldn't let a woman buy my life for me."

"You'd expect me to go free and leave you here, Kent?" she demanded indignantly. "Guess again! We go or stay together—or die together!"

Kent held her close.

"Listen, Kent," said Lisa, in a strained voice after a moment's si-

lence. "I want to tell you something. It's easier to do it in the dark when you can't see me at all. I might be too ashamed if it were light. I just want to tell you that I love you," she whispered. "I love you! I loved you when I first saw you with Marilyn at Madame Cyr's. I didn't know it then, but I knew it last night when you kissed me. Oh, I know you thought you were kissing Marilyn. I know you love her, and that's perfectly all right with me. Only it was I you kissed last night!" she said passionately. "Even if I stole it, I got that much!"

Waves of fire and ice flowed through Kent Huntington. In his arms, he held love such as he had never known or understood till now. Everything else—all the past—all women, even Marilyn—seemed small and mean to him beside the girl he held in his arms.

For a long moment, Kent's humiliation and self-contempt kept him from any demonstration of his emotion; then desire and love and grief at last compelled him, and he bent forward to kiss Lisa. But she pushed him gently away.

"No," she said steadfastly. "Marilyn!"

Day disclosed itself by a slight diffusion of light through the small window, clearly near the ground outside, but ten feet above the cellar floor. Kent began to see dimly that they were confined in a deep cellar littered with trash and ancient farm implements which were falling to pieces from disuse and age. But he couldn't rise to investigate more closely, for Lisa was sound asleep in his arms.

He had forgotten to wind his watch. It had stopped at twenty minutes past seven, presumably in the morning. He judged it must be

noon, when there was a creak of rusty iron above and the bulkhead was lifted. Down the stairs came three men, the first of them dressed like a newly rich millionaire, with a quantity of diamond rings glittering on his hands. The other men held revolvers. Kent awoke Lisa as gently as he could and stood up.

"Well, well, here we are!" grinned the gangster chief, showing a row of gold teeth that glittered almost as brightly as his diamonds. "And I had to come all the way from California to find you, Marilyn. Traveling is expensive, you know."

Lisa stared at him without winking an eyelash.

"How much?" she asked in an icy voice.

"How much did it cost me?" He laughed aloud. "Oh, nothing at all compared to what it's going to cost you to get back there, baby!"

"How much?" repeated Lisa tonelessly.

The gangster's eyes hardened to black marble, and the muscles of his face tightened.

"How much? Well, we'll see. You made a million dollars last year, but you spent it like water. Maybe you've got a couple of hundred grand left. And then"—his voice got colder and colder—"you went in with that dope business from Mexico at a nice profit, and you ran away with the whole shipment of goods you took to be distributed in Hollywood. A hundred grand, in the least, at fair prices! That is then three hundred grand! We'll say it will cost you three hundred and fifty thousand to get out of here."

"Three hundred and fifty thousand dollars!" said Lisa, trying to keep terror out of her voice. "But that's impossible. Nobody could raise that much money!"

"I, James Polliti, will show you how," he said cynically. "It's easy if you do it right. You've got fifty thousand in the bank, and you can make over to me those four big apartment houses you have in Los Angeles."

Lisa knew no more of Marilyn Mountfort's affairs than she did of Mr. James Polliti's, and she stood mute and staggered. She glanced at Kent, who looked pale and drawn. Mr. Polliti frowned blackly.

"It's hard to control my men after you double-crossed them. Up here on this old abandoned farm, nobody would ever find you—or him!" He threw a flaming glance at Kent.

Lisa started.

"But how—how can I do it?" she asked shakily. "I'll have to go myself, and it would take weeks——"

"It would take a day or two," said Mr. Polliti. "I'd go with you myself. If you forgot what banks your money was in, I could show you. I know!"

"Hey, chief, this guy is getting nervous," interrupted one of the gangsters. "Why don't we give it to him right here?"

Mr. Polliti shrugged.

"Why not? Maybe it will help Marilyn to make up her mind. Anyway, we can't let him go."

The two revolvers were raised in an instant. Lisa hurried herself at Kent and flung her arms about his neck.

"Shoot!" she cried. "You'll have to kill me first, and then you won't get a cent!" Despite Kent's almost brutal efforts to push her away, she clung to him.

"Don't shoot!" snapped Mr. Polliti, frowning.

"I'll send for the money if you promise not to kill him," gasped Lisa. "Do you want it or don't you?"

Mr. Polliti waved a hand, and the automatics disappeared.

"Send? I said I'd go with you."

Lisa laughed.

"If you did, they'd throw you in jail and send me to an insane asylum, and you know it," she said scornfully. "Marilyn Mountfort isn't any better known than James Pilloti, the gangster!"

"That's right," admitted Mr. Polliti, a trace of pride in his tone. "But what will we do? I'd rather lose the money than let you go, sweetheart. To tell you the truth, I'd rather kill you, anyway. You've double-crossed James Polliti!"

"Why not send him?" Lisa nodded toward Kent. "I—I love him, and he'll come back to me. I'd risk my life on it! I'll give him letters to the banks."

"Risk your life on it," is right," nodded Mr. Polliti after a sharp look at Kent. "He can go, and if he doesn't come back, or if he comes without the money, he knows what will happen. We can use a gun on you, you know, just as we have on a lot of other people. But first," he added significantly, "you'll make love even better than you do on the screen!"

Lisa flung herself at Kent again.

"Just one more kiss!" she whispered. "Afterward—all your kisses will be Marilyn's!"

The gangsters tore her away from him. His arms were bound and his eyes bandaged; then he was led to the car.

"Take him where he wants to go," Polliti ordered his men, "but don't let him know the way he's taken. Then bring him back—if he comes back to you!"

Lisa hurled herself at Kent for one final whisper.

"Don't come back! If you love me, don't come back!"

"Throw her back in the cellar!" commanded Mr. Polliti coldly.

And Lisa was returned to her prison.

"Three hundred and fifty thousand dollars!" cried Marilyn in stunned amazement. "You're absolutely crazy, Kent Huntington! If it had been something reasonable—say, a thousand, or even three—I might have handed it over for her, but no girl on earth is worth that much. What do you care, anyway, darling? You're safe out of it, aren't you?"

Kent stared at her, horror in his eyes.

"Do you mean to say, Marilyn, that you won't even make an effort to save the life of that girl whose little finger is worth your whole self?"

"That's the way you feel, is it?" she flamed back at him. "No; I wouldn't waste another nickel on her! If you want to know, she took a chance and got well paid for it! It was understood between us from the beginning, that she was to be my double for any sort of stunt! And I gave her fifty dollars a week—more than she'd ever earned in all her life before—besides food and lodging and a flock of clothes! If she had an accident, she's out of luck; that's all. It's none of my affair. This is just what I hired her for."

"You're the most cold-blooded fiend I ever heard of!" he cried, his face white with horror and contempt. "Has it occurred to you that I might report what I learned about your dope running to the Federal government?"

Marilyn Mountfort shrieked with laughter.

"Go ahead, you poor dumb-bell! And has it occurred to you that you haven't got a thing on me, outside



"I want to marry you to-morrow," said Kent. "I can't do without you ever again, my darling!"

of some nasty cracks made by a gangster and a gunman? Believe me, everything's planted where even James Polliti couldn't find it in a thousand years, and as for him—I snap my fingers at him! I'm safe here in New York, and I'm going to sail for—wouldn't you like to know where—in just two days. So give my regards to Mr. James Polliti, and that's all he'll ever get from me. I'm through with him and you and the screen and everybody!"

Kent left the room, his face grim with fear.

Soon afterward, he was back at the place he had agreed to meet Mr. Polliti's gangsters. If he had had any idea how to get back to the desolate farm in the mountains where he had left Lisa, he would have knocked them unconscious and gone on himself. As it was, they searched him before binding his arms and blindfolding him, mockingly depriving him of a gun.

When they arrived, he was led to the trapdoor and pushed down the steps. Polliti was absent on some minor business.

To his amazement, Lisa flung her arms around his neck and broke into tearful, incoherent laughter.

"Oh, Kent darling, we're saved!" she sobbed. "We can escape! Oh, where do you think we are?"

"Dearest, don't get so excited," he said, trying to calm her.

"No, no, there's a way out," she insisted, "if I can find it in the dark! Kent, where do you think we are? This is my old home!"

The gangsters hadn't been thorough; they had left him some matches. He struck one, really to look at her. Lisa grabbed the box and dragged him over to a corner.

"Down here!" she whispered. "It's under those boxes; I know it's there, but I couldn't lift them. Look, Kent! Look!"

Kent lifted the boxes. In the corner of the brick floor was a hole, more than half filled with the debris of the years.

"It goes through to the house," Lisa whispered. "Don't you understand, my darling? This is where I used to live, my first home, where all my people were! They all left when I was a little girl only eight years old. But, Kent, this opening goes right up into the house from our old cellar, the place where we are! I found it once because the cat used it, and I dug it out and made it bigger and often used it myself."

He pulled out the rubbish that filled the little tunnel's crumbled mouth.

"Just where does it lead to, Lisa?"

"Into the back shed of the house. I'll go first."

Propping up the boxes so that they would fall and cover the hole

again and thus delay possible pursuit, Kent followed her. When he emerged in the dilapidated shed of the house, he found Lisa peering through a broken door.

"One of the men is in the kitchen," she whispered. "Oh, be careful!"

Looking about for a weapon, Kent found a wagon spoke.

"You stay here," he commanded, "and slip back into the tunnel if you hear any trouble."

Then he gently eased the door open and crept forward. The unsuspecting gangster, who was reading a newspaper, raised his head only in time to met the descending spoke, and then slipped quietly to the floor. Kent heard a gasp behind him, and turned to see Lisa.

"I told you to stay back there!" he said recklessly.

Lisa shook her head.

"If anything happens it—it's got to happen to both of us," she stammered, "until we get back to—Marilyn, of course."

"Marilyn? There isn't any Marilyn! I know now I never loved her, Lisa."

Lisa looked at him with all her heart in her eyes. Kent dropped the wagon spoke and took her in his arms.

"Yes, you're mine, mine, mine forever, beloved, whether it's five minutes or fifty years!"

From the kitchen, they went directly into a front room. The broken windows looked out upon a stretch of grass upon which stood the gangsters' car. Between it and the house stood three other gangsters, suddenly interested in the house. But across a window sill was propped a machine gun, ready for use.

As they saw the man and the girl through the window, one of the men uttered a shout, and three au-

tomatics began to pour bullets into the face of the building. Kent threw Lisa to the floor and took his place at the machine gun, which sprayed bullets in a deadly hail. The three men scattered, then fell sprawling on the lawn.

Kent snatched Lisa into his arms and leaped through the window, praying that the gasoline tank of the car wasn't empty. Mercifully, the starter responded. At any moment, one of the gang might revive enough to place a fatal shot, or worst of all, James Polliti might appear.

Kent shifted into first, and the big car rushed down the bumpy dirt road. An hour later, he had the car on a traveled highway in New Jersey, where he could slow down safely to forty. Lisa nestled close beside him.

"Tell me about Marilyn," she said in a low voice.

Kent told her. Lisa drew a long shuddering breath. Then she surprised him.

"But if you hadn't thought you cared for her, darling, I'd never have seen you, so I can forgive her everything."

"Lisa! Dear, brave, sweet Lisa!"

Kent had to stop the car for lights, and Lisa drew closer as his arms went around her.

"Darling, I want those thrills all over again—those kisses you gave me night before last on the veranda. It isn't true that stolen fruit tastes best; I don't believe it! Anyway, I want to see whether it does or not. Let me try again and see."

Kent kissed her again and again.

"It's not true that stolen fruit is sweeter," said Lisa, five minutes later, drawing a long breath as the car sped down the road. "Oh, Kent, how I love you!"

"I want to marry you to-morrow," said Kent peremptorily. "I can't do without you ever again, my darling!"

"Did you think you were going to be allowed to?" asked Lisa. "I've lost my job, and I've got to be taken care of, haven't I?"

"Maybe we can get married to-day," he suggested.

"It won't do any harm to try," agreed Lisa meekly, and her eyes met his for an instant in a look of shining happiness.

At breakfast on the morning after the wedding, Kent picked up the newspaper. Headlines stared him in the face:

FAMOUS SCREEN ACTRESS FOUND SLAIN!

MARILYN MOUNTFORT STABBED TO DEATH

KNIFE DRIVEN THROUGH A PAPER MARKED
WITH A DOUBLE CROSS

JAMES POLLITI, GANGSTER CHIEF FROM THE
PACIFIC COAST, HELD FOR MURDER

Lisa looked up with blissful eyes from the occupation of pouring her husband's second cup of coffee.

"Does it say anything about the biggest thing that ever happened in the world, darling—our marriage?"

"Not a word!" answered Kent, crumpling up the paper and throwing it behind him.

"Well, who cares?" asked Lisa, tossing her golden head. "Have you kissed me good morning yet, darling? I don't seem to remember it."





One Kiss

By Gerry Ann Hale

ALL during the interval in which she heard the terrifying sounds of a key being turned in the lock and the ominous footsteps that came immediately after, Joan huddled in the bed, too scared to breathe. Why hadn't she done as Harper had told her to do? If she had taken a room in a hotel, this couldn't have happened.

But no; she had insisted on being different and hiring a kitchenette apartment for her two-weeks shopping trip.

The rosy bedside lamp shone serenely on the white-faced, dark-eyed girl who crouched against two fat pillows. The bedroom door stood open, a square of darkness beyond. The horrible footsteps were out there in the tiny hall.

It seemed years to Joan before the footsteps stopped at the door. Her throat was so dry that she couldn't scream. Her hands shook so under the covers that she couldn't even lift them toward the telephone.

If only she could close her star-

ing eyes! If only she didn't have to face whoever was out there! If only she had strength enough to slip down under the covers and hide!

And then suddenly he was there, looming in the open doorway like a handsome avenging god. At least that was the way Joan thought of him afterward. Just at that moment, of course, he seemed a towering, dark-faced brute who menaced her fearfully and growled something under his breath as he came in.

"Where is he?" he demanded roughly, peering around the bare little room. "Bob!" he called out then. He listened for a reply, while he dragged off his heavy, dark-blue overcoat and flung it with his hat across the chair. "Isn't he here?" He turned swiftly to Joan, staring at her with distinctly unfriendly eyes. "Where is Bob?"

Joan swallowed and clutched the bedclothes tighter under her chin.

"Who—what—whom do you want?" she gasped, wondering desperately if this could possibly be a nightmare. If only it were!

The man swung on his heel after a singularly unpleasant glare at her, and began to open doors. He opened the closet first. Just her few modest dresses were hanging on the rod. He paused there longest of all, pushing aside the dresses. Then he turned to glare at Joan again.

"He's pretty careful not to leave anything of his here," he muttered. He looked out the window at the fire escape, and then switched on the hall light and peered into the kitchenette. "Hm-m-m, he isn't here," he said finally, coming back into the bedroom.

While he was out of the room Joan had gathered enough strength together to reach for the phone. The minute she put in a call downstairs to the superintendent her

safety would be in a measure assured.

"Put that down!" The man strode over and snatched the phone from her hands, slammed it hard on the table. "It's a lucky thing for both of you that he isn't here."

"But—please—who—what do you want?" Desperately Joan tried to gather words. Somehow they just wouldn't come right. They strung along in a dazed sort of babble that the man didn't even heed.

Grimly he was making himself at home, taking off his coat, unbuttoning his vest, rumpling his hair.

Surreptitiously Joan pinched her arm. It hurt, proving that she was awake. She began to tremble.

The man took out a watch and frowned. He turned once to look uneasily at the outer door, and then faced Joan. For the first time she saw his eyes. They were deep-blue, fringed with the longest lashes, only now the blue was an icy blue-green, and his mouth was tightened into a cruel line.

"I'm advising you to keep quiet," he said coldly, pulling forward the upholstered boudoir chair. "One word out of you and I'll choke you!"

Joan shivered farther down in the bed. She could feel little waves of fear go down her spine. Too frightened to scream, she crouched there, watching him with unblinking eyes.

Again the man pulled out his watch and then dropped into the chair, his eyes seeking Joan. For the first time he took note of her—of her tumbled brown hair, pushed back carelessly from a broad, white brow, eyes almost too large for her pointed little face, lips quivering childishly.

Even in her terror, Joan saw the puzzled look grow in the man's eyes, to be banished almost as quickly as it had appeared. His head turned

automatically; some one was at the outer door.

Almost fiercely he faced Joan, leaning forward tensely.

"Remember, not a word!" he whispered, his eyes boring down into hers.

But he did not warn her soon enough, for Joan's lips were already opening to cry out. Her breath was coming back. If some one were outside in the hall, she would call him. He would save her from this mad-man!

"You will, will you!" The man sprang forward just as the outer door opened softly; just as the first faint sound issued from Joan's lips. His hand circled her throat, one arm sliding about her shoulders, holding her so tightly against him that she couldn't breathe. And then, while soft footsteps came toward the door, he bent his head and kissed her.

It was a hard, ruthless kiss, calculated to still her cries; a kiss that hurt dreadfully, that left Joan a limp rag hanging in the man's steely arms.

And as his lips burned on hers, Joan heard a woman's heartbroken, panicky cry.

"Bob! Oh, I didn't believe it!"

Then, and then only, did the man lift his head. Slowly, his eyes seeking Joan's warningly, his hand suggestively caressing her throat, he turned to face the woman in the doorway.

"Oh!" she cried again, more faintly now, a bewildered look chasing the dread from her face. "Hugh! What are you—— Oh!" She faltered into silence. She was a pretty young woman with childish blue eyes, Joan noted dazedly. "I thought——"

The man named Hugh frowned, seemed to color with embarrassment.

"What on earth are you doing here, Martha?" His voice was softer than it had been. "Do you think this is nice, butting into a man's private business? Being my honored sister-in-law doesn't quite give you this privilege."

Martha squirmed visibly, her face coloring. "I'm awfully sorry, Hugh, but I—I guess I made a mistake."

Joan breathed heavily. She felt faint, as if just one more unexpected happening would send her far off into a dark world alone. From a distance she heard the man and the woman talking. She was aware finally that the man left her to walk to the door with the woman.

"Just see that it doesn't happen again," he was saying coolly. "I'm not crazy about having my indiscretions known."

Martha nodded. "I'm awfully sorry, Hugh; honestly I am." She lifted shamed eyes to his. "I might as well tell you that I thought Bob was here."

"Bob?" Hugh made a good job of his amazement. "My brother Bob?" he repeated incredulously.

"Yes; wasn't I silly?" Martha sighed with relief. "Anyway, I promise not to tell anybody a word of this if"—she looked at him beseechingly—"if you'll promise not to tell Bob what I thought."

Hugh laughed shortly. "It's a bargain." He pushed her gently toward the door. "Now hurry home. I'll bet Bob is there waiting for you."

Joan knew when he came back into the room and donned his coat. Through the half daze that enveloped her she knew when he picked up his overcoat and then came to stand over her.

"From now on you may as well get used to being without Bob," he said grimly, his eyes raking her

white, pitiful face. "He won't be coming back here. Do you understand?"

His footsteps receded; a door slammed.

Joan awoke, blinking her eyes heavily against the morning sun that defied the curtains to keep it out. For long moments she lay there without thought, staring up at the slightly dingy ceiling. Then gradually things seeped into her mind.

She had come to New York on a two-weeks shopping trip to select her trousseau. She was in the apartment she had taken in a huge building downtown, near enough to the stores.

Suddenly she sat up as if a spring had snapped within her. Horror came back with a rush to her heart. Trembling, she looked slowly around the room. Had it been real, or just a singularly clear nightmare?

The rosy bed lamp glowed feebly on the little table. On the floor lay the shopper's guide she had been looking through, just where she had dropped it when she had nestled down under the covers before going to sleep.

Holding her breath, Joan's eyes sought and found the chair where he had flung his coat and hat. A small pool of ivory silk lay under the chair. With stiff knees she got out of bed and went to the chair. Her cold fingers dragged out his scarf.

Then it hadn't been a nightmare! A real man had been in her room. A real man who had kissed her so brutally.

Bending over to face the mirror, Joan saw her white face and heavy-lidded eyes. He had kissed those red lips of hers. His fingers had rested on her smooth neck.

She sank down limply in a chair, her mind a turmoil of racing

thoughts. What would Harper say if he knew? He would probably want to break their engagement. He had never made any bones about his puritanical convictions. His sweetheart, his fiancée, his wife would have to be free from all taint of gossip, wildness, inclination to run around.

Back home in Newburg that was perfectly all right. There was no place to run and nothing much to tempt one into a questionable situation.

Crouching in her chair, Joan knew that Harper had been right when he had said she should go to a nice quiet women's hotel. But he had yielded a bit stiffly when Joan had pleaded to be allowed to take a furnished apartment. It would be cheaper, she had told him—the one sure way of gaining his consent—to have a place where she could cook her own meals.

And look what had happened the very first night!

Considering it all, Joan knew that there had been a big mistake somewhere. Either Hugh had gotten into the wrong apartment, or else the woman who had had it before her had left suddenly.

On impulse, Joan called the superintendent.

"Who was the tenant who just left this apartment?" she asked the superintendent.

"A Miss Trent. She left yesterday afternoon just about an hour before you came," the man told her.

So that was it! Miss Trent had been the woman who stood between Martha and Bob. Slowly Joan dressed, shivering each time she looked at the ivory-colored silk scarf. Hugh might come back for it. Just thinking of that caused hot and cold chills to chase down her spine.

She couldn't bear seeing him again. He was utterly ruthless.

She'd give up the apartment right away, without waiting for the end of the term of the agreement. It would be better to lose the money involved than to stay there and run the risk of having Hugh rush in again. It would be a thousand times better to go without some pretty gown and use the money for a hotel room than chance encountering another such kiss!

It was while Joan was repacking her suitcase that the telegram came from Harper.

DRIVING DOWN TO CITY WITH
FRIEND STOP SEE YOU AT EIGHT
HARPER

Joan sighed a bit wistfully. Trust Harper not to add "love" for fear it would cost an extra nickel or two!

She caught her breath as a new thought struck her. Now she'd have to stay in the apartment until Harper came. She couldn't leave yet. He would be frightfully suspicious if he came there for her and the superintendent told him she had gone. He would ask questions and tell her she was wastefully extravagant. She should have done her shopping in Newburg, rather than waste money going to New York.

And it would go on and on indefinitely until Joan would wish for ear muffs or a ticket to the farthest end of the world.

Aside from conservatism, Harper was a fine fellow, steady-going, the type mothers adore pushing in front of daughter's eyes and lauding to the heavens. He was good-looking, and the best catch in the city. Maybe that was why Joan had thought she cared for him.

"Thought she cared!" The words leaping unbidden to her mind star-

tled her. "Thought she cared for Harper?" Had it been only imagination?

Unwillingly her mind slid back to last night, to the memory of a man's



deep-blue gaze, dark lashes, hard lips, firm arms. What would it be like to have them all for one's own, with love there instead of hate?

Shaking away the thought, Joan put on her coat and hat and went out. Somehow she couldn't bear the little apartment now. It was haunted by a blue-eyed man with firm, sweet lips. Joan blushed fiercely as she walked down the street. Sweet lips!



"I'm the man who left the scarf here last night by mistake," Hugh said. "And I'm the man who's going to demand an apology from you to this young lady."

Aimlessly she wandered through the stores, not buying, hardly looking at the loaded counters. It made no difference suddenly that sales were on and that everything was a great deal cheaper. The interest that had brought her down from Newburg had suddenly gone, disappearing into the limbo of forgotten things.

Once she stopped aghast at sight of a familiar dark-blue overcoat

topped with a gray felt hat. Her heart thumped madly. But it wasn't Hugh. It was just some ordinary man walking along.

Shaking herself angrily, Joan hurried on. What a little fool she was to think about a man who had frightened her half to death and then nearly choked her—and kissed her!

Eating a sketchy lunch in a sandwich shop, Joan wondered with quick panic if Hugh would come

back for his scarf while Harper was there!

The thought was so horrible, so devastating, that Joan gasped and turned pale. If he did, Harper would know all about it. He wouldn't understand, either. He would make it his business to misunderstand.

Joan didn't finish her lunch. She scurried out into the street and started for the apartment. There was no one there when she reached it, tired and scared. And no one had been there. The ivory silk scarf still lay in a heap on the chair where Joan had dropped it.

What should she do with it? Leave it with the superintendent? But would Hugh ask him first? He might.

Hastily Joan wrapped it up into a small, neat parcel, using the white paper and string that had come around the box of candy Harper had given her. Then she took it down to the superintendent.

"A—gentleman left this," Joan stammered under his casual gaze.

"Want me to give it to him?" the man drawled.

Joan nodded, face aflame, and hurried back upstairs. That was that. If only he stopped down there first!

But, after all, he didn't. For not half an hour later some one knocked on the door. Joan glanced instinctively at the clock. It was only five, too early for Harper. Then she was at the door, opening it, looking up into Hugh's dark face.

"May I come in?" he asked gravely, an entirely different man from the one he had been the previous night. "I have an apology to make."

He was almost humble then, and Joan felt her heart quicken excitedly. Without a word—she couldn't

have spoken if her life had hung on it—she stood aside and let him pass into the tiny living room. She closed the door carefully, hoping he couldn't hear her heart beat.

Then at last she faced him, trying to keep her eyes steady on his face.

"What must you think of me?" he asked simply, standing there, towering over her. "I wouldn't have blamed you if you'd refused to listen or to let me in just now," he went on, twisting his hat in his hands.

Joan didn't speak. She just stood there, a trifle breathless, suddenly warm, facing this man. Her hands got cold, so she held them tight together behind her, looking to the man more than ever like a child. He was remembering suddenly the way she had looked last night, all tumbled hair and wide eyes. A frightened child! And he had been the cause.

He evaded his conscience and then resolutely came back to it.

"I was terrible," he told her thickly. "I should be flogged——"

He stopped, aware that Joan was faintly smiling.

"And I should be the one to do it," she said gravely, tilting her chin the shade of an inch. "I hope you enjoyed it."

He winced. "I deserved that," he muttered, turning to pace the floor quickly. "But if you knew, if you could possibly see my side of it, you might realize. It was a horrible mistake!"

Suddenly he was pleading, coming closer to bend down and look into her eyes.

"I thought you were——"

"Miss Trent?" Joan put in quietly, and saw him start.

"You know her?" he demanded quickly.

"I merely rented the apartment

she vacated." Joan was so cool that she surprised even herself.

"Then that's why it all happened!" He was eager now. "Can't you see how it happened? I came, thinking you were this Trent woman, though how I ever made such a mistake——" His voice died away while he stared with deep concentration into her eyes.

Joan steeled herself against that gaze. If she melted one bit, something would happen. She knew suddenly, definitely, that something terrible would happen. She had only to let herself go.

"Well, it's over, and that's that, isn't it?" Very coolly she moved out of his reach, out of the steady pull of his blue eyes.

"Yes, of course." He pulled himself together, bit his lip. How sensitive they were, those finely modeled lips that last night had been so stern, so thin! Catching herself in time, Joan turned her eyes away from his face.

"You'll accept my apologies, I hope," he urged.

"Yes," she said with seeming carelessness, fumbling a bit with her hair. Anything to keep from reaching out to him, telling him to stay! "It's quite all right. Mistakes will happen."

She was so cool he was uneasy, so nonchalant he was puzzled, so serene he grew cold. There was no use remembering the softness of her lips under his, or the feel of her satiny shoulders under his hands.

Hugh squared his shoulders and bowed shortly.

"Then that is all," he said.

And that was that.

Joan stood leaning against the door after he had gone, her eyes wet. A pain in her heart grew worse until it seemed to spread through her whole being.

"Oh, you fool, you fool!" she told herself desolately, sobbing aloud. "Crying over a man you saw only twice; a man who kissed you horribly, brutally! And now you're liking it!"

That was what hurt, her memory of that kiss. Guiltily she realized that she remembered it clearly, even to the fascinating roughness of his cheek as it rubbed hers.

"I could shake you, Joan!" she berated herself. "You're old enough to know better! You're engaged to Harper. You love him; you know you do!" But the final words were so weak that they died away in a whisper while Joan went to stare into a mirror. "Joan, look at me." She stared truthfully at herself. "You don't love Harper; you know it." Her image nodded slowly. "You love that brute, Hugh!"

She sat down abruptly and wiped her eyes. Well, it was better to know the truth. There was no use lying to herself.

And then Harper came. Joan heard him outside the door and hastily rubbed some powder over her tear-stained face. She'd have to keep the lights low, or he would surely want to know why she had been crying.

He stalked in, curiously chilly.

"How are you, Joan?" He held her off, looking searchingly into her face.

"Why, I'm fine." She smiled valiantly. "I'm so glad to see you."

"Miss me very much?" Still he held her off, measuring her with cool eyes.

"Of course." Joan tried to speak lightly. Inwardly she was saying: "Shall I tell him now I don't love him, or wait until later?" Outwardly she smiled and made small talk. "I went window shopping today."

"What did you do last night?" Harper's voice was suddenly grim, purposeful, and his fingers bit down hard on her shoulders. "What did you do last night?"

Color fled from Joan's face, and then flooded up again in a riotous wave. Her eyes faltered.

"Why, I just stayed in," she stammered, knowing he suspected something. "I went to bed early."

Harper let her go so suddenly that she swayed and had to cling to a chair to gain her balance. His face was stern, granitelike in its coldness.

"Then probably you entertained the owner of this"—he flung out his hand suddenly, and in it was the ivory silk scarf—"before you went to bed. Or——" He raised his brows.

Joan whitened, drew a deep breath.

"You dare say such a thing to me!" Cold rage rose within her. "You dare suggest such a thing!"

"I dare anything when you lie to me and then I find this, left at the office for the gentleman who called last night!" Furiously Harper flung the words at her. He twisted the silk scarf into a knot and flung that, too. It lay limply between them on the floor.

"It was all a mistake," Joan tried to say calmly, knowing she should feel that Harper was justified in adopting this attitude. The scarf was rather incriminating. Still, she was his fiancée. He loved her. He should believe in her. "If you'll listen without going off the handle," she added, "I'll explain."

"Oh, I go off the handle, do I?" he sneered, his good-looking face twisting into ugly lines. "I suppose I should grin and forgive you and say it doesn't matter! I suppose I should laugh gayly and say I'll still marry you! Well"—he breathed

deeply—"I won't. So far as I'm concerned, you're all washed up. I'm through, completely through."

Joan just stood there listening, a vast sense of release and peace flooding her soul. Suddenly it didn't matter that Harper was furious, rightly so, perhaps, depending on the way you looked at it. All that mattered was the fact that she was free to love Hugh, even if she never saw him again.

"That's right, stand there smiling!" Harper raved on, suddenly half mad with anger. "Go on, grin, laugh at me, the poor fool who let himself be kidded into thinking you were his girl!"

Joan gasped and then was very still. For a new voice had broken into Harper's tirade, a voice that Joan knew well.

"Just a minute, there." Hugh came into the room, his face white, his lips twitching. "I've been standing out there, wondering whether to come in and knock you down now or wait until you get outside."

Harper grew red with fury.

"Who are you?" he shouted, advancing threateningly. "You're the man who——"

Hugh's fist successfully stopped Harper's remarks for the time being.

"I'm the man who left the scarf here last night by mistake." Hugh stood over him, a grim look in his eyes. "And I'm the man who's going to demand an apology from you to this young lady."

Joan trembled. She was leaning against the wall, her hands clasped so tightly that they hurt. Her heart was in her eyes as she watched Hugh.

Harper was sitting up, resentfully feeling his jaw.

"I want to warn you," Hugh went on clearly, "that I once held the wrestling championship at Prince-

ton, with a bit of fighting thrown in. So don't try any funny tricks."

Harper grunted and got to his feet.

"Now apologize to the lady." Hugh prodded him. "And make it a good one."

Harper turned to Joan. "I'm sorry I made a mistake in—in thinking things." He fairly snarled the words. "Though you couldn't blame me——"

Hugh stepped over lightly and grabbed his wrist in a steellike grip. "I said apologize," he hinted softly.

And Harper did, sullenly, but at least civilly. Then Hugh let him go.

Joan's knees began to weaken. It was queer how fright or excitement went to her knees. She wanted to stand erect and thank Hugh, but somehow she couldn't. Her knees just slid out from under her and let her down flat on the floor.

And there she sat, hands going swiftly to cover her face, while the tears came pouring out between her fingers. In a moment she heard Hugh move, felt him kneeling down beside her. The first gentle touch of his hand on her shoulder unnerved her completely.



"Joan tell me"—it was hard to stay apart when they were so close—
"did you—did you remember last night, when I kissed you?"

"Child, don't!" His voice, soft, pleading, came through the sound of her own sobs. "Please! I'm sorry if I did wrong."

His arm went around her shoulders lightly, almost as if he were afraid.

"Don't cry so. It hurts." His voice was muffled a bit.

That sent Joan's head up. He looked so miserable kneeling there, his blue eyes dejected, his lips drooping at the corners.

"Do you want me to get him back?" hopelessly Hugh asked her. "I can rush out. He can't have gone very far."

Joan shook her head, unable to stop the tears.

"Don't you dare!" she sobbed. "I hate him—I despise him!"

A queer heady light began to glow far behind the man's eyes.

"What did you say?" he asked with forced politeness. "Did you say you hated him?"

Joan nodded violently.

"And not me?" He was bending nearer. Heavens; he was actually sitting down on the floor, too! "You don't hate me?"

Joan shook her head. "No," she whispered between lessening sobs.

The man sighed and relaxed, his back against the wall. Very carefully he withdrew his arm, and sat there holding his hands loosely.

"I want to tell you a story," he said softly, throwing his head back, staring at the patch of light over the one small lighted lamp. "Will you listen?"

Joan wiped her eyes and murmured a timid "Yes."

"Once upon a time there was a man who had a brother who loved to flirt. And this brother who loved to flirt married a very sweet girl who undoubtedly deserved better attention than she got. So the man tried

hard to set the flirtatious brother's feet in the path he should go. And when it seemed that one special indiscretion was bound to be found out by the wife, the man rushed over to save the wife's happiness. But he found out afterward"—Hugh drew a deep breath—"that the brother had already come to his senses and was through with his indiscretion. And the man also found out that he couldn't quite forget a girl whom he had insulted."

Joan gasped and whispered a faint "No!"

"Her sweet eyes haunted him all night. Her"—Hugh cast one swift glance down at Joan's lips and then turned quickly away—"her sweetness held him. He couldn't forget her, so he came back."

There was a silence, falling softly between them. Joan felt her heart lifting magically.

"Joan"—he met her gaze then, smiling at her start of surprise—"I asked the superintendent for your name. That's how I happened to hear about the scarf. I sort of imagined it would be in the package you left. When the superintendent said he had given it to another man, I hurried right up. Something told me you needed me."

There was no use fighting against his eyes, his magnetic voice.

"I did need you awfully," she said, tilting her head back against the wall.

He was awfully quiet, his eyes searching hers, his hands not daring to reach out.

"Joan, tell me"—it was hard to stay apart when they were so close—"did you—did you remember last night, when I kissed you?"

Her eyes closed, her hands went up swiftly to him.

"Oh, Hugh, if you only knew how I remembered!"

Then his arms reached out for her and gathered her to him, held her so close she could feel his heart reverberating through her. His rough cheek slid down hers with the most fascinating feeling in the world, and then the world stood still. He kissed her.

Now his lips were no longer brutal, but soft, sweet, warm. They touched her cheek, her ears, her neck, and then sought her lips again and again, until neither had much breath left.

"Darling, you believe that I love you, even if I haven't known you for years?" he held her off one moment to ask.

"I know, because I love you, too," Joan told him dreamily. "Love

doesn't take years. It took just twenty-four hours for me."

Hugh sighed and drew her back into his arms.

"And I nearly let you go," over and over he marveled. "Suppose we'd never met again? All my life I would have been sorry."

Against his heart, Joan sighed, too.

"My love would have found you," she said confidently, "no matter where you were, across the world or right on the same street."

So Hugh forgot to sigh for what had almost happened, and began to make up for all the time he had lost—kissing sweet lips, feeling warm arms around his neck, a mist of hair in his face—Joan, his love!



WHAT do you do Thursday nights? Or don't you do anything but sit around the house and fret because Tom broke his date with you or because you couldn't go to Mary Jane's party? Why don't you tune in on the Love Story Radio Hour and treat yourself to half an hour of real, honest-to-goodness pleasure? Try it some time—remember, 9:30, Eastern time, every Thursday night.



Dan Cupid Announcing

By Doris Falbron

SUDDENLY, Lael had a wild desire to throw her violin to the floor with a crash loud enough to shatter the sound-proof walls, then to rush from the broadcasting room, slamming the unslammable door behind her.

She had been tucking the innocent violin under her firm, small chin when suddenly she noticed the wondering, half-awed expression in Ken Nickerson's gray eyes as he looked at Persis Parker, the waiting singer.

Ken was most decidedly Lael's favorite person, had been for so long she couldn't exactly remember when it had all started. And Persis was the exquisite blond studio singer who had fascinated Ken with her lovely violet eyes and gorgeous, rich voice, the girl who made Lael want to cry, and break things, and run until she was exhausted.

Lael just couldn't give Ken up to anybody! She swallowed the aching lump in her throat, clasped her vio-

lin a little more tightly, and nodded her dark curly head toward the big clock.

"Half a minute to go, Ken," she reminded him, trying to speak casually, but he blinked, then smiled a trifle ruefully. Lael knew that he had just remembered where he was, and she watched him anxiously until he took his place before the microphone, just as the wall light flashed red. They were on the air!

"This is Station KXRT of Rose City, California," came that deep, dear voice, which even yet could tremble occasionally from "mike" fright, so new was it to the air. "Your announcer is Kenneth Nickerson, who now presents Persis Parker in the Home Folks' Hour." He paused. Lael knew that he wanted those two names to sail forth in splendid isolation. Then he went on: "Lael Dimond will accompany on the violin, with Miss Rachel Doone at the studio piano. I present Persis Parker!"

Even that vast, unseen audience must have known how Ken felt about Persis. His voice lingered over her name as if it were something infinitely precious.

Lael's eyes were stormy as she took her place near the mike. She didn't realize how lovely she looked in her white skirt, orange sweater, and *béret*—like a gay California poppy, swaying in the soft, sweet breeze, or like a golden autumn leaf, sparkling in a bright patch of sunlight. She was thinking only of Ken—the way he looked at Persis, the way he spoke her name. Piano and violin plunged into the opening measures of the first number, and then the rich sweet tones of Persis Parker took up the song.

Persis had a glorious voice; Lael admitted that, in all honesty. Two of the larger stations, which had re-

fused her at first, were cautiously tempting her now. Well, let them! KXRT needed good talent, but the blond singer couldn't leave any too soon to suit Lael.

It would be a blow to Ken if Persis left, but—confound it!—he didn't have to stand there with that lovesick expression on his face! Or if he had to be like that, Lael's thoughts plunged on, why couldn't he choose a less public place than the main broadcasting room, with the gaping audience—especially that plump middle-aged woman watching them so intently—just beyond the thick glass that separated them from the lobby! Lael blinked her eyes hard. She wouldn't shed a single tear over Ken, the poor fish! He probably thought he was in an aquarium!

During the next song, she moved a little nearer to the piano. Persis stepped back to follow her. What a ridiculous thing to do!—Lael thought quickly. And why was Persis looking at her wide-eyed with accusing dismay, just as if Lael were doing something wrong?

Very gently, Ken touched Persis's arm, pushed her back into position before the microphone, but Lael had seen her nervousness, caught the slight tremble in her voice. Persis was worried about something, seemed to be trying to convey a message. All at once Lael nodded and smiled. She understood. Of course, Persis was right. Lael's keen musician's ear had detected the monotony of voice, piano, and violin all carrying the melody.

She could remedy that. At the start of the second verse of the song, Lael dropped into a minor obbligato to build up the accompaniment. It was much better that way, really lovely.

And then suddenly Persis faltered

in her singing! Straight toward Lael she gazed, and her violet eyes were almost black with pent-up rage and accusation. Lael flushed and tried to look away. What in the world was the matter? She remembered now that Persis had asked her always to carry the melody, but surely, when the piano was carrying it, too, it was all right for Lael to vary a bit. What in the world did Persis want, anyhow?—Lael wondered bewilderedly.

Was Persis crazy, letting her senseless irritation affect her singing that way? Her voice was horrible now, flattening on the high notes, never quite true. Nervousness always did that to Persis, and she would allow herself to get upset over nothing at all. Lael could see the clenched hands, the taut cords on the singer's neck.

Then Lael glanced over at Ken, and his worried, tense face caught at her heart. Didn't he know she was doing her best? But she understood Ken. Right now he was imagining the great group of listeners he had interested in the Home Folks' Hour, the one time of the day that the studio had turned over to him for his own, to build up, to cherish. Lael saw the pain and worry in his gray eyes. He didn't know what the matter was, but it was his habit to turn to Lael when things went wrong. She had to do something quickly. She must put Persis right again!

Lael stepped very close to the distracted singer, and at the start of the last verse of the song, caught up the melody. Clear and loud and true she carried it. Persis caught her steadiness, and the song ended on a sustained, sure note.

Ken made his brief announcement, and the red light blinked out. From the small room behind them,

Roger Dunlee, chief broadcaster, made his station announcement, and then from the organ studio across the hall, another program went on.

Suddenly some one clutched Lael's arm, held it fiercely. She turned to see Persis Parker close beside her, her face white with fury.

"You did that on purpose!" she accused, and Lael wondered how so sweet a singer could speak so raspingly. "You dropped—you deliberately upset me—trying to ruin my singing!"

"Don't, Persis!" Lael begged. "I thought that was what you wanted. It sounded awful, all three of us on one tune."

"I'd told you what to do! You had no business to change!" Persis cried wildly. "You—you——"

"Listen, Persis, you're just excited," Ken began, and Lael winced at the gentleness of his voice. "Whatever Lael did, she didn't mean to hurt you. And no one noticed it at all."

"Oh, you don't know!" Persis wailed, turning to him in teary appeal. "You don't understand, Ken. She knows that any sort of change upsets me. I—I can't stand it!"

"Really, Lael"—Ken looked at her, his gray eyes hurt, bewildered—"I wish you'd try to help Persis more. She's so high-strung and nervous; all artists are like that, I guess. You'll have to be a little more thoughtful, Lael, even if it is hard for you to understand a temperament like hers."

Lael looked away. She had to hide the hurt in her eyes, the dull ache that made her heart a heavy lump. She wanted to get far away where she would never again see these two together, where she wouldn't have to listen to Ken blame her for Persis's mistakes. Silently, holding her violin tightly in

her hands, she moved toward the door.

But Persis was not to be stilled. She was weeping softly now, and Persis was lovelier than ever when she wept.

"If you ever let me down again, Lael Dimond," she sobbed, "I won't let you play for me any more! You knew the other stations listen in to check up on my work! And you deliberately——"

"Listen, both of you!" Lael held her small curly head very high, and her eyes were flaming darkly in her little heart-shaped face. "If you don't like my playing, why—that's that. I'm through. And now I'm going to get out of here. This room may be sound-proof, but they can see out there." Lael shrugged toward the outside lobby, tucked her instrument under her arm, and pushed open the heavy door into the inner hall. She had to go, for the treacherous tears were already blurring her eyes.

"Just a minute, Lael!" somebody called. She stood still, waiting for Roger Dunlee, the chief announcer, as he slipped out of the little room and followed her. "Come into the office, child. There's some one there to meet you."

She was grateful for the kindly consideration of this gray-haired man, who always made everything easy for her. It helped to have some one think of her.

Then they were in the office, and he was introducing her to the plump middle-aged woman who had been watching them so intently through the heavy windows.

"Madame d'Arvil, this is our little violinist. The other stations have been trying to take her away, but she's loyal to us."

He smiled quizzically at Lael, who flushed at his gentle teasing.

She knew he had guessed why she stayed on at KXRT, where Ken was working so hard to make his Home Folks' Hour popular.

And then suddenly she comprehended the other woman's identity. Her eyes grew wide with awed wonder. Madame d'Arvil was actually here in this small studio, and Lael was being introduced to her! Madame d'Arvil, singer of grand-opera rôles without peer, the greatest voice in all the wide world!

"I'm—I'm so proud!" Lael gasped, and hugged her violin to her in childish fashion. "I—why, I saw you in 'Aida' last week, but I didn't recognize you here at first."

"Of course not!" returned the older woman with prompt kindness. "One looks so different without the make-up. But you play beautifully, child. I have heard you over the air, and to-day I come here to see you for sure."

Lael felt like a gawky little girl as she stammered her thanks.

"To-morrow night we have the program for the poor unemployed," went on madame. "My own accompanist, he have gone East, but perhaps you will play for me—yes?"

Lael's brown eyes opened wide, and she caught her breath. The artist program to-morrow night was to be given over the double network, nation-wide, world-wide! The greatest talent in the world would go on the air for one solid hour of beauty. From Los Angeles, Madame d'Arvil would sing, with a famous actor introducing her. And now, unknown little Lael Dimond had been asked to accompany the great singer, while the whole world listened!

"You'll be at the other station, anyway, Lael," said Roger Dunlee, knowing she was too confused to speak. "In the half hour before the

big hook-up, KTCK has asked each smaller studio to send talent. Persis Parker will go from here to sing, and

Ken Nickerson to announce for us. It will give the youngster a chance to advertise his Home Folks' Hour."



Lael turned to see Persis Parker close beside her, her face white with fury. "You did that on purpose!" she accused. "You deliberately upset me—trying to ruin my singing!"

"You have a good technique, and are very, very sympathetic and wise as an accompanist. Since I first heard, I have admired your sensitive music," Madame d'Arvil went on. "And so you will be my little violinist for the three songs?"

"Oh, I'm so happy!" cried Lael, her eyes shining with soft, radiant joy. "I—I never dreamed of so much honor and happiness!"

Madame patted her shoulder gently.

"Youth, it is so enthusiastic," she sighed. "But to play for me, perhaps it will help you. We shall take special pains to have your name said clearly. And now here is the music. You will practice before to-morrow, yes? And to-morrow afternoon at four you will meet me at KCTCK, and we will go over them together."

Lael never really knew how she thanked Madame d'Arvil or said good-by when the older woman left. Dazedly, she gathered up the music and went out. She wasn't on the air again for almost two hours. She would go into a vacant room and rehearse.

"Oh, Lael!" Ken's voice was jubilant. Had he heard her wonderful news? "Isn't it great? Aren't we proud?" He caught her arm.

"I'm thrilled to death, Ken," she smiled, and she forgot the pain and bewilderment of half an hour before. If Ken was so happy over the big chance that had come to her, he must care a little. Nothing else mattered. Ken was here, rejoicing with her, proud of her!

"To think"—his gray eyes held a dreamy, far-away look—"of their asking Persis to sing just before the big broadcast at KCTCK! People will tune in ahead of time just to be sure of not missing any of the big program, and they'll hear Persis! It's a marvelous opportunity for her

—for you, too, Lael," he added, as an afterthought. "It'll be a good thing for you to be announced as her accompanist."

There was a moment of tense silence. Lael wondered if her breath would ever be even again, if the loud thrumming of her heart would ever cease. Then she heard herself saying as if from a great distance:

"But I'm not Persis's accompanist any more. Never any more!"

"Oh, you didn't mean that, Lael! You aren't really peeved at Persis, honey. You can't be! Why, I told her you'd play; she's been awfully upset about it. You've never been mean, Lael. You've always understood. And Persis was so nervous. She's high-strung, you know, and awfully temperamental. You know how real artists are, Lael."

Lael couldn't answer. She was fighting back the maddening tears. Others called her an artist—every one but Ken—yet, no one expected her to be temperamental.

"You will play for her, won't you, Lael? She's set her heart on it. And she has such a marvelous voice, a golden voice!" He said the last words slowly, as if he loved the sound of them.

"Yes, Persis has a wonderful voice," Lael answered, "but I seem to make her nervous. And she doesn't really need the violin. Miss Doone does well enough, and I think it's best for me not to risk upsetting her any more."

"But you can't do that, Lael! It would spoil it all—not having you there on my Home Folks' Hour! Why, we've built it up together—you used to play solos before we found Persis—and it's your program as much as mine! We've always talked it over. Why, you——" He stopped, confused, then went on pleadingly: "You said once, Lael,

that you'd do anything to help, and I want you to help now. Won't you please play for Persis—because I ask it?"

She hesitated a moment, thought how it would hurt her to see Ken and Persis in the broadcasting room every night, herself left out. And Ken depended upon her so.

"Please, Lael!" he asked again.

"Oh, all right," she said at last in a tired little voice. "I'll try once more, Ken, and I'll do my best, but if I do keep on upsetting her——"

"You won't," he said confidently, catching her hand and pulling her down the hall to the door of the concert studio, now off the air.

"Persis and Miss Doone are in there now, waiting for you to come in and practice the songs for to-morrow night," he said. "And thanks a lot, Lael. Now go on in and be a good girl!"

"But——" Then Lael stopped. She was already familiar with two of Madame d'Arvil's songs. It wouldn't take long to get them all in shape. There would be time to practice to-morrow morning. Roger Dunlee would arrange to use phonograph records on those two unimportant, in-between quarter hours, and let her have the morning to herself.

"All right," she finished.

Persis made no mention of their recent disagreement. For almost an hour, Lael patiently went over again and again the phrases she knew were too difficult for Persis's half-trained voice. Ken came in later, his face, too, wore a worried expression.

"Listen, Persis," Lael suggested gently, when they stopped to rest a moment. "Why work so hard over this? Why don't you choose something that you know well, something simpler, that you won't feel so nervous about?"

"Yes, Persis, why take on these new ones when you do the others so beautifully?" Ken agreed.

Persis's blue eyes were dark pools of anger as she turned upon Lael.

"What do you know about it?" she flared. "I suppose you don't want me to attract too much attention! You'd like to have me fail! After what I was going to do for you, too!"

"And what was that?" asked Lael wonderingly.

"I was going to take you with me when I went to a bigger station!" Persis snapped. "I was going to make them take you as my official accompanist! It would have been a step upward for you, if you had sense enough to know it!"

"And why should I want to go to a bigger station?" asked Lael, pushing her orange *béret* back on her dark head, as she bent lower over the task of tightening a string.

"Why — why — because — anybody wants to get up in the world!"

Lael caught the bewildered look on Ken's face. Didn't Persis mind hurting him? Poor old Ken! Hadn't it ever occurred to him that the blond singer might be taken by one of the larger stations?

"But, Persis," he said helplessly, "I thought you liked it here, would stay and work up with Lael and me. I know KXRT is a small station, but it's new. Later on we may be as great as the others! We—why, Lael has stayed! She could have gone to KNX last January, or she could have gone to KHJ only a month ago, but she stayed!"

"I don't believe it!" snapped Persis, then at the shocked expression on Ken's face, she laughed apologetically. "Or if she stayed, it was because she wanted to be near you. Oh, you ought to know it, Ken Nickerson! Lael's crazy about you!"



He said pleadingly: "You said once, Lael, that you'd do anything to help, and I want you to help now."

"Persis!" cried Lael.

"Well, it's true," Persis laughed cruelly. "You're in love with Ken. That's why you put up with so much from him. That's why you stay on, mooning around him like——"

"Stop it!" Lael had laid down her precious violin, and now she stood facing Persis, her small, capable violinist's fingers curled tightly into her firm little palms. Her brown eyes were blazing, bright with

the angry, mortified tears she was holding back.

"Don't talk that way, Persis," Ken begged, his face crimson. "Lael and I are just friends, have been for years."

"Sometimes I think you're half in love with her yourself——" Persis began; then she stopped, as if half-frightened at what she had said. "Oh, Ken!" she laughed self-consciously. "You must forgive me! I didn't mean that. Of course, Lael is just a friend. Every singer is nervous before an important appearance, easily upset by little, annoying disturbances."

"Since I seem always to be the one who gets on your nerves, there's no use for me to try any more!" Lael cried. "You can get another accompanist. I'm through—this time I mean for good!" And picking up her violin, she fled from the room, her head held proudly high, but her heart throbbing achingly.

She never wanted to see any of them again—not poor, startled Rachel Doone, whose thin, elderly hands had trembled with embarrassment to hear love spoken of so openly; not Persis Parker, with her scarlet, mocking mouth and her beautiful, cruel eyes; most assuredly not Ken Nickerson, whose face had flushed darker and darker, as he realized what Persis had said.

Going down the hall, Lael passed the glass wall of the studio she had just left. She didn't want to look, but something overpowering drew her unwilling gaze to the scene within—Persis, alone with Ken, close to him, her two white arms stealing up around his neck.

All the next morning, Lael practiced, but her heart was a heavy, hurting thing. She should be radiantly happy, she told herself; she

was going to play for Madame d'Arvil to-night.

But she could think only of Persis and Ken at the station, working together without her. Through all the nights of the world to come, the Home Folks' Hour would be sent on the air, and Lael Dimond, who had played on its first presentation, would not be there. Persis would sing, and Ken would stand by, watching her tenderly, proudly. Perhaps he would miss Lael for a little while, but then he would forget entirely. Working with them had been agony, but what a long-drawn torture working without Ken would be!

If only Lael had been away from the studio that day, three months before, when Persis Parker had been given her audition! If it hadn't been for Lael, probably the blond singer would never have come to KXRT to sing.

"A wonderful voice," Roger Dunlee had judged with a puzzled frown on his face, "but it doesn't seem sure of itself, somehow."

"The piano lacks something." Persis Parker had stood before them, nervously twisting her handkerchief. "If I could have the violinist—I heard her playing for that man a while ago—and try again, I know I'd be better."

KXRT, so young itself, was friendly to all beginners.

"Certainly!" said Roger Dunlee, pushing Lael toward her. "Lael's the studio stand-by. She'll be glad to play for you."

So Persis had sung again, that time steadily and truly, and she had been given a chance on Ken's Home Folks' Hour. And out of the acquaintance had sprung Ken's love for the golden-haired, golden-voiced singer.

At three o'clock, Lael received a

telephone message from Madame d'Arvil's secretary. "I'm Miss Terry, madame's secretary. She has been detained and cannot practice with you this afternoon. She and her pianist will meet you at KCTK at seven thirty."

Seven thirty! That would be just half an hour before the big program, with no chance to practice again, if anything were wrong. But nothing would be wrong! Lael had the music splendidly now, knew that she could play all the songs well. She would be almost perfect when she had followed madame and her experienced pianist through them once.

And she would be too busy to hear Persis sing and Ken announce on the preceding all-station program.

She was at the big station at seven o'clock that night, so that not a single moment should be lost after madame was ready for her. And once there in the big, busy place, Lael found herself thrilled as she had never been before, not even on the night when KXRT had opened up! In the tense, excited atmosphere preceding the big program, she almost forgot her heartache for a little while. That is, until she saw Ken.

"Lael, I'm so glad you came," he said, relieved. "That kid we found to play for Persis isn't doing a bit well. You came to play for her, didn't you?"

She shook her head mutely, and finally managed to speak. "I'm on the program. You haven't heard?"

"No," he said vaguely, his face troubled. "Persis has kept me so busy all day. Say, Lael, have you an extra E string? That kid showed up without a spare, and, of course, the first thing he'd do was to break one! I'm on my way downstairs for one now, but they're in a hurry."

"But, Ken," Lael objected, "I can't be without my spare. My own

E string is frayed, and I meant to change it as soon as I got into the practice room. I'm afraid——"

"Oh, be a good scout, honey!" Ken pleaded. "I'll take it in to him, then slip down and get you another. It'll save time for us, and every minute is precious!"

The look in his eyes was too pleading, too appealing. Impulsively, Lael opened her case and handed the E string to him.

"You won't forget, Ken?" she asked anxiously. "It's terribly important!"

"Do I ever forget?" Ken countered reproachfully.

He passed through the door marked "No Admittance." Lael turned to the woman who had slipped into the chair next to hers, and who had touched her elbow.

"This is Miss Dimond?" the woman smiled. "I'm Miss Terry, Madame d'Arvil's secretary. She will be here shortly. She was afraid you'd see in the papers that her own violinist has returned, and feel disappointed. She wants you to play for her, anyway."

Persis was practicing in the studio next to the lobby, and although she could hear nothing, Lael could see everything that went on. The young violinist was putting on the borrowed string with shaking fingers. Then he began to play, and Persis to sing. But the boy was nervous; Lael could see that. Persis was nervous, too. And each seemed to be making the other worse.

Lael saw Persis whirl upon Ken, her face flaming with passionate disappointment. Was the girl forgetting that all this was visible, if not audible, from the public lobby? Ken, his eyes worried, placated Persis. The boy's chin was stubbornly set. With an air of finality, he put his violin back in its case.

Lael saw Ken leave the studio, disappearing for a second in the hall before he came through the main door. He looked anxiously around, then came toward her. He seemed relieved, as if he knew she could help him out of his difficulty. And Lael was sure of what he was going to ask even before he began to speak.

"Won't you play, Lael?" he begged in a low voice. "She can't do without you! And her success means so much to the Home Folks' Hour—and our own station! Persis relies on you, understands you," he went on, "and she'll do the old numbers you all know by heart."

The next half hour was to be her practice time with Madame d'Arvil. If she gave it up, she gave up her one big opportunity to make a name for herself. But there was big, lovable Ken, with his beseeching eyes, his troubled face. Of course, Madame d'Arvil didn't really need her, but it was Lael's one big chance. She must say no to Ken! He would understand.

"Please, honey!" he murmured again. "It's almost time, and it's part of our Home Folks' Hour. Less than a minute to go, Lael!"

"All right," she answered, her voice catching on a little sob, and she turned swiftly to Miss Terry.

"Tell Madame d'Arvil—oh, please explain!" she whispered huskily. "I'm needed. It's my own station, and madame has her own violinist now."

Then Lael swiftly followed Ken. As she hastened, she remembered that he had not gone down for the E string, nor even brought her own back! The old one would have to do!

A moment later, they were waiting breathlessly, soundlessly in the studio, all eyes on the little wall

light that would flash red when their program went on the air.

"You'll follow the melody—promise me! You won't change?" Persis's hands clutched at Lael's slim shoulders. "So much depends! You won't let me down, Lael?"

"No, I won't let you down," returned Lael tonelessly. Through the thick windows, she was watching the arrival of Madame d'Arvil. She saw Miss Terry explaining, and then the opera singer swept on into the inner office, plainly disturbed.

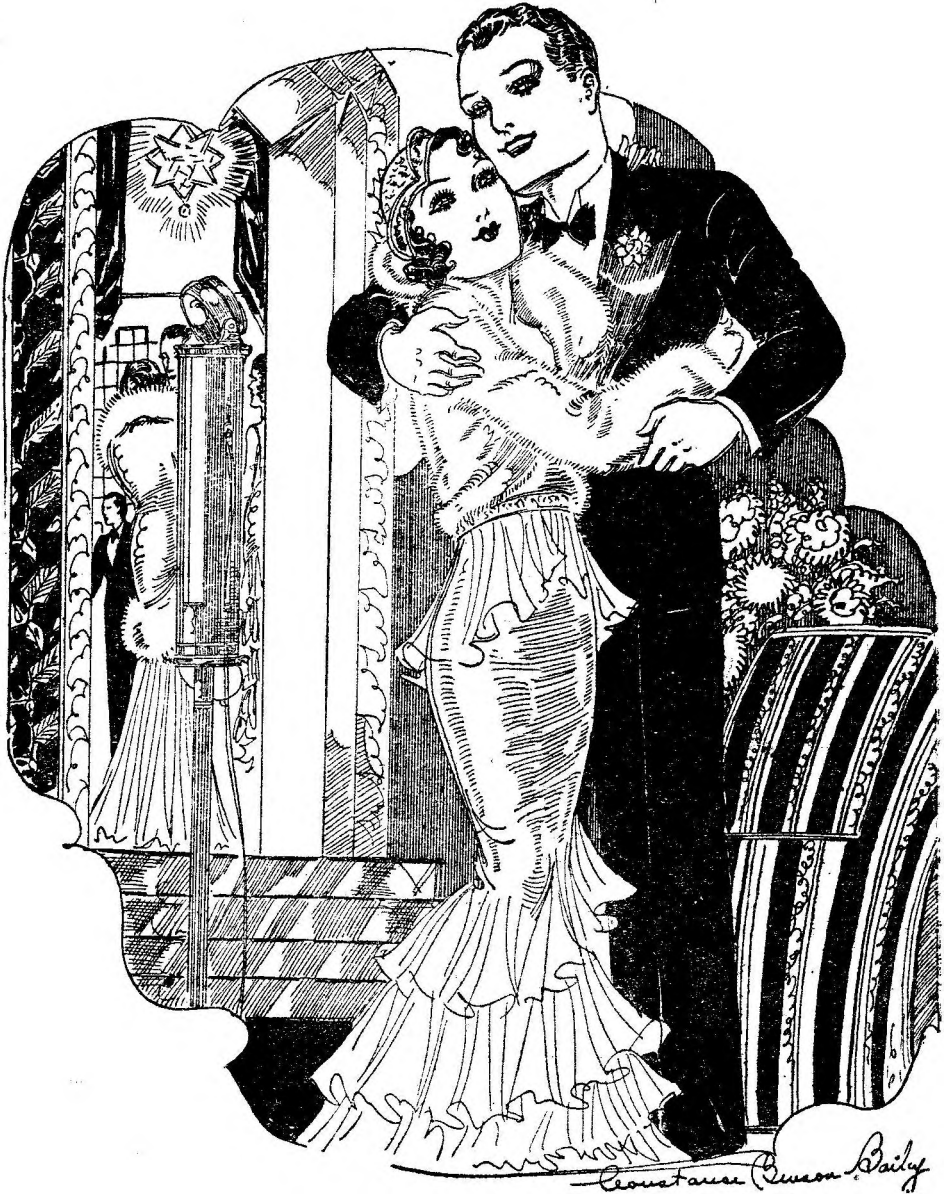
Would the change upset her, as little things did Persis? Persis now sat beside Lael, frantically twisting the fragile wisp that was her handkerchief. With sudden sympathy, Lael put a quieting, encouraging hand over the blond singer's nervous ones.

Then the red light flashed on. An orchestra from KFWB opened; a group of hill-billies from KMTR followed. There was a talk, more music, and suddenly it was their turn!

Ken, his voice a little husky with tenseness, made the brief announcement. Rachel Doone struck into the opening chords, Lael caught up the melody, and then the glorious voice of Persis Parker began the words, sweet and clear and steady.

It was at the beginning of the last number that the frayed E string snapped. It must have been written in her book of fate, Lael thought, that this night of her life was to be a failure.

As Lael stopped, Persis faltered, turned toward her. With a rueful, trembling smile of helplessness, Lael held up the fiddle with its dangling string. Miss Doone had come in strongly on the piano, yet into the tense, white face of Persis Parker, there came a world of fear, hesitation, desperate pleading. She half



Then they were in each other's arms, laughing, crying, and he was kissing her. "My little girl, my sweet, lovable Lael! I've been the blindest fool!" he said.

turned toward Lael, and her voice began its pitiable, awful searching. It fumbled like a toddling child, whose tiny hand has lost its mother's leading grasp, going through a dark, deep night.

And suddenly Lael understood the compelling reason for Persis's insistent demand for the violin and its sustaining melody!

She stepped close to the singer. She could carry it through on the

A string. She must! She caught at the melody again, firmly, surely. She leaned close to Persis, poured all her sureness and faith into the music. And she prayed that Persis could be steadied enough to go on unflinching, because Heaven had given her a wonderful golden voice, and its gift must not be shamed. She prayed that all might be well for Ken's sake. His Home Folks' Hour, the thing he had so cherished, must not be lowered by any pitiful, ridiculous happening that the world could never understand!

And then Persis turned relieved, grateful eyes toward Lael, eyes a little ashamed, and misted with tears. She sang again, true and steady and clear. It had all occurred so quickly that few in that great mysterious audience outside would ever remember that there had been the slightest faltering.

The red light blinked off, and the other talent gathered about the KXRT group, congratulating, praising. Persis had only a moment in which to give Lael's hand a squeeze. Her eyes held a plea for forgiveness. An instant later, Ken took Lael's firm fingers in his two great hands.

"I don't know what you did, dear," he whispered gently, "but I know it was something wonderful!"

A messenger, coming in hurriedly, interrupted them. "Madame d'Arvil wants to see Miss Dimond at once in the little piano room. She says please hurry!"

Lael followed the guide to the little studio where the singer and her pianist awaited her.

"Come, child, we have just time to go through all three of the songs," madame said. "And my violinist sends this, with his compliments for a fine performance!" She handed Lael a small package. "We saw,

from the lobby, that yours broke while you were playing."

"But—but——" began Lael, taking the precious string from its envelope, "your violinist is here—and I—I had to disappoint you!"

"Never will I be disappointed to see an artist so lovely, so loyal. Your first duty was to your own little station. And now we must get busy! My songs have been changed to the end of the program to give us this time together. And my first, it goes at this tempo——"

Lael's fingers thrilled with the joy of painting with her music a background for the hauntingly lovely crystal jewel that was the voice of the great D'Arvil. She didn't understand yet what had given her her chance, in spite of everything; she knew only that in a few minutes now, she was to stand before the microphone, putting all her young heart into the music that would soar forth with this heavenly singing to the listening ears of the world!

"You're an artist!" commended madame, as they started for the main room where the big program was being broadcast. "And to think of your so kindly hiding another's weakness, without the jealousy one artist too often feels for another!"

"Then you knew?" breathed Lael.

"That she was tone-deaf? Of course! I saw that the first time I watched you, last night. Persis Parker has a gorgeous voice, but she can't carry a tune herself! Too bad! Always must she follow the violin!"

Again Lael was on the air! She was playing for Madame d'Arvil, and beyond the thick windows that separated them from the lobby, she could see Ken and Persis and kindly Roger Dunlee, and sweet, elderly Rachel Doone—even the boy violinist who had tried, and who now

stayed to watch. Lael was playing for Madame d'Arvil, for the listening world out there, and for Ken—mostly for Ken!

They finished the last song on a long, rich, full note, and then the red light blinked out. Across the hall, another program was already starting.

"Child, you were wonderful!" and the famous singer impulsively gathered Lael into her arms. And Lael clung for a moment, loving this great, kind-hearted artist who had given her her chance.

Then they were out in the lobby; others were pressing around, offering congratulations, chattering happily. All but Ken! He hovered in the background, saying nothing.

With a heavy, sinking heart, Lael began putting her violin away in its worn case. Madame d'Arvil and her friends left; she was alone with Ken. He was coming toward her hesitantly, as if nerving himself to a hated task. She shrank back, afraid.

"Lael!" he half whispered, and again: "Lael!" There was a world of pathos, of pleading in his voice. She stood, gazing at him in wonder, even while she longed to rush to his

side, to cradle his dear face in her arms, to kiss the lines of worry from around his mouth.

"I didn't know," he said. "Lael, I've been a terrible fool! Why couldn't I have realized, without waiting for Persis to tell me, that I loved you—after it was too late!"

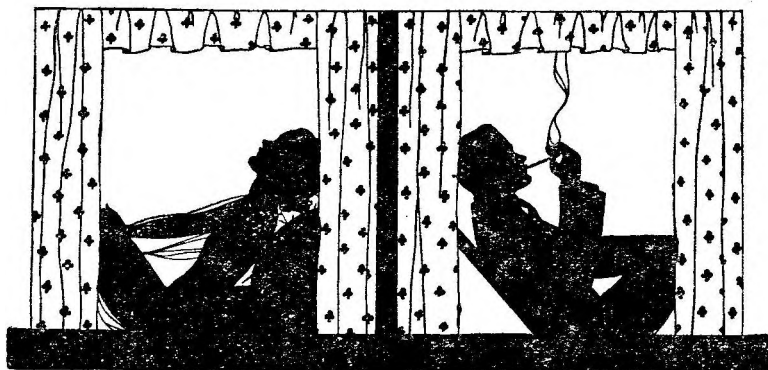
"Too late!" She stood looking at him as he slowly came nearer. "Too late!"

And then they were in each other's arms, laughing, crying, and he was kissing her eyes, her cheeks, her lips, murmuring sweet words to her.

"My little girl, my sweet, lovable Lael! How could I think Persis the attraction of the Home Folks' Hour, when you were in it, too? I've been the blindest fool!"

"Hush!" she whispered, placing her small, firm hand over his protesting lips. "I won't allow anybody to talk that way about you! You're the man I'm going to be loving the rest of my life!"

"Station LOVE!" he smiled. "Dan Cupid, your announcer. Introducing the Home Folks' Hour!" And his hungry lips found hers in a kiss of love and trust and understanding—and more love!





Jim Fraser's Choice

By Mark Price

THE day after Jim Fraser won the six-gun events of the Rennville Rodeo he met young Willie Todd in town. Willie wore a shiny new gun; he growled in answer to Jim's friendly greeting, swelled his chest and blustered.

When Jim understood what the other was driving at, he laughed.

"Are you tryin' to wrangle me into gun play, Willie? Why, you locoed infant!"

"You'll speak to me as 'Bill,' with no more callin' of names," rejoined Willie stiffly. "And if you don't go for your gun you're yellow!" Willie had grasped his gun butt.

Jim was tired of such foolishness. He pinned Willie's arms, took the gun and unloaded it, handling Willie as he would a child. "Run along now," he growled. He boxed Willie's ears and sent him on his way.

The crowd roared with laughter. "Young pup must have et loco

weed! What are kids comin' to nowadays?" remarked a horse wrangler. They all approved of Jim's self-restraint; most of them were the tall rancher's friends. The few who were not said nothing. They had all seen Jim do the double roll the day before, and it was unhealthy to crowd a man who could shoot like that. So Jim had a drink and rode for his pint-sized mountain ranch.

That evening, when he came down to the Square 89 ranch house as usual, he found the aftermath. Helen Randolph was vexed and angry—his Helen, who was everything in the world to Jim.

"I'm ashamed of you, Jim—letting Willie make a fool of you!" she stormed. Her china-blue eyes were clouded, her small perfect features set.

"Willie made a fool of himself, honey," drawled Jim. "Great snakes, I couldn't gun the boy; it'd be like poppin' songbirds! Just because I

won the shootin' prize the hare-brained idiot wants to try me out, cover himself with glory 'cordin' to his kid notions. Shucks, I've known him all my life, punched cows for his dad. I can't drill him just 'cause he gets a little fresh!"

"That's not all; there's jealousy, too. Willie's crazy about me," said Helen complacently. "And if you really loved me you'd be willing to fight for me! There was a time when men fought for their sweet-hearts."

"So you've got kid notions, too—want me and Willie to shoot over you!" Jim laughed. "Be yore age, honey—you been readin' fairy tales! This is the twentieth century. Forget that, and give us a smile!" Six feet three and built in proportion, he towered over the slender girl as he put a hand under her chin.

But Helen flushed angrily and pulled away. She drew a ring with a tiny diamond from her finger and thrust it at him. "Here, Jim. I can't be engaged to a man who won't defend his self-respect." Her voice was cold, shrill. "And Willie's coming to take me out to-night, so you needn't linger."

"Don't take on, honey. Listen to reason."

There was a knock, and Willie Todd came in. He stiffened at the sight of his giant rival, glared, and asked: "Ready, Helen?"

Jim glanced from one to the other and shrugged. "'Lo, Willie," he said without anger. "All slicked up, I see." He picked up his hat, whistling, and sauntered from the living room out to the kitchen.

"Hello, Jim," said the cook.

"'Lo, Lucy. Well, we've busted up again."

"Yes, I couldn't help hearing it. This makes about the seventh time, doesn't it?"

"About. Every time I peeve Helen she hands my ring back and gives me the air, and goes around with some other hombre till she cools off again. It'll blow over." He hung up his gun belt, sat down at the kitchen table, grinned, and suggested: "Any pie layin' around loose?"

Lucy assumed an air of mock haughtiness. "First let me ask you—would you fight for a lady?"

Jim shrugged. "Why, if necessary, shore. To suit her fool ideas of romance, no!"

She relaxed and laughed. "I was catty, Jim. Here's your pie."

"Thanks. I'll take a couple of lumps of sugar along for Blackie."

"You spoil Blackie, treating him as if he were the only horse in the world," she said. "Other punchers have a whole string."

"That's right. I've got a sort of one-track mind—one bronc, one girl." He chewed reflectively. "Reckon I spoil Helen, too. Well, we'll make up. We always do."

She looked at his rugged face, his level gray eyes, and shook her head. "You're almost too good to be true."

"You didn't think so the first time you saw me," Jim laughed.

Lucy had come to Renville a stranger, three months before. As she waited at the station uncertainly, Jim had come by and offered to drive her out to her new job. She had refused coldly. So Jim had gotten the local judge to introduce him, had persuaded the girl that he was respectable and safe, and had driven her to the Square 89.

Lucy smiled at the recollection. "I'd lived in a city slum so long that I'd forgotten there were men like you."

She was putting dishes away, moving about the kitchen with a light, sure step. She had a tall, well-

rounded figure, queenly in bearing. Her mouth was a shade too wide, her nose a bit too short for perfection, but her features were strong and fine, her brown eyes wide and deep. Jim looked at her and said: "Lucy, I ought to give Helen some of her own medicine. She's usin' Willie, goin' with him to make me jealous. Now if you'd——"

Suddenly realizing how crude it would sound, he flushed and bit his lip. But Lucy finished for him. "You mean you'd like to use me to make her jealous, by going with me and just pretending?"

Jim nodded.

Lucy laughed merrily. "Don't look so embarrassed, Jim. Of course I'll do it. You can come over every night, and I'll see that there's always pie here."

The next night Helen met Jim with icy blue eyes and curt words. "What do you want here? I'm busy to-night!"

It was a delight to Jim to reply casually: "Oh, I won't be botherin' you, Helen. I came to see Lucy," and to see the expression on her face as he passed on to the kitchen.

The trick certainly brought results. It shook Helen's cool self-assurance, made her bewildered and angry. She took out her spite on every one around her; Lucy would have been discharged, but for old Randolph's support. Helen held out stubbornly against reconciliation.

Things were growing complicated for Jim. He had never looked at any girl but Helen. Consequently he had thought all women were vain, headstrong, undependable, unfair, inclined to use a man's affection to make a doormat of him. That was simply their nature, he thought, to be excused for their loveliness and charm.

But now Lucy was a revelation to him. She had a dark loveliness no less than Helen's, a voice of low music, an even temper and genial charm that never varied, and all those other qualities of mind and character which Jim had thought existed only in a man.

"In lots of things, you're like a man, Lucy," he said one night. It was the highest compliment he could pay.

"Or like a woman," she replied. "I'm afraid you don't know much about women, Jim."

"Right," he admitted. "The only female critters I savvy are cows."

A companionship begun only for strategy developed into something more. Jim saw that Lucy was worried. She never spoke of her past. Her name was Smith. She had grown up on a ranch and later lived in a city slum. She could cook remarkably well; that was all any one knew about her. She seemed to hide from something which she dreaded. She rarely left the ranch, and seemed under constant tension. At times some trifle—a noise, a passing car, a stranger—snapped her nerves and left her distraught for hours.

She subscribed to a city newspaper, and one evening Jim chanced to pick up a copy in the kitchen.

"I see that Conrad gang put another man on the spot," he remarked. "It must take a pretty low coyote to shoot a man in the back in cold blood. You used to live in the city, Lucy; know anything about these gangsters?"

"I was in their neighborhood," she said in a muffled voice.

Jim turned. She was white to the lips, breathing quickly. He caught her quivering hands in his. "Tell me about it, Lucy," he said.

"It's nothing." She forced a smile, tried to change the subject.

"I think your scheme's working out, Jim. Helen will weaken and take you back any time now."

Jim would not be evaded. "You've got to tell me, Lucy. What's wrong?"

Then it came out. Lucy's real name was Rice. Her father, crippled by a fall, had left ranching and invested his savings in a store in the city. Unknowing, he and Lucy had moved into a bad district, dominated by the powerful Conrad gang. Abruptly a war between rival gangs flared about them.

One night two men were put on the spot outside Rice's store. The killers rolled up in a powerful car, unmasked a mounted machine gun, and sprayed their victims with a hail of hundreds of bullets. They were after their enemies; it was nothing to them that the death volley also shattered the store front in the line of fire, and snuffed out the old ex-rancher's life.

Lucy at an upstairs window had seen it all. Although she had been numb with horror, the faces of the execution squad were engraved on her mind. The killers were arrested and indicted largely on her identification and testimony. Among them was Conrad himself, lord of the city underworld.

"They tried to bribe me and threaten me. Once I was shot at," said Lucy. "Then the district attorney told me to go away and hide till the trial, so I came here. I'm the star witness. If I don't testify the case falls through and the killers go free. The trial's in two weeks—and I'm afraid. I know they're not through with me!"

"You mean they'd really kill a woman?"

"Of course; that means nothing to them. They're the sort of killers you've never met out here, Jim.

And they've got me afraid of my own shadow. But I'm going through with it—they'll pay for killing dad!" She pointed to a photograph on the front page, a massive head with a cruel mouth and heavy-lidded mocking eyes. "That's Conrad."

Jim folded up the newspaper and tossed it aside. "Forget it, Lucy. Nothin' can happen to you out here. This is cow country, not gangland. Let's see you smile!"

Gradually the lines of worry faded from her face, her lovely dark eyes lighted. "Nerves again; excuse it. Let's go for a ride, Jim."

"Right." They went out together.

On Saturday evenings the ranch was always deserted. As soon as supper was over, the crowd went their various ways. Willie called for Helen and took her out; the young buckaroos started for the weekly dance at the schoolhouse; Randolph and the older hands rode to town for poker and redeye. Only Lucy remained, to finish her day's work.

The phone rang, and Lucy answered. A gruff voice asked for Randolph. She answered that he was out.

"Let me talk to the foreman then, one of the hands."

"There's no one here at all except me; they've all gone. Is there any message?"

The receiver clicked.

It was a commonplace call; yet, after Lucy hung up, things seemed different, strange. The loneliness was oppressive. The ranch house, usually alive with activity, had never seemed so deserted. The long empty hallway echoed hollowly under her tread. She stood still, strained her ears—anything to break this blank dead silence!

Then, when a dry board creaked somewhere, her heart leaped. An

image of Conrad's ominous face flashed unbidden through her mind. Nerves again! She tried to laugh at herself, to pull herself together. She went back to the kitchen, where the wall clock ticked with an endless, tiny, hammer beat. Outside it was twilight. Lucy turned on the light.

same instinctive uneasiness gripped him that roused him from deep sleep at night on trail herd when a storm was blowing up and the cattle restless. It was the plainsman's sixth sense, an inner danger signal. Now, looking about him, he was glad to find his fears groundless. "All alone, Lucy?"



Hocf beats sounded. They drew nearer, followed by footsteps approaching the kitchen door. It couldn't be Jim yet; he wasn't due till eight thirty to take her to the dance after her work was done. She called: "Who's there?"

Nevertheless it was Jim. Lucy stifled a sigh of relief. "But you're early, Jim!" Fear had gone.

"Yeah, I couldn't sit still any longer." He did not tell her that the

She told him of the call. Thinking it might have been a cattle buyer in town, Jim went to the phone and found the wire dead. "That's funny. Any idea who it was, Lucy?"

"I never heard the voice before," Lucy replied.

There was a faint, far-off droning. Lucy listened.

"Just an auto comin' along the road. I saw it from the hill trail



"You mean you'd like to use me to make Helen jealous, by going with me and just pretending? Of course I'll do it, Jim. You can come over every night."

on my way down," said Jim. "Better get ready, Lucy."

"Soon as I put these things away." She took off her apron, peered out through the gathering dusk toward the road.

A long touring car turned into the ranch driveway and pulled up beside the kitchen door. The driver

got out and knocked at the screen door. "My radiator's nearly dry, lady. How about some water?"

"Certainly. Come in," said Lucy, and the stranger entered. He was small and sallow, and his little black eyes gleamed like shoe buttons. He stood blinking in the light, looking at Lucy intently, while a satisfied

grin dawned on his hard face. Then he caught sight of Jim at the side of the room, and his lips contorted to a soundless snarl.

Lucy noticed nothing. "There's a pail, and the pump's outside to the right," she said. "I'll go and get ready now, Jim." She started toward the inner door. An icy finger seemed to touch Jim's spine as he rose from his chair. The sallow stranger did not pick up the pail; instead he stepped back toward the screen door and held up two fingers. At that three men got out of the car.

Jim saw it all like a flash of light—their coming at the most suitable time, the phone call to see that the coast was clear. Lucy was supposed to be here alone, but the presence of a single cow-puncher would not matter much, and now the gangland killers had come to make sure that the State's star witness would never testify against their chief. They had come to kill her! As the last touch of certainty, the third man got out of the car and stood framed in the light from the doorway. Jim recognized that heavy evil face—Conrad, the underworld boss.

Jim's racing brain was cold and clear, every muscle in his body tense. His face did not change, he moved with casual sureness. He watched the hall door close behind Lucy, then moved to place the beady-eyed man between himself and the approaching three.

The man swung about, and looked into gray eyes of flame. "Don't move," warned Jim softly. The other growled something and reached toward his armpit. Jim drew his right-hand gun and shot him twice. As he fell Jim leaped for the wall and switched off the light.

For a second the three outside paused while the air of the room

vibrated with suspense and the shadow of death; then they swarmed through the doorway together with blazing guns. Although it was almost complete night, enough light remained to shoot by at that range. Jim had both guns out, his back against the hallway door, firing into the human mass in the outer doorway. Their first volley went wide, and Jim shot one of them through the head. Blinded and maddened by his death wound, the gangster ran screaming straight toward his slayer, shielding his companions and stopping three more of the puncher's bullets before he died. In that split second's delay, the remaining two poured a stream of lead at Jim. Bullets thudded on both sides of him, smashed a wrist, struck one holster a glancing hammer blow; then a bullet struck him and he went down.

Conrad sprang forward with a snarl. "Got him! Now for the girl!"

But "Dopey Joe," though morphine-crazed, hung back and muttered: "Make sure of him first." He whipped out a flashlight, turned it on Jim's prostrate form, then leveled his pistol at the cowboy's heart.

The next instant he was hurled backward as the hall door flew open and a desperate form plunged against his.

The flashlight went crashing; Dopey seized a slender wrist and shouted: "It's her, boss!" As Conrad came at the girl from the other side, Lucy struck at him with all her force. He pushed her back and swung his gun toward her, but jerking free from Dopey, she clutched Conrad's gun hand with both hands and turned it aside. "Jim! Jim!" she screamed.

Jim was sinking through a gray fog down into bottomless depths. A voice checked his descent. He hung

suspended between consciousness and blackness. To his dazed mind rest seemed sweet. He wanted to sink on through the fog, but some one far away was calling him; there was something he must do. He moaned and stirred.

Lucy's desperate strength was spent, and she could not prevail against two men. Conrad was cursing Dopey, who floundered in the darkness with a wildly flourished gun. "Don't shoot, you fool! Get her clear first!" She clung to Conrad with all her strength, but with a growl he broke her hold and flung her toward the opposite wall. Again she screamed. She had fought her best for Jim, and now it was done. In a moment they would both die, she and Jim. All the agony of her soul burst from her lips. "Jim! Jim!" Then she struck the wall with breath-taking force and fell in a helpless heap near the screen door.

"Now!" roared Conrad. But Lucy's final cry had pierced through the fog in Jim's brain like a knife, stabbed him wide awake. He shook his head, sat up with a gun in one wavering hand. There was Lucy on the floor, the two gangsters crouched above her ready to fire. Jim's hand steadied as though changed to stone as he pulled the trigger.

The next day press photographers and reporters swarmed about the Square 89, clamoring for pictures and news of the new hero. "He did what all the cops and gangs couldn't do—he got Conrad!" exclaimed one of them. "He'll be on every front page in the country! Where is he?"

But Jim Fraser was not to be found there, nor in Rennville, nor at his small mountain ranch. After his wounds had been dressed at the doctor's, he had shakily mounted Blackie and disappeared in the hills.

Not till evening, after the newspapermen had gone, did he return to the Randolph ranch house.

They greeted him royally. Willie Todd was there, his immature face stamped with hero worship, the old grudge forgotten. Helen took possession of Jim, leading him into the living room.

Lucy rose from the couch, pale and hollow-eyed. "How are you to-day, Jim?"

"Nothin' much, 'cept my arm. And you, Lucy?"

"Oh, I got out of it with only a few bruises. Just shaken up." She and Jim did not take their eyes off each other.

Helen looked on, vexed, then she cut in: "Jim, you silly boy, why have you been hiding? They want your pictures and your story. You're a hero now, you know, and you must act like one!"

"That sort of thing doesn't interest me," said Jim.

"Now, Jim!" Helen was smiling at him with her old possessive air.

Lucy rose. "Well, I'll leave you two alone together," she said.

Jim shook his head. "Don't go, Lucy."

"But, Jim, hadn't she better?" Helen protested. "I mean—we've something to say in private."

Jim stared. "What?"

Helen bit her lip. "You're so stupid to-day!" She spoke with forced sweetness. "We quarreled because you wouldn't fight for my sake, but now—after yesterday—all that's wiped out." She patted his cheek. "We'll start all over again!"

He had almost forgotten. Jim looked into Helen's shallow blue eyes. Once—how long past it seemed!—he had loved this girl, laid his devoted heart at her feet. Now he saw her coldly, clearly—a lovely doll, a pretty surface which masked

an inner emptiness. How could he have expected love from her? How could she have faced the crisis last night? There was one woman for him, yes—but not this one!

He looked past Helen to Lucy, saw her beauty heightened by a radiance that seemed to come from within, saw the fine, steadfast soul that shone in her dark eyes. There was the one woman for him!

"I'm ready to take your ring back, Jim," said Helen.

Jim said gently: "I'm sorry, Helen. I've given the ring to Lucy."

Helen looked from one to the other. She tossed her head and flounced out of the room.

"Fibber!" laughed Lucy softly, a tender look in her eyes as they rested on Jim's face.

"I had to say something," said Jim with a smile. Then, deeply serious, he looked at her and groped for words. "I meant that, Lucy, if—if you want it." He held the little solitaire out to her.

"You might ask me, Jim." She raised her lips, her dark eyes misty. "But you might kiss me first!"

She was in his arms and he was kissing her again and again. And suddenly Jim Fraser knew that he had made the only possible choice—the choice of the girl he really loved.



WHEN Mercy picked up the dirty, hungry-looking pup on the street corner, saved him from the dog catcher, and took him home with her, the fact that he was going to bring her love and happiness seemed almost impossible. But that's just what happened. Don't miss "Closed Doors," by Yvonne Yves, in the next issue of *Love Story Magazine*. A story of a girl who was an artist, and of a lost pup and a good-looking young aviator.

JUST YOU

By CORA SMITH GOULD

HOW true, that underneath a smile
A heart can grieve and ache the while!
All lovely things my senses woo,
But life lacks luster without you.

Alive am I to Nature's charms,
And when I seek her kindly arms
She breathes a prayer, as if she knew
That I am dreaming, Love, of you.

I worship trees, adore the sky,
Where fleecy clouds go drifting by
Across the deep entrancing blue,
When heaven seems near with thought of
you.

The little waves play on the sand
And sing to me—I understand!
They play upon my heartstrings, too,
And whisper tender things of you.

The wizard moon takes keen delight
To open floodgates in the night,
When memories crowd and surge anew
Along a stream that leads to you.

This world is like a fair rainbow
In sweethearts' eyes, who view it so:—
To me its prism has lost a hue,
The vivid one that meant *just you*.





Yes Girl

A Serial

By Vivian Grey

Part III.

CHAPTER V.

GRACIA stared down at the paper her father had thrust into her hand. At first her startled eyes refused to take in any of the details of the picture-dotted page that she held.

Gradually the figures began to take shape—a divorcee with crossed legs smiled out at the world from her new freedom; a dog that had rescued a child from drowning, a baby that was lost and then—

THE STORY SO FAR: Gracia and Stacia Fane are twins. Stacia, selfish, wild, leads the man who loves her, Ken Worthing, a mad chase, while Gracia, the quieter one, looks on, loving Ken herself, but helpless to stop his ruination at the hands of her sister. Stacia has a mysterious need for a great deal of money. One evening a taxi brings Stacia home and the driver lifts her out. Ken is at the house and believes that she has been hurt. Gracia puts her to bed and does not tell Ken that Stacia had been drinking too much. The next morning Mr. Fane asks Gracia where she was the day before and, thrusting a newspaper into her hand, demands an explanation of the story printed under her picture.

Gracia felt as if her heart had stopped beating. She seemed to stand through countless years looking at her own face in the paper.

"Well, what do you know about it?" she heard her father asking.

She looked at it again—her own photograph taken at her coming-out party, the gown that she had loved so much with its quaint neck and below it in a smaller picture the figure of a girl being lowered by a rope over the side of an ocean liner! A little group of men in the tug below were reaching up to grasp the figure of the girl as it came within their reach.

"Gracia, I've asked you a question!"

"I—I don't know anything about it." She managed to say finally in a queer, stifled voice.

"But that is your picture!"

"Yes, my picture—the one taken at my debut—the one the papers used then."

"But this isn't you?" Fane pointed to the figure of the girl being lowered over the side of the liner.

"No, it isn't."

Fane looked at her a moment intently.

"I've never known you to deceive me, Gracia. I believe you."

"Then—then what are you going to do about it?" Gracia asked, still in that small, frightened voice.

"There's only one possibility left. It must be Stacia. Do you know what she was doing yesterday?"

"No." The syllable was barely audible as it came from Gracia's lips.

She knew that she should tell her father how Stacia came home, that in keeping that from him she was only making herself party to whatever had happened to her sister. But she felt that she couldn't tell him.

Things were bad enough—perhaps he wouldn't need to know that Stacia had been drinking. That a story like that had gotten into the papers about Stacia was bad enough. Her father would find it all too hard

to forgive that without knowing the rest.

"Where is your sister?" Fane asked.

"She's still sleeping," Gracia murmured, hoping to delay the ordeal until his temper had cooled a little.

"Wake her. Tell her to come here at once."

"But——"

"I told you what I wanted," her father cut her off shortly.

"But, I was just going to ask you how you happened to see that, daddy."

"An anonymous call came from New York this morning."

Gracia stared in amazement.

"How terrible!" she breathed.

"Call your sister," Fane said, not answering Gracia.

Gracia looked at her aunt appealingly and seemed to read in her eyes a mute resignation to the condition.

She paused at Stacia's room. It was hard to take her down to face what she would have to.

Stacia looked up from her frivolously draped bed.

"Well?" she asked.

"Daddy wants to see you."

Stacia stared a moment.

"Oh, he does? What about? Have you ~~been~~——"

"No, I haven't been anything," Gracia put in quickly. "But he knows something about yesterday—it got into the paper. I only saw the picture. I didn't have time to read the story. And it's my picture they've used—mine!"

Stacia laughed.

"That's doing you a good turn, darling! If they get the idea that you've got a little pep you may get a hot date once in a while!"

Gracia stared at her sister for a startled moment. She could joke even when she knew that her father was waiting for her downstairs—

waiting to go into the details of one of her stunts.

"Oh, Stacy," she suddenly wanted to protect her from the anger that waited her downstairs, "don't be that way! If you're sorry and say you won't do it any more, daddy'll forgive you and overlook it! You—oh, you just can't go on the way you are—breaking everybody's heart and you'll break your own, too!"

"Don't be silly." Stacia was getting into exotic pajamas and then combing out the tangled mass of her curling hair. "Why should I say I'm sorry, when I'm not? Why should I promise not to do a thing again, when I know that I will if I want to? My life's my own. I'm living it as I want to! If daddy doesn't like it—well, why should that cramp my style?"

Gracia stared at her sister in unbelief.

"You needn't wait," Stacia added. "I'll be down."

And so Gracia went down alone.

"She's coming," she said to her father, and then would have left the room but her father's voice stayed her:

"You might as well stay here and know what is said. We haven't any secrets in this family."

Gracia stared when her sister swaggered into the room, her lovely face, carefully made-up, had lost all signs of the party of the night before. She was poised, almost insolent.

She stood on the threshold and looked the three of them over with coolly smiling eyes.

"Looks like a family conference!" she said lightly, as she entered the room and sank into a big chair.

"It is. It's more than that. What can you tell me about this?" her father asked, putting the paper into her hands. "What have you to say about it?"

Stacia looked at the paper, coolly and then, a slight smile on her lovely face, said:

"Well, an actress would certainly have paid a pretty penny for it and they're handing it to me—that's one thing to say about it."

"Don't be flippant, Stacia! This is no time for flippancy!"

"I'm not! I'm in deadly earnest. It's quite true that an actress would have had to hand out a nice little check for that sort of thing and here I get it free!"

"Stacia, I'm not fooling about this! I've known that you liked a good time and I've often felt that you went too far, but I've never felt that you would forget your family entirely, that you would expose them to such disgrace as publicity of this sort! Do you realize that your sister's photograph has been used and that this story says that you smuggled yourself on board ship and had to be put off on a tug by a rope tied around your body? Do you know that this story insinuates that you were so interested in a party on board that you didn't know what was happening—that the ship was sailing? It insinuates that you might have been drinking too much!"

"I don't have to read that paper to know all of that!"

"Then it is true!" Fane looked for a moment as if he had been slapped.

Gracia knew then how much her father had been hoping all along that Stacia would be able to deny the story.

"Of course it's true, and what of it?"

"You ask me *that*? And you're my daughter?" the man exclaimed in startled amazement.

"Certainly, and I'll ask you something else, since you're so shocked!"

"Stacia!" Gracia's cry interrupted what the other girl would have said.

"You mean to say that you went on board that ship to see men you scarcely know? You went on board for a party with people we know nothing about and so forgot yourself that you were carried out to sea and had to be sent back in that undignified manner?"

"Yes, I mean it! And I intend to go on just that way—going to all the parties I'm asked to! And, if you'd feel any better about knowing it, I was drunk when they put me off that boat. Drunk when I got home here last night. What are you going to do about that?"

She was on her feet, her small, slim figure drawn up to its full height, her lovely face masked with insolence.

Fane whitened with anger and turned swiftly to Katty.

"You knew about this, then? You knew that she came home drunk?" he demanded.

"No—no, I didn't!"

"And I thought I put my daughters in your care!"

"Daddy, don't!" Gracia's young voice broke in. "Katty didn't know. I put Stacia to bed!"

"You did! You're lying! You couldn't have gotten her upstairs!"

Gracia hesitated. She didn't want to say that Ken Worthing had carried Stacia up. Somehow she didn't want his name even mentioned in connection with such a thing.

And then she heard her sister's hard, brilliant little laugh rippling through the lovely old room.

"The pure Mr. Worthing carried me to my bed!"

"Ken Worthing?" Fane asked. "I thought he was decent."

"So he is—too decent!" Stacia's words, tinged delicately with sar-

casm stilled the explanation that Gracia would have made.

"So this is the way my daughters carry on!" There was more than anger in Fane's voice, a sort of broken note that went straight to Gracia's heart, and hurt.

Silence filled the room for a while. It was Fane's voice, still with that oddly broken note that finally spoke:

"I wish that I could order you from my house, Stacia, and be done with the thing that way. But that's too simple and too much like shirking. You're my daughter, you're a Fane and I'm going to make you a respectable member of society if I have to keep you locked in your room until your spirit is broken. Katty, will you take her to her room and see to it that she stays there until she has decided to live a more normal life?"

"You can't do that!" Stacia was blazing.

"Oh, yes I can and I will do that."

"I won't stay! There isn't a lock or a bolt that will keep me! You can do what you want to, but I won't stay!"

"You'll stay, and I'll break your spirit if I have to put you in chains!" Fane's face hardened. He paused only a moment and then went on, a strange, chill purpose in his voice: "That's been done before to a Fane—I've got the chains in the barn. Katty, send the man for them while I take this wild person to her room."

Katty Fane's hand gripped the arms of her chair so hard that her knuckles whitened.

"No, I won't get them!" she said fiercely and Gracia stared at her in amazement. She had never seen Katty oppose her father before. "I won't. I wore those things. They were made for me! The girls might



as well know it now. I lived in them for a solid year. I know what they did to me! They broke my spirit, all right. I never wanted to look at a man after that, but they filled me with hatred, too. And I won't have that happen to Stacia! She's a Fane—I know it. She's wild and

unmanageable, but I won't have what happened to me happening to her! She's got to have her chance, Tom Fane! You had it! Because you were a boy your wildness was endured until—love and life tamed you. Well, Stacia's got to have that same chance that you had. I won't



"I intend going to all the parties I'm asked to! And, if you'd feel any better about knowing it, I was drunk when I got home last night."

have her finally grow into an empty-handed, empty-hearted, bitter woman!"

"You heard my order, Katty!" came sternly from Fane. "Get those irons!"

"I won't!"

"This is my house! You're living in it. Get those irons!"

"I've leave your house first!"

"Katty, how dare you defy me!"

Katty Fane would have spoken again, but Stacia's voice, edged with a slight sneer, interrupted:

"Go ahead, get them, Katty. I don't mind. That will be just one more experience for me. And if he"—her eyes blazed toward her father for a moment—"thinks he can hold me with those, he doesn't know his own blood!"

Fane stared at his daughter and Gracia thought she saw something beaten and broken creeping into his eyes. She knew instinctively that it hurt him beyond words to be harsh with his daughter.

"You——" Fane stopped speaking and looked toward the door of the room.

Ken Worthing stood there. No one spoke for a moment. Then:

"I hope I'm not intruding. I came to ask about Stacia." It was Ken's voice, and Gracia, not daring to look at him, felt her heart trembling just at sound of his voice.

"So you came to ask how she is! You're the person who brought her home last night. You——"

"I was here waiting for her, Mr. Fane, and carried her into the house," Worthing corrected him.

"Then you weren't with her?"

"No."

"I might have known."

"But, since you know about it, I do think you'd ought to protect your girls a little more—some one had given Stacia more than she should have had to drink last night. I——"

"Protect her!" interrupted Fane. "Protect that wild female! Do it, if you can. And if you do you'll be a better man than I am! I've been

trying to do that all my life, and I'm just beginning to realize what a poor job I've made of it! Any man who has to bring up a modern girl has my heartfelt sympathy."

"I don't understand," Worthing said slowly.

"Here, read that, then perhaps you will!" Fane tossed the paper toward Worthing.

The youth took the sheet, stared at the pictures and then read the story telling that one of the Fane twins, beautiful daughter of one of New York's wealthiest men, had become so engrossed in a party on board ship that she had been carried out to sea and was in such condition that she had to be lowered over the side with a rope tied around her body.

Worthing's face was white when he finished.

"What are you going to do about this?" he asked tensely.

"Do?" demanded Fane. "What can you do when you've got a daughter who owns up to all of it?"

"I don't believe it!"

No one spoke for a moment. Even Stacia seemed a little affected by the youth's sublime faith in her. Then:

"Well, you might as well—because it's true." She spoke quietly.

"Stacia!"

"It is—every word of it."

Worthing stood looking at her, and Gracia saw in his eyes again that mute adoration that she had seen for the moment that he bent over Stacia the night before when he had laid her on her bed. Gracia felt as if she couldn't endure looking at it, but she had to; it fascinated her.

And then she saw him go toward Stacia, his hands out in a little gesture of appeal, as if forgetful of the others in the room.

"Stacia, it isn't true! Not of the

real you! The real you that I love didn't do that. It's just the restlessness of the age, this period that you were born in. It's confused you and made you think you want things that you don't. Stacia, I love you, I want you. Marry me now, let me take care of you; give me the right to be with you always, to protect you from this modern madness. I'll make you happy. As my wife—why, darling, I'll be on my knees to you always! I'll spend the rest of my life trying to make you happy, giving you everything you want!"

He paused a moment and Stacia's light, brilliant, cruel laugh echoed in the silent room.

"You couldn't sell me marriage if they were giving gold bricks away with it as premiums! I want to live, and there's no surer way to oblivion for a girl than the shackles of matrimony! I want to know every thrill life holds before I kick off. I want to try everything once. That's why I'm a yes girl. I'll say 'yes' to anything once—anything but marriage!"

"Stacia!" Ken Worthing seemed stunned and Gracia's heart ached for him.

She wanted to go to him and take his hands in hers, to comfort him, to tell him that he wasn't missing anything, that Stacia wasn't the kind of a girl who could ever make any man happy. And yet Gracia knew that the touch of her hands, the comfort of her words, were the last things in the world that he wanted.

"Stacia, you don't mean that!"

"I sure do—and how!"

Her flippancy in answer to the strained, passionate words of the youth was a sacrilege.

Fane seemed to sense it. He looked at Gracia and then, as if in answer to something that he saw in her eyes, he rose and went out of the

room, Katty following. Finally, Gracia also went.

It didn't matter to her about Stacia, but she couldn't endure looking on the gift that Worthing was laying at her sister's feet, and seeing the pain in his eyes at her spurning.

Gracia would have given anything to have saved him that.

She had an impulse to rush back into the room and beg him to see that Stacia wasn't worthy of the gifts he brought her, but she forced herself to go on out into the gardens.

She was still there when, a little later, Worthing was walking through them toward his uncle's place.

He stopped a moment and looked at Gracia, something as if seeing her for the first time.

"You're like Stacia, aren't you?" It was as if he'd never really noted it before.

"We look alike," murmured Gracia, and the memory of his lips on hers in that impassioned kiss that had been meant for Stacia came back to her with painful clarity.

He went on and Gracia looked after him, a peculiar emptiness possessing her.

CHAPTER VI.

Stacia had a coolly triumphant smile on her brilliantly rouged lips when Gracia saw her that evening.

It was as if she wanted to say to Gracia: "You see, I can get away with anything!" Gracia turned away from her, heartsick.

She knew that Worthing would come over that evening and take Stacia out somewhere—and he did.

Nothing seemed to shake his faith in her, thought Gracia bitterly. It wasn't that she would have taken anything from Stacia; it was just that life seemed to be passing her by. The things that she would have

given her very soul for were being showered on others and wasted.

Gracia was sitting quietly with her father for a little while before Johnny Farrel came to take her out.

"I presume you think I'm weak—that I was weak about Stacia this afternoon," he said.

"No," was Gracia's quiet reply.

"Well, I'm doing what I'm doing because I hope that kid's love for Stacia will make some impression on her." He was speaking slowly and earnestly. "I know the Fane blood. It's wild, little Gracia. Be glad that it missed you somehow. But when it loves—it loves. Katty could tell you what it did to her. And I can tell you what it did to me—it broke her and made me. If your mother had been any other kind of a girl—you're like her, Gracia—I hate to think of what my end might have been. There's wild blood in the Fanes, Gracia, and that's why I've been patient and tried to understand your sister. That's why I'm letting things go now, in the hope that the beauty of that boy's love will somehow get over with her and do something for her."

"I know." Gracia's voice was not quite steady. "I hope so, too." But the words seemed to be dragged from her, dragged over her aching heart.

She did hope that things would turn out well for Stacia, that somehow out of her warped, twisted philosophy the calm sweet happiness of perfect peace would come to her, but it was hard to echo just her father's wish, when her own heart yearned so for Worthing.

She was glad when Johnny appeared at the steps and called to her. Her eyes lighted a little and Johnny noticed it.

"Gracia, beautiful, you look almost glad to see me!"

"Oh, I think I am to-night, Johnny!" Her voice trembled a little as she spoke, and her hands went out to him in a helpless little gesture.

Johnny took them and stood looking intently into her eyes.

"You've been driven to me to-night," he said. "I can see it in your eyes. Probably some more of Stacia's doing. You'd let me kiss you now, you might let me take you in my arms—you might say 'yes' to things I'd like to ask you. It's a terrific temptation, Gracia, but I won't. I don't want you that way."

She let him help her into his car and seemed to sink against him when he slipped under the wheel. He half turned to her as he started the motor.

"You're a temptation the way you are to-night, Gracia. And I don't know how strong I am."

"I don't know how strong I want you to be, Johnny!"

His hand left the wheel and touched hers.

"I care too much to take you this way, honey. When you come to me, if you ever do, I want it to be because you really love me. Not because you've been hurt so much that you're seeking shelter. Not that my arms don't ache to give you that shelter, dear. They do. But I want your happiness more than I want my own, and after this was over, you'd be sorry if you'd made me any promises, given me anything. I want you never to be sorry about anything—about me. If I spend my life trying to make you happy; if I give my life in doing just some little thing for you, that will be all that I ask."

"Johnny!" There was fear in Gracia's voice. "Don't talk like that. You frighten me! I feel as if—something might happen."

Johnny laughed softly.

"Don't be frightened, little girl!" he said easily. "I meant what I said but nothing is going to happen to me."

"I can't be so sure!" There was still a trace of agitation in her voice.

"In a minute you'll have me thinking you care what happens to me!" He spoke gently and there was a whimsical smile on his fine young face as he glanced at her a moment.

"I do, Johnny. I do care. Only not the way you want me to. I wish I could! I wish I didn't know what love was and that I could let the liking that I have for you masquerade as love. I wish I dared cheat you that much! But I can't! I'm mad about some one else—mad about some one who doesn't even know I'm living, Johnny!"

There was a desperate note in her voice.

Johnny's young face whitened slightly and his teeth seemed to grit.

"I don't see how any one could be that way—not see you, I mean."

"It's—Stacia. He can't see any one but her!"

Johnny was silent for a moment, then the words seemed to be dragged from him against his wish. It was as if he had to know.

"It's Worthing, then, isn't it?" And when Gracia didn't answer, he added: "You needn't tell me—I know. Every one knows that he's fallen for Stacia and fallen hard. And he isn't her kind. He's made a mistake somewhere. He'll probably wake up too late."

"Yes! Yes—it's Ken Worthing!" And then Gracia found herself frankly crying in Johnny's arms. Crying over one man in the arms of another who loved her.

"Oh, Johnny, I'm so ashamed," she said brokenly, breathlessly.

Johnny who had stopped his car and parked in the kind shadow of some tall trees drew her closer.

"Don't be. I understand."

When Gracia finally looked up, her sobbing ceased, she asked in a pitiful little voice:

"Is it always like this—wanting some one you can't have? Is that the way we were meant to go on?"

Johnny petted her tenderly.

"It's life," he said softly. "I want you with all my heart, and you want Ken Worthing with all of yours."

Gracia was a little bit glad when her father said that they would return to their city house. She loved the country. She had always been twice as happy in the great old rambling farm homestead that looked out over the lovely Hudson as she had been in the city house, but she was glad to leave it. She felt that the city might mean seeing less of Worthing. That would make life a little easier.

One of the first invitations they received after settling in their city place was for a tea the Jaimes girls were giving.

"Will you go?" Gracia asked, looking up from the invitation that Stacia had put into her hand with a little laugh.

"Go? Certainly, since I have nothing better to do!"

"But, wouldn't you rather hate to——" Gracia hesitated.

"To meet the old boy? Not me! Don't be absurd, sweet child! What's a little petting party more or less in a girl's life?"

And so they set out, Stacia at the wheel of the car, and arrived at the Jaimes town house a scented flutter of smart fall femininity. Their long skirts of soft, costly fabric swirling about their slim ankles; tiny hats from which peeped co-

quettish bits of ostrich contrasted with the bronzed curls beneath their brims.

The Jaimes girls looked at them in breathless admiration as they led

them into the living room. They were plain in contrast. Their mother, a woman of exceptional strength of will and personality, believed in a simplicity to the point



Stacia's light, brilliant, cruel laugh echoed in the silent room.
"You couldn't sell me marriage if they were giving gold bricks
away with it as premiums!"

of plainness and almost disfiguring barrenness.

She had marked the lives of both of her daughters and of her husband with her stern beliefs.

"Oh, you're always so gorgeous!" breathed Elise Jaimes. "I could just die admiring your clothes! I wish mamma would let us have things like yours!"

"I'll will it to you when I die!" came lightly from Stacia while Gracia smiled at Elise and pitied her just a little.

There was a little stir in the room as the girls entered. It was always that way—two of them so nearly alike and so beautifully dressed.

And then the chatter was resumed again. Young voices echoed the little high cries and the light, frivolous laughter of the moment. There was the clinking of crystal and the tinkling clatter of silver on china.

The soft, shadowy light of six o'clock came. Cars were whirling up the Avenue with home-bound speed.

And then the light feminine noise of the party softened a bit and Elise Jaimes looked up to welcome her father.

But Jaimes wasn't smiling. Instead he was looking straight across the room. Gracia tried to tell herself that she was only imagining that his eyes rested on her sister with that malignant expression. And then she heard him speak:

"Elise, I thought I told you——"

But Elise, following the direction of his glance, must have caught his meaning even before he finished the sentence.

"Daddy, I just couldn't help it! I know what you said, but I didn't think you really meant it! I just couldn't have a party without asking all the girls. I couldn't!"

"When I give an order, I expect to be obeyed, Elise!"

LS—5E

A slight shock, a thing that was almost tangible ran through the little group of girls. It was as if each girl there was thinking that no one but the parents of the two Jaimes girls would attempt to get away with such dominance in the twentieth century. That sort of thing just wasn't done any more. You could feel the sentiment exuding from the refined gathering.

"But, daddy, I just couldn't leave out one of the girls. I couldn't!"

And then Gracia felt a sense of apprehension. It was as if something directly associated with her was about to be touched upon. She felt, rather than saw, Stacia rise to her full, smartly black-clad height—tall and slim and lovely.

"I imagine you're referring to me, Mr. Jaimes," she said, with a peculiar emphasis on the last. "We might as well put the rest of the girls at ease. They're all worriedly wondering what it's all about and if it means them."

Gracia, too, was on her feet, her hand moved in a little staying motion, as if she would have begged Stacia to be still.

"Yes," Jaimes said, "I do refer to you, and you'll save me a lot of trouble by leaving and not coming into my home again. I wish you'd regard that as an order. I asked my daughter not to invite you here. I want you to keep away from my girls and out of my home!"

A little gasp rose from the group of girls, and Gracia was conscious of the fact that they were all on their feet as if in protest against Jaimes's conduct.

But Stacia was standing perfectly poised, looking at the man, a slight smile on her face.

"You dare do this to-day," she said easily to Jaimes, "because your wife is out of town—you know she

can't come in on it and see it. But you hadn't counted on my not caring. You thought you'd humiliate me and I'd slink out and the game would be yours. Well, I'm not playing into your hand that way!"

"Leave this house before I call your father and ask him to come and get you!" Jaimes exclaimed. "I refuse to let my daughters associate with such as you—your very presence is a contamination to these other decent girls!"

"Yes, I'll leave. I was ready to go, anyway. I have another appointment. But first—you're going to pay for this. You've started something that you can't finish! I'm going to finish it for you! And these girls you want to protect so much are going to know how far you'll go when you think no one knows it. The only thing that's hurting you now is that you're being made to pay!"

"You have no proof of that!" came tensely from the man, while the girls looked on, white-faced.

Stacia laughed easily.

"I had the check you gave me that night we parked on Allapartus Road photographed before I cashed it! Would you like to see the picture of it? Shall I pass it around?"

"You didn't!"

Stacia chuckled in a pleased way.

"Oh, yes, I did. You counted on my being stupid about that. And you counted on my being afraid and eager to get away and keep things quiet this afternoon. Well, you're not dealing with the women in your own family now. I'm cast from a different mold!"

"If you had any shame——"

"But I haven't!" Stacia interrupted hotly. "Not any more than you have! You thought this was a game that you could play alone, because you were a man. Well, those

days are gone forever. The man pays now—and pays and pays!"

Stacia's light laughter hung for a moment over the room which was otherwise deathly still.

"And now, if we've finished this little scene, I'll be going on to my next party!"

"You'll hear from this!" Jaimes said hotly.

"Oh, probably!" Stacia replied as she moved gracefully out of the room, Gracia following her.

They got into the car. Gracia felt that she couldn't even look at the line of smartly dressed girls that were coming from Jaimes's house, but Stacia looked out and returned their good-bys.

"Sporting of you, Stacy," said one, coming to the side of the car. "I wouldn't have dared do a thing like that. I'd have crumpled. I know what you mean. He's always coming to the club dances without his wife and trying to poach!"

Stacia laughed.

"Well, once he paid more than the posted fine!"

"Good for you!"

"Bully of you, Stacia," came from another girl. "Wish I had the nerve to pull something like that when one of the old papas tries to take a so-called fatherly kiss! They ought to pay the piper once in a while!"

And with her light laughter trailing in a fine high line from the smart little car she drove, Stacia pulled away from the curb, waved a smartly-gloved hand and was out in the traffic of the Avenue.

It was long before either of the girls spoke.

"You don't really mean that about the check?" Gracia asked finally in an awed voice. "You didn't really take money from Jaimes?"

"Of course I did," Stacia replied,

with that easy laugh. "A man like that should be made to pay for the things he wants. A girl would be a fool to contribute anything to his happiness, unless she was crazy about him, which would be a condition hard to imagine. Only most men are willing to pay for privileges—favours from young women. Jaimes is a quitter. He tried to squirm out of it that night on Allapartus Road—would have, if we hadn't been parked right there in front of that house belonging to his wife's best friend. I'd have screamed my lungs out when he tried to kiss me if he hadn't come across handsomely! Gosh, he was frightened!"

"But"—Gracia's voice held an awed, frightened note—"what are you doing with all of the money, Stacy? It frightens me when I think of how much money you're handling."

"Don't think of it! A girl needs money these days!"

"But aren't you afraid? It might make him an enemy—it might make him wish you were—" But Gracia didn't finish the sentence. She couldn't. The thought that came to her was too dark and horrible.

"Oh, he's done his worst now! He was the only one who called daddy about that silly stuff in the paper—I'm sure of that. It was another way that he thought he'd frighten me into—being afraid of him." The last came in a lower tone that turned Gracia's eyes toward her sister with a startled and horrified expression in them.

"Stacy, you're not—you haven't—he isn't still giving you money?" she asked, unbelievably.

But Stacia laughed lightly and asked for a cigarette instead of replying. Gracia lit it for her and gave it to her and then lit one for herself and they drove on in silence.

"Oh, heck!" Gracia looked up at her sister's exclamation and saw the cause of it. "I hoped he'd be late—he's worse than a fly around a honey pot!"

Ken Worthing's car was in front of their house and Gracia knew that inside she would find Ken waiting, as usual, for Stacia. He had probably come straight from his office to her.

Gracia's heart ached. If only he would do such a thing for her. If only he'd be that anxious to see her!

The two girls went into the big brick house, and in the living room talking quietly with Tom Fane was Worthing.

"Hello, everybody!" Gracia wondered that Stacia could be so lightly sure of herself after the shaking experience she had just been through.

Worthing was on his feet immediately, and with that fine young eagerness that tore at Gracia's heart, he hurried to Stacy, taking her coat and gloves as she laid them off.

"Awfully sorry, Ken, old thing," she was saying easily, "but I forgot, when I told you you could come, that I had another engagement for this evening. Got to rush up now and slide into some glad rags for it! Why don't you sit the evening out with Gracie? She'd be only too glad to have a handsome male draping himself around her living room!"

And Stacia was off on light feet, up the stairs.

Ken looked at Gracia.

"If you haven't a date for tonight I might wait here with you until Stacia comes back. There are things—well, I've got to see her tonight."

Gracia smiled, over the ache in her heart.

"I'm afraid your wait would be an awfully long one. You know how

they keep her out when they get her." And she tried to hate him in that moment for the hurt look in his eyes.

"I know but I wouldn't mind, if you wouldn't."

"Why, certainly." It was Fane's warm voice. "Stay, if you like, Ken. Have dinner here with us."

And so it was settled that he would stay, and Gracia, who had no reason for dressing more than the simple black afternoon gown that she wore, took off her wraps and then returned to the living room.

She looked up as Stacia came down in shimmering green, cut startlingly low at the back, hugging her slim hips and flaring into a lovely long skirt at her knees.

Her heart started aching as Ken Worthing came to his feet, his face alight, seeming to be drinking in the fresh, lovely beauty of her sister.

It was as if in that moment of her supreme beauty, he forgave her everything, all of the neglect and insults and was at her feet, worshipping, adoring.

"Well, too-le-oo!" came lightly from Stacia.

But just as she started toward the front door its bell rang fiercely. There was a sort of agitation in the sound that awoke apprehension in Gracia's heart. She chilled and felt somehow held to the spot.

She was still standing so, stunned, when Jaimes was ushered into the living room.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Jaimes!" Gracia heard her father's voice in friendly greeting and realized that as he had come into the room a quick movement had taken Stacia out of sight toward the rear of the house. She heard the faint sound of a door closing and knew that Stacia had probably gone out the back way. When a car zoomed away from the curb

she knew for a certainty that Stacia was gone, and was a little bit glad.

She would have been sorry to have had Stacia face what she knew was coming. For strangely, in spite of the fact that her sister seemed so self-sufficient and utterly lacking in any need for sympathy or understanding, Gracia somehow pitied her.

She scoffed at herself for it. Nevertheless, she pitied her.

"Yes!" the word came with a sort of breathless force from Jaimes. "I've come on a most unpleasant mission! I'd rather have had anything happen than have had to come to you with this!"

Gracia saw her father tense as if he half knew what might be coming. She moved across the room to him as if to be there to be a stay for him.

"It's about your daughter, Mr. Fane—Stacia, I mean."

"What about Stacia?" asked Fane, and Gracia heard the terrific strain in his voice.

And then came the story of that hour on Allapartus Road, the story that Gracia already knew, only it was colored as if Stacia had been the tempter.

"You know you're only telling a part truth, Mr. Jaimes!" Gracia said hotly. "You know that you can't keep your hands off young girls and that you must have begged Stacia to take that ride with you—just as you've asked other girls to park with you!"

Jaimes stared at Gracia, breathless for a moment. Then he spoke:

"So you're another one of the same kind, are you?" he asked viciously.

"Don't say that!" The words came hotly from Ken Worthing and Gracia started at the sound of them. "Don't dare say that! If you'll let me, Mr. Fane, I'll take care of this!"

Hot words flew back and forth be-



It was as if in that moment of her supreme beauty, Ken forgave her everything, all the neglect and insults, and was at her feet, worshiping, adoring.

tween the three men, while Gracia stood trembling and wondering. It had been the insult flung at her by Jaimes that had brought that quick

defense from Worthing—though he instantly turned his attention to Stacia's case. But she held the thought that he had come to her defense

close to her heart as if it had been a real thing, close to her heart with the memory of a kiss and an embrace.

She seemed to hear none of the rest of the quarrel except Ken's voice, and then knew that Jaimes was leaving beaten, with the attitude of a man who had shamed himself.

They had evidently told him, both her father and Ken, what decent men thought of other men who tried to take liberties with girls young enough to be their daughters.

Fane looked up wearily, however, when the door had closed behind Jaimes.

"But, no matter what I said to him, no matter how I defended Stacia to him, I'm afraid for her," he said in a voice that sounded tired and worn. "I'm afraid for her. She's going too far. She's doing things that leave a mark, and I'm helpless. If I antagonize her with correction, I'll lose her entirely. She hasn't any fear. She'd run away on the slightest provocation. What shall I do?"

He had asked a question but he didn't seem to expect any answer to it from any one.

Young Worthing stood staring at Gracia and Gracia wondered if there was something in his eyes that she had never seen there before—something that had never been in his eyes when he looked at her. Yet when he spoke he said:

"I love Stacia, Mr. Fane. Give me the right to do what I can—what she'll let me to save her, to help her."

"Anything, anything, boy. She's beyond me. I never supposed that my own daughter would have me beaten." And then he looked up at the boy with haggard eyes. "But after this—after what you've heard, would you still want her? Would

you want her for your wife after what you know?"

"Nothing could make any difference to me."

And Gracia, listening, felt as if her own heart was breaking.

She felt as if she was stifling when Ken Worthing came toward her, took her hands and looked deeply into her eyes:

"Tell me where she is to-night," he said. "I know that you know, or have some idea. Tell me. I'm going there—you'll go with me. We'll bring her back—you and I."

Gracia didn't answer immediately. "Tell me," Worthing insisted. "I know that you know—that you have some idea."

Gracia thought swiftly. Nothing worse could happen than already had. Perhaps, by some strange twist of fate, Stacia might be touched. Something that Worthing might say, something he might do, perhaps that hurt look in his eyes would touch Stacia, get through to her heart, and change her.

"Yes, I have an idea of where she is—only that, just an idea of where she might be."

"Then we'll go—you and I!" He took her hand as if to hurry her.

But Gracia drew back.

"Why should I go?" she asked, her voice not quite steady. It was almost too much, this being asked to go and help bring Stacia back to the man that she—Gracia—loved! That was asking something almost superhuman of her!

"Because"—Worthing paused a moment as if he hadn't considered his reason for asking her himself, and then—"because I need you!"

"But you don't! You could do better alone. It might only make her angry to see me coming with you. She might just think that I was spying on her."

"You've got to come with me. I can't go without you." And there was a peculiar need of her in his voice that Gracia tried to steel her heart against.

She let Worthing lead her out to the car and help her in.

"Which way?" Worthing asked as they sat for a wordless moment in his car, his eyes on Gracia's face with a strange, intense look.

"There's a little restaurant downtown where Stacia likes to eat. She may be there. You'll have to hurry to get there before the dinner hour is over and she's gone."

"I'll hurry."

Gracia gave him the directions and Worthing turned the car toward the Village and brought up in front of a quiet-looking house.

Inside, the place was almost deserted. They went to the basement and there in a dim corner, Gracia saw the familiar pale-green dress and the back of a man's suit.

She recognized the figures immediately and stood still, directing Worthing's gaze toward them with a little motion of her hand.

"There they are. I'll go now." She would have turned but Worthing's hand stayed her.

"Wait, don't go!"

"But why do you want me here?" Gracia demanded, her voice trembling with feeling.

Ken stared at her a moment as if not quite knowing the answer himself. Then:

"Because I need you," the words came again.

He needed her to help him get Stacia! It was like crucifying her! It was slow torture!

She drew her hand away from the touch of his. She couldn't endure it! His hand touching hers when it meant nothing to him and her whole being quivered at the contact!

"Well, look who's here!" It was Stacia's voice. She had become aware of them. "Ken all festooned with the sister!" And then in mock concern: "You two sweet children aren't out on a bender, I hope?"

"We came for you, Stacia." Ken went directly to the point.

"Did I understand you two dim bulbs correctly—you came for me?"

"Exactly."

Gracia marveled at the new firmness in Worthing's voice. Something of the tender pleading that she had always heard in it when he spoke to Stacia was gone and in its place was something that was almost chill.

"Well, if you don't get the asbestos-lined ear muffs, for pure nerve, if you know what I mean! Why, I never heard of such a thing! I really haven't!"

"Are you coming with us, Stacia?" Ken asked, a little too calmly, for him, it seemed to Gracia.

"Am I coming with you—and what about my handsome time killer?" She turned to Bob Langely. "Doesn't he get an invitation to the party, too?" Sardonic laughter filled her eyes.

"It doesn't happen to be a party, Stacia," Ken said firmly. "And I think Langely had better not be included. I think you'd rather not have him."

"Well! You seem to know all the answers, don't you? But you missed it on that last one, boy. Bob and I have a heavy date for to-night. And you and the lovely sister had better scram."

"Stacia——" Ken started to speak, but the girl interrupted.

"Get the check, Bob!" she said sharply. "We're on our way. I've listened to enough of this drivell!"

"Stacia!" There was something of the old tenseness in his voice.

"You're not going with Langely! Don't you know that you can't do things like that and keep getting away with it? Langely is married—he belongs to some one else and you—you belong to me! You're mine, Stacia, and you can't go with him! You're coming home with me now! Please, dear."

All of the old tenderness and panic was in his voice again, and Grace, at the sound of it, felt as if her heart was breaking.

Stacia looked at Worthing coolly, almost disdainfully, while her sister wondered how she could do so, and then said in that chill, superior little voice of hers:

"I'm going out with Bob and you're going to move over and let me pass." Her hand moved in a clearing gesture.

"You can't, Stacia!"

"Can't!" she repeated, sneeringly. "You wouldn't dare make a scene—either of you! Come on, Bob! Must I have courage for you, too?" Langely seemed to be holding back, as if not quite sure that he wanted to go on with his date with Stacia.

"Stacia!" came protestingly from Worthing as he made a move toward the girl.

Stacia, her eyes growing a little wilder, picked up one of the heavy glasses from which they had been drinking: "Come any nearer, try to stop me, and you'll stop this!"

"You wouldn't dare!" Worthing exclaimed, as he started toward her, and then Stacia's hand rose with the glass. There was a queer stifled cry in the dimly lighted little room and a sound of splintering glass.

Worthing turned sharply.

"You've been hurt!" There was anxiety in the tone. "It struck you!"

"It's—it's nothing!" But Gracia was swaying slightly from the blow of the glass on her forehead, and a

slight bump was rising, already a bit discolored.

And in the confusion, she heard Stacia's voice in a high little cry of triumph. Heard hurried steps rushing out of the stuffy little room and knew that they had gone, while Worthing was giving attention to the bruise that the glass Stacia had thrown had made on her head.

"They've gone! We'd better go to!" Gracia exclaimed.

"We'll follow them!"

"No! No, I can't!" she said, feeling that she couldn't endure hearing Ken plead any more with her sister.

"We've got to! I can't let her go like that—with him. Anything might happen to her. She doesn't know what she's doing!"

"She knows what she's doing!" The words came almost bitterly from Gracia. But Worthing seemed not even to have heard.

He was dragging her out of the place toward the curb where his car waited. They were in it and Ken was starting it as Langely whirled away with Stacia in her car.

Madly he started in pursuit, the car swerving around corners on two wheels and careening breathlessly up the street.

They came to a sudden stop just behind Stacia's car in front of a smart apartment house on Fifth Avenue.

Stacia was out of the car immediately and hurrying Langely. Gracia and Worthing were immediately behind them.

They reached the elevator together and all got in, Stacia's eyes blazed with anger, but her lips were forced to silence by the presence of the elevator boy.

When the car stopped at the floor they wanted, she was instantly off and tearing down the hall.

She had gotten the key from



Stacia looked at Worthing coolly, almost disdainfully, then said in a chill superior voice: "I'm going out with Bob and you're going to move over and let me pass."

Langely, while they rode up with the impatient words:

"Better give it to me—you're slower than molasses in January to-

night. I've never seen you so! What on earth ails you?

"Hurry! Hurry! They mustn't get in." She called to Langely, who

seemed, even while he walked fast, to be lagging.

But Worthing was not lagging. He reached the door before Langely did and pushed past Stacia, into the room—a dimly lighted luxurious affair.

“Well, and now what are you going to do about it?” Stacia asked sarcastically, as all four of them stood in the softly lighted room.

“Whose apartment is this?” Worthing asked.

“What difference does that make? You’re not going to stay in it.”

“I’ll stay as long as you do. When I go, Stacia, you go with me!”

“You’re talking all out of your turn, boy. You’re going to go—if you don’t, Bob’ll put you out!”

Worthing looked across the room at Bob, and a queer smile lighted his features, as if at the idea of Langely, soft and flabby from city life, putting him, recently his university’s star athlete, out.

Stacia seemed to get the thought.

“Well, he can do it!” And then as if suddenly angered at the smile on Worthing’s face, she added: “Why don’t you go? I don’t want you here! Go, and take Gracia with you. You’re a couple of dim bulbs together!”

“I’ll go, but when you do! You’re not going to stay here in this apartment alone with this man!” And then on a suddenly tender note, he went on: “Stacia, don’t you see what you’re doing? Don’t you see that you’re throwing away something very precious to me when you let men like this take you to their apartments? Men who have wives who bear their names and to whom they’ve given everything honorable they can? Stacia, doesn’t my love mean anything to you? I can give

you everything that he can, all of the tenderness and affection, and it would be clean. It wouldn’t soil you, Stacia dear, with just the touch of it. You’re too lovely for this—too lovely to throw yourself away this way. Stacia, come to me, let me take you back, marry me tonight, let me try to make you happy, try to fill your life with things that good women want.”

“Good women! I’m not good! I don’t want to be! Good women are stupid! They’re like Gracia! They only half live! I want to live completely! I want to know every thrill life holds! I want to have lived every experience there is in life.”

“Stacia!” Worthing had crossed to her and held her firmly so that she was forced to look into his face. “Stacia”—his voice was suddenly more tender—“there is one experience, the greatest one that can come to a woman, that brings happiness to only good women when it comes with marriage and a home and a husband’s love and tenderness. I mean, Stacia——”

Gracia felt suddenly as if she must run away, as if she couldn’t listen longer to Ken Worthing’s voice with that excessively tender note pleading with Stacia to take what Gracia would have given her life for. And then she heard his words interrupted by Stacia’s high laugh, that strange high laugh of hers with a cruel edge in it.

“I know what you mean! But they’re the last things in the world that I want—marriage and motherhood! I’ll take them, if I have to when everything else has failed! Come and talk to me then about it, big boy!”

Ken Worthing’s fine face whitened.



Shopping For Love

By Mona Morrow

WITH lips tightly set, Blanche Norden gazed out of the window of the train that was taking her to Florida. Beside her sat her mother, a well-preserved woman of fifty, with keen and calculating eyes.

"Why so serious?" Mrs. Norden asked. "You ought to be happy. You're going to a beautiful place where you'll bask in the sunshine, have lots of fun, and meet nice men."

"Rich men," Blanche was almost tempted to correct her.

She knew her mother's thoughts. She knew the reason for this trip. And she knew what was expected of her. For the past three years, since Blanche was seventeen, her mother had been planning and scheming to have her marry a rich man. She had been taking her from place to place, displaying her to the eyes of men, hoping for a rich bidder.

Blanche wished her father were alive. He would not have tolerated such a thing. But since he was gone,

she was at the mercy of her mother. When she argued or pleaded, her mother would cry. And the sight of those tears streaming down her mother's cheeks always softened Blanche's heart. She would beg her mother's forgiveness and promise to be nicer to the men she met.

Life looked bleak and desolate to Blanche. Thoughts of real love and romance were banished from her mind. Those things, she felt, would never be for her. She must marry a rich man to please her mother, to insure for her future comfort and luxury. And the rich men she had met so far had been distinctly distasteful to Blanche. Many of them were twice her age. It seemed impossible to like them. And it often made her wonder what would be the end of it all.

Two days later Blanche and her mother were settled in one of the least expensive rooms of an expensive hotel. For the same money they could have had better accommodations in a more modest hotel, but Mrs. Norden wanted to be among the rich, where she could meet people who would fit in with her ambitious plans. And she was particularly anxious now because she was reaching the end of the insurance money left her by her husband.

"It's a beautiful day, my dear," she said to Blanche. "Why don't you get into your bathing suit and enjoy the sunshine? It will do you good to lounge on the beach."

With an utter lack of enthusiasm, Blanche took out the orange bathing suit which her mother had purchased for her. She knew that it would be useless to argue. Her mother would persist and persist until she obeyed her.

She also knew why her mother was so anxious to get her on the

beach. She wanted her to show off her physical attractions. Blanche was a very pretty girl with chestnut hair and bluish-gray eyes. Her little nose turned up the least bit, giving her a piquant look that arrested attention. Beneath it was a full, generous mouth, beautifully shaped, sweet and provoking.

Her skin was pink-tinted and smooth as a rose petal. In a bathing suit, she looked her loveliest, and her mother was well aware of that fact.

However, instead of staying on the beach in front of the hotel as her mother would have wished, Blanche wandered off with no particular destination in mind. She wanted to think. Wasn't there some way out of this? Must she sell herself in marriage?

When she tired of walking, she saw a huge jetty reaching into the water. Anxious to be alone to wrest with her problem, she walked along the wooden pillars. Near the end was an iron projection, shaped somewhat like an anvil, but with pointed ends. Small boats often used it to tie their painters. Blanche sat down on the iron to rest.

"Would you mind getting up for a moment?" a pleasant voice suddenly tore her from her thoughts.

The voice came from behind her, and Blanche turned her head. She saw a very good-looking young man with sprightly brown eyes and blond hair that was a bit bleached by the sun.

He was standing up in his boat, a little motor launch which would have been greatly improved with a coat of fresh paint. He hung onto the jetty with his finger tips, keeping the boat from drifting.

"I'd like to tie up, if you don't mind," he said, a slight flush coming to his face at the unexpected prettiness of the girl.

"Oh, I'm sorry," Blanche said, as she rose from the iron seat.

A sound escaped his lips like a sudden intake of breath. Her beauty and her loveliness appearing before him so suddenly just bowled him over. He stared at her with admiring eyes, his lips forming in an infectious smile.

And as he put the painter over the iron, his eyes never left her. "I'd sure like to know you," he said honestly and frankly, voicing the thought that was uppermost in his mind.

Blanche smiled. There was something in the way he said it that thrilled her. It was so genuine and real. It sounded boyish, too, even though she judged him to be about twenty-six years old.

With the agility of an athlete, he jumped up on the jetty and faced her. He wore a dark bathing shirt and a pair of old khaki trousers. On his feet were white sneakers.

He was lean and muscular, fully a head taller than Blanche. It made her seem fragile and dainty in comparison.

"Of course names don't mean much," he said, "but mine happens to be Leonard Dunway, in case you'd like to know. Could we sit here and talk for a little while?"

Only for a fraction of a second did Blanche hesitate. "Why, yes," she said. "My name happens to be Blanche Norden, in case you'd like to know."

"I'm very glad to know your name," he said, "and I'd like to know a great many more things about you. Where are you staying? How long are you going to be here? And where did you get those beautiful eyes?"

Blanche eyed him sharply. "I'm afraid your line is a little too fast for me." Even though she was

favorably impressed by his good looks, she was afraid that he might be an atrocious flirt.

She made a motion to leave. He held out his hand to stop her, but did not touch her.

"Please," he said, "I'm sorry. I won't ask any personal questions. Won't you sit down?"

There was a pleading look in his eyes which she could not resist. There was something about him that stirred her, that made her pulses quicken. She could hardly understand herself. Held by the intensity of his gaze, she sat down on the iron seat. He dropped down opposite her, crossing his legs in front of him.

He tried to keep the conversation impersonal, but it was impossible. He could not conceal his interest in her. And Blanche soon found herself feeling the same way about him.

"Would you care to take a little ride in my boat?" he asked. "I'd love to see you standing on the deck with the wind blowing through your hair."

Blanche gazed out at the sea wistfully. It looked peaceful and quiet. Then her eyes turned to Leonard. He was awfully sweet. He made her forget why she had come to Florida. He made her think only of the present moment.

"All right," she said impulsively. "Let's go. I think I'd love it myself!"

She had to smile at the eagerness with which he jumped up. He got into the boat, then helped her in. He untied the painter and pushed off.

Blanche experienced an exhilarating feeling of freedom as the boat went farther and farther from shore. She stood on the deck for a while, then went back to where he sat at the wheel. The idea of their being

alone on the vast ocean sent a strange quiver through her. And for the first time in her life, she felt genuinely happy.

"What do you do besides running this boat?" she asked.

For a split second his eyes narrowed. Then he looked straight at her as he answered: "I work in a bank. I'm on a month's vacation now. A friend of mine lent me this boat."

"That was very nice of him," she answered. "You seem to enjoy it a lot."

In her heart there was a sinking feeling. Oh, why couldn't he have been wealthy? It would be so easy to fall in love with him. Each moment that she spent with him made her fonder of him. He represented her ideal, the type of man she had dreamed of before she had banished all romantic thoughts from her mind.

But life would be that way, she reflected. The desirable man was always poor and the undesirable one was always rich.

He turned the boat toward shore.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"I want you to see the bungalow I'm living in," he said. "Then I'll take you back. All right?"

"Yes, but I haven't very much time. My mother must be worrying what became of me."

It was a tiny bungalow in which he lived—two rooms and a kitchenette. Things were thrown around carelessly, skowing quite plainly that he did his own housekeeping.

"Sit down in the armchair," he said. "I'm going to make you a cup of tea."

"Please don't bother."

But he wouldn't listen to her. He made the tea and served her as if she were a queen. Longingly and admiringly his eyes rested on her.

"You're the first girl who's ever been in here," he said.

"You make very good tea," she said, changing the subject. She was afraid that he might make love to her, and if that happened she didn't know what she would do. It would be better to get out of here quickly, better to get away from his spell. She'd feel much safer outdoors.

She placed the cup on the table and walked to the door. "Will you take me back, please?"

"Of course," he answered. "I'm sorry you can't stay a while longer. Perhaps you will some other time."

"Perhaps," she answered, although in her heart she felt that it would be best for her never to see him again. She dared not fall in love with a bank clerk.

She sat beside him in the boat going back. Instead of skimming the water at a rapid pace, Leonard maneuvered the boat slowly. He was trying to prolong the trip as much as possible.

Soon her hotel was in view.

"Couldn't we go dancing somewhere to-night?" Leonard asked. "I'll bring you home at whatever time your mother says."

Blanche hesitated. It would be wonderful to dance with him, to feel his arm around her. She wanted to be with him. Why couldn't she have one day of pleasure? To-morrow she would do as her mother wished. But that one day would be hers, something to look back upon.

"I think I can manage it," she said. "Call for me at the hotel at nine."

He drew up to the pier. She climbed out, waved good-by to him, and walked toward the beach.

"Blanche!" she heard her mother calling.

She looked around and saw her mother standing beside a corpulent

man in white flannels, a blue serge coat with brass buttons, and a white yachting cap. As she came closer, she noticed the little puffs under the man's dull eyes, a self-convicting sign of dissipation. He was a man of thirty-eight or forty, who had lived well but not wisely.

"My dear," Mrs. Norden said when Blanche reached them, "I want you to meet Mr. Alfred Fenton. This is my daughter, Blanche, Mr. Fenton."

Alfred Fenton held out a hand which Blanche could not ignore. He squeezed her hand the least bit,



"You're after big game, big money. You came to Florida to get a man. You're shopping for love! You're going to sell yourself to the highest bidder!" he said bitterly.

swept her with a glance from head to foot, and said: "I'm charmed, Miss Norden."

His eyes on her sent little shivers down her spine. They were so different from Leonard's eyes when he had looked at her.

"I'm sorry," Blanche said. "You'll have to excuse me. I feel a bit chilled. I must go in and dress."

She was glad to get away from him. His presence made her feel uncomfortable. She wondered how her mother had met him. Mrs. Norden had probably pretended to think that she had met him somewhere, and in that way struck up an acquaintance. Blanche disapproved of her mother's tactics, but her mother always pleaded that the mistake was not intentional.

Blanche was just getting out of the tub when her mother came into the room.

"Where were you all day?" her mother demanded. "Do you think it's fair to leave me alone that way?"

"I'm sorry, mother. I met a young man and the time flew by so quickly I didn't realize it was getting late."

"Who is he?"

"Not much, just a good-looking and awfully nice bank clerk."

"I thought so, judging by the disreputable boat you came in on."

Blanche did not care to argue the matter. She rubbed herself vigorously and started to dress.

At the dinner table she wondered how she could tell her mother about her date for the evening. Realizing that there would be some objection, she decided to wait until dinner was over.

And then, in order to avoid a scene, "Let's go upstairs for a while," she suggested.

Mrs. Norden eagerly welcomed the suggestion, for there was some-

thing on her mind, too. The moment they were alone she voiced it.

"I've got a great surprise for you, my dear," she said. "We've been invited to a party on Mr. Fenton's yacht this evening. It's a wonderful opportunity for us. We'll meet every one who's worth while."

Blanche turned pale. "I can't go, mother. I promised to go out with Leonard. We are going dancing somewhere."

"Who is Leonard? The bank clerk?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's too bad," Mrs. Norden said coldly. "You'll have to break the date. It's much more important that we go to Mr. Fenton's party."

"But, mother, I can't go back on my word that way. Please let me keep the date to-night. Let me have just this one day. I'll do anything you say after this. I'll go wherever you want me to. Please, mother! It means a lot to me."

But Mrs. Norden was deaf to her daughter's pleas. Assuming an air of injury, she dropped into a chair and started to cry. It was amazing how the tears trickled down the woman's cheeks. Her sobs were pathetic. One would have thought a great catastrophe had happened.

"Very well," Mrs. Norden sobbed. "Go ahead and do as you please. Of course a mother's feelings don't count for anything. I promised Mr. Fenton that we'd come to his party. Now I'll have to hide every time I see him. He'll tell all his friends of what value my word is. I'll be ashamed to face people. I'll be ostracized—all because you want to go out dancing with a bank clerk!"

Blanche felt a sickening feeling coming over her. Her mother's tears always affected her that way. They made her feel as if she were the most ungrateful person in the

world. They upset her terribly. Each sob went through her like a knife thrust.

She walked over and touched her mother's shoulder.

"Please, mother, don't."

Instead of subsiding, Mrs. Norden cried more bitterly.

"Go ahead," she said. "Do as you please. Go with your bank clerk. I don't count. I'm only your mother. When you were small and deathly sick, I stayed up night after night with you. And this is the payment I receive. Well, mothers must always suffer. We can't expect our children to be grateful."

"Please, mother," Blanche said, no longer able to endure it. "I'll do as you wish. I'll break the date."

Unfortunately there was no telephone in Leonard's bungalow and it was impossible for her to stop him from coming. The only thing she could do was leave a note for him. It was a cruel thing to do, but there was no other way out.

On the hotel stationery she scribbled a note:

DEAR LEONARD: Please forgive me. It couldn't be helped. My mother made a previous appointment for me which I had to keep. I expect to be very busy in the near future, and it will be impossible for me to see you again. Thanks for a very lovely day. Good-by. BLANCHE.

As she sealed it in an envelope, tears came into her eyes. She was sending him out of her life forever, and the very thought hurt her. But it was the only thing to do. It would do no good to see him again. He was poor, and a poor man was not for her. She must marry a rich man so she could take care of her mother and pay the debts of which her mother always kept reminding her.

It was the meanest thing she had ever done in her life, and of all the

people in the world, she had had to do it to the man she loved.

She went down to the lobby with her mother and gave the note to the desk clerk to give to Leonard when he called.

"Do you see that girl sitting near the palms with that nice-looking man?" Mrs. Norden asked.

Blanche looked over and saw a very pretty girl not more than nineteen years old, dressed exquisitely in an expensive gown and an ermine-trimmed wrap. The heavy-faced man beside her looked old enough to be her father.

"They're newlyweds," Mrs. Norden explained. "Her name is Marian Hartwell. She was a very poor girl, but now she has the best of everything. I spoke to her mother this afternoon. She's very happy."

It didn't seem so to Blanche. Even though the girl had a sweet smile on her face, there was an unhappy, frightened look in her eyes. Blanche wondered if she herself would be in that same position some day.

Alfred Fenton's yacht was the kind of plaything only a millionaire could afford. The deck was snow-white, with shining brass rails. Below deck the quarters were furnished lavishly and luxuriously.

Mrs. Norden dropped into an easy-chair on the deck with a contented sigh, while Alfred took Blanche through the boat, showing her everything which he believed would make an impression on her. He held her arm, and even though she disliked it, she tolerated it. When he suggested staying in his cabin for a while, she shook her head and told him she preferred the open air of the deck.

An orchestra furnished music for the dancers. Waiters went to and fro serving refreshments. Alfred took Blanche to a corner of the deck

where they found two unoccupied chairs.

It was a happy party, but Blanche could not get into the spirit of it. She was thinking of Leonard. What a shock it would be to him when he read the note! His feeling for her would immediately turn to hate.

Alfred was telling her how pretty she was, but his compliments meant nothing to her. Besides his wealth, there was nothing about him which she could admire.

He danced with her, holding her much more closely than was necessary. She suffered in silence. What was the use of protesting? Since she couldn't have the man she wanted, since she wasn't destined to marry for love, what did it matter whom she married?

"It was glorious," her mother said when they were back in their room in the hotel. "I never felt happier than when I sat on that deck! A few months of that would do me a world of good. It would build up my health."

Blanche's lips tightened as she slipped out of her chiffon evening gown.

"Mr. Fenton seemed rather fond of you," Mrs. Norden continued. "I noticed that he kept you all to himself, as if you were his girl. I do hope you won't be disagreeable. He's an extremely wealthy man."

"I understand, mother," Blanche answered. "I won't be disagreeable."

On the beach the next day, Blanche sat with her knees drawn up, her hands clasped around her legs, gazing out at the ocean with sad eyes. If only she could live her own life; if only there were no such thing as money in the world! Then she would have had a chance for happiness.

Some one dropped down beside her. She turned her head. "Leonard!" she cried out, a glowing light appearing in her eyes.

"Well," he smiled, "that doesn't sound as if you hated me. I've been battling with myself all night and all morning, wondering if I ought to come over and see you. I felt pretty bad about that note you left me. I could excuse that part about another appointment. It sounded plausible. But why the good-by?"

"Oh, please don't ask me. I'd rather not explain. Let's make believe we never met. I'll forget you and you'll forget me."

"But why?" he insisted. "It seemed to me that we hit it off nicely together."

Alfred Fenton suddenly appeared before them in his yachting clothes.

"How do you do, Miss Norden."

Leonard rose to his feet and eyed Fenton sharply.

"We're going on a cruise this afternoon," Alfred said. "I'd like to have you come along with your mother. Can you be ready at two o'clock?"

"Yes," Blanche answered slowly. "We'll be ready."

Alfred touched his cap and walked away. Leonard's eyes followed him. He felt a mad desire to run after Alfred and fight with him. Then he slowly turned his head and looked down at Blanche. In his eyes there was hurt and disillusionment.

"Is that why you broke your date with me yesterday?" he asked.

She nodded her head.

"And I suppose that's why you don't want to see me any more?"

She felt ashamed of herself. She knew what he must be thinking of her. Still, she hated to tell him the truth—that she was being forced into it by her mother. He would never understand.

"I see now," he said bitterly, "why you asked me what I did. I suppose if I were rich I'd be interesting, but as I am a bank clerk, you didn't think it worth wasting time on me. You're after big game, big money. You came to Florida to get a man. You're shopping for love! You're going to sell yourself to the highest bidder!"

She jumped to her feet. His words cut her like a whip.

"Keep quiet!" she said angrily. "I can do whatever I please with my life!"

"Yes, I suppose you can," he said slowly. "Go ahead and get him. I won't interfere. Now that I know your type, I'm not interested at all. Good-by, Miss Norden."

She was tempted to call him back, to explain to him. She didn't want him to go away with that terrible opinion of her. But she bit her lips and kept herself from calling his name.

Five days later Alfred Fenton proposed and Blanche accepted him. Her mother was tremendously happy. She hugged Blanche and kissed her several times.

"You lucky girl," she said. "Every one will envy you. He'll deck you out in diamonds and sables. You'll have your own car, everything your heart desires."

"Everything but love," Blanche said, thinking of Leonard.

However, she felt a certain amount of satisfaction in the fact that her mother was happy. There'd be no more tears now, no more wailing complaints about her ingratitude. She was paying back her debt to her mother.

Alfred presented her with a beautiful diamond engagement ring. Then he took her in his arms and kissed her. Blanche felt a chill run-

ning down her spine when his lips touched hers, but since her mother was present, she was careful not to register her dislike.

The wedding was set for two weeks later. Alfred wanted to settle his affairs so he could go away on his honeymoon with a quiet mind.

Blanche thought of Marian Hartwell, the girl her mother had pointed out in the hotel lobby. Blanche was in the same class with her now. She was going to marry a man who was twenty years older than herself, a man who would dress her up as Marian's husband dressed her. She, too, would be smiling soon and have that same sad expression in her eyes.

To Alfred the engagement period meant a period of privilege. He felt that he could kiss Blanche whenever he pleased. Blanche was frightened. All her finer feelings revolted. She couldn't bear his touch and every time he came near her she was tempted to scream out. Eventually she reached a stage where she wanted to run away.

She rose early one morning and left the hotel. In her mind a plan had formed, and she went in to town to see if it could be executed. There were a number of fine shops in town, and she planned to go from one to the other seeking employment.

Neither the morning nor the early afternoon brought results. She became disheartened. All the shop owners were polite, but, they were equally firm in telling her that they required no help.

About four o'clock she walked into a very fashionable millinery shop. A suave gentleman with a waxed mustache came up to her.

"I'm looking for a position," Blanche said.

The man eyed her critically. "Have you ever sold millinery before?" he asked.

"No, but I'm sure I can. You see, I need the position and I'd try very hard," she said earnestly.

He stared at her for a moment. "Turn your head," he said. "I want to see your profile." Then his eyes studied her figure from head to foot.

"I can offer you nothing here," he said, "but if you would care to pose for fashion photographs, I could

send you over to my brother. He has a very large studio, and I think he can use your type."

"I'd be glad to do it," Blanche said, "and I'd be very thankful to you."

He wrote the address on the back of one of his cards and gave it to Blanche. With a happy heart she walked to the studio.



Posing in expensive gowns, Blanche found her position to be very interesting. However, it was quite natural that she should think of Leonard. He was always in her thoughts.

Mr. de Merjan, the owner, a tall, slim man in an artist's smock, studied her appraisingly. "Nice nose," he commented. "Beautiful eyes. Raise your chin. Fine! Stretch out your arms. Ah! A beautiful figure! Put on that coat with the white collar. Now place your hand on your hip like this. Turn your head to the right a little. That's it. Stand that way. Fine! Take off the coat."

He took her into his office, wrote down her name and address and all the statistics regarding the sizes she wore in clothes, shoes, gloves and other apparel.

She left the studio in a happy frame of mind. Mr. de Merjan had told her she could come to work on Monday and her salary would be thirty dollars a week.

All the way to the hotel Blanche rehearsed what she would say to her mother. Marriage to Alfred Fenton was impossible. She'd rather be dead than submit to any more of his caresses. She had tried to like him, but it was impossible. She couldn't go through with it.

Of course her mother would create a scene and burst into tears. But that time Blanche would not permit herself to be swayed by tears. She would explain to her mother that she had secured a position and that she would give her mother every penny she earned to spend as she pleased. In time she would earn more money and be able to give her mother more comforts. But she must not be forced into a loveless marriage. She couldn't go through with it.

The hotel was strangely silent when Blanche reached it. In the lobby there was the deathlike hush which usually follows a tragedy in a place of gayety. Blanche could not understand it. She went to the elevator and rode up to her floor.

The door of her room was slightly ajar and her mother sat in a chair near the window. She jumped up when Blanche came in, gathered her in her arms, and kissed her tenderly.

"My little baby!" she said affectionately. "I'm so glad to see you. I've been terribly worried about you."

Blanche felt a choking feeling in her throat. It was a long time since her mother had called her her "little baby." It brought back fond memories of days when her father was alive, days that were filled with happiness.

She had worshiped her mother then. Mrs. Norden had been the sweetest and most affectionate person. It was only after Mr. Norden died that she had changed. She was obsessed by a terrible fear that she would end her days in poverty.

She took Blanche's arm and led her to a chair.

"I want to talk to you," she said with a catch in her voice. "I haven't been the best kind of mother to you. I've been mean, selfish, grasping. I've thought of myself, not of you. I'm dreadfully ashamed. I hope you'll believe me."

She took Blanche's hand and held it between her own, patting it very gently. "Tell me the truth," she said. "I must have the honest truth. Do you care for Alfred Fenton?"

"No, mother, I don't," Blanche answered.

"Then you must not marry him. We'll return his ring. I must have been absolutely heartless to force you into a marriage with a man twice your age. I wasn't myself, dear. Please forgive me. I shan't try to rule your life any more. You may do as you please and choose whatever friends you please. When you do marry, I want you to marry for love. And please, dear, try to

forget the last three years. Let's start over again. Be my little baby again!"

There were tears of genuine regret in Mrs. Norden's eyes. No one could doubt her sincerity. Blanche felt sorry for her, and at the same time experienced a feeling of gladness upon seeing this wonderful change in her mother's character. She had always loved her mother, but she had loved her best before Mrs. Norden had set out to marry her off.

Blanche put her arms around her mother and kissed her. "You're a darling," she said. "We'll be together always. And we'll be happy, too. You just wait."

"I don't deserve any credit for the change," Mrs. Norden said. "I'll tell you what woke me up, opened my eyes to the truth. You remember that girl I pointed out to you in the lobby—Marian Hartwell, the one who married a man old enough to be her father? Well, she just tried to take her life with poison. She's in the hospital now and there's a chance that she may recover. Her marriage wasn't as happy as it appeared to be. She preferred death to living with her husband."

"That gave me an awful shock. I realized that I might be driving you to the same thing. And your being away all day threw me in a panic. I just sat here, paralyzed, praying that you wouldn't do anything desperate. That's why I was so glad to see you when you came in."

"I was thinking of a way out, myself," Blanche admitted. "And I think I've found it."

She told her mother about the position Mr. de Merjan had offered her. "We'll move to an inexpensive place," she said. "I'll work and we'll be happy."

Two weeks passed. Posing in expensive shoes, hats, and gowns, Blanche found her position to be very interesting. It occupied her time from ten to four every day. The remaining hours she spent with her mother.

It was quite natural that she should think of Leonard. Ever since the first moment she had met him, he had always been in her thoughts. But since the day he had denounced her on the beach, she had never laid eyes on him again. He had walked out of her life completely.

She knew where his bungalow was and she was tempted to look him up. Her heart yearned for him. She could not forget his eagerness, his boyish spirit, and the shining look in his eyes. She felt that he had fallen in love with her just as she had fallen in love with him—at first sight.

However, she hesitated. She was afraid that she had turned his love to permanent hate. And even if that weren't the case, even if he still cared for her, he would believe that she came to him because Alfred had thrown her over.

One Sunday morning, while her mother slept late, Blanche went out for a walk. At first she went along aimlessly; then, finding herself not very far from Leonard's bungalow, she made a sudden decision. She left the street and headed for the beach.

Presently she was at his door. She tapped timidly on the frame. Leonard opened the door and stared at her with incredulous eyes.

"Blanche!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"May I come in?" she asked, her cheeks flushing as he looked at her.

He stepped aside and permitted her to enter. The beat of his heart quickened, but he looked at her with



She tapped timidly on the frame. Leonard opened the door and stared at her. "Blanche!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

cold, penetrating eyes. He didn't say a word, made no move to show her to a chair. Blanche felt very uncomfortable. She had hoped for more than that.

Finally he spoke. "Why did you come here?" he asked.

There was a sinking feeling in her heart. She had killed whatever love

he had had for her. She was not even as welcome as a stranger.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I shouldn't have come."

He stepped to the door and blocked her way.

"But you did," he said. "Why?"

"Oh, I just happened to be passing by," she answered quickly.

"That doesn't sound plausible." Then he looked straight into her eyes, and intent upon hurting her as she had hurt him, he said: "Tell me if I guess right. Did the yachtsman run out on you?"

She felt she deserved that, but still it angered her. "No," she answered. "I ran out on him."

"Why?"

"Because I didn't love him," she said. "I suppose you won't believe that. But I don't care what you believe now. Please let me go!"

She was very close to him. The charm, the sweetness, and the loveliness of her went to his head. Deep down in his heart he loved her. She had fascinated him from the start. And now the nearness of her, setting his blood afire, robbed him of his senses. It was beyond his power to resist that mad, consuming impulse.

He crushed her in his arms and pressed his lips to hers in a burning kiss. Blanche felt as if she were drowning in a sea of ecstasy. The world stopped for her in that moment. Every fiber of her being quivered with a hitherto unknown joy. She had no strength to resist him. Her whole heart surrendered to him.

He dropped his hands and stared at her while his breath quickened and he longed to hold her close once again.

"You're wonderfully sweet," he said. Then he turned his head. "Oh, if only you were different!"

He walked away from the door, went over to one of the side windows, and stared out with unseeing eyes. Blanche watched him. In her heart there was a tumult. She knew now that he was the only man she could ever love. Life wasn't worth living without him.

She went over and touched his arm timidly

"I am different, Leonard," she said. "I never really was the girl I seemed to be."

She told him about her mother, but she spoke of her with kindness, love and understanding, so that instead of disliking her, he felt sorry for the woman who had been obsessed by that terrible fear of ending her days in poverty.

"But I don't care for money," she said. "I'm not looking for a rich man." Then she bared her heart and soul as she added: "I'd marry a bank clerk if he loved me."

He looked deep into her eyes and recognized the truth of her words. "I do love you," he said. "I've loved you from the first moment I laid eyes on you."

Happily and contentedly she rested in his arms, returning kiss for kiss. Then she let her feet touch earth again.

"Of course we'll have to take care of mother," she said. "But you needn't worry about that. I'm going to help. I've got a good job and I get thirty dollars a week. We'll pool our salaries and get along splendidly."

An amused smile appeared on his face. "I'm afraid that's out," he said. "I wouldn't think of having my wife work."

She looked disheartened. "Please, dearest, let's not quarrel. Lots of wives work nowadays. I only want to help until you get better established. I don't want you to feel that my mother's a burden."

"Your mother will never be a burden to me," he said. "I'm not a bank clerk, darling. I'm very wealthy. My folks left me more money than I could possibly spend in a lifetime, so it would be silly for you to work. Besides, I don't think I could ever bear to have you away for more than an hour."

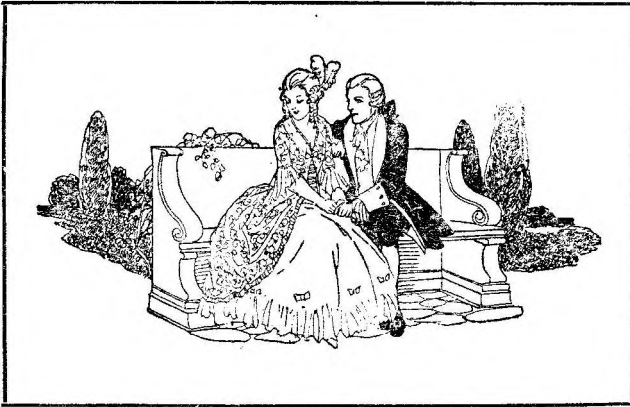
She stared at him with surprised and puzzled eyes. "But you told me——"

"I know I did," he interrupted. "You see, I'm an incurable romantic. Like your mother, I have had an obsession. I've always worried that the girl who married me would

love me for my money only. That's why I lived simply and pretended to be poor."

"And do you believe that I really love you?" she asked, her eyes shining with happiness.

"I'd stake my life on it!" he answered as he kissed her again.



Listed below are the stations over which the Love Story hour comes to you every Thursday night.

IF YOU LIVE IN

Akron	tune in on WADC	at 9:30 ES
Baltimore	WCAO	9:30 ES
Boston	WNAC	9:30 ES
Buffalo	WKBW	9:30 ES
Chicago	WGN	8:30 CS
Cincinnati	WKRC	9:30 ES
Cleveland	WHK	9:30 ES
Detroit	WXYZ	9:30 ES
Fort Wayne	WOWO	8:30 CS
Hartford, Connecticut	WDRC	9:30 ES
Kansas City	KMBC	8:30 CS
New York City	WABC	9:30 ES
Philadelphia	WCAU	9:30 ES
Pittsburgh	WJAS	9:30 ES
Providence	WEAN	9:30 ES
St. Louis	KMOX	8:30 CS
Syracuse	WFBL	9:30 ES
Toledo	WSPD	9:30 ES
Washington	WMAL	9:30 ES

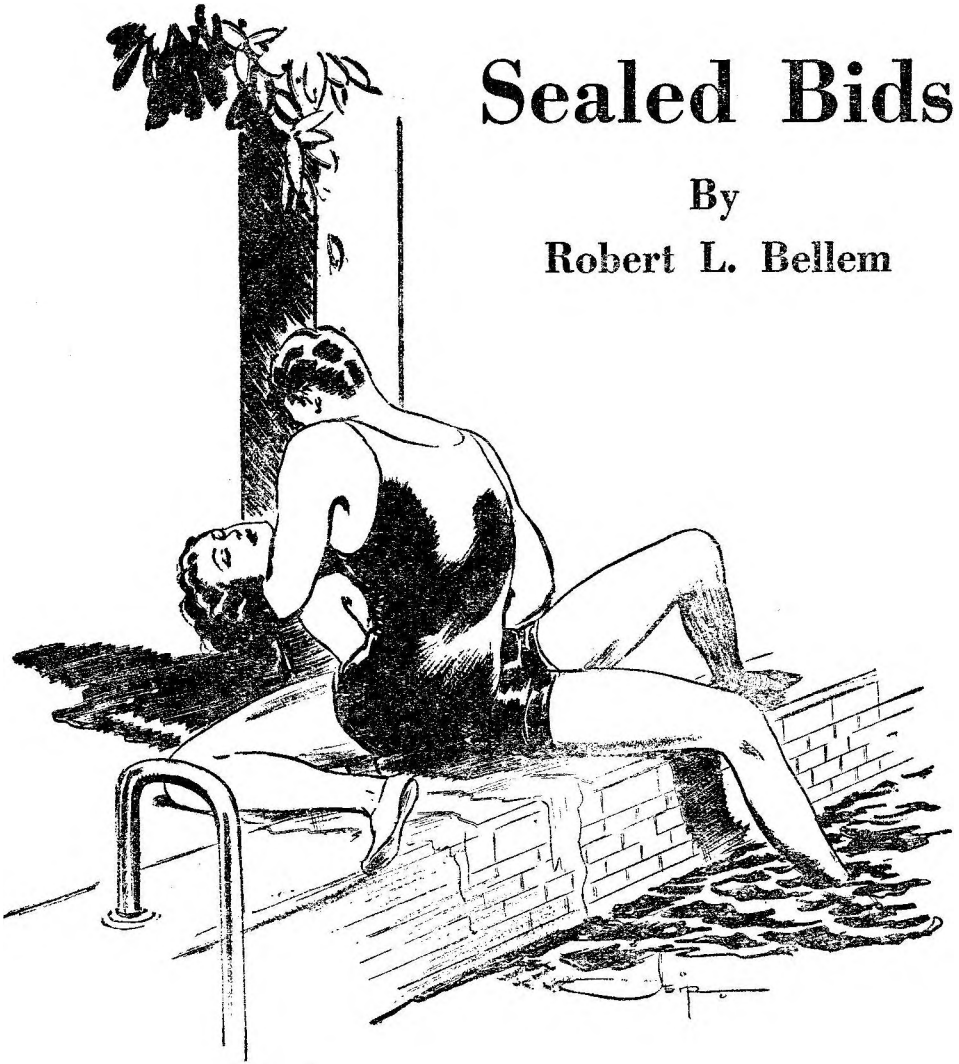
ES—Eastern Standard Time

CS—Central Standard Time

Sealed Bids

By

Robert L. Bellem



CONNIE tiptoed her way noiselessly down the staircase of Elverson Northrup's Long Island house. If any artist had glimpsed her as she descended the curving, ornate steps, he would have gone into ecstasies and begged for the opportunity to immortalize her in oils.

Her soft, wavy red-gold hair tumbled and rippled on her cream-smooth shoulders, framing her girlishly piquant features with an au-

burn aureole. Her slender, pliant young figure seemed to float in a misty sea of baby-blue lace and silk as she drew her negligee closer about her. Her dainty, high-arched little feet trod softly in feathered mules.

But of course no artist saw her. Artists don't go around painting pictures at two o'clock in the morning. And that was the time it was as Connie came down from an upstairs guest room in quest of a glass of milk.

At the foot of the stairs she suddenly halted. Her hand went to her heart and her pulses skipped a beat. Some one was in the library!

Through the gloom of the vast hall, Connie saw a flickering beam of light that danced almost imperceptibly from the darkness that marked Elverson Northrup's study. She heard a faint, clicking noise.

Cautiously, she tiptoed toward the door of the combined study and library, which was partially open. As Elverson Northrup's private secretary, Connie Bryant had a legitimate curiosity about flickering lights in her employer's house at two o'clock in the morning.

Scarcely breathing, she peered into the library. Then she stifled a sudden desire to cry out.

In the tiny unwinking glare of a small flashlight, a man was kneeling before Elverson Northrup's private safe and manipulating the dial with long, tapering fingers.

Wide-eyed, Connie stared at the intruder. Through the gloom she discerned an amazing fact; the burglar was clad in a correct, well-fitting Tuxedo. But his face was completely obscured behind a mask that concealed his eyes, his nose, and his mouth. He was engrossed in his enterprise, leaning over the safe with rapt attention.

Connie turned and ran silently up the stairs. At first she thought of arousing the household; then she realized that the noise might frighten away the burglar before any one could get downstairs to head him off. She made her decision with the promptness which made her so valuable in Elverson Northrup's office. Swiftly she went into her own room; from her bag she extracted a small but businesslike automatic. Then she descended the staircase again, as quiet as a wraith.

She reached the library door just in time to see the masked man give the safe knob a final twirl. He pulled, and the door of the safe swung open with a faint whisper of hinges in need of oil.

Connie raised her automatic in an unwavering hand. And then she smothered an involuntary gasp. The burglar reached into his coat pocket and extracted an oblong, white, flat object. He thrust it into the safe! Instead of stealing something from the little vault, he was putting something in!

With a little sigh, the masked man swung the safe door closed, and twirled the dial to lock it. He straightened up.

"Don't move!" Connie Bryant spoke from the darkness.

The burglar stiffened.

"Put up your hands!"

He complied.

Connie stepped into the library, full into the white pencil of light thrown by the flashlight on the table. The burglar turned and faced her.

Under his mask, Connie could see his mouth twitch into a startled smile. "I never knew they had angels on the detective force!" he said in a subdued, whimsical voice scarcely more than a whisper.

Connie blushed and glanced down involuntarily at her very feminine negligee. "I'm not on the detective force," she responded grimly, "but pretty soon I'll have somebody here who is!" She moved toward the telephone, still covering the burglar with her weapon.

"Oh, say now, can't we discuss this matter before bringing in the police?" he reproached her.

"There's nothing to discuss. I find you here in my employer's home, opening his safe. You wear a mask. Obviously, I shall call the police."

"Oh! So this is your employer's home, then? Are you by any chance the parlor maid? If you are, let me congratulate your employer on his choice of household help."

Connie flushed indignantly. "Parlor maid? How dare you? I am Mr. Northrup's private secretary. He invited me down here on a weekend party because he had some dictation to give me." She suddenly bit her cherry-red lower lip. "Besides, that's none of your business. Stand out of the way—I'm going to phone for the police."

The burglar bowed. "Go ahead," he invited mockingly. "Meanwhile, I shall feast my eyes on the most intriguing private secretary I ever saw. You're really charming, you know."

"Be still!" Connie flared, and reached for the telephone.

It was a disastrous move. For an instant she took her eyes from the masked man. And in that instant he leaped forward. One strong hand went over her mouth, cutting off her protesting cry; the other twisted the automatic from her slender fingers with a calm, unhurried gentleness. Then he released her.

Connie's blue eyes blazed. "You—you cad!" And yet somehow the sensation of his hard arms around her in that brief, fleeting instant had sent a peculiar thrill through her veins.

He bowed again and pocketed the automatic. "But you can't really blame me for trying to save myself, can you?" he protested.

"I'm going to scream for help!" Connie stormed.

"Are you? How interesting! And by the time help arrives, I shall have made my escape. They'll open the safe and discover that I took nothing. You won't even have your automatic to back your claim that you had a burglar captured. They'll

think you had a nightmare and laugh at you. Or else," he added, "they'll condemn you for not yelling for help before you tried to capture me single-handed."

Connie glared and said nothing. She knew he was right.

He came closer to her, and once more that queer, sensational thrill tingled in her veins. The magnetism of his nearness seemed to hypnotize her into silence.

Audaciously, he slipped one arm around her slender waist and cupped her lovely dimpled chin with his other hand. Then he tilted her face upward very gently, and even though she struggled to release herself, he succeeded in planting a firm, determined kiss on her warm lips. Then he stepped back.

"That's the penalty for the fright you gave me!" he grinned beneath the silk mask. He turned to the window. "Good night, beautiful lady." Then he leaped lightly, athletically, through the casement and was gone.

Connie, the fire of his kiss still tingling on her red lips, stared dazedly after him. Something had happened to her, something that had never occurred before. A delicious shiver went cascading down her spine, and a feeling she could not analyze pervaded her heart of hearts.

When she had regathered her composure, she realized that it was now too late to raise an alarm. By that time the man in the mask was far away. Suddenly she knew that she must not mention this odd midnight adventure to any one; it dawned on her that her own actions had been inexplicably absurd. How could she ever hope to explain the escape of the burglar? Would her employer, Elverson Northrup, believe such a weird account of the affair? On the

contrary, he might even discharge her for letting the man get away.

Still tingling from the masked kiss, she tiptoed back upstairs to her room. The glass of milk she had originally gone downstairs to get was forgotten.

As she crawled between the soft, cool linen sheets of the big four-poster bed, she contrasted in her mind this studied luxuriousness with the Spartan simplicity of the little uptown flat which she shared with her younger brother Jerry, who also worked for the Northrup Construction Company. Jerry was in the auditing department. Connie cuddled her pillow, and a tiny smile brought the ghost of a dimple to her smooth cheek. She idly wondered if she would ever be the mistress of a Long Island estate like Elverson Northrup's. Perhaps some day Prince Charming would come along and lift her from the humdrum world of stenographers and private secretaries into a paradise of love and luxury.

Love! She thought of the burglar who had kissed her. Then, angrily, she scrubbed at her red lips with a tiny square of lace that did duty as a handkerchief. Prince Charming never arrived in the guise of a masked housebreaker, she told herself firmly. And as she rubbed away the last remembrance of the burglar's audacious kiss, she tried to erase the burglar himself from her thoughts. Nevertheless, when at last she fell asleep, it was only to dream of a masked man whose kisses were electric.

In the morning before breakfast, Elverson Northrup summoned Connie into his study. As she entered, he surveyed her with eyes that bespoke distinct approval. "You look very charming this morning, Miss Bryant," he said. Then, as Connie

colored, he smiled. "I suppose you're wondering why I asked you to come down here on this week-end party?"

Connie smiled, too. "You wanted to give me some letters, didn't you?"

"Frankly, no. The job I have for you is entirely different. Maybe you've wondered why you weren't introduced as my secretary—why you've been treated exactly as any other guest. Well, I'll tell you. I want people to think you're just a guest; nothing more. Especially do I want that impression left with Chamberlin Ives."

"Chamberlin Ives, of Ives & MacManus, our competitors?" Connie asked in surprise. "Is he here?"

"Yes. I've always been friendly with him in spite of our business competition." Northrup's teeth showed in a wolf grin. "But I never let friendship interfere with business. Up to now, young Ives hasn't bothered me much, but now he's beginning to reach out, and I've got to clip his wings. Specifically, he's entering a bid on the Stony Point bridge project. I happen to know that his firm is in bad shape financially, and it would take a big contract like the Stony Point job to pull him out of danger. But I happen to want that contract myself!"

Connie's eyes narrowed. Never once during her two years' service with him had she seen him display such a ruthless spirit. "And so?" she prompted.

"And so I'm going to escort you to breakfast and introduce you to young Ives. At the moment he's rather smitten with that blond Daltzell widow, but you're pretty enough to lure him away from ten of her type. I want you to vamp Ives, make him fall for you hard. And then I want you to make him tell you the figure of his bid on the Stony Point job."

Connie flushed; with an effort she suppressed her indignation. "But, Mr.——"

Northrup silenced her. "The sealed bids must be submitted by noon to-morrow—Monday. I have my figure prepared, but there's a bare chance that Ives has underbid me. I've got to know what his bid is; if it's below mine, I'll revise my figure and cut under him. There's a thousand-dollar bonus for you if you get that information out of him."

Connie's red lips curled scornfully. She faced her employer, seeing him in his true light for the first time. "I—I won't do anything so unfair, so unscrupulous!" she cried. "You've admitted that if Mr. Ives doesn't get the contract his firm will fail. Your own company has as much work as it can handle. I—I won't do it!" She turned and ran out of the study, up to her room.

In a few minutes there came a discreet knock at her door. She opened it. An impassive footman handed her a note and went away.

Connie tore open the envelope. The note was from Elverson Northrup, and as she read it, her face went white and her lips trembled.

DEAR MISS BRYANT: I appreciate your unwillingness to do anything dishonest or unethical. But we never know where dishonesty might crop up, do we? For instance, you probably don't know that your brother Jerry, in my accounting department, is several thousand dollars short in his accounts. If I prosecute, it means the penitentiary for him. But if you get that information from Ives, I won't prosecute. Let me know.

ELVERSON NORTHRUP.

Connie sank, bewildered, into a chair. Her brother a thief! The blow stunned her. She visioned Jerry behind steel bars. She felt like a trapped animal as she suddenly began to pace the floor of the pink-

and-gold bedroom. In all her brief twenty-four years she had never been face to face with a decision like this. Should she sacrifice her brother to save her own sense of honor and ethics? Or should she take the easier way, do what Northrup demanded, and keep the stigma of prison from her brother's name?

Suddenly she squared her straight little shoulders. Blood was thicker than water; no matter what he had done, she could not let Jerry go to prison! She went downstairs to Northrup's study.

Northrup was waiting for her. He looked at her craftily. "Well?"

"I'll do it—if I can," Connie whispered.

"Fine! Come with me."

A moment later Connie Bryant found herself face to face with a tall, athletic-looking young man whose pleasant gray eyes seemed to bore into hers with a warm fire. Northrup spoke. "Miss Bryant, may I present Mr. Chamberlin Ives? Mr. Ives, this is Miss Bryant, who is also one of our guests."

Ives smiled and took Connie's little hand in his strong one. An electric thrill went through Connie's finger tips at his touch, and quite suddenly, all recollection of last night's burglar vanished. Ives spoke in a low, masculine baritone. "I've waited all my life for this moment!"

As she withdrew her hand from his, Connie flushed furiously. She was oddly, inexplicably confused. Her heart skipped a beat at the sound of his voice, and for a minute she forgot her position, the nefarious reason behind her introduction to this smiling, handsome man, everything except that here at last was Prince Charming!

She dimpled. "How did you know the moment was coming?"

He grinned. "Because a crystal

gazer once told me I'd fall in love with the most beautiful girl in the world, and I've been waiting ever since."

"Do you believe in crystal gazers?"

"I'd begun to lose hope, but now I'm a complete convert. They know their stuff." He looked at her with frank admiration, drinking in the soft piquancy of her features, the girlish curves of her slender figure, the soft red-gold of her hair.

Connie laughed. Outside, for the first time she heard the twitter of birds, became aware of the gentle spring breeze that wafted the perfume of newly opened blossoms. In one brief, magical instant the entire world had been changed from common metal to pure gold!

She looked at Chamberlin Ives. His tall form was as straight and military as a field marshal's; his corn-colored hair was brushed smoothly back from a high, unlined forehead. His gray eyes twinkled, and his wide, masculine mouth held a hint of hidden laughter. In a word, he was Prince Charming!

She started to speak. And just then, a shadow fell between them. A white, feminine hand fell posses-



"Go ahead; phone for the police," the burglar invited mockingly. "Meanwhile, I shall feast my eyes on the most intriguing private secretary I ever saw. You're really charming, you know."

sively on Ives's strong right arm; a soft, languorous voice drawled musically: "Chamberlin Ives, how dare you desert me like this? You promised to escort me to breakfast, you bad boy!"

Ives colored and turned to the blond, exotic Nadine Dalzell. "Nadine, this is Miss Bryant. Miss Bryant, Mrs. Dalzell."

Connie acknowledged the introduction absently. Abruptly the birds had ceased to twitter, the breeze to blow. Magic and wizardry faded; she suddenly realized her position, realized that she had no right to imagine romantic things about Chamberlin Ives. He was in love with Nadine Dalzell, while she, Connie, was just a spy, a sneak!

She watched Ives and the blond girl stroll into the breakfast room, and her heart was very heavy as she thought of the distasteful task before her. And then, as her thoughts went to her brother Jerry, she steeled herself. She had a part to play; she must play it through! She went in to breakfast with her head high.

As she sat down at the gleaming, flower-decked table, a footman unostentatiously handed her a note. Furtively she opened and read it. It was from Northrup and was brief and to the point.

I'm having Mrs. Dalzell called to the telephone. Make use of your opportunity.

Almost at the same time, the footman leaned over and spoke into Nadine Dalzell's ear. The blond girl turned to Chamberlin Ives and whispered an apology. He nodded and arose politely, drawing back Nadine's chair. She walked regally from the room.

Connie looked across at Ives and forced herself to smile provocatively. He returned the look with interest, and leaned across the table. "How about a dip in the pool with me after breakfast?"

Connie's pulses leaped, in spite of her effort to control her emotions. Her blue eyes sparkled. "I'd love

it!" she answered. "But what about Mrs. Dalzell?"

He looked at her oddly, and didn't answer. The meal over, he took her rounded arm and walked with her into the conservatory. "What makes you think Mrs. Dalzell has any claim on me?" he asked whimsically.

Connie blushed. "Did I jump at the wrong conclusion?"

He pressed her elbow close to his side, and patted her hand. "You did!" he replied emphatically. "Let's get into bathing suits and have that dip!"

Connie suppressed the involuntary, delicious little shiver engendered by his nearness. She smiled. "I'll go right upstairs and change," she promised.

But once in her room, her heart grew heavy again as she realized the contemptible part she was playing. The enormity of it appalled her; not only was she taking Chamberlin Ives away from Nadine Dalzell, whom he evidently cared for, but she was going to wheedle information from him that would result in the ruin of his firm! For a minute, Connie sank into a chair and gave way to bitter thoughts. Two tears welled into her pool-blue eyes and trembled at the verge of her lashes. Then, with a resigned, self-contemptuous shrug, she got up and donned the pert, abbreviated little swimming suit she had brought with her.

Chamberlain Ives was waiting for her at the edge of the swimming pool behind the vast house. The place was otherwise deserted. When he saw Connie, his eyes lighted and his pleasant mouth widened in a smile of welcome.

"So you got here first, Mr. Ives," Connie greeted him.

"Yes. But I wish you'd call me 'Cham.' All my friends do."

"But—have we known each other

long enough for you to think of me as your friend?"

"I'd like to think of you as—more than that," he answered earnestly.

Connie blushed as she poised on the edge of the springboard. To cover her confusion, she dove lightly into the pool. Her lithe young form entered the water with scarcely a ripple, and she struck out for the far side of the pool with swift, sure strokes.

Halfway to the other side, an idea came to her. It was already the middle of the morning; she had very little time for her campaign to worm her way into Ives's unsuspecting confidence. There was no time to be lost. Unexpectedly she threw her hands up out of the water, churned with her feet, and sank down to the bottom of the pool.

There was a tremendous splash as Ives leaped far out into the pool. Connie felt his strong hands around her waist, buoying her. She closed her eyes and went limp. He had her on the surface now. He was striking out fiercely, determinedly toward the far end of the pool. She felt him reach the goal, grab the hand rail, and lift her body out of the water. Gently he laid her on the ground. "Connie! Connie!" he whispered hoarsely as he chafed her wrists.

Feeling like a rank hypocrite, she fluttered her long lashes. "Ch-Cham!" she said faintly, as though recovering from a bad dream.

Tenderly his arm went around her waist, lifting her toward him. She was like some damp and beautiful wood nymph, her wet red hair clinging to her shoulders. For a fleeting, heavenly moment, Connie forgot her mission. She knew only that the thrill of being in his arms was like nothing she had ever experienced before in her life. Simply, unaffectedly, she looked into his eyes.

He leaned over and brushed her lips with his own. "Connie—darling Connie!" he whispered. A thrill went coursing through her at the touch of his lips.

"Connie—tell me that you're all right!" he pleaded.

She opened her eyes again. "I—I think I am," she said in a trembling voice that needed no artifice to make it sound shaken and disturbed.

He leaned close to her face.

A harsh voice spoke. "So here you are!"

Ives jumped, startled. Connie flushed to the roots of her red-gold hair. It was Mrs. Dalzell.

Ives recovered his composure first. "Oh, hello, Nadine. I—Miss Bryant just came near drowning. I pulled her out."

The blond girl smiled frigidly. "I see your first-aid technique is quite effective!" she said in a tone as brittle as ice. "I'll leave you to continue the treatment!" And she stalked off.

Connie stood up, confused and embarrassed. "I'm afraid you've made her angry, and it's all my fault."

He took her two hands in his. "Do you think I care? The anger of a thousand Nadines wouldn't matter to me, as long as I had one Connie Bryant!"

Connie drew away. She weighed and measured her words. "You—you really care for me a little?" she whispered, making her voice soft and pleading.

"Oh, Connie darling, I've loved you since I first saw you!"

Connie forced a gay little smile. "But I don't know a thing about you! You haven't told me what you are, where you work, what you do."

He grinned back at her. "I happen to be president of the Ives &

MacManus Contracting Company, and I can furnish the best of references, ma'am, if you'll consider me for the job."

Connie pretended surprise. "President? Of a contracting company? Oh, how wonderful! Tell me—what kind of contracting do you do?" she asked innocently.

He smiled. "Well, we build buildings and bridges."

"Bridges? I love bridges! Would you build one for me?"

He looked at her oddly. "I'm bidding on one now. If I get the contract, I'll dedicate the bridge to you."

Connie clapped her hands in simulated delight. "Oh, how wonderful! And where is the bridge to be erected?"

"At Stony Point." There was an unusual quality in his voice.

Connie was silent a moment. Then, as though thinking aloud, she murmured: "I've always wondered how much a big bridge would cost. I wonder how much money it would take to build one at Stony Point?"

Ives looked squarely at her, his gray eyes enigmatic and veiled. "If I were to tell you how much my firm estimates in its sealed bid, darling, I'd violate an unwritten law of the contracting business. Suppose you happened to tell your—er—host, Mr. Northrup, who is our competitor? He could change his bid, cut under our price, and take the job away from us."

Connie compelled herself to look hurt and aggrieved. "What reason would I have to tell him? He's nothing to me!"

Cham smiled gently. "It was rude of me to say that, wasn't it?" he apologized. "Well, just to show my trust in you, I'll tell you our bid. Ives & MacManus have offered to construct the bridge for one

million five hundred thousand dollars."

Connie Bryant's pulses leaped. He had told her! He cared enough for her to tell her! Her heart sank as she realized her own duplicity, realized that in trusting her, he had doomed his firm to bankruptcy. She forced herself to be indifferent. "How interesting!" she remarked absently.

He arose. "Shall we go back to the house?"

Connie nodded, wondering at his sudden coolness.

At the door he excused himself. "I must get dressed and pack—I've got to get back to town this afternoon," he said. Then he turned and left her.

Connie went to her room and dressed, despising herself. She fought a desperate battle with her conscience as she descended the ornate staircase. If she were to repeat to Elverson Northrup the secret figure Chamberlin Ives had told her in the confidence of his love, she could never face the world again, could never look any honest person in the eye. And yet, she shuddered at the thought of her brother Jerry in prison.

Elverson Northrup was at the foot of the stairs. He saw her descending, and took her by the arm. He led her into the study, his face anxious and disturbed.

"Young Ives just left in a hurry, made an excuse about having to get back to the city. Tell me—did you scare him off?"

Connie shook her head wearily. "Did—didn't he even leave any word for me?"

"Certainly not. Why should he?" Northrup replied in an annoyed voice. He grasped her arm in a grip that was painful. "Did you get that figure from him?"

Connie went white and jerked loose. "I—I can't tell you!" she gasped. There were tears in her eyes. "I can't! You mustn't ask me!"

Northrup sneered. "Mustn't I? Then you want me to send your precious brother to jail?"

Connie's knees seemed to turn to water. She slumped into a chair. She was defeated. As though pronouncing her own doom, she said in a dry, expressionless voice: "Ives & MacManus have placed a bid for the Stony Point bridge job for one million five hundred thousand dollars."



"Oh, Cham! Cham! Don't ever leave me again!" she cried. And as he gathered her into his arms, there was a look in his eyes that said he never would.

Northrup leaped to his feet excitedly. "You got it!" he exulted. "Oh, fine, fine! Now I've got Ives where I want him! I'll cut his bid by a hundred thousand dollars. He's through, I tell you! Through!" He faced Connie, rested his hands on her shoulders. "You've certainly earned that thousand dollar bonus!"

"I don't want it—it's blood money!" she answered wearily. "All I want is your assurance that you won't do anything to Jerry."

Elverson Northrup threw back his head and laughed. "Jerry? Don't be absurd, child! Jerry hasn't stolen any money! I told you that just to frighten you into doing what I wanted!"

The blood drained suddenly from Connie's pale cheeks. She leaped to her feet. "You—you've tricked me!"

"All's fair in business warfare!" Northrup chuckled.

Connie's eyes blazed. "You despicable cad! I hate you—I despise you! I'm going to get out of here! I'm going to find Cham Ives and warn him to revise his bid, to cut under you! I'm through with you—understand? Through!" And she ran from the room.

In her bedroom she threw her clothes into a bag, flung herself into her coat, jammed her little felt hat over her damp red hair. There was a sob in her throat. She must hurry, must find Ives, confess that she had divulged his bid to Northrup, warn him to revise his figures!

She ran down the stairs and out of the house. The road through the grounds seemed endless. At last she was on the highway leading toward the railroad station. There was no taxi in sight. She set forth at a desperate little trot.

Her breath came in convulsive, short, painful gasps. Her feet, in their ridiculous high-heeled pumps,

ached with the unaccustomed pace. She fought back the tears that filled her agonized heart.

A heavy sedan drew up alongside of her. The dark-faced stranger at the wheel looked at her, and smiled pleasantly. "You seem to be in a hurry. Can I give you a lift to the station?"

"Oh, if you will! Thank you!" Connie gasped.

He opened the curtained rear door. Connie stepped into the machine. The door slammed and the car lurched forward. Connie screamed. Two pairs of rough, rude masculine hands grabbed at her, gagged her, thrust her unceremoniously into the seat and tied her there. She was being kidnaped!

Desperately, with futile strength, she battled her captors. A harsh voice snarled in her ear. "Be quiet, sister, and we won't hurt you. We're just going to keep you safe until after twelve o'clock noon to-morrow."

Noon to-morrow! Connie's heart sank leadenly. Then it was Elverson Northrup who had arranged the kidnaping. He wanted to keep her away from Chamberlin Ives until it was too late to warn him. The dead line for the sealed bids was noon to-morrow!

Connie made one more despairing effort to escape, but it was fruitless. She was trapped.

The car whined along the highway at breakneck speed. They were getting into the city now. The deserted Sunday streets became a speedway for the careening, rocketing sedan. Suddenly the car slid to a screaming, tire-destroying halt. Connie felt herself being lifted up, carried out of the car, shoved roughly into the doorway of a grim brownstone house. The door slammed behind her. One captor remained at her

side. He conducted her up a flight of rickety, ancient stairs and pushed her into a bedroom. She heard a key turned in the lock. She was a prisoner.

Connie sank down on the slatternly bed and gave way to tears.

Somehow, the hours passed like grim, slow-moving sentinels. It was dark. She slept fitfully. Dawn broke. Connie rattled at the door, tried to force it open. Its old-fashioned stoutness resisted her efforts.

Later in the morning she looked at her wrist watch. Eleven thirty! As though in a daze, she tried to tell herself that in thirty minutes it would be too late, that in thirty minutes her own treachery would ruin Chamberlin Ives, the man she knew she loved!

Desperately, Connie ran to the room's single window. It was a narrow, dingy pane, overlooking an unkempt areaway and side yard. All around, gray-white wash hung on laundry lines. She was on the third floor, and the ground was sickeningly far away.

Suddenly a desperate idea entered her whirling brain. She ran to the bed, stripped it of its dingy sheets and sleazy blankets. With trembling, agitated fingers she whipped the sheets into twisted ropes, knotted them together, pieced the length by adding blankets and the flimsy counterpane. She knotted one end of the improvised rope around the bedpost and pushed the bedstead close to the window. Hastily, she tested the knots. They seemed to hold.

Cautiously, noiselessly, she opened the window and dropped the line out. Then, with a faintly breathed prayer, she hung her bag over her arm and climbed out.

Down—down—down! She felt the crude knots slip as her weight

trembled earthward. Her heart leaped. She seemed to be falling.

Miraculously, she was at the end of the rope. She looked down. There were ten feet to go, and hard concrete waiting at the end! With a gasp, she loosed her grip and dropped.

The pavement stung the soles of her little feet as the force of her fall landed her in a collapsed heap. Unmindful of pain and shock, she stood up on trembling legs and ran.

She was out of the yard. She was in the alley. She was out in the open—on the street! A stray taxi passed, empty. Connie waved and cried out.

The cab stopped and backed up to her. "Quick—oh, hurry! To the nearest city directory! Find out the address of Ives & MacManus, the contracting firm; then take me there! Hurry!" she pleaded.

"Ives & MacManus? I know where they are, ma'am. My brother works for them!" The taxi driver grinned. He clashed his gears.

Connie looked at her watch. It was ten minutes to twelve! The Monday traffic was thickening; the cab's pace slower. Hours seemed to pass with every tick of the second hand on her watch.

Suddenly the cab jerked to a halt. Connie had already opened her bag and extracted the fare. She thrust the money toward the chauffeur. He pointed. "In that building, ma'am."

Connie ran. The elevator seemed to creep upward. At last it let her out at the proper floor. She burst into the office of Ives & MacManus and halted, frozen.

Chamberlin Ives and the blond, exotic Nadine Dalzell were standing there, deep in conversation. And the clock on the wall pointed to one minute after twelve.

Connie tottered forward. "Cham

—the bid! Hurry—change it! Northrup is cutting under you!”

Ives looked at her coldly. “Really?” He glanced at the clock. “You took good care to bring your warning too late, didn’t you?”

She met his eyes, her face white and drawn. “You mean you can’t change your bid? You—you’ll lose the contract?”

Calmly he shook his head. “I don’t think I’ll lose the contract. In fact, I think I’ll get it, in spite of your efforts to sell me out to your employer, Mr. Elverson Northrup.”

Connie’s shoulders slumped. Her hand fluttered to her throat. “Then—you know?”

“I knew all along!” he flung out bitterly. “The moment you tried to pump me about my bid, I realized that you were double-crossing me! When you claimed to have no connection with Northrup, I knew you lied, so I gave you a false figure—a figure two hundred thousand too high! If Northrup based his revised bid on that figure, he’s due for a surprise. He’ll be away above my true bid.”

Connie stared at him. “You—you knew I was his secretary all the time?”

“Yes.”

“But—but how?”

He grinned sardonically. “Because you told me so yourself that night in the library, the night you found me opening Northrup’s safe.”

Connie’s eyes widened. She gasped. “You—you were the burglar?” she whispered, dumfounded.

He smiled as he nodded. “Not exactly a burglar,” he corrected her. “It happens that my former partner, MacManus, with whom I have dissolved partnership, had unethical ideas. He stole Northrup’s bid from the safe that night. I happened to catch him at it, and took the un-

opened envelope away from him. After I kicked him out, I returned the envelope to the safe, still unopened. That’s what I was doing when you found me. That’s when you told me you were Northrup’s secretary. And the next morning, when we were introduced, I knew you, although you didn’t recognize me. So you see, you weren’t so smart after all. And now, if you please, Mrs. Dalzell and I would like to be alone.”

In a daze, beaten, her heart dead within her, Connie turned and left the office.

Dimly she threaded her way through the luncheon crowds. She wanted to be alone with her misery. She wanted to go home to the little uptown apartment, to curl into a little, grief-stricken ball and give way to bitter, disillusioned tears.

She boarded a street car and reached for her bag to pay her fare. And then she flushed with embarrassment. Her bag was gone! She realized that she must have left it in the taxicab.

The conductor grinned. “It’s happened before, lady. I’ll let you ride. You can pay me the next time.”

At the little apartment, she flung herself full-length on the bed, racked with heartbroken sobs. Her world was in a chaos; everything was gone! She was jobless, friendless, and Cham Ives thought her a traitor, a double-crosser! Cham Ives had gone back to Nadine Dalzell!

She grew tense. There was a frenzied knocking at the front door. Weary, worn-out, Connie dragged herself to the hallway and opened the door.

“Connie! Connie, my darling!”

“Cham!” Connie choked.

“Connie! Soon after you’d gone, a taxi driver came to my office. He had a bag. He said a lady had left

it in his cab—a lady who had wanted him to drive her to Ives & MacManus's offices—so when he found the bag he brought it to me, thinking you might still be in my office."

He hesitated. "Oh, Connie, can you ever forgive me for doubting you? I—I took the bag. It fell open and a letter came out. I—I read the letter. It was from Northrup."

Chamberlin Ives extended the note in which Northrup had threatened to jail Connie's brother unless she got the bid figure from Ives. Mechanically, Connie took the paper and tore it into bits. "Thank you," she said woodenly. "And now—you can go back to Nadine."

"But, Connie, she means nothing to me! She was just up there to discuss a house she wants built. Please believe me, Connie! Oh, I know I'm not worthy of you, but—oh, my darling, I love you so!"

"You—you didn't trust me. Please go."

His shoulders slumped. He turned his stricken face to the door. He stepped out into the hall. The door started to close after him.

Connie's arms went out. Her voice rose to a frightened little wail. "Oh, Cham! Cham! Don't—don't go! Don't ever leave me again! Oh, my dear, don't!"

As he returned and gathered her into his arms, there was a look in his eyes that said he never would.



THE MOON IS FULL TO-NIGHT!

STARLIGHT and shadows, and the great full moon,
And, sweetheart, you and I there, side by side—
Little we dreamed the trail would soon divide,
What winds of change and chance could e'er betide;

Joyous and eager, and a lovers' tune;
We hummed it low, together, you and I,
Beneath that moon and the deep-sapphire sky,
With starlight and the shadows whisp'ring, "Good-by";

Time-spent and waiting, and doubt interstrewn—
Still, magic things do happen now and then:
Trails cross and queer winds guide the footsteps when
The great full moon is shining once again!

PETER A. LEA.



A Fiancé To Order

By Georgia Brooks

RUTH MAYNARD reached for her bag and opened it, took a peek into the mirror inside, after making sure that the girls talking together over at the window were not observing her.

A frown of dissatisfaction creased her brow, and she sighed.

Ruth had long ago been aware that beauty had not been one of the gifts bestowed on her by Dame Fortune, but it was not that which made her sigh. It was the knowledge that in two weeks' time she would be twenty-five, and an old maid.

She had worked for the firm where she was employed for ten years—

first as a typist, then gradually rising to more important positions until she became private secretary to Stephen Travers, the junior partner.

During those years many girls had come and gone in the big office; most of them had left to get married, but romance never seemed to come Ruth Maynard's way, and now she seemed part of the firm, a sort of institution, and the knowledge aroused her resentment.

It was almost five o'clock, and there was very little work being done in the offices of Travers, Jennings & Company; the girls were putting their work away and discussing

what they meant to do with the approaching week-end.

Ruth rose and went into the smaller office, pushing the door behind her.

It did not quite shut, and as she paused on the other side, she heard Maisie Drew remark:

"Mustn't it be awful to be like poor Miss Maynard? She never has a boy friend."

"Hush!" somebody else exclaimed. "She will hear you."

Ruth suddenly felt she could bear no more. To be pitied by eighteen-year-old Maisie Drew! For a moment she stood deep in thought; then, her heart beating unusually fast, she returned to the outer office.

She was still being discussed, for the girls started rather guiltily, and to cover their confusion, one of them asked:

"What are you doing with yourself this week-end, Miss Maynard?"

Just for a second, Ruth hesitated. Then, with a calmness that sent a secret thrill of amazement through her whole being, she replied:

"I'm going to be rather busy—a friend of mine has just returned from abroad. I'm meeting him this evening," she added casually, "so I want to get away as soon as possible."

As she turned away an almost audible gasp of astonishment escaped the other, and Ruth was conscious of exultation. They could not pity her now!

Ruth was being carried rapidly on her way home. She had a room in an apartment on Riverside Drive, for though she was earning good money, she shrank from the loneliness of an apartment of her own.

As the bus hurried on, she looked wistfully about her. How lovely it would be if it were true, if she really

were going to meet some one and they were going to one of those cute little restaurants she knew to be hidden away in the side streets!

As she looked back on the impulse which had come to her at the office, and her sudden yielding to it, she felt rather breathless. But it was done now, and she had to carry the deception through. And why not? It would be rather fun—perhaps, after all, it was better to have a make-believe boy friend than none at all.

When she reached home she shut herself in her room, and taking from her trunk a little case which contained the few pieces of jewelry her mother had left her, she unlocked and examined the contents.

There were two rings, one an old-fashioned cameo, the other curiously set with a double row of small sapphires. Her breath came rather quickly as she slipped the latter onto the third finger of her left hand, standing for a moment, an odd gleam in her eyes, one of great longing.

When Ruth sat down at her desk the following morning, wearing an engagement ring, she could not have felt more self-conscious if it had been a genuine symbol—her ringed finger seemed to get in the way every second, and the double row of sapphires to assume enormous proportions.

Maisie Drew's quick eyes spied the ring at once, and by twelve o'clock the news that Miss Maynard was engaged had spread through the office.

When they were dressing to go out to lunch, the girls gathered around Ruth, congratulating her, and excitedly examining her ring.

They were obviously genuinely pleased, and her conscience pricked her. Nevertheless, there was a warm little glow at her heart, for, after

all, she was doing nobody any harm by her innocent deception.

Stephen Travers, her boss, had been away in the country for a couple of days, and there had been no sign or message from him in the morning when Ruth had startled the office with her engagement ring, but when she returned from lunch she was met on the threshold by one of the stenographers, who informed her that Mr. Stephen had been asking for her.

As she took off her gloves and hung up her hat and coat, she was once again uncomfortably aware of the sapphires gleaming on her left hand. She would have given a good deal to be able to slip off the ring, and was on the point of doing so when the door leading to Stephen Travers's office opened and his pleasant voice said:

"Ah, Miss Maynard, there you are. Will you bring your book in, please?"

There was an added color in Ruth's cheeks as she entered his office, sat down and prepared to begin work. She had not had time for her usual perfunctory glance in the mirror, so the customary rigid neatness of her hair was slightly ruffled; at one side a piece had escaped altogether, and was curling against her cheek.

Nothing about her appearance, from the color in her cheeks to the ring on her finger, escaped the notice of her employer, and there was a strange expression in his gray eyes as they rested on her—something which rather resembled the wistfulness that had been in her own when she had envisaged the companion with whom she would have liked to be dining the evening before.

While she waited, pencil poised, he made no attempt to start dictating, until at length, finding the si-

lence irksome, she looked up and found his eyes still fixed upon her.

The flush which deepened in her cheeks was suddenly darkly reflected in his.

"Eh—yes—let me see," he began hurriedly. "I was considering what to say to these people."

He glanced at some papers before him and began to dictate.

Half a dozen letters were dictated during the following half hour, but if Ruth had not felt so strangely uncomfortable herself and found such difficulty in concentrating on her work, she might have felt that her employer, too, was far from being at ease.

Holding her book, she managed to keep the telltale ring hidden, but all the time she could feel it on her finger, and her embarrassment increased—it was one thing to fool the office staff, but quite another to have to lie to Stephen Travers, and she hoped with all her heart that she might not have to do so.

She was thankful when the last letter was dictated, and rose with alacrity to leave the room, but she was not to escape so easily.

Stephen Travers wanted to look at a contract which had recently been signed, and she was obliged to get it from the file in the corner of the room. When she laid it on his desk he thanked her rather absently, and once again she prepared to depart, and had almost reached the door when he observed:

"By the way, Miss Maynard——"

"Yes, Mr. Travers?" She turned.

"Is it—er—true that you are to be congratulated?"

She felt herself become scarlet and then suddenly pale.

"Thank—you——" she stammered, hoping he would attribute her awkwardness to shyness.

"I suppose this means we shall be

losing you soon?" he said, still intent on putting in order a perfectly tidy desk.

"Oh, no!" she answered quickly. "Not at all——" and becoming aware of his rather surprised regard, added: "You see, I should not like to give up my work."

"Do you mean that you propose to go on working after you are married?" There was an odd, strained intonation in his voice.

Flushing again, she shook her head.

"No, not exactly. You see"—she had a sudden inspiration—"my fiancé will be returning aboard in a few weeks' time, and we are not thinking of getting married for ages."

"I see," he said quietly. "That is all to the firm's advantage, though not altogether, I am afraid, to yours."

"I like my work," she assured him, but as she went out, Stephen Travers thought that however true that might be, she would most assuredly have preferred that the fiancé who was returning abroad in a few weeks' time should not go alone and leave her behind.

As the door closed, he leaned back in his chair and remained gazing before him, an expression of pain on his face.

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may," he murmured. "Very sound advice, for if you don't you generally find that some one else has gathered the one on which you had set your heart."

Ruth was thankful to remember that Stephen Travers never came down to the office on Saturdays as she got on the bus the following day. She had hardly slept all night, and the face the mirror presented to her was certainly not like that of a newly and happily engaged girl.

She usually worked in her employer's room on Saturday morning, clearing up his correspondence for the week, so at least she would be free of the inquisitive glances of the others.

When she arrived at the office, she exchanged a good morning with the girls, and going straight in Stephen Travers's office, took off her hat and coat.

As she prepared to begin the morning's mail, she caught her breath and sat staring at the note wedged inside a corner of the blotter, where it could not fail to catch her eye, and addressed to herself in the firm handwriting of Stephen Travers. It was silly that the sight of the envelope should affect her so, for he had often left her last-minute instructions, but her hand was not quite steady as she took up the note and tore it open.

Her heart was beating unevenly as she read:

DEAR MISS MAYNARD: I trust that you will not be offended at the suggestion I am about to make you.

You have been a valued employee of the firm for many years, and anything we could do to further your happiness would give us the greatest pleasure. Forgive me if I am mistaken, but I can only think that what you told me about your fiancé going abroad again and leaving you behind can only be for one reason—that he does not feel able to offer you the sort of home you deserve.

Now, if there is one thing in the world which I think is most unfair to a girl, it is a long engagement. Would it not be possible if you had a certain amount of capital of your own for you to marry at once and begin your new life without any fear for the future? I am a rich man and one who, believe me, has your welfare very closely at heart. Let me help you by offering as a bonus for your faithful service and a wedding present from the firm the sum of five thousand dollars. I am arranging to have this paid into an account in your name at our bank and I shall be very hurt if you refuse it.

Also I want you to consider your obligations to the office at an end from this date.



If only she could return the love he felt for her, assure him of the happiness for which he longed! "My dear, I love you. Don't keep me in suspense," he pleaded.

You will find plenty to occupy these next few weeks without dull business cares!

Believe me at all times, your well-wisher,
STEPHEN TRAVERS.

A cry escaped Ruth as the letter fell from her hand.

She looked around the office, and knew how blank her life would be without it—day after day without the sight of Stephen Travers, the sound of the voice which at last she had the courage to acknowledge

meant the whole world to her. Here and here only was the romance of her life—and she had thrown it away! She was dismissed with the gift of five thousand dollars, to which she had not the slightest right, and which, if it had been fifty thousand, would not have compensated her.

She had been content to give years of her life to this one firm, and now she knew why—it was because she had given them to Stephen Travers.

Why should the man who filled her thoughts want to get rid of her so quickly? There was something behind the letter, she felt sure. Could it be that he had always looked on her as so much a part and parcel of the office that he did not like the thought of sharing her with any one else?

But she could not pause to think of that now. She must get in touch with him at once. No matter how much it humiliated her, she must tell him the truth.

She drew the telephone toward her, and lifting the receiver, asked for his home number. In a minute she was talking to the housekeeper, who informed her that Mr. Travers had gone out of town that morning, and she could not say when he was returning; he had been uncertain in his plans. Could she take a message?

"No, thank you. Good-by," Ruth murmured, and rang off, gazing about her despairingly.

But business had to be attended to, and since it was impossible to get in touch with Stephen Travers, she forced herself to go on with her work.

When she left the office, although it was long past her usual lunch hour, the very thought of food nauseated her, but she knew that she

should have something to eat, so she went into a near-by restaurant.

It was when she came out again into the golden afternoon that she suddenly felt that she could not go back to the office nor to her room. She must try to get away from herself—surely on this wonderful day there was somewhere where she could find peace and forgetfulness.

There came into her mind the memory of a place in the country where white violets grew. She looked in her bag and found that she had plenty of money with her, and almost before she knew what she really intended, she had hailed a taxi and told the man to drive her to the Pennsylvania Station.

More than two hours later Ruth emerged from a very slow train which had carried her to the small country station, and paused to inquire what time the last train left for New York.

She was told seven o'clock. It was now nearly four, but she felt she would have all the time she wanted, and without needing to ask the way, she left the station and struck off along a country path that was little more than a cart track.

The air was soft and wonderfully warm for that time of the year, and the peace and beauty of her surroundings seemed to sink into her very soul.

Long before she was tired she had found her bank of white violets, and knelt to greet the frail, dainty flowers.

Consulting her watch, she found she had plenty of time, and she walked on in search of a place where she could get something to eat. The road wound uphill, and by the time she reached the top of it she was out of breath.

In the near distance she could see

a tiny hamlet—a few cottages, an old church, and the painted sign of an inn—where she felt sure she would be able to have tea.

She paused to regain her breath, leaning against a white gate, and presently her wandering gaze caught sight of a house among the trees. She was not usually given to curiosity, and she never quite knew what induced her to push open the gate and enter. A moment later she was facing the house.

It was only a very large cottage, a low, white building set in a perfect garden, where already the roses were blooming, and it was obviously untenanted.

She approached nearer and looked in at the windows. The rooms were empty of furniture, and a sudden desire to see the place inside sent her to the front door. She did not expect it to be open, and it was with a thrill of surprise that she felt it yield under her hand.

At first she thought there must be somebody inside, and paused in the hall, listening. There was not a sound, however; and, emboldened, she started on a voyage of discovery.

The place was perfect, and how easy it was to see how more than perfect it could be made. Standing in the middle of one of the bedrooms, looking out at the view beyond the garden, Ruth found herself wishing that the story of her forthcoming marriage had been true, and that this was to be her home.

At that moment she heard a step in the hall below.

Who could it be?

A caretaker, she hoped, but whoever it was, she had better go out and meet him rather than have him find her there. She went out onto the landing, and leaning over the balustrade, looked down into the

square hall below, right into the eyes of the man who stood looking up at her. It was Stephen Travers!

"Ruth! What are you doing here?"

In her confusion, she hardly noticed that he had used her Christian name.

"Mr. Travers!" she exclaimed. "I—I was passing, and I thought I would like to look at this house."

"I see." He hesitated. "Your fiancé is with you?"

"No," she answered in a low voice. "I am alone."

"Alone!" He looked at her in amazement.

"Yes," she answered, beginning to descend. "I thought I'd spend a few hours in the country. I was so tired of New York and my own company."

"What do you mean?" They were facing each other now. "My dear girl, what has happened? You haven't—you can't have——"

She interrupted him with the courage of desperation.

"No, I have not quarreled with my fiancé, because I never had one. I—oh! I read your letter. I tried to get in touch with you, tried to explain."

"But I don't understand."

He had taken her hand, and drew her in through the open door of the sitting room, where an oak window seat invited rest.

She sank down on it, the color coming and going in her cheeks; and then, in a few blunt words, she told him the story of her "engagement."

He listened in silence, and in silence continued to look at her when she had finished.

"Of course, I can't expect you to understand. How could any man?" she exclaimed bitterly. "But I was so tired of feeling that all the others knew no one wanted me, and pitied

me for it. I did not realize that I would have to keep the thing up where you were concerned. Oh! what must you think of me?"

"I don't know what to think," said Stephen Travers, and there was a sudden glad, boyish ring in his voice. "What you have told me makes me so wonderfully happy that——"

"What do you mean?" she asked, astonished.

He caught her hands in his, drawing her to her feet.

"My dear, you talk of no one wanting you. Why, don't you know that I have wanted you?—I dread to think for how long! Ruth, I have been blind. I have loved you always, but I knew that I could not marry in my father's lifetime, and you know what I said to you about long engagements in the letter. I thought it unfair to bind you. But I had been planning. I had seen this place and thought what an ideal home it would make! I wanted to bring you here and show it to you, and then ask you to share it with me."

He looked at her anxiously, at her face, which wore an almost stunned expression, as if she doubted that she heard right. A cold fear smote his heart. What if his hopes had been aroused only to be killed again?

His face turned pale at the thought. He could not bear it! Lingeringly his eyes rested on the sweet profile, noting the upward curl of the thick lashes, the fugitive rose-pink tinting her cheeks, the crimson bow of her mouth.

If only she could return the love he felt for her, assure him of the happiness for which he longed!

"My dear, I love you. Don't keep me in suspense," he pleaded.

Still Ruth was silent, and her eyes gazed through the window out onto the lawn.

He had bought this house for her! When she had thought love was passing her by, this man had loved her, had planned their happiness together. And he was the man of her dreams, the one she had cared for in secret, never daring to hope that her love would be returned, that he could possibly love and want to marry her.

She gazed up at him incredulously.

"I don't—I daren't believe it," she told him. "It is just because you pity me."

For answer he drew her into his arms.

"Look at me! Can you learn to love me—or from the point of view of romance, am I impossible?"

"I have always loved you," she whispered, and there was no chance to say any more just then.

Presently she asked:

"Stephen, if you cared, how could you want to marry me off so quickly to some one else and give me a dowry as well?"

"Partly," he answered, "because I honestly wanted your happiness, and partly because I just could not bear to see you every day, knowing you belonged to somebody else. You see, I had grown to think of you as mine. Oh, my darling"—he drew her closer—"can you ever forgive me for wasting the years when I could have made you happy?"

But Ruth knew that the years were still before them—years of which she would know the joy of true love.





A Serial
Part VI.

So Many Miles

By
Ruby M. Ayres

"Canst thou be true across so many miles—
So many miles that keep us still apart?"

CHAPTER XI.

SONDRA stooped and picked up a long strand of brown seaweed that a wave had washed in. "I suppose you must go back to New York to-night?" she murmured. "I'm afraid so."

THE STORY SO FAR: Sondra Kent, living with her married sister Flora, allows John Anderson, married but separated from his wife, to give her gifts of money. Sondra secretly marries Mark Merriman before he goes abroad, where he has a position working for Anderson. Flora leaves her husband, and Sondra's brother-in-law turns Sondra out. Sondra is looking for a cheap room when she meets Stephen Cassidy, a friend of Anderson's. He tells her that Anderson's wife is dead. Anderson comes to see Sondra and asks her to marry him. She then tells him of her marriage to Mark, and adds that it was all a mistake. At John's suggestion Sondra goes to spend a few days at the seashore.

Anderson stood still and looked out over the sea. He wore no hat and the soft breeze had ruffled his hair, giving him a surprising look of

youth. Sondra laughed as she looked at him.

"Do you know I've never seen you look so thoroughly messed up," she said. "Or so"—so happy, she had been going to add, but stopped.

Anderson laughed, too, and brushed a hand across his hair.

"You look rather messy yourself, young lady," he told her with pretended severity, his eyes wandering over her slender figure. Sondra was wearing a white sports dress, sleeveless and cut low at the neck, and she had taken off her shoes and stockings and slung them carelessly over her arm.

It was a glorious evening, with a blue cloudless sky, faintly tinged with the first glow of a riotous sunset.

For four days Sondra had been at the quaint little stone cottage that stood back in a sheltered corner of the cliff high above their heads, and already she felt like a different creature.

"I never thought I could enjoy a vacation like this," she said with a little grimace. "Old clothes, nothing to do but walk and swim and sleep."

"And eat," he supplemented comically. "I've never seen any one with such an enormous appetite as you have developed."

She laughed. "I don't see how you can know. You don't have meals with me except dinner."

She had been up each night to dine at the hotel where Anderson was staying.

She gave a quick little sigh. "It will be awful when you've gone."

"You'll soon find some one to take my place," he assured her. "And even if you don't——" He broke off, to go on after a moment more briskly. "I've behaved disgracefully as it is—breaking engagements

in town at the last moment. People will be wondering what the attraction is."

"I expect they'll know it's me," Sondra said unthinkingly, then she added with haste: "Besides, all the best people are out of town now, John."

They strolled on, close to the edge of the water.

"How long do you think I had better stay here?" she asked.

"As long as you like." Anderson was busily engaged lighting his pipe. "Or until you have to come back."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Only that we may hear soon when Merriman is expected."

"Oh."

A shadow crossed her radiant face; during the last few days Sondra had forgotten all about Mark.

She shivered, and John asked quickly: "You're not cold?"

"No, but I think some one walked over my grave."

"I think you had better put on your shoes and stockings. The sun's going down."

She flashed him a quick glance.

"How long have you been my keeper?" she asked.

Anderson made no answer, and she said, after a moment, "I think you might stay until after dinner, at any rate."

"I'm afraid I can't. I want to be in town early to-morrow."

"Do you have to be there early?"

"Yes, I've got a luncheon engagement."

"Who with?"

He told her unhesitatingly.

"With the Symonses."

Sondra's face changed. "Oh— isn't there a red-haired daughter?"

An amused smile flickered through his eyes.

"You know quite well there is," he replied calmly.

They had reached a rugged break-water which ran far out into the sea, and Sondra sat down on a broken pile, and began putting on her stockings. Anderson watched her silently.

"I should have thought," she said, her eyes intent on her task, "that it is far nicer down here, than up in town having a stuffy lunch."

"It probably is," he agreed, "but this is a long-standing engagement."

"And therefore cannot be broken," she added with sarcasm.

"I only intended to stay one day when I brought you down," he reminded her.

"You could have gone back sooner if you'd chosen," she retorted childishly.

She paused for a moment in her task and looked out over the sea; some people were bathing a little distance from the shore, and their laughter and voices came clearly through the quiet evening.

Sondra said suddenly, "I've a great mind to run back for my suit and have a swim before dinner. I've got plenty of time."

"You won't do anything of the sort," Anderson retorted calmly. "You've been in twice to-day already, and it's getting late."

"What time is it?"

"Nearly seven."

Sondra looked rebellious. "I don't see why I shouldn't," she murmured.

Anderson laughed. "But then you never see why you shouldn't do a thing you want to do," he retorted calmly. "Three times in one day is too often to bathe; you'd probably get cramps, and I should have to go in and save you and spoil the only suit I've got with me."

She flashed him a quick glance. "It might pay you better to let me drown."

Anderson sat down a little distance from her and began lazily throwing pebbles into the sea.

"I call that plain fishing for compliments," he said.

Sondra frowned and leaned her chin in her hand.

Lately she had not quite known what to make of Anderson. He was not the man to whom she had grown so accustomed in the old days, neither was he the man who had so surprisingly taken her in his arms and told her that he loved her. He seemed in a quiet way to have established an entirely new basis of friendship between them, making himself an impartial guardian—friend—she could find no word that really explained the relationship, but always she had the feeling that she was being kept at arm's length, and she angrily resented it. She had been happy during these few days by the sea. Anderson had spent most of the time with her, driving around the country, or walking along the long golden sands.

They had talked of all sorts of things, but never of any serious matters, and Mark's name had not been mentioned until a moment ago, and Sondra thought that then it was as if John deliberately brought her mind back to the future, defying her to forget her responsibilities.

It was as if some one had drawn a cloud across the face of the sun, as if a stern hand had been laid on the light-hearted irresponsibility to which she had entirely given herself, reminding her that it must end. She looked again at the sea where now only a solitary swimmer was splashing in the sunlight. He looked lonely, she thought, lonely as Anderson had suddenly made her feel.

She said, a hard note in her voice: "I can't remember that you have

ever paid me a compliment in all your life."

He looked at her and smiled.

"'Why gild the lily?'" he quoted lightly. "Besides, I haven't known you all my life."



Lately Sondra had not quite known what to make of Anderson. She had the feeling that she was being kept at arm's length, and she angrily resented it.

She looked at him from under her dark lashes.

"Are you ever serious?" she asked exasperatedly.

"It has been known," he answered.

She stood up with a shrug of her shoulders.

"Well, I suppose we may as well go home. You seem to——" She broke off, turning her face toward the sea, shading her eyes against the brilliant light of the setting sun. "Look"—she pointed toward the solitary bather. There was a note of excitement in her voice. "Is there something wrong?—Oh!"

A sudden ringing cry for help came shrilly to them across the water.

Anderson started to his feet.

"Help! Help!"

Sondra screamed. "He's drowning—John!" But John had gone already, and Sondra saw him splashing through the water, wading until he was out of his depth, and then swimming fast.

To Sondra's agonized eyes it was a nightmare of unreality—the smooth sea, hardly broken by a ripple, the radiant light of the setting sun, and that lonely struggling figure, so far beyond human reach or help, it seemed.

She looked around desperately for help, but the golden sands were deserted, and behind her the rugged cliffs towered forbidding and empty.

Hardly knowing what she did, she waded into the sea, and as if sensing her intention, Anderson turned his head and shouted to her to go back. There was a heavy ground swell in spite of the unbroken surface, and Sondra's skirt hampered her, making it difficult to keep her feet as the water rushed upon the sand, and swirled giddily back again.

The dazzling sunlight half blinded her as she struggled forward; the golden glory of the evening made the sudden tragic happening more horrible than it would have been in worse weather; there was something appalling in the knowledge that perhaps a life was being lost so needlessly when the surrounding world was so beautiful.

Sondra felt that she would go mad with a sense of her own impotence; subconsciously she could hear an agonized voice crying out Anderson's name, "John—John," not realizing that it was her own.

Then as suddenly as the tragedy had come about it ended, and Anderson was back on the sands beside her with the half-drowned, terrified boy choking and spluttering at his feet.

Anderson gave one glance at Sondra's white, agonized face.

"It's all right," he said briefly. "The boy could have got back quite easily if he hadn't lost his nerve." He stooped over the boy at his feet. "All right now, sonny?"

He waited till the boy was on his feet again, trembling and white, but trying to smile.

"Where do you live?"

The boy pointed to the cliff.

"At the top, sir." His teeth were chattering.

"Well, we go that way, too; we'll go along together."

He took the boy's arm in a kindly grasp to help him along, and Sondra silently followed.

Her knees were trembling and she could hardly see; there was only one thought in her mind: "Supposing John had been drowned."

She looked at him with tragic eyes. The water was dripping off him, leaving little pools on the dry sand, but he was quite calm and unmoved, quietly talking to the boy.

"You shouldn't go out so far if you're not a good swimmer. There's always a strong current around these parts. You'll know better another time, won't you?"

It seemed an endless way up the steep cliff path, but halfway up the boy stopped. "I go this way, sir."

"Very well. Do you feel all right?"

"Yes, sir."

They watched him scuttle away out of sight like a scared rabbit, too frightened even to remember to say "Thank you."

Anderson glanced down at his sodden clothes.

"Well, I've ruined my suit after all," he said comically.

Sondra made no reply; she was biting her lip to keep it from trembling. She felt as if something within her heart was breaking, as if presently she would have to give way to the tears that were choking her.

Anderson saw the whiteness of her face.

"I'm sorry if you were scared," he said rather stiffly. "There was never any real danger. I was hardly out of my depth and the boy had the good sense not to struggle."

They reached the little cottage tucked away in a sheltered corner; the door stood wide open and there seemed to be nobody about.

"I'll just hunt around for some dry clothes," Anderson said. "I think I must have left some here when I was down last summer."

He disappeared upstairs, and Sondra went into the sitting room.

She sat down in a low chair and leaned her head back against the cushions.

"If John had been drowned." She could not drive the thought from her mind. She felt that she could never bear to look at the sea again.

She did not move till she heard him coming down the stairs, then, with an effort, she opened her eyes and sat up.

He came into the room smiling and cheerful in an old flannel coat and trousers that badly needed pressing.

"They're all I could find," he apologized. "When Ellen comes back she'll soon get my other things dry. Not exactly smart, are they?"

Sondra tried to answer, but no words would come and John looked at her in surprise.

"What's the matter, Sondra?"

She began to sob broken-heartedly.

"You might have been drowned. You might have been drowned."

He stood silently looking at her, a strange expression in his eyes, then he laughed. "Nonsense, there wasn't the least danger. I'm sorry if you were frightened. Sondra! I thought you had more courage than this."

She had broken down utterly and it was some minutes before she could control herself. Anderson walked away and stood with his back turned looking out of the window; there was a queer look of pain in his eyes, and his mouth was set in a hard line.

It seemed a long time before either of them spoke, then Sondra said in a stifled voice:

"I'm sorry. I suppose you think I'm a fool, but it was horrible standing there—not being able to help, expecting you to be drowned."

He turned then.

"Well, you seem to have got thoroughly wet in the attempt anyway. Run and change that dress at once. Why haven't you done it already? Do you want to catch your death of cold?"

She disregarded his words; she went on sobbingly.

"I'm coming back to town with you when you go. I can't stay here

any more. I shall always hate the sea now. It looks so beautiful, but it's horrible, really—horrible and cruel."

He came a little nearer to her.

"My dear, you know you're talking utter nonsense," he said very gently. "You've had a good scare, but you'll soon forget it. Go and change that wet dress, and I'll see if I can make a cup of tea. You'll feel all the better for one."

She shook her head. "I—shan't. I want to come back with you."

"I thought you were so happy here; only this evening you said that——"

"It won't be the same when you've gone," she broke in.

They looked at each other silently, and it was Anderson who turned away.

"Go and change that dress," he said in a matter-of-fact voice.

Sondra looked at him, her mouth quivering, the tears still in her eyes, then, before he could reach the door, she slipped between it and him. "John."

He laid his hands on her shoulders in a grip that made her wince.

"Go and change that dress," he said again.

Then he put her gently aside and walked past her out of the room. Sondra went slowly upstairs, clinging to the rail as she went, trembling in every limb.

"If John had been drowned." The words seemed circling all about her, refusing to be silenced.

She changed her wet clothes mechanically and combed her hair.

The little window overlooked the sea, and she shivered as her eyes fell upon it.

The sun had nearly disappeared below the horizon, and the chill grayness of night was creeping up over the world.

Downstairs she could hear Anderson whistling cheerily as he hunted about in the kitchen for the tea things.

She smiled tremulously, contrasting him with the man as she had known him in New York. Even Cass would be amused if he could see him now in that old flannel coat and trousers.

Presently she heard him calling to her. "Hurry up, the kettle's boiling."

She made no reply, and presently he called again:

"Sondra."

She went out onto the stairs; Anderson was standing at the foot of them looking up.

"You've taken longer to change than I did," he said.

"Yes." She tried to smile, but her lips trembled.

She followed him into the little sitting room; he had put the tea things on a tray and filled the teapot.

"I'm afraid I haven't made much of a job of it," he said ruefully.

Sondra was standing close beside him, but she said nothing, and he turned to look at her and his face changed.

"What's the matter, my dear?" he asked very gently.

She raised her eyes, infinitely pathetic they were, and angrily ashamed, as she said slowly:

"Do you remember, when you came to see me the other night, you said—you said that you'd stayed away because you wanted me to find out if it—if it was—you I wanted—or—or some other man?" She waited a moment, but he said nothing, and suddenly she hid her face in her hands. "Well, it was you I wanted, John," she whispered desolately.

Then a long silence followed,

broken only by the mournful cry of the gulls outside and the distant voices of some people climbing the stiff cliff path.

Then Anderson said very quietly: "You don't mean that, Sondra. You must *not* mean it. You mustn't make it too difficult for me. You see, my dear——"

He broke off sharply, turning his head toward the open door as some one on the threshold gave a little amazed laugh.

"May we come in? We're simply worn out. We've had a most frightful job finding you, Sondra." It was Beatrice Taylor.

It was too late for Sondra to hide her tears; she knew that Beatrice Taylor's sharp eyes had seen them, seen also that she and John Anderson had been standing very near to each other.

"I hope we don't intrude," Beatrice said. She looked at Anderson coyly. "I heard you were both down here, so we thought we simply must find you if we had to walk a hundred miles. And we're simply dying for tea!"

Sondra seized upon the opportunity to escape.

"I'll make some fresh—it won't be a minute." She fled into the kitchen, furious with herself.

Beatrice spoke behind her.

"Can't I help? I've left the boys to talk to Mr. Anderson. You might have waited to be introduced, Sondra."

Sondra had hardly realized Beatrice had not been alone; she had hardly realized anything except the fact that she had been caught unawares at what was perhaps the most tragic moment of her life.

Beatrice seated herself on the kitchen table, and lit a cigarette.

"I do hope we haven't butted in at the wrong moment," she said.

"Were you having a lovers' quarrel, darling?"

"How absurd. Of course not."

Beatrice laughed. "No? Well, it looked like it," she said frankly. "Poor Mr. Anderson! Well, one can't say he hasn't been faithful to you."

"I don't know what you mean," Sondra protested. She had recovered herself now. "He lent me this cottage, and he came down for the week-end. He's staying up at the hotel."

Beatrice giggled. "Darling, you don't suppose I thought he was staying here, do you?" she asked. "And do tell me—why on earth don't you marry him now he's free?"

"Perhaps because I don't want to, and the kettle's boiling. You'll find some more cups on the dresser."

It was an immense relief to Sondra when Beatrice collected her "boys" as she called the two rather vapid youths she had brought with her, and said "Good-by."

"I do hope we haven't butted in," she said for the third time to Anderson, as they parted at the gate. "But I was dying to see Sondra."

Anderson made some casual reply and went back to the cottage.

Sondra followed him, and for a moment there was unbroken silence, then he said briskly: "Well, I must be off. It's getting late. I won't wait to have my clothes dried—nobody will notice this suit as I shall be driving."

Sondra was aimlessly picking up the tea things.

"When will you come down again?" she asked.

He hesitated. "I will let you know," he said at last.

She raised defiant eyes. "That means you don't intend to come any more, I suppose."

He looked at her gravely.

"Don't you think it will be better if I don't?"

She broke out stormily. "Because you're afraid of the truth, I

suppose, is that it? Well, I'm not afraid. I've made one muddle in my life by being afraid—by hiding things—one ghastly muddle, but this



There was only one thought in her mind: "Supposing John had been drowned."
talking to the boy

time it's going to be different. This time I——" She broke off, and he asked quietly:

"What do you want me to do, Sondra?"

Her eyes fell. "I don't know."

He laughed, but rather wearily.

"Neither do I. You're a married woman, and your husband is on his way home, believing that you will be glad to see him, Sondra. You married him of your own free will, and so I don't think either of us can do anything except say good-by."



She looked at him with tragic eyes. He was quite calm and unmoved, quietly he had rescued.

"I thought you loved me."

"You know I love you."

"And yet you're content never to see me again."

"Not—content."

She laughed. "You don't seem to be very distressed about it anyway—calmly telling me that we must say good-by. Perhaps it's what you wanted—that I should be the one to suffer."

Anderson moved, crossing to where she stood, and looked down at her with eyes that were rather pathetic.

"It's not for me to preach," he said hoarsely. "I'm many miles from being perfect myself, but it seems brutally unfair, Sondra, that you should speak to me like this, after—after deceiving me as you have done. Do you think I should ever have told you I loved you had I known about Merriman? I'm not fond of—of having my heart torn out and—and thrown back at me."

"It was a mistake, I've told you. I don't know what made me do it."

"And so isn't it probably that this—this feeling you have for me may be a mistake, too? That perhaps—when you see Merriman again, you may be thankful that I—I haven't taken you at your word now?"

She turned her face away. "I wish I could believe that," she said fiercely. "I'd give anything in the world to find after all that you weren't anything to me, and he——"

"Stranger things have happened, Sondra," John broke in.

She gave a fierce little cry. "You're so cold-blooded, so self-controlled. Do you think if I were in your place I could stand there and calmly hand over the woman I loved to another man?"

"A woman already 'handed over,' as you call it, to another man!" He laughed cynically. "What do you

want me to do? Make a scene or jump off the cliff? I'm afraid I'm not made that way."

A bitter little smile curved her pretty mouth.

"Then we need argue no longer," she said coldly.

"That is precisely what I have been trying to make you see," Anderson answered. He broke off. "I think that is Ellen."

He walked out of the room, and Sondra stood leaning against the table staring before her with blank eyes.

Was this indeed the end of everything? She knew he intended it to be. There was a dreadful coldness around her heart.

"Am I mad, or just utterly bad and fickle?" she wondered hopelessly. "Only a little while ago I felt like this when Mark went away. No—not like this—it wasn't anything like this. I was sorry, but it didn't feel like the end of the world—as this does."

And Anderson believed that when she saw Mark again all would be well. It made her want to laugh, and it made her long to weep.

She could hear him talking to Ellen, hear him laughing, and presently he came back to her.

"Good-by, Sondra."

She raised her eyes to his face. "Good-by," she said flippantly. Her hands were resting on the table behind her and she did not offer to move them.

A little quiver of emotion crossed his face.

"I want you to be happy—that's all that matters," he said.

"Thank you," she laughed. It seemed so strange that he should wish her happiness when he was taking it from her.

"Won't you shake hands with me, Sondra?"

She drew a hard breath. "No!" she said.

He squared his shoulders as if to rid them of some heavy burden.

"Good-by then. If ever I can do anything for you——"

"There is only one thing you can do," she broke in harshly.

"What is that?" he asked.

Her unhappy eyes met his with a defiant challenge.

"Love me," she said.

"I shall always do that," he answered.

Her lips quivered with bitter jealousy.

"You say that, and you'll still go about with—with the Symons girl, and let people think you are going to marry her."

"What people think does not trouble me, and I cannot live the life of a hermit just because you——"

"Because I offered myself to you and you turned me down," she interrupted.

"I am not stealing another man's wife."

"Oh, you saint, you saint!" she mocked him, then suddenly the tears were running down her face. "I suppose even you have made mistakes in your life?" she sobbed.

"My dear, I've made more than I can remember, but I've had to stand by them. Not that it's been easy."

"I'm not made that way. I hate having to suffer. I can't see any sense in it. Life's so short."

He drew a quick, harsh breath.

"Sondra, if only you'd told me this sooner—if only you'd been honest with me."

"I'm honest now, but it's no use." Then, with sudden, passionate impulse, she caught his hand. "Don't go, John. Don't go."

He passed a hand across his eyes.

"And if I were to stay, perhaps some day you would grow tired of

me, and blame me for taking you, my dear."

Her fingers tightened about his wrist.

For a moment she thought he wavered, then almost roughly he dragged his hand free.

"Good-by, Sondra."

He waited a moment, but she made no reply, and so he left her.

CHAPTER XII.

How it rained! Sondra stood on the pier staring out over the water which seemed to meet the gray sky in unbroken dreariness.

The few people who had come down to meet the boat were huddled together, shivering.

A little distance away John Anderson and Mark's mother stood talking together. Sondra had wandered restlessly away from them, finding it almost impossible to listen any more to Mrs. Merriman's eternal questioning.

"What time is it now? Do you think the boat will be late?"

She was a small, spare woman, as much unlike Mark as it is possible for mother and son to be.

She knew all about Sondra's marriage—everybody knew. To Sondra it had been like writing "The End" on the last page of a story of which she had only just discovered what the ending was to be.

She had not seen Anderson since the evening he left her at the cottage till this morning when he had driven her downtown with Mark's mother to meet the boat.

It had seemed a queer sort of ride—the three of them united by such strange ties—divided by emotions even more strange.

Sondra knew that Mrs. Merriman disliked her and disapproved of her, knew that she resented her presence,



"You're so cold-blooded, so self-controlled," she said. "Do you think if I were in your place I could stand there and calmly hand over the woman I loved to another man?"

but it did not seem to matter; nothing mattered.

Even the fact of Anderson's presence had hardly hurt her. He seemed somehow so far removed.

He was kind, attentive, courteous, but there was something gone from

his manner; she had felt all the time as if he were stretching out an arm to keep her away from him.

Presently he came across to her.

"The boat won't be in for half an hour yet, Sondra, and then it will be some little time before we can go

on board. We'll go to the hotel and get something to eat. You must be hungry."

"I'm not hungry," Sondra said in answer to Anderson's suggestion. "But we will go if you like."

The hotel was filled with people who, like themselves, were waiting for the boat; they all seemed happy and excited.

Sondra drank some coffee but she could not eat.

She sat almost silent, listening to Mrs. Merriman's ceaseless questioning.

"Do you think Mark will be very ill? Oughtn't we to have brought a doctor? How shall we get him home? Oh, my poor boy!"

Anderson had already assured her a dozen times that all arrangements had been made, but she still seemed in doubt. It was a relief when she left them and wandered outside.

"You haven't eaten anything, Sondra," Anderson said.

"I'm not hungry."

She looked at him with indifferent eyes; he was so calm and undisturbed, and yet if he loved her he must surely be suffering.

She said, with sudden irrelevance:

"I wonder what's become of Flora? It seems funny she has never written to me."

"What made you suddenly think of her?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "Perhaps because I want to do what she did—run away from a man I do not love."

He made no answer, and she asked presently:

"I wonder what you are thinking about?"

He smiled a little. "I dare say my thoughts are very much the same as yours, Sondra. Perhaps I am wondering why we have made such a mess of our lives."

"You haven't made a mess of yours. You've got everything you can possibly want."

He let that pass, and after a moment she broke out again.

"I don't know why you bother about us at all. We're not your responsibility."

"I naturally feel an interest in Merriman, seeing that I sent him abroad. I want to do the best I can for him."

Her mouth quivered, but she answered bitterly: "I'm sure I am very grateful to you, on his behalf, at least, John."

He leaned his arms on the table, looking across at her with steady eyes.

"Sondra, why will you persist in hurting me so? Can't you—can't we both think a little of the poor fellow who is counting the moments till he sees you again? Don't let's be cowardly."

Her eyes flashed angrily. "I don't know why you say 'we.' It has nothing to do with you. I don't want you to carry my troubles, and anyway, I am a coward! It's the way I've been brought up, I suppose. It's all very well for you to talk. You're free, but I wonder how you would like to be me—tied hand and foot to some one you don't care for?"

"Don't you think I've experienced it? But I always tried not to forget that it was my own fault."

"I don't see how that helps," she said almost sullenly; she pushed back her chair and rose as Mrs. Merriman came hurrying back to them. "If she asks any more questions I shall scream," Sondra said half hysterically.

Mrs. Merriman was flushed and excited; the boat was coming up the river she said to Anderson in a trembling voice. She ignored Sondra.



Sondra knew that Mrs. Merriman disliked her and disapproved of her, but it did not seem to matter; nothing mattered. She drank some coffee but she could not eat.

She sped away, a pathetic, anxious figure, and Sondra and Anderson looked at one another silently.

"How she hates me," Sondra said.
 "Well, I don't care."
 She picked up her coat. "I sup-

pose we must go." But when he would have moved, she spoke his name: "John!"

"Yes."

"If I can't bear it—if I haven't got the courage——"

"You will have, Sondra," he broke in.

She laughed miserably. "You say that because you don't want me any

more, I suppose. I suppose you'll marry somebody else and forget all about me."

Anderson said nothing, but his face twisted into lines of pain and grew deathly pale.

She made a half movement toward him, then checked herself, and together they went out again into the rain.

TO BE CONCLUDED.



CONTENT

PEACE, and the quiet twilight,
Flowers on the window sill,
Soft lights that ward the shadows
And whisper the heart, "Be still!"

Fingers that twine together,
Lips that softly meet,
And part but to meet and linger
Again in kisses sweet.

Faith, and an understanding
That has no need for speech;
Hearts that hold communion
In silence, each to each.

Peace, and a strain of music,
The night o' the day for rest,
Dreams as the shadows gather,
And love at the end of the quest.

A. LESLIE.



The Bracelet

By J. U. Giesy

IT glinted on Lillian's wrist that morning as she left the entrance of the walk-up apartment she shared with her sister and her sister's husband—just a bit of costume jewelry, a circle of white gold set with stones which looked like sapphires and diamonds, but weren't.

She eyed it with a sudden feeling of distaste as she hurried toward the subway.

Bob had given it to her on her birthday. She remembered how

adoringly he had looked at her when she opened the box, recalled his words:

"I hope you like it, sweetheart. It's rather nice, I think. Of course those aren't real diamonds and sapphires, but maybe they will be some day. I'm going to work hard. After we're married you'll have lots of jewelry."

Married! Diamonds and sapphires! An odd smile twisted Lillian's soft lips. It was as though she were silently laughing at Bob, who

was only a shipping clerk in the importing house where she was employed as stenographer. There was small chance that she would ever wear diamonds and sapphires as Bob Vincent's wife.

Her eyes, like living sapphires, darkened. Her smile thinned. Marriage? She had seen quite a little of marriage since she had begun to live with Mae and Joe.

Of course, Joe was nice. And, of course, it wasn't his fault that he had been sick, and lost his job, and been unable to find another. Marriage as an institution was all right, Lillian agreed. The trouble was the way it sometimes worked out.

One expected to be so happy. Mae had expected it. And then had come sickness, the loss of a job, anxiety, worry. That morning there had been no milk for the baby, no cream for Lillian's coffee, because the milk bill had been so long unpaid. She had given Mae ten dollars. It was a good thing she had been able to do so, a good thing she still had her job.

Mae puzzled her at times. Love was all right. And Mae loved Joe, had been crazy about him ever since she had first met him. But after all, it was a man's place to support his wife and child. Mae was always finding excuses for Joe in his failure to do so, always pointing out that he tried. Lillian knew that he had, but that wasn't exactly the point.

What she was actually considering now was a thing suggested by the white-and-blue lights of her bracelet. It was rather hard to put into words. But roughly, it was that marriage might come to be very much like the iridescent settings by which those lights were given off—a sort of compromise in which a man, no matter how sincere his hopes and endeavors, might be com-

pelled to give to a loved one not the full measure of his pride or his ambition, but some lesser thing, some imitation. Marriage itself might become not the fulfillment of hopes and dreams, but a thing that fell short of them, an imitation.

Suddenly her smile became a brittle laugh. She had been meaning to spend the ten dollars she had given Mae for gloves and a pair of shoes. She didn't really need them, but she had wanted to wear them to dinner and the theater with Bob tomorrow night, and so enhance her pink-and-white attractiveness in his eyes. Her hard little smile returned. How utterly silly it was for a girl to seek to enhance her charm in the eyes of any man, unless he were in a position to give her real diamonds and sapphires instead of imitations!

Of course Bob was a darling, the nicest man she had ever met. Almost unconsciously she quickened her step. He would be waiting for her. He waited every morning to ride downtown with her to work. That had been going on for months.

Her eyes picked out his stalwart young figure at the subway entrance, marked the welcoming smile on his face as she approached.

"Hello, Lillikins!" he said, dropping two nickels into the turnstile.

"Hello," she returned. Even in her own ears, the word sounded strangely flat. "Lillikins" was Bob's pet name for her, and until that morning she had loved it. Yet now it gave her an indefinable feeling of offense. There was an assurance about it, a hint of possessiveness which she recognized and in a vague, unpleasant way resented.

"What's the matter?" Bob was quick to note her mood.

"Why, nothing." She moved a bit closer to the edge of the platform.

"You aren't sick, are you?" he questioned. "You'll be all set to-morrow night?"

To-morrow night! The words stirred a fresh spirit of perverseness in her. He meant the dinner and theater, of course, for which she had meant to buy the gloves and shoes. They had been planning it for days. But now everything was upset. She had given Mae the ten dollars. And girls were always making fools of themselves over men who gave them nothing but love.

"Oh, I'm all right," she said as the train roared in. "But we might as well call that date off, I guess."

"Call it off?" Bob's voice was full of dismay. His face was both puzzled and troubled, when they had fought their way into the train. "See here, Lillikins, what is the matter? Did you get out of bed on the wrong side this morning? You've been crazy to see that show, and——"

"Oh, don't be tiresome, Bob." She shrugged. She knew she had hurt him, and in some vague, unhappy way she was glad. "I've simply changed my mind. Women are like that, you know. You can exchange the tickets, can't you? Or"—she paused, and then urged by the imps of dissatisfaction within her, added—"take somebody else."

"Lilly!" Bob's voice was startled, shocked. It occurred to her that he might have spoken her name in the same manner if she had struck him in the face. "Lillikins, what——"

"Oh, nothing!" she cut him off. His expression made her half regret her words. She drew a deep breath. "It's just that I've been thinking about Mae and Joe and people like us. You know how things have been with them since Joe was sick."

Bob did. He had called at the apartment several times.

Lillian waited until he nodded. Then she went on: "And it's all wrong, Bob. It's a mistake for a couple to start out with nothing to fall back on, the way they did. I'm not blaming Joe, exactly, but if he doesn't find something soon, Mae will have to go out and get a job and"—her lips twisted wryly—"let him stay home and take care of the baby. That's all right, too, I suppose, except that if that's marriage, I'm not having any, thank you. And the same thing might happen to us. With what we have to start with, where would we be if anything should happen to upset the budget?"

"We'd have each other and love." Bob's voice was as soft as a caress. "We'd have that, Lillikins, whether we had anything else or not."

"Love?" she repeated, and laughed. "Oh, of course. I might have known you'd say that. But love isn't enough these days, Bob. Mae and Joe had love. But I like to eat. I'm funny that way. And I'm not willing to take the chance. I've no intention of marrying, unless——" Abruptly she broke off.

"Unless what?" Bob's gray eyes held her, challenged her.

"Unless I marry somebody with more than a shipping clerk's job behind him," she declared with a sudden, passionate force.

"I see," Bob said, and was silent while the train pounded on between echoing walls. His face was white and drawn. Its strained lines tugged at Lillian's heart. After all, he was nice and she did like him. But, then, Mae had felt the same way about Joe, did yet. Lillian found herself wishing, though, that she had not said what she had about marrying somebody else. She wished suddenly that she had not hurt him quite so much as she apparently had.

The train ground to a stop at

their station. Silently they climbed the stairway to the street.

"I hoped you'd understand," she said at last.

"Oh, I understand, I guess," Bob assured her in a manner that hinted of things imagined rather than proved.

And, womanlike, she could not leave it that way. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"Mean?" He gave her a quick glance as they walked. "Why, nothing, I guess, except that you're afraid that you don't care enough."

That was the man's point of view. Men never seemed to realize that a girl risked more in marriage than a man because it filled her life completely. But coming from Bob, the remark moved her, nevertheless. Like one in pain she set her lips against retort. They went on in silence, where as a rule they chatted and laughed.

"Or maybe," he said just before they reached their destination, "there's somebody who isn't just a shipping clerk. Is that it?"

"No!" She caught her breath in a dry sob, so that she left him staring as she turned away toward her office. She was furious with him, furious with her own rebellious heart, as she settled herself at her desk.

And perhaps that was why she smiled at Reginald Marnley when he paused beside her desk an hour later.

Of course she had smiled when he had addressed her on former occasions. One did that with a junior member of the firm, who was both darkly handsome and rich. But she had never smiled in quite the same way as that morning. She had read an interest beyond any question of business detail in his manner toward her of late.

And though she had never once thought of Marnley during her talk with Bob, she flushed a trifle now beneath the smilingly direct glance of his confident brown eyes.

"Good morning, Mr. Marnley," she said.

"Good morning, Miss Morris. How would you like to change your job?"

Her heart faltered, fluttered, began to race. For an instant she thought of dismissal. And then she controlled the sudden panic the thought excited. "Just how do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean a better one," Marnley replied. "It's like this. I've a lot of special work and they're giving me a private stenographer to help me out. The job's yours if you want to try it. It means more pay, of course."

"You think I can handle it?" Lillian temporized. The suggested change was the last thing she had been expecting.

Marnley nodded. "Of course. I've been watching your work."

"Then I'd like to try it," Lillian decided.

"All right. Pick up your powder puff and eraser, finish your work, and come into my office." Mr. Marnley walked off.

In a daze, Lillian followed his directions. Completing the page in her machine, she filed it with the others she had typed that morning, then walked into Marnley's office.

"Fine!" he greeted her, and waved his hand at a typewriter and a desk. "Now let's fly at it. I'm up to my neck in work."

An hour of dictation followed, an hour when Lillian's fingers flickered above the keys. When she had finished, Marnley, glancing over the pile of letters, caught her hand to spread it out on his own, palm up.

"Clever little fingers!" he said, smiling. "Time to feed them. Come on. Let's take them to lunch."

Lillian flushed. She drew her hand away. Instinct whispered to her that the man should be repulsed, but before she could frame a suitable refusal, he grinned at her disarmingly.

"Now, now, remember that Heaven protects the working girl, and let Heaven attend to its job. Why do you suppose I picked you out as my special stenographer?"

"Why, because you needed one," Lillian stammered. The moment the words left her lips she knew they sounded silly.

"Oh, positively." Reginald Marnley laughed. "But mainly because you're a disturbingly attractive girl, and I've admired you from afar for months."

Apparently he meant exactly what he said. He proved it as time went on. Fate seemed to have taken her at her word, placed her in a position to do the very thing she had told Bob Vincent she might do—marry somebody with more than a shipping clerk's job behind him.

Whether they lunched or dined or danced or rode in Marnley's high-powered roadster, he always treated her with respect. And when a man of his type adopted that attitude toward a girl in her position, there was, she felt, only one reason worthy of consideration. She might be his playgirl now, but later he was going to propose, unless all indications were at fault.

As for Bob, she had seen nothing more of him that first day when she had changed her position. He hadn't been waiting for her at the subway the next morning. But that night he had called at the apartment, and the call had not been a success. The moment he opened the

door, she realized that he was different. He even looked at her differently, she thought.

"I hear Marnley's taken you into his office," he said after a time, in a casual manner that was all too plainly forced.

"Oh, yes." She nodded. All at once she felt guilty, as though in some vague way her acceptance of her new position was unfair to Bob.

For a moment he made no further comment. Then he said: "See here, Lillikins. Did you mean what you said the other morning about marrying for money?"

She was on the defensive at once. "And if I did?" she demanded.

"Well, Marnley's got money, all right." Bob shrugged.

His words filled Lillian with hot resentment. Impulsively, she began to tug at her wrist. She drew off the bracelet with a jerk.

"I've no intention of marrying any one at present. But you can have this back!" she flared, and thrust it into his hand. Then she ran to her own room, and flung herself face downward on the bed.

After that she saw nothing of Bob for weeks. He kept out of her way. She accepted the fact with a certain pride, but not with a happy heart. For, although Marnley's interest in her made life pleasant enough, she did not love him. She asked herself over and over how she would answer the question she felt more and more convinced he would some day put to her. Over and over she told herself that she would be a fool to refuse him, that in him was her chance of winning all she had dreamed she might some day possess.

Yet in spite of Marnley's polite, considerate treatment of her, there were things about the man which she did not like. For one thing, he



"Bob!" she whimpered, unmindful of those about her. "Oh, Bob darling, speak to me—please! Can't you hear me? It's Lillian, and—she loves you!"

carried a flask. He always laughed when she protested against it at night clubs or at restaurants where they had dinner during the course of a drive.

One Sunday he drove far out in the country, and asked the question she had both expected and feared. Then, suddenly reaching the decision she had been so long unable to make, she heard herself saying:

"Oh, but, Reggie, I can't marry you! I like you a lot, really, but it isn't enough. It's just liking, Reggie. It isn't love."

He gave her a searching glance, and then laughed sneeringly. "Why, you little gold digger, you! Don't pretend you haven't known this was coming all along. You must have known from the way I've treated you from the first. You're cleverer

than I thought, aren't you? You've just been leading me on!"

"I haven't!" she cried, half sobbing. "And I'm not a gold digger, Reggie. Of course I've known you were serious. And I've been trying to make up my mind."

"You're sure you've made it up?"

"Yes. I can't marry you, Reggie. I don't love you, and I won't cheat."

"No?" Marnley produced his flask and unscrewed the cap. "Poor but honest, eh? A girl like that. Well, Heaven protects 'em, as I think I've told you." He lifted the flask and drank.

"Reggie!" Lillian protested. "Please don't!"

"Why not?" He eyed her. "I'm drowning my sorrow, you know." He drained the flask and thrust it into his pocket. "All right. Let's go."

He started the car and turned it savagely around, headed for town at a pace that sent her heart into her throat. He drove in a scowling silence. Lillian herself had nothing to say. At length he flung her a challenging question:

"Scared?"

"Of course not," she denied. She was afraid that if she admitted her actual terror, the man at the wheel might be tempted to try something worse.

"Little fibber!" he retorted, grinning. "But there's no need to be scared. I think too much of you to hurt you. I know how to drive, flask or no flask."

Apparently he did. He kept the car at a reckless speed without damage, but once in heavier traffic, he slowed to a saner speed.

Then the apartment building was in sight. Lillian screamed as Marnley suddenly steered the car wildly to one side with a shriek of brakes.

He was too late. There was a sickening thud, a sound of voices shouting, and then the roadster was tilted at a crazy angle with one wheel over the curb.

Men were running toward the body of a man upon the pavement, the form of a little child.

Marnley was sitting stupidly at the wheel, staring at them.

Lillian wrenched the door open and sprang out.

The man's limp form was being carried to the sidewalk. Some one caught up the child. She was beginning to cry. Lillian had a heart-arresting glimpse of her little face. It was Mae's baby!

"Margy!" she cried, and ran toward her. Then she stopped with a little moaning whimper in her throat. She had seen the white face of the man being borne to safety. For a single dizzying instant she thought her heart was going to stop.

It was Bob! Bob was the man Marnley's car had struck! Bob was the man who had saved her sister's baby from death beneath the wheels of a car in which she rode with a man who was more than half drunk. The thought flashed through Lillian's mind like a searing knife.

And all at once, with no conscious weighing of values, as plainly as one knows pain or instinctive fear or hunger, she knew the answer to all the rest of her life. She knew the meaning of love—that forever and forever this man was hers and she was his. Nothing else mattered.

"Is he alive?" she gasped, and thrust her way to his side.

"Can't say yet," somebody answered.

She stared at the speaker with dull eyes. "Put him down then and—get a doctor," she directed. To her it seemed that if Bob Vincent were dead, she must die herself.

"Here! Lay him down and let me hold him! Call—an ambulance!"

As she spoke, she went down on her knees. Then she drew Bob's head into the circle of her arms.

"Bob!" she whimpered, unmindful of those about her. "Oh, Bob darling, speak to me—please! Can't you hear me? It's Lillian, and—she loves you! Bob dear, open your eyes."

But Bob Vincent neither spoke nor moved. Lillian became aware of Mae beside her with Margy in her arms, of Joe, and a policeman, and Reggie Marnley, white and shaken and sobered by the accident.

"He ran right in front of me," she heard Marnley say. "He was after the kid, of course. She ran into the street. I tried to miss her, but there wasn't time. Get him into my car. Don't wait for an ambulance. I'll take him to the hospital myself."

"You'll take nobody nowhere," the policeman growled. "You're drunk and you're under arrest."

"See here, officer, this man he ran over is a friend of ours," Joe protested. "Can't we take him inside till the doctor comes?"

"Sure," the officer assented. "You show us where and we'll carry him up."

As Lillian watched him, Bob's forehead suddenly wrinkled. His eyes opened, then closed again. He scowled. Like a fighter numbed by a stunning blow, he opened his eyes once more and stared up into the face of the girl bent above him.

"Hello!" he murmured vaguely. "Did I—get the kid?"

"Yes, dear," she told him. "You saved her. She's all right. We're going to take you upstairs."

An hour later in her own room, where she had insisted that he be taken, she hovered over him, putting cold packs on his head. The doctor

had come and gone, and she had him all to herself.

Then as she bent to change a compress on his forehead, he caught her hand and held it. His gray eyes searched her face.

"See here, Lillikins, did Marnley knock me entirely cuckoo, or were you really holding me in your arms down there in the street?"

She merely nodded. Her heart was so full she could not trust herself to speak. Once more she was living over that dreadful moment after she had gotten out of Marnley's car and seen Bob Vincent's white face.

And then she asked a rather surprising question:

"Bob, may I have my bracelet—back?"

"Lillikins!" His eyes lighted swiftly. "Lillikins, do you mean it?"

Lillian Morris did not hesitate. "Yes, Bob," she said, all her new-found knowledge of love shining in her face. "Because—oh, Bob dear, after what happened this afternoon, nothing else matters but you. I—I know that now. I realized it the minute I knew you were the man we had hit. You see, while we were driving, Reggie asked me to marry him, and I refused. He'd been drinking and driving like a madman. And then it—it happened, and I knew that if you were—dead and I couldn't be yours, I didn't care what happened to me any more all my life. And—and——"

"Darling!" Bob Vincent sat up. His arms went hungrily about her and drew her close. "That's funny," he said. "You don't know how I happened to be here this afternoon, do you? Or—have they told you?"

Against his shoulder, she shook her head.

"I had two reasons for coming," he went on. "One of them was that

I've found Joe a job. And the other was that I've been given a pretty soft spot myself. They're going to put me in charge of the whole department. I'll be right under the superintendent himself. And I wanted to see you and tell you, just in case it would make any difference. I thought maybe—"

"Oh, Bob, don't!" she interrupted. All at once she was wonderfully glad of his love, of his good fortune, but above all, glad that before she had known of his new job, she had made her choice. "Of course it's perfectly splendid to think you've been promoted, and have found Joe a job. But I don't care so very much about anything else right now except—just us. Bob dear, when can I have my bracelet?"

"Right now!" He held her very close for a moment. "That's why I said it was funny, when you asked me for it. It's in my pocket. I brought it with me this afternoon, in case you'd be willing to take it back. And then when they said you were out with Marnley, I decided to wait. I took Margy out for a

walk to kill time, and the first thing I knew she had run into the street in front of the car. So if you want it, sweetheart, dig into my pocket and get it." He grinned. "Whatever's in it will be yours from now on, anyway, I guess. Of course it isn't diamonds and sapphires. But there'll be a ring now—a real one—and if I keep on, I'll be able to give you a lot after we're married."

"Oh, Bob darling, don't!" Lillian begged. She found the bracelet in the pocket of his coat and slipped it back on her wrist. It glinted with blue-and-white fires. Her blue eyes softened to a mist of unshed tears. Now she knew that its material value did not matter. It was the genuineness not of itself but of the love behind it that made it more precious than any diamond she might otherwise possess. And suddenly she bent her head and kissed it.

"Here, here!" Bob protested. "What about giving me some of those kisses?"

With a soft, unsteady laugh, she surrendered her lips to his.

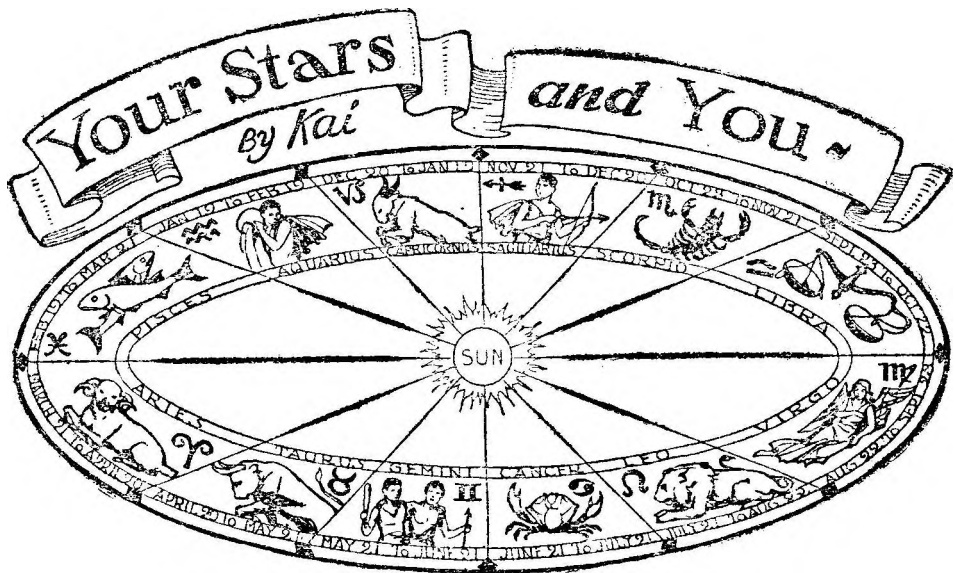


SONG FOR YOU

THERE is glamour in your eyes—
Soft the south wind sighs,
Pale the lonely stars above,
While the night dreams of love.

There is romance in your smile—
Wait for me a little while;
Let me prove that love is true,
All my heart's saved for you!

DONALD BAYNE HOBART.



YOUR WEEK

This is a week when the spirit will run rampant. There are planetary influences for travel, intermingling of people, activity of people, trade, markets stimulated; excitement, new ideas, revolutionary changes, spiritual perception, sacrifice, pleasure, and ingenious and new methods of living and doing business. All that seems like a large order, but the above is an accurate description of the general trend of the planetary positions for the week. By this time you know that a general transition has taken place—the current week continues, the changes and individualistic ideas for personal betterment will be paramount. This is a time for leadership, fixed ideas, and inspirational planning. The regular customers will recall that Kai struck the keynote of rebirth at Christmas time. Many transitions, changes, and upheavals have transpired during the past three months, and if you have been following this department regularly you know that you have had the undercurrent explained to you. It is almost impossible to interpret for you the exact changes that will take place in your individual lives, but you may be assured that the trend will be different from that which has existed before. Remember that a *fixed* plan is essential, that while there is life there is hope, and when one has hope he has the very seed of existence. Do not forget to be tolerant and kind, but always keep in mind that we are in an

advancing era. Plodding is necessary at this time, but vision is most important.

DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time

Saturday,
May
7th

h

To-day has an undercurrent of lack of concentration. A spirit of adventure will pervade the hours. This is an excellent day for writing, commercial endeavor, financial consideration, intelligent procedure, and unusual experiences. Until six thirty-five p. m. it would be wise to proceed very carefully, guard the speech and action, and maintain personal poise. It is safe to follow unusual paths to-day, if you are sure you have yourself under control and can handle the unexpected. The evening hours are very pleasant and expansive and most favorable. Some of you must remember that you are not under favorable aspects at this time and must be cautious in anything that you do. Consult the "Born Between" section; those of you who are under favorable influences will find to-day mixed and exciting, but the developments

will have an important bearing upon the future months.

Sunday,
May
8th



To-day is friendly, active, pleasant, and profitable. Friendly contact, pleasures, mental pursuits and occupations will be to the fore. You may write, create, visit, study, follow recreational and amusing activities, and improve your personal outlook and mode of thinking. The entire day is favorable after ten thirty in the morning.

Monday,
May
9th



The entire day, but particularly the morning hours, are very favorable for dealing with the opposite sex. The general keynote of the day is expansiveness. Emotions will be uppermost, and we will find ourselves infused with a spirit of confidence. The superficial aspects will be pleasant and satisfactory until noon. From midday until two thirty there is a slightly unfavorable aspect which will produce delays and unsatisfactory business results. The remainder of the day is light in tone and very intense, with unexpected emotional reactions. It would be wise to keep your feelings under control, act with confidence, but keep business formula as a keynote of your activity.

Tuesday,
May
10th



This is a very emotional day with an undercurrent of nervousness and fear, and feelings will be stimulated and unreliable. After nine thirty in the evening, be very careful of your actions. There is danger of quarrels and accidents and uncontrolled speech. If you deliberately allow yourself to become a party to disputes and angry thoughts, you may expect the consequences. This latter aspect is particularly active around eleven p. m. and midnight.

Wednesday,
May
11th ♀

Until three p. m. to-day there is an unfavorable Mars aspect which dictates caution to the utmost degree, especially just

Thursday,
May
12th



before the noon hour and in the middle of the afternoon—E. S. T. The remainder of the day until nine thirty p. m. is exciting, changeable, and tinged with the unexpected, although the main planetary influences are favorable. Around midnight there are pleasant, and sociable influences caused by the planet Venus. After that, rest and relaxation is the program

This is a very peculiar and mixed day. There will be the need to sacrifice yourself personally, especially in domestic and emotional matters. Until eight p. m. most activities will fluctuate between restriction and hopefulness. The afternoon will carry a note of levity and joviality, but within we will feel serious and practical. It would be a very good idea to keep all matters on a practical and commercial basis to-day, and remember that you are following a set schedule materially and personally. The evening hours are very favorable, and this is the best period of the day. You will find yourself meeting with circumstances unexpectedly which will give you pleasure. Amusements, recreation, dealing with the opposite sex, and domestic felicity will be the keynote throughout the entire evening until six a. m. to-morrow.

Friday,
May
13th



Until shortly after ten a. m., the morning hours will be unsatisfactory, delayed, and limited as to activity. The underlying note will be intense and erratic. Excepting this, we have an excellent day for business from eleven in the morning until midnight. You can make the results of the day beneficial to yourself; everything depends upon your own efforts. After midnight the hours are very dangerous, and nothing should be done which is not thought out beforehand. Do not believe all you hear during the late

evening hours to-day. The influences over the week-end are very quiet and slow.

IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN—

March 21st and April 20th

(Aries ♈)

—critical influences are operating for the Aries people born between April 8th and 14th. These influences will be felt most forcibly in the mental attitude of this group of Aries people because of complications in connection with legal affairs, difficulties with relatives-in-law, and a critical state of affairs at a distance. You may expect to be greatly disturbed at this time. Be careful of accident, do not do anything without forethought, and expect your outlook upon life to undergo a radical change. Favorable influences are operating for the group born between April 3rd and 7th. The aspects will manifest themselves through expansive feelings relating to love interest, pleasure, social contacts; there is also an indication of favorable results in relation to religious, scientific, and legal matters. Those of you who have birthdays between March 22nd and 27th, with special emphasis on March 26th birthdays, are under mixed influences. Stabilization is indicated for this latter group in relations with partners, domestic matters, friends, hopes, and relatives-in-law. The current week will be unsatisfactory emotionally in connection with domestic and home affairs, but any disturbance of the feelings is temporary.

April 20th and May 21st

(Taurus ♉)

—Taureans born between May 8th and 15th are under favorable directions from the planets, and you may expect activity, changes, and mental stimulation in relation to affairs which are hidden from the public; in legal matters, personal outlook, and in connection with credit and business standing your influences are favorable. Taureans who were born between May 2nd and 7th will experience financial difficulty at this period in connection with the home, property, credit, employment, and emotional distress because of personal limitation economically. If born between April 21st and 28th, you are under mixed planetary influences. There will be emotional, domestic, and partnership difficulties and dissatisfaction, with responsibility and hard work in connection with business, but there will be an undercurrent of pleasantry and

social contact and an increased intuition, with pleasant developments of love affairs and visionary planning in connection with income and finances. You should use this period for laying the foundation for future advantages and increased financial benefit.

May 21st and June 21st

(Gemini ♊)

—the Gemini folks born around June 11th are due for changes, creative instincts and ability, travel, activity, and general improvement in every department of their lives; this applies to you who have birthdays between June 9th and 14th. The effects of these influences will be felt in making contacts, in long-distance travel, in scientific knowledge and developments, in legal developments and radio activity. This is an excellent time for business and commercial pursuits. The influences are favorable, also, for you who were born between June 3rd and 7th. You may expect your mentality to soften and expand, and your relations with other people to be very pleasant; this is a good time to travel, but the most significant phase of your personal aspects is the accumulation of experience and the acquisition of knowledge which can be converted into practical channels later in the year. Those of you with birthdays around May 26th, and who were born between May 22nd and 26th, have mixed influences. The favorable quality of the planets' positions for you is a stabilization in business, the help of friends and those interested in your welfare, and more practical personal viewpoint, adjustments along most lines, but particularly in connection with partnerships and associations. Your home and domestic situation will be unsatisfactory and confused, with a definite cause for worry and distress. Keep your ideas and activities practical, and do not wander into untried paths for the fulfillment of your expectations. It is quite possible at this time that you will allow yourself to become involved financially through friendships and expectations, and it would be wise to consider all phases of any matter carefully before obligating yourself.

June 21st and July 21st

(Cancer ♋)

—the Cancerians born near July 12th, or between July 10th and 17th, are due for perplexities and complications in their private lives, in connection with affairs at a distance, in business, and in connection with institutions. Be very cautious that you do not act in such a way at this time

that your freedom will be jeopardized and your status of employment injured through reckless acts. This is a restless and dangerous period for you, and you will have to act very cautiously. It is a most inopportune time for you to make decisions of a permanent nature. Those of you with birthdays between July 3rd and 8th, especially if you were born near the 6th, are under more favorable and expansive aspects than you have been for some time in the past. You may take advantage of new channels of activity which will improve your personal welfare and your opportunities to make money. If born between June 22nd and 30th, the current week is pleasant and socially satisfactory, with emotional stimulation; but difficulties are indicated in financial conditions of partners.

July 21st and August 22nd
(Leo ♌)

—the planets are placed most favorably for the Leo people who were born near August 5th, between August 10th and 16th, and especially those with birthdays on or near August 12th. There is expansion, changes, travel, opportunities to advance and increase the income, good conditions for long-distance journeys, science, radio, and legal affairs, and special developments of a personal nature which will be satisfying. Now is the time to do everything that will improve your environment and your possibilities for a higher mode of existence. The planetary conditions are favorable for those of you born between July 24th and 31st in connection with plans and organization of your capabilities for improving your income; but partnership and marital affairs will not be satisfactory or settled, and there will be a definite limitation and critical state of affairs in connection with marriage partners.

August 22nd and September 23rd
(Virgo ♍)

—Virgo people with birthdays near August 29th are under aspects which will produce mental confusion and complicated conditions. These people should not allow fear to influence their lives or their judgment, and should use practical application and judgment in all matters, especially in handling anything that affects them personally. If you were born between August 24th and 31st, expect limitation and unsatisfactory conditions in health, working conditions, and financial matters related to partnership affairs. Virgo folks born near

September 7th are under favorable conditions from the planets and should use this period for creating circumstances which may bring definite monetary results in the near future.

September 23rd and October 22nd
(Libra ♎)

—Librans who were born between October 11th and 18th, and especially near the 13th, are due for critical and painful adjustments and complications in relation to legal matters, marriage and business partnerships, and for mental and spiritual upheaval. If born between October 4th and 11th, new contacts may be made, new ideas formed, and new methods put into application which will benefit you personally. If this latter group takes advantage of this period of expansiveness, 1933 will be a very satisfactory year for them. Those of you who were born between September 24th and 30th are under difficult emotional aspects during the current week, and will find love affairs unsatisfactory; but your basic influences are stimulating, intuitive, and stable, and this is an excellent time for establishing yourself in a business way and for adjusting complications in love affairs and in marital conditions, in spite of any current indications and developments which may be annoying.

October 22nd and November 21st
(Scorpio ♏)

—the Scorpio people born near November 7th will find business dealings and relations with employers emotionally and financially upsetting at this time, and unfavorable conditions surrounding credit and reputations. Property, real estate, and domestic conditions will be unsatisfactory, also, and if you can avoid making a sacrifice or negotiating on important matters during this temporary period, you should do so. There will be annoyances, changes, quarrels, and disputes at this time if born near November 12th, in relation to law, contracts, property, and employment. If born between October 24th and 31st, especially near the 29th, land and property considerations will be a source of annoyance just now, and personal conditions in the home will be upsetting and limited; you have other favorable influences at this time, however, for building for the future by making proper contacts, acting upon your "hunches," and planning your affairs with an eye to money developments in the future.

November 21st and December 20th
(Sagittarius ♐)

—most favorable and advantageous planetary influences are in force for the Sagittarians born on or near December 16th and December 7th. You should make any changes, removals, plans, and personal sacrifice which will be beneficial to you commercially and financially. The aspects for love affairs and emotional developments are stimulating and good. The current week is annoying, unsettled, and dangerous emotionally if born between November 23rd and 30th. Be very cautious in making a move which will lead to scandal or which will injure your economic stability in connection with your credit and your job.

December 20th and January 19th
(Capricorn ♑)

—Capricornians born near January 10th will have to control all activities at this time, especially the desire to act erratically in legal matters, home affairs, property dealings, domestic entanglements, and employment considerations. Delay all important decisions until a later date, if possible. You will be under more favorable planetary conditions later in the year, and if you will just be patient, you can adjust all these complications to your advantage. There will be health difficulties, unsatisfactory working conditions, and restricted conditions in connection with the financial status of partners, if born the first week in January. Better business influences and planetary conditions for adjusting all complications are operating for the Capricornians born between December 23rd and 30th, although the current week is unsatisfactory for dealing with the opposite sex.

January 19th and February 19th
(Aquarius ♒)

—the Aquarians born on or near February 9th are under fundamental influences of a favorable nature and should make changes and removals gracefully. Take advantage of new ideas, ingenious methods, inventive instincts, a fresh outlook, and create living conditions which will be on a different plane, but which will improve your personal condition. Those of you who were born near February 3rd are under highly stimulated and emotional influences, and will find marriage and partnership matters trying and very difficult to handle. Try to make logical decisions instead of predicating them on your personal reactions. If your birthday is between January 21st and 29th, the current week

is unhappy and upsetting, and there will be confusion and worry in relation to the financial affairs of partners. The personal aspects of this latter group are restrictive at this time, and any activity which will test your physical and mental capacity should be met cheerfully and patiently.

February 19th and March 21st
(Pisces ♓)

—favorable influences are operating for the Pisceans born on or near March 11st. This is a good time to adjust your personal conditions so that you can capitalize financially, increase your efficiency and income, and adjust matters which relate to financial conditions dealing with marriage and business associations. Those of you who were born between February 20th and 27th are under stable conditions fundamentally, but you will have to eliminate undesirable and worry-producing factors in your life and try to think and act logically in solving problems dealing with marriage and business associations. If born around March 4th and 5th, you will find working conditions, your health, partner's financial affairs, and personal reactions annoying and unsatisfactory at this period.

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★ THE STAR QUESTION BOX ★
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Mr. W. L. B., born March 13, 1913, Texas, nine thirty a. m.: Yes, music is your natural forte. If you take dancing, I would suggest that you go into a phase of this work that incorporates the unusual, such as eccentric dancing. Even if you go into dramatic work later, training in dancing will be valuable to you. I cannot see your voice conditions in your chart as being wholly dependable, although your voice could be used as an adjunct in helping you to entertain. If you do anything in the music line, try the banjo or a wind instrument. With application and effort, I do not see any reason why you cannot succeed in this work. The years 1935, 1936, and 1937 are good periods for you.

Miss N. C., born July 29, 1912, four thirty a. m.: The latter part of June or the first two weeks in July is a favorable time for you and your fiancé to consummate your matrimonial intentions. Your charts are well matched.

Mrs. Ann G., born April 9, 1910, two a. m.: Your husband is under better planetary influences than you are, Mrs. G., although a change is indicated. It would be better if you allowed him to make the decisions at this time, because your judgment is erratic. I doubt if you will be able to continue your grocery business in its present set-up. Do not be alarmed at the necessity for change, but you must make current changes coincide with your environment and possibilities. Later in the spring you will be under more favorable conditions personally. Try not to be disturbed. After you have used moderation and a fair degree of caution, you have done everything that you can do. I think you will find the results of this adjustment more favorable than you anticipate.

What is all this business about marriage? Most of my letters this week were apropos of marital relationship. No, J. P. K., I do not see how the complications can adjust themselves satisfactorily for your marriage to R. U. B., born January 6, 1908. You can take my word for it—or not, as you please—that your two charts are not a successful marriage combination, especially in 1932. Your best personal influences for marriage are in 1936.

Miss A. S., born May 8, 1903, in Sweden; man born February 11, 1903: I do not advise your marriage, but I am not able to judge completely without more definite birth data. I would say that the best time for you to marry would be in 1937, if you are looking for favorable influences for both of you. It is almost impossible for me to give an astrological judgment on charts, where marriage is concerned, without full and complete birth data.

Bee, born October 13, 1901, Arkansas, nine thirty a. m.: No one realizes more than the astrologer the difficulties, disappointments, restraint, and restrictions, you October people have suffered during the past three years. If you will watch the "Born Between" department in this magazine, you will be able to judge fairly well the general conditions under which you are operating. It is not a question of luck—planetary conditions have been putting you to the test throughout this period, and all the prognosticators of the planetary influences are aware that the four cardinal signs of the Zodiac—Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn—have undergone the test of tests. There is a decided improvement in your economic status in the spring and sum-

mer of 1933, some minor improvement in 1932, and definite developments in 1934. Keep your spirit and courage alive.

Mrs. H. A. B., born December 10, 1900, hour unknown, Massachusetts: Glad you liked my article about looking ahead instead of bewailing what might have been. As a regular reader you are well acquainted with the fact that anything which appears in this department is written from a constructive and helpful angle—for you, my customers. I am very sorry you did not include more definite information in your letter concerning the time of birth. Your chart indicates a change for the better, sudden opportunities, and material returns throughout the coming spring months and in June and July. Most of this will be as a result of your own efforts, although your husband's chart reveals changing conditions, too. If you wish to go into business, I see no reason why you may not do so. Everything ahead for you looks O. K. to me.

E. Y., born February 23, 1908, time unknown: The general conditions in your chart are unfavorable for this marriage. The date of the man you are interested in shows a chart which will be under pressure during the first three months of this year and again in September, October, and November. If I were you, I would not jump into this matrimonial deal if there are complications present of any nature. Your influences in 1932 are such that you are apt to visualize conditions which are not present and which will not materialize. Judge all factors in the case impersonally and look the future squarely in the face before you make a move. In marriage one should always know the things one is letting oneself in for, if there is any idea of permanence in a future life together.

Sorry, Dollie, but I could not possibly answer your question concerning a movie or stage career without your birth data, including the time of birth. I suspect your failing to include this information was an oversight. Write me again.

Mrs. A. D. Z., born January 8, 1889, New York, eleven p. m.: I think this going-back-to-the-farm idea is excellent, especially from the standpoint of your husband's chart. Your personal aspects are splendid this fall and in the early part of 1933. As you say, your planetary conditions have been disappointing and frustrating in the past, but I am personally sold

on the future possibilities of land values. You can make this move any time in the early spring that is most convenient for you, as your husband's favorable influences are quite O. K., especially in June, July, and August.

REASONS WHY LETTERS ARE NOT ANSWERED

Mrs. E. A. Z., South Dakota: You did not send me your birth data.

Mrs. O. C., Pugh, 1891, five a. m.: You did not send me complete birth data.

Mrs. R. R., January 12, ?; husband born April 18, 1898: You forgot to send me the year of your birth.

Mrs. T. M. C., July 10, 1901: You did not send me the birth data of the man in question.

The following have asked for complete horoscope readings, which I do not give:

Mrs. W. B., February 28, 1909.

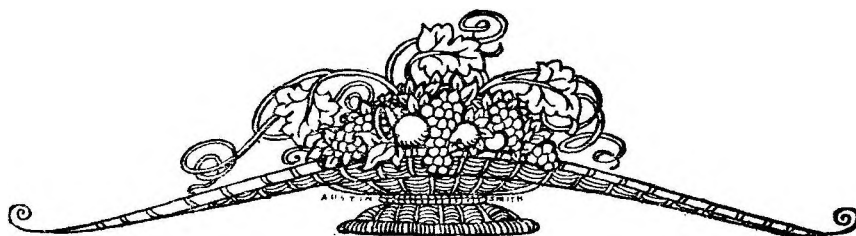
Mrs. L. H., September 11, 1899.

Mrs. M. McC., August 11, 1882.

Miss M. G., April 3, 1899.

Mrs. V. R., January 20, 1899.

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.



Statement of the Ownership, Management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, published weekly, at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1932.

State of New York, County of New York (ss.)

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared George C. Smith, Jr., who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is Vice President of the Street & Smith Publications, Inc., publishers of Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: *Publishers*, Street & Smith Publications, Inc., 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *editor*, Daisy S. Bacon, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *managing editors*, Street & Smith Publications, Inc., 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *business managers*, Street & Smith Publications, Inc., 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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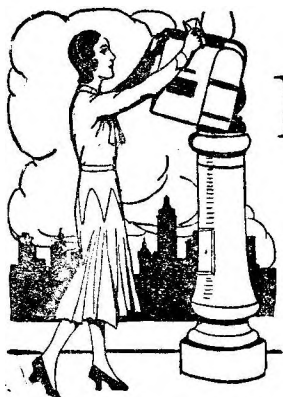
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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of April, 1932. De Witt C. Van Valkenburgh, Notary Public No. 32, New York County. (My commission expires March 30, 1934.)



The Friendliest Corner

By MARY MORRIS



Miss Morris will help you to
make friends



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.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

WHO doesn't love a grandmother? Here's a sweet old lady of sixty-three with all the sympathy and understanding and genuineness you could ask. Grandma lives her quiet, peaceful life among her flowers, as contented as only an old-fashioned person can be. Somehow she brings back the days of homemade ginger cookies, hand-crocheted afghans, enormous holiday dinners—those childhood days we all remember and like to think about. Sit down for a gossip chat with Grandma, whatever your age. Her warm-hearted sweetness has a message for you all!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May a grandmother join your Friendliest Corner? I'm sixty-three years old, and as I can't leave the house to make new friends, I'm very lonely. Sixteen years ago, I suffered a fall which has left me very lame. I want some friends with whom I can exchange flower seeds, recipes, gossip, and interesting letters. I'd especially like to hear from women of my

own age, but will be only too glad to hear from any one.

GRANDMA.

Let a Floridian tell about his famous State.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man, twenty-one years of age, a good sport, but awfully lonely. Could you enter my S O S for Pen Pals? I'm an only child, but not spoiled, and can tell all about Florida, the land of sunshine and health, as I'm a Floridian by birth.

HEALTHY CECIL.

Consult her on your summer wardrobe.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder if I could enter your Corner. I'm a Texas girl, twenty-one years old, with brown hair and eyes. I'm especially interested in girls living in Los Angeles or surrounding cities. My main interests are keeping up with the dress styles of to-day, collecting songs, and tinting pictures.

BELLE OF AMARILLO.

Put your poetry in her book.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a widow of twenty-five, and have a little girl four and

LS—9E.

one half years old. I lost my husband six months ago, and am very lonesome. I'm a brunette, fond of poetry. Send me your original poems, Pals, and I'll keep them all in a book. I'm attending business college, and promise to answer everybody.

E. L. G.

A tang of cynicism, a dash of dreaminess!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman, twenty-eight years old, and have brown hair and eyes. I love to dance, write letters, and am fond of the water. I like horseback riding, hiking, reading, and I'm cynical and dreamy at the same time. Pals, big and little, married and single, write to me.

VIRGINIA RIDER.

A bird's-eye view of the legal profession.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Jersey girl, like sports of all kinds, as well as reading, dancing, traveling by plane, and a host of other things most girls enjoy. I'm employed in a law office, and like my work very much. Write to me, Pals—I'll be true to you.

PATTIE.

Railroad men, tell him about your job.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm lonely sometimes, and I wonder if you could find some Pals for me, especially those living in Oklahoma. I'm a Canadian man, and would be mighty glad to hear from railroad men, aviators, mechanics, or any one interested. Write, and I'll tell you about one of the prettiest Provinces in Canada.

THE CINDER KID.

Mothers, tell her about your children.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman in my thirties, and have two darling children. As both are in school, I have plenty of time for Pen Pals. I love dancing, swimming, cards, sewing, and all kinds of fancywork and housework. Pals of any age, I promise interesting letters.

PEPPY PEGGY.

Don't miss her impressions of movieland.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman from California, looking for

LS-10E

Pen Pals. I've light-brown hair and blue eyes, am rather tall, and considered a good sport. I like swimming, hiking, camping, and the movies, and have seen several stars. Girls, please drop a line to

A CALIFORNIA PAL.

Dance crazy? Here's a kindred spirit.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm just another lonesome girl looking for Pals. I'm a blue-eyed blonde, nineteen years old. I'm simply crazy about dancing and reading. I work during the day, but I have plenty of time to write letters. There's no age limit, so come on, every one.

BRIDGEPORT BLONDE.

The proud, friendly mother of a boy prodigy.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd love to have Pen Pals. I'm a married woman, and have a little boy, ten years old, who is the coming cartoonist of Texas. I sprained my ankle and will be shut in for a while. Pals, let me tell you the interesting things about my State.

TEXAS FAITH.

Look forward to her worth-while letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd love to have Pen Pals! I'm a girl of twenty-one, with brown wavy hair and gray eyes, and I'm an invalid. I haven't walked for eight years, so would love to hear from girls anywhere and any age. I am noted for writing long, interesting letters.

MISS MINNESOTA.

Choose a Pal who's seen the world.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I had some Pals before, but due to much travel and sorrow I had to lose touch with them all. Won't you girls write to me? I've traveled far and wide, and will make an interesting and helpful Pal. I'm a girl, twenty-two years old, and have black curly hair and dark eyes.

KISMET.

The gay college years are lonely for him.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonely college boy in a Texas college. I want correspondents from far and wide. I never was so lonely in all my life. I'm majoring in chemistry, love to dabble with paints, and

like sports. I'll send you a quick reply, so fill my mail box, boys.

TEXAS SOPH.

A mother with the wanderlust.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a mother of three children, and would like to have Pals from everywhere, especially those far away, as I have always wanted to travel. I'm a twenty-six-year-old mother, and promise to make my letters interesting.

BLUE FOR YOU.

She'll tell all the details of a nurse's life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Although I'm not lonesome, I would like to have loads of Pen Pals. I'm eighteen years old, have been in training for a nurse, and am going back in the spring. I'd like to hear from girls all over the world, and promise an answer to every one.

DUMMIE.

Another girl follows the gasoline trail.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would appreciate friends from across the ocean and from every State in the Union.

I'm a girl, twenty-two years old, and love all outdoor sports and movies. I have my own sport coupé, travel quite a bit, and will exchange snaps and views. Come on, all you girls, especially those from way out West!

KATHRENA.

He'll give your business a scientific analysis.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man, thirty-one years old, a graduate of the school of business administration of a large American university. I'm established in business, but am quite lonesome. I'd like to meet other young men between twenty-eight and thirty-five years who have something in common with me, especially those in Arkansas or Missouri. I'm fond of movies and everything connected with them.

BUSINESS MAN.

Get your glimpse of society's most exclusive club.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm making a plea for Pen Pals, high-school and college girls from everywhere, as I'm collecting school stickers. Who'll be the first to write? I'm

a girl of nineteen and a Junior League member. So come on, girls, and pep it up.

JUNIOR LEAGUER.

A little verse writer makes her plea.

DEAR MISS MORRIS:

I'm a small-town girl, just past seventeen. I want to write to girls I've never seen. An east Texas town is the place where I live,

And my friendship I'm ready to give and give.

No matter in what far place you may be, Your note will be answered—just write and see!

Hoping to meet lots of new friends by mail, I now conclude this long, weary tale.

BETTY OF NEW BOSTON.

Wives, here's some one who'll understand.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a brunette, twenty-two years of age, happily married, and the mother of two adorable little boys. Surely there are many married girls who get lonesome, as I do, or who just like to write, as fits my case, also. Come on, you married ones; let's exchange notes on husbands or children!

MICHIGAN MOTHER.

Boys, enjoy his Dixie humor.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Virginian and live on a farm. In the evening, after chores are done, I get lonesome. Maybe your Pals will coöperate and write to me. I'm a boy, twenty-five years old, and have brown hair, brown eyes, and a great big sense of humor.

FARMER BUDDY.

Drive lonesomeness from another lonely farm.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is a plea to all you women of my own age—from forty-four to fifty. I'm a widow, living all alone on a fifteen-acre farm. I have my radio, but it sure gets lonesome just the same. My two children are both married and living in Chicago. Letters from Pals, young or old, would certainly be appreciated.

LETTER SEEKER.

Another girl who loves the stage.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I, also, would like some Pen Pals. I'm a girl, twenty years old, and have dark hair, brown eyes, and

an olive complexion. Most people think I'm Spanish, but I'm really of German parentage. I'm interested in dramatic work, and would love to hear from other stage and sport enthusiasts.

DRAMA LOVER.

A true mother and a true Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm twenty-three, have dark curly hair and brown eyes, and am interested in music, dancing, travel, and all sports. I'm the mother of four lovely children, who are a great joy to us. I'll make a faithful and interesting Pal to all of you.

HAPPY OF MAINE.

He could put more pep into the peppiest jazz orchestra.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young fellow, twenty-two years of age, with dark wavy hair and brown eyes. I live in the eastern part of New York State, and want some real friends from all over the world. I'm very much interested in music, dancing, and flowers, and I play the piano and xylophone. O. K., young men; I'll be waiting for a letter!

JUST WALT.

A sports winner on every count.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of fifteen, a junior in high school, very popular. I love all kinds of sports, and am a sport myself. I've won a few medals for swimming and ice skating, and some lovely cups for ballroom dancing in the latest steps. Write to me, girls; I could tell you a lot of interesting things.

BUFFALO BOOTS.

Mothers, she needs your advice.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman of twenty-eight, and, as I have no children of my own, I am thinking of adopting one. So won't you foster mothers who have already done so please write to me and try to help me decide? I want you all for my friends.

MRS. G.

Her life is sprinkled with adventure and thrills.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of seventeen, and have brown wavy hair, gray-blue eyes, and plenty of pep, which I like to use on dancing, swimming, and hiking. I'm now living in Indiana, but I was born in Salt Lake City. I've lived a life of travel and adventures, and now I'm anx-

iously waiting for a correspondence partner and friend.

TRUE HELEN.

Lonesome in the land of palms and millionaires.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll write to a lonely Yankee way down in Miami? I'm a girl of eighteen, with brown hair, gray eyes, and a complexion tanned by the Florida sun. I love pretty clothes and outdoor sports. I'm out of school and have worked, although I'm not employed at present. Girls, I'd love to tell you about New York, Pennsylvania, and dear old Florida.

FLORIDA YANKEE.

A lover of life in its finer aspects.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a single and unhappy colored boy of twenty-four, trying to get through college. My main interest is music, but I'm fond of movies, traveling, and almost everything else. I'd be glad to exchange concert programs and letters with other boys all over the world. I can sing in French, German, Italian, and Latin. Who wants me for a friend?

SERIOUS JIMMIE.

There's romance in the Bronx. Let her tell about it.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Two years ago I came to the Bronx from Michigan, and in that time have made some friends, but not quite enough. I'd like Pals in Hawaii, Cuba, or any of those romantic places—our own country as well. I'm a girl, twenty-one years old, and have red hair and blue eyes. Girls, won't you let me tell you about the romance in New York?

NEW YORK RED.

Ambitious to do a man's work in the world.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: And then there is I, from Detroit, Michigan. I'm a high-school girl about to enter the university. I'm only sixteen, but I'm planning to study medicine, and in my spare time learn aviation from the ground up. Girls, write and tell me what they do to freshmen, and sympathize with me, because I'm

SORTA SCARED.

She has the blessed knack of enjoying things.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a widow, aged thirty-two, look twenty-five, and am a

brunette. Four months ago I came several hundred miles to the Evangeline country of Louisiana to take a position as office manager, and, being a total stranger here, I find it rather lonesome. I've traveled a lot, and enjoy anything from cutting out paper dolls to politics. Pals, send me a letter, please!

EULA MAE.

Watch your diet with a St. Louis wife.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't all stout, married girls between the ages of twenty and thirty-five write to me? I'm a married girl, twenty-two years old, living in St. Louis. I'm stout, but don't let that scare you off, girls. I'd especially like to hear from St. Louis Pals, but every one who wants a real friend is welcome to write to me.

PLUMP AND JOLLY.

She'll bring you the charm of old Cape Cod.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I want Pen Pals; loads of them. I'm seventeen, a girl who likes dancing, jazz, and anything that suggests excitement. I promise to answer all letters that I receive, and will tell you all about the quaint town I live in. I live on Cape Cod, so please write if you're interested.

PROVINCETOWN MILLY.

Who's been looking for a country Pal?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman, and live in the country. I'd love to have some Pen Pals, and promise to write interesting letters. I am very fond of baking, reading, and fancy work; would surely appreciate hearing from married women everywhere.

GOLDBLOCKS.

She's after life's thrills.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm just another blue-eyed blond girl, seventeen years old, a scrap-book enthusiast who is longing for the friendship of a Pen Pal. Excitement and adventure have always been two of my most desired wishes, but I've never gotten so far as peeking around the corner at them. Girls, won't you write to me?

SCRAP-BOOK JO.

Some one interesting—who wants her for a pal?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May a mysterious girl enter your circle? By mysterious I

mean that I love to dream and think. I'm called snobbish, but I'm not. People find that out when they take the trouble to understand me. I'm interested in the stage and intend to make it my life work. I'm tall and blond, and as a closing word, I might say I adore dogs and horses.

DIFFERENT.

Fishermen, write to a kindred soul.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm just a hard-working man—out of work at present—forty years old. I have a pleasant disposition, and am very fond of fishing, although there isn't much fishing to be done here in Kansas. I have a mighty sweet little girl, seven years old, a car, and a canary bird. I want to hear from every one, especially Westerners, as I've never been farther West than Kansas.

FOND FATHER.

Put some real friends on her correspondence list.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonesome girl who adores writing letters, but I get tired of writing to uncles and aunts and cousins. Won't you girls be my friends? I'm a sports lover, like to draw and read, can tell about fishing and deer hunting, and hope to become a writer. Girls, let me be loyal to you.

TOMBOY MARIE.

Twin Pals from old Kentucky.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are twins, a boy and a girl, fun loving and very fond of finding new Pals. Won't you readers of this friend-seeking corner write to us? We can tell about our native State, Kentucky, and would especially like to hear from boys and girls in California, but every one will get a big welcome.

THE TWINS.

Get off to a flying start with "Flying Em."

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm going to fly into your Corner with a crash and seek some true Pen Pals. I'm a girl of twenty-one, very fond of winter and summer sports, but my hobby is flying. Any one interested in aviation please write to me. I'm very fond of writing, and am always prompt in answering letters.

FLYING EM.

An interesting job and an interesting Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young electrical engineer thirty years of age, and have

traveled extensively. I've had many interesting and humorous experiences, and I'm sure I can brighten many dull hours for you Pals. I exercise enough to keep in excellent health, and love the outdoors. Pals, let's get happy and stay that way with letters. ELECTRICAL GENE.

Youthful, bubbling friendship for the asking.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's Mrs. Someone's-little-girl-Something asking for Pals. You've heard about letter men in athletics—well, how would you like to hear from a letter coed? I'm a girl of seventeen, a senior in high school, and will tell more about myself in my next letter. I want to hear from girls in every State, especially you wild cowgirls of the West.

IRENE OF P. H. S.

Artists, hear her story of success.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Twenty, tall, slender, with brown hair and green eyes, interested in art and interior decoration—I'll call myself "The Artist." I've done illustrating for a number of magazines, and to the first half dozen girls who write me I will send pen sketches. Art, story writing, books, music, religion, travel—I'm a girl who's fond of anything and everything. Write soon, girls, please! I'll be waiting.

THE ARTIST.

Let him prove his loyalty.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man twenty-one years old, have blond, wavy hair and gray eyes. My hobbies are movies, music, and true friends, even though they're hard to find. I'm a woman-hater, but I can be very loyal to those who are loyal to me. Boys, won't you write?

LOYAL WALLY.

Don't you love children? Why not hear about hers?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman of twenty-three with two little girls. They keep me pretty busy, but still have time to be lonesome. So won't you Pals, either married or single, take pity on me?

PINE-TREE LILLIAN.

A prize winning seamstress and dancer all in one.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a seventeen-year-old redhead with blue eyes. I love to

dance, and once won a prize dancing a waltz. I also go to a sewing academy, and love it. Pals all over the world, let's be friends.

NEW YORK ANN.

Get close to the thrilling West, girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl who's lived most of her life on a ranch, and I'll be glad to tell about my experiences to any one who is interested. I'm fond of dancing, horseback riding, and—well, just everything in general. Pen Pals, come on and write to a dizzy blonde.

SUCE.

Show a Greek what real friendship means.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Greek girl, fifteen years old, with blond hair and blue-gray eyes. I don't go to school, so I have plenty of time to write to Pals. I'd love to hear from girls near Hollywood, and I'm a sport enthusiast. I've never had any real friends, and hope the Corner will give them to me now.

BESSIE OF NASHUA.

Interested in everybody—including you!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Have you room for a very lonesome girl in your Corner? I'm twenty-four years old, slender, with light-brown hair and large blue eyes. I'm interested in everything and everybody, but have just moved to Dallas, Texas, so I'm very lonesome. Come on, girls; please write to me!

SALLY JO.

She's seventeen and friendly.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of seventeen working as a bookkeeper. My hobbies are dancing, skating, and reading. I love to write letters, and promise a speedy reply to every girl who writes. Won't you try me out, Pals?

MASSACHUSETTS GINGER.

An A-1 athlete sends in his plea.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd like very much to enter your Friendliest Corner. I'm a young man, eighteen years old, five feet seven inches tall, and have brown eyes and hair. I've traveled from Pennsylvania to Colorado, and am an amateur athlete. I'll appreciate all letters.

HUMPTY.

A hard worker and a true Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a regular chat-terbox through the mail, and hope you girls

will give me a chance to write. I'm a girl with dark-brown hair, and eyes so dark that they're sometimes referred to as black. I work all day, attend business college at night, and love animals, horseback riding, and travel. Won't somebody please write?
RENZELLA.

Learn her recipe for married happiness.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder how many Pals I can get? Won't you all help me find out? I'm a married woman, twenty-four years old, with two darling youngsters and a wonderful husband. I live in the northeastern part of New Jersey, near New York City, and promise you all an answer pronto!
THAT'S ME.

She'll tell about her golden West.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm just one more girl who wants Pals. I'm thirteen years old, look much older, and love reading, short-story writing, and dancing. I've traveled in California, and was once in Arizona for my health. Pals, send a letter my way.
AUDREY LORRAINE.

Boys, see life beyond your own job.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Can you spare me a few lines in your Corner? I'm a boy of twenty-one, a sprayer in a factory, and also a good garage man. Would anybody like to hear about these jobs? Come on, Pals; let's exchange ideas, since two heads are better than one.
LUCKY.

Follow the movies with a friendly married girl.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm just another letter fiend, and hope your Corner will do something to relieve my disappointment when the postman leaves my box empty. I'm a married girl, twenty-four, with a little boy three and one half years old who is an imp and a human question box. I see practically all the movies, adore baseball, and couldn't live without my radio and books. Who wants a nice fat letter from me?
TOPSY.

Pals, who shares her ambition?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl, sixteen years old. My favorite pastimes are dancing, swimming, and movies. I'm interested in newspaper writing, am a reporter on

our school paper, and write editorials and poetry. I'm also a good typist, and hope to hear from all of you interested in the same things.
JOURNALIST RUTH.

Follow the trail with a real hiker.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd love to hear from girls who are interested in outdoor sports and hiking. The more wanderlust my Pals have in them, the better. I'm a girl of twenty, and love dancing and horseback riding. Please write to me, girls. I'm sure we could have loads of fun.

HIKER MARGE.

Look at the stars with an astrol-
o-ger.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman, thirty-seven years old, and get very lonesome. I'm very much interested in astrology, and would enjoy hearing from married women who are also interested in that science. Pals, write to me!

DANE OF BROOKLYN.

Who'll help a small-town boy get ahead?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a man, thirty years old and single, crazy about stage work. I've been in a great many home-talent shows and am considered a good singer, but can't get ahead in a small town. I'd certainly like to find some one through your column who'd take an interest in me and advise me. Fellows, please write to
HOME TALENT.

Another little American lover of sports.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl in my early teens, have blond hair and blue eyes, and am tall and slim. I love football, baseball, basket ball, and hiking. Won't you all be my friends, girls?

MISS BELOIT.

Here's one Pal you mustn't disappoint.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Many different kinds of people have come to you for Pals, and now I'm trying my luck. I'm a girl of eighteen and have been blind since I was seven years old. I've traveled to many places to see if the doctors could help me regain my eyesight, but so far they haven't. A member of my family writes the letters I dictate, and I play the piano, sing, dance,

and swim, so, you see. I'm not altogether helpless. I'm hoping I get a great many letters.

MARGARET MAY.

A true little conscience-fearing daughter of Dixie.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a call for Pals from a little Southern girl who was born in South Carolina, lived for fifteen years in beloved Georgia, visited romantic Florida many times, and now lives in historic Virginia. I adore dancing, hope to become a writer of note, am always ready for good, clean fun, and live by the dictates of my conscience. I'm eighteen and blond, and I want heaps of letters!

SOUTHERN LADY.

The two modern wonders of the air are his hobbies.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm hoping for some real Pals, and I know you'll help me find them. Being very much interested in aeronautics, I'd certainly like to write to Pals of the air. I'm a twenty-year-old boy, now studying radio television. Let's go, buddies!

AIR-MINDED EDDIE.

Get a sample of that good-looking stationery.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm just one of the many thousand girls who attend high school and get lonesome once in a while. I like to exchange gossip, and my hobby is collecting good-looking stationery. I'd like to be able to write to all you interesting Pals. I'm seventeen, a senior, and like anything that has to do with the outdoors.

BELLE OF CINCY.

You'll want to hear her tales of river life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman, twenty-four years old, have a little girl three years old and a stepson nine years old. I'm interested in sewing, love to paint and write letters, have traveled, and can tell of life on the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. Who wants a true Pal?

MARY OF THE RIVER.

A line from you will brighten her world.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please, all you Pen Pals, write to me. I'm a married woman and live in the country. I'm asking all of you to give a little human aid to one who is lonesome.

EMPTY MAIL BOX.

A musical wife with time for everything.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young married woman, twenty-eight years old, play in my husband's dance band, and have some spare time in which to welcome Pen Pals. Come on, you young married women, and I'll tell you all about our musical career. I play piano and pipe organ. My main ambition is music, but I'm also a great home lover and have three darling children. Girls, I'll give you interesting letters.

MUSICAL MILLIE.

Give her a helping hand, Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please find me some one to write to. I'm a married woman in my fifties, but full of life. I'd love to have a Pal who'd understand a lonely heart and be a true friend. I live in St. Louis, and will be glad of any letter that comes to me.

M. L. S.

He'll give you a taste of life in the service.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonesome coast guardsman stationed in New Jersey. I haven't been in this branch of the service very long, and I sure am lonesome. I was in the navy four years, and spent my time in China. I'm twenty-three years old, and letters would mean a lot to me.

COAST GUARD FERRIS.

A new hobby enters the Corner.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of twenty, have been married four years to a Filipino, and am very happy. I like to dance and read, and my hobby is collecting menus. Girls, don't make me watch for a letter in vain.

BETTIE JACK.



The Friend In Need

Department

CONDUCTED BY

Laura Alston Brown



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.

CAN any woman win the love of a man? Has a woman unsuccessful in love no alibi but herself?

A famous motion-picture star elucidates this:

"Any woman, even one to whom nature has not been so generous when beauty was being passed around, can sooner or later win the love of a man. He may not be an Adonis—they generally are not worth winning—and he may not be wealthy; but any woman can attract at least one man who has enough of the man about him to be a success—at home and in the world.

"If a woman cannot hold that man, if she cannot make something out of him and his love, the reason for failure may be attributed only to herself. Women can hold their men if they will use their heads. Getting and keeping a man ought to be a woman's greatest career, which begins on her wedding day. Most women have the mistaken idea that that day is the completion of their conquest—the finish. It gen-

erally is, when a woman has such an idea.

"I might add that it is the woman who picks her man—who is endowed with the weapons to fascinate him."

This, in part, throws some light on Poppy's letter.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I won't ask that worn-out question, what is this thing called love? What concerns me most is whether or not it is possible for any girl, or woman, to win love, make some man consider her attractive and desirable.

I'm twenty-eight, not just a silly youngster suffering from a crush, but it does seem as though love has passed me by. Do you think it has?

I'm just an average girl; went through high school, and, because it was necessary, studied stenography and found a job. Although I have, and always have had, friends, young men as well as girls, so far not one man has fallen in love with me.

Perhaps it is my fault; but, if so, I wonder what's wrong. I dress neatly, and, although I'm not beautiful, I do take care of my skin, hair, and teeth, and wouldn't have to be pushed through a crowd to pass, as they say.

I'm told I'm a "nice girl," and I've often been told by men I'll make a darn good wife for some man some day. That day seems almost too far off to ever get here. I'm ready to join the old maids' club out

of sheer desperation, unless you or your readers give me some hope and think there's a chance.

Has any one ever found love at my age?
POPPY.

I know those who have read Poppy's letter will not hesitate to send her a few comforting words, but I'd like to say this:

No one has ever been able to find out how and whence first springs the attraction called love between a man and a woman. It just happens, and to some sooner than to others. But even at twenty-eight, dear, you needn't feel as though you will never find love. Many women in history have loved and been loved when they were almost twice your age.

There's more in the advice to be a "good listener" than meets the eye. Next time you are in a group of young people, select the boy who seems most quiet and extend a sympathetic ear. He will probably loosen up and talk about himself. Show him you are interested, and before you know it he'll be seeking *your* company.

But by no means drape your aspirations and hopes in mourning. Who can tell but that this year, or next, or the year after, love will come to you with a rush and crown your life with happiness?

Joe Bell's letter contains advice to the unpopular girl, and you may find some of his suggestions useful.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: A letter signed Marianne, which appeared in a current issue of Love Story Magazine, attracted my attention, and it sure deserves a quick-fire answer.

Marianne says she is twenty-six, possesses a good education, holds an executive position, wears good clothes, and her conversation is not confined to one or two grooves. Yet no marriageable young man has ever plotted to get her alone in the moonlight. She is not the only one in that

"boat," as she so quaintly expresses her situation. However, let her check up once again on herself and find out what she forgot the last time she took inventory.

How about that irresistible *it* we hear so much about? That spontaneous personality? Does she swim? Play golf? Tennis? Athletics? She doesn't have to be a fanatic on athletics, et cetera, but she should have a first-hand knowledge of some of the games; then she could meet more marriageable young men, and one might propose.

Men do not feel so inferior that they are afraid of the really intelligent girl. After all, many of the really intelligent girls broadcast their intelligence either by talking too darn much or by their superior airs. And, as an afterthought, since when do really intelligent girls pin roses on themselves by making statements such as, "Is it because we are too intelligent, make good salaries, and are able to take care of ourselves without male assistance?" No one in this wide world is too intelligent. As for good salaries, it sure is a joke. No one's salary is safe, especially during this so-called depression.

And the men propose to the beautiful but dumb type like her roommate. How does Marianne know that they propose? A lot of women say that Jim or John proposed last night. But *did* Jim or John propose? Proposals do not mean marriages. I know quite a few boys who propose to every new girl they meet, but are still unattached. Very often they have been accepted, but have broken off.

Now for the summary: Be pleasant, polite, and act like a human being. Don't put on airs, and don't—I cannot emphasize this too greatly—ever show your superiority. Let boys think that you are just a plain, educated, bashful young lady. You'll land a good one yet.

JOE BELL.

What do you girls think of Joe's helpful hints?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have traveled in forty-six States, worked and courted in most of them, held a chief clerk's job in a plant hiring thirty thousand men, and was a corporal in the headquarters of a machine-gun battalion. I have lived thirty-five years of single bliss, and to-day look young enough to have many younger girl friends.

From my study and personal observation of men, I believe I am qualified to tell Marianne that she is really too intel-

ligent for most of the young men with whom she is acquainted.

Furthermore, Marianne has been too interested in her position and her work to have made a study of men, or she has been just a little ahead of them, instead of keeping just a little behind them. Men love to be dominating. They love to do all the love-making.

Marianne, you've been friendly all right, but my guess is that you have been a little too anxious. Men are like women; they want the things that are hard to get, and most of them like to be independent.

Be independent, too, but in the right way and at the right time. Don't rush a date or be too anxious about filling one.

Whatever you do, avoid talking about your position and your salary. Sometimes you will make a fellow feel very inferior. He will hear soon enough of your position, and most men will want you more if they are the kind who think of the future. Avoid talking about the dumb good-looking girls. Never show any jealousy toward them.

Dress very neatly, but not richly, for some men will think you are too high for them and avoid you on that account.

Men love flattery and a pleasant, smiling, friendly personality. Most men love the girl who will listen to the things they have to say. That is why they choose the dumb kind, and the girls who let the men feel so superior are the girls men find interesting.

Men want to feel they have a girl nearly in their power, yet the average man doesn't really try to take advantage of a girl. It's all a case of how a girl leads them on. But most girls know that the less they let a man pet, the more he wants to pet, and she soon learns that if there is not a little petting after a few weeks of acquaintance, she will soon lose her man, if he is the wrong kind.

Make every man wait, take your time, keep him at a safe distance always, and allow very little petting.

Probably Marianne's trouble is getting them started. She may have shown too much independence, and they figure she has been a back number.

Men to-day are looking for a good time. Every one can have a good time and be careful, too.

Of course, they pick the beautiful but dumb, yet not so dumb, because some girls lead men to believe they are devils, and then wisely keep them at a distance. After all, men like the modern girl who doesn't go too far.

Don't be too frosty, but act as though you were not too anxious. After making love to a man with your eyes, while he does all the talking, see how quickly he will scheme to get you out in the moonlight.

BOB.

What do you think of Bob's advice, girls? Any comments?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May another modern girl say a few things to your readers?

I have been a reader of your column for some time, but have never written before. However, I can no longer restrain myself.

Mrs. Brown, I liked the way Brown-eyed Sue and Frances From Texas punched away at Outdoor Girl; they spoke my mind exactly.

"A flapper holds a man by mean, catty tricks," said Outdoor Girl. Just how does she get that way? I have been going with a fellow for two years, and if I have held him by mean, catty tricks, I must have been unconscious. We are going to be married next month.

I am eighteen years old, good-looking, and I am a modern girl, but not a flapper.

I also want to say a few words to those who think smoking is so terrible. I smoke. I am not bragging, but I am not ashamed of it, either.

I don't drink, because I don't approve of it. I think a girl who drinks is the most revolting sight there is; but what boy doesn't prefer her company to one who doesn't dance and looks bored all evening, with her hands folded in her lap?

How many of you boys will agree with me?

I also want to stick up for some of the henpecked boy friends. Three fourths of the time, when a girl is insulted, it merely means that she has led the boy on. Then she goes crying home to mother.

Well, boys and girls, will you tell me where I am wrong in my viewpoints?

Thank you, Mrs. Brown, and good luck. May I write again?

AULD LANG SYNE.

Yes, do write again. As to the question of smoking, take a slant at Argus's argument.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: As you invite the comments of readers, I want to say a few words to Silver Hope, Glorious Gay, and those who write in defense of girls who smoke, drink, and pet.

I am a member of a social club in which the membership is made up of over a thousand boys and young men. While most of the members do not publicly condemn girls who smoke, all of them are emphatic in declaring that smoking detracts from a girl's charm, and, if carried to excess, affects her health and personal appearance.

Most of the members do not like the idea of their mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts smoking; but if women do smoke, they keep silent on the subject rather than be accused of interfering with personal liberty. Notwithstanding this silence, we do abhor that ash-tray breath which all smokers acquire and which nothing seems to overcome.

It may be that the opposition to girls smoking is due to the fact that it is modern. Nevertheless, girls who smoke lose some of that quality of femininity which so sharply contrasts them with men. The more a girl apes men, the less feminine she appears. A mannish girl or woman is even more ridiculous than an effeminate man.

We think that it would be better for girls to accept the views of their parents in this matter, if for no other reason than to have peace in the home. Anyhow, by abstaining from smoking, girls will cultivate self-control, which is always a great asset. Smoking on the part of girls breaks down that wall of modesty with which nature endows them.

Concessions made in the matter of smoking open the way to drinking, and when women indulge in drinking they are in danger of serious trouble. If there is one thing which we ought to strive for in this age of toppling standards, it is that women remain women, and leave men to their own tastes. Women are the molders of character. The moral status of a nation will be largely determined by the morality of its women.

Girls complain that if they do not smoke and drink they are considered poor sports. It must be remembered that devotion to high ideals nearly always mean a curtailment of liberty. But it is better to be true to ideals than to be a slave to fashion.

As for petting, it is merely a pretty name for something else. It is a sad, but true, commentary on the fickleness of human nature that those very girls who indulge in promiscuous petting in order to become popular with men often end by losing their popularity with all men.

Finally, please remember that "everybody is doing it" is not a safe rule to fol-

low. Everybody may be wrong. One of our greatest philosophers said: "Right is right if nobody is right, and wrong is wrong if everybody is wrong." That may prick the vanity of many who fall in with the way of the crowd, or with some self-elected group which thinks it should lead the rest. But the truth remains, irrespective of personal experience or personal views.

ARGUS.

And all this is the unvarnished opinion of the committee of one thousand. Is it better to be true to high ideals than a slave to the tyranny of fashion?

Since the boys are sitting up to take notice of your letters, girls, we might just as well give Mr. X-perience a hearing.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: When girls like Glorious Gay start that line about being a dare-devil, and in the same voice tell about winning six cups in a beauty contest, I understand that saying, "Beautiful but dumb."

Listen to this, Glorious Gay, from a boy of nineteen who has dealt with flappers before. You know as well as I do that you don't have to drink and smoke to keep your precious popularity. If you have a pleasing personality, can dance fairly well, and are pleasant without making a fool of yourself, we fellows will manage to come around now and then.

I can understand how a girl feels when she is called a wet blanket, but take a glance outside of that whirlwind crowd of yours, and see all the really smart girls who have won lasting popularity through charm and graciousness. No doubt, you could do it, too, if you had enough real sense.

Now I'll tell you why I'm so sure of what I am talking about. Here are my qualifications to discuss your beloved flappers: I have been everything from a soda jerker to an assistant to a professor in a girls' school, and for your especial benefit I will add that I had four years of experience spelled with a capital "X."

I admit this Penny Boy you were berating must have been of a peculiar species, from the way so many have written about him; but, as for your own darling self, Glorious, please don't get into too deep water, because the uselessness of these so-called flapper doings will hit you, and you may drown.

On second thought, I think you might be a girl who likes to talk fire water and drinks milk. And if you are, Glorious, I am on my knees in humble apology. But if you aren't, some day you'll be sorry.

Well, here's looking at you, Gay. Come to my house some time and see my pretty row of dolls; they have paste heads, but they're good-looking, too!

MR. X-PERIENCE.

Count ten and take four deep breaths before you dip your pen in the old inkwell and say, "Go!" Who's first?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am writing to you again. This time it is not to ask for your wonderful advice, but to thank you for what you did for me, although I don't think you will remember me.

I asked you for advice four years ago. I was just sixteen at the time. I thought I was in love with a married man considerably older than I. He was in love with me, and was trying to get a divorce from his wife.

Your advice was neither to see nor communicate with him in any way until he was free. I followed your suggestion, and, thanks to you, I am now happily married.

Here's what I did: I left my home, went to another State, and found work. While I was working there I met many men. Some were rich and some were poor, but not one seemed to be the right one.

Five months ago I met the man who has made a wonderful husband. We were married two months after we met, and we are wonderfully happy.

The other man never got his divorce, which proved that he never loved me. And I know I never loved him.

I love my husband so much that when he is away during the day it seems like a year, although he's away only eight hours out of the whole twenty-four.

I have you to thank for all my happiness. Dear, Mrs. Brown, I'm sure if it had not been for your advice I would not be so happy as I am to-day.

So again I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I only hope other girls will take your wonderful advice, as I have done, so that they may find the happiness I have found.

VI.

Now, wouldn't a letter like that just warm the cockles of your heart? Letters of appreciation are not as rare as hen's teeth, but they

certainly make me feel good. Good luck to you, Vi, and write again some time.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: My recent experience has left me wondering just what to do. Will you please help me?

Three months ago I met a very nice fellow. He was on a ten-day furlough, visiting his relatives in my own town. His sister, an intimate friend of mine, introduced us, and we just naturally fell in love.

This man, after his furlough, returned to the army. He is about to be discharged after three years of very good service. He is an honor to the army, and his superiors want him to reenlist, but he refuses for a special reason. In the fall he plans to enter an electrical college; his ambition is to become an electrical engineer. He already has had general experience, but wants to better himself.

His father and mother separated when their children were only tots, leaving them to get along as best they could. This young man, at a very early age, earned his own living. Hardships taught him to be gentle and courageous. One of his sisters—my friend, was adopted by her aunt and uncle, who are prominent people; but his other sisters and brothers, all younger, have very bad reputations. Rumor has it that they are doing exactly as their father and mother did.

Please advise me, Mrs. Brown. Is it possible that the man I love has inherited the sins of his father and mother? He is their oldest child. So far, he has proved to be a gentleman. My folks warn me against him, not because he has done anything wicked, but because they at one time had unfortunate dealings with his parents.

I come from a very good family, and I would not want to disgrace them by marrying this man. He has already proposed to me. I have great confidence in him, and I am positive he is different from his family.

He is ambitious, and I know he will be successful in his enterprises. He is twenty-six years old, and I am twenty-two. He would give the last drop of his fighting blood to make me happy and to show the world that he can be what he is aiming for. You probably will think I am old enough to decide for the best, but good advice never hurts any one. I will be waiting in anticipation for your answer.

DOUBTFUL EVE.

Suppose you had been in this young man's shoes when his parents

separated and left the children to shift for themselves, and you had worked and dreamed, achieved a fair measure of success, hung onto an ambition to make good, and had grown up to be a person who did not need to be ashamed of himself; wouldn't this prove that you had more courage than the other children, and, having made good, would not be likely to take the wrong path?

I think your fears are foolish, dear. If he has proved himself a real man so far, he is not likely to tumble down. If you love each other, and he has a future and is willing to work hard just to make you happy, why hold back? Weakness of character has been known to exist even in the best of families; but, from all you say, I think this man has shown you he is made of sterner stuff. Marry him and be happy, and don't hold the misfortunes of his family against him.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm just another one of your readers of *Love Story Magazine*, and, since I am blue, I thought I might be able to unload my heart by telling you my story.

About a year ago I met a fellow in a public ballroom, and, although it wasn't love at first sight, I know I thought a great deal of him. He was unemployed and couldn't afford to take me out, but I was satisfied just seeing him in the ballroom.

I was working at the time, and on two occasions gave him money—not much; only a dollar each time, as he wouldn't accept any more. About two months later he left and went to another State, where he thought he might be able to get work.

We wrote to each other regularly, and about a month later I received a letter from him asking me for a few dollars as a loan, and promising to pay it back as soon as he found work. I would gladly have sent him some money had I thought he was really sincere and wasn't using me merely as a means of getting money when he was broke. I didn't send him the money or answer his letter.

Two weeks later I received another letter, stating he was terribly sorry he had ever asked me for money, but had thought he knew me well enough to know I wouldn't be hurt at his request, since he honestly intended to pay it back shortly. He added that he was ill at the time and dead broke, and said that he didn't blame me a bit if I just dropped him and forgot all about him, since everybody was rubbing it in that he would never amount to anything. Two weeks later I met him at the ballroom again.

He had quite a 'it of money, and was willing to get me anything that night. He took me home in a cab and made a date for the following evening.

The night of our date I found that he was again broke, and I wanted to know what he had done with all the money he had had. He told me that he had quite a board bill and had had to pay it. I didn't believe him, and lost my temper. I told him I was through.

I met him again after that and told him I was sorry for what I said. He forgave me, but a few days later he called me up and told me to forget him, as he was going away, and said I could never be happy with him, as he was always roaming. That sure was a jolt to me, but I think he was only paying me back for the way I acted toward him.

I have seen him since that night, but he won't talk to me, and my pride won't let me talk to him. If I had been the one to blame for our parting, I would gladly have spoken first; but he is of the stubborn type, and won't give in. A couple of his friends told me that he was crazy about me, but I don't believe he could treat me this way if he cared about me.

With sincere wishes, I am

UNHAPPY.

Does a real man ever accept, or ask a girl for, a loan? What's your reaction on this, children?

Don't you think you'd be better off if you just tried to forget him, Unhappy? If he is seen at the ballroom you frequent, why go there? This boy's behavior was indeed strange, and I think he was just handing out a sympathy gag when he borrowed from you. If you had continued to lend him money, there might have been no end of it.

Take an interest in other boys

and stop thinking about him. His friends are no doubt prompted by him to kid you along. If he really loved you, he wouldn't have behaved this way.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: You have helped so many, won't you please help me? My mother has been dead for three years, and my dad does not understand the situation, because he is so old-fashioned. I need your advice very badly, and you are about the only one I can go to.

I was married at the age of eighteen, three years ago. We went to live with my husband's mother, as it was up to him to support her. His mother and I got along very well, but it seemed my husband and I could not make a go of things.

We had been married about a year when he met a girl and kept company with her. He had been going out with her about four or five months before I found it out. He agreed with me that I should get a divorce. The divorce was granted, and I went back home to live; but while the divorce suit was going on he took me to and from work, invited me to shows and different places, and I learned to love him again.

We decided to go back together again, so we had the divorce annulled. We rented an apartment and were happy for about a month. Then I found that he was still going out with this girl, although she lived out of town.

We quarreled, and an argument with his mother about coming home to live with her made him decide to leave me. I went home again to my dad. My husband and I lived apart for almost a year. During that year he came to see me and went around with this girl, too. We always quarreled about his going to see her. For a time I didn't see him, but he always was the first to come and make up.

Finally, we came to an agreement that if I would come back to his mother's house to live, he would stop seeing this girl. He has been true to his agreement, but there is a barrier between us.

It seems, the worse he treats me the more I love him. I love children, but he doesn't want any for a while. His sisters, brothers, and relatives have been on my side during the trouble.

Please tell me how I can win him back, and advise me what to do. ELEANOR.

Since your husband had such a difficult time trying to make up his

mind regarding his marital responsibilities, why not stretch your patience still further and wait a little longer? Make yourself as pleasing and attractive as you can; try to be cheerful and friendly, and make believe nothing unfortunate has ever happened between you. This won't be easy to do; but, if you want to win him back, I don't think indifference will do the trick. By this I don't mean you've got to act the part of a clinging vine, but be sociable, ask his advice and opinions on small things, and try to direct his attention to yourself as much as possible without actually overdoing it. If he cares at all, he won't remain aloof.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Five years ago I came to you for advice. I followed it to the last word, and it has worked out one hundred per cent, so here I am again.

I'm terribly in love with a boy two years my junior. Here's my trouble: My folks object to the match very much.

When my parents were married they didn't have anything. In fact, they were in debt. They worked hard, and my dad got ahead, and now he is head of a million-dollar concern.

I drive a car of my own. We live in a beautiful home, and I've always had everything I've wanted. I have never known what want is. So much for my side of the story.

Don's parents started out very much like mine did, but his dad is still in the same old rut. They have their own home, but that's all. They haven't even a car. Two years ago his parents were divorced.

I'm twenty-two, have a jolly disposition, and am rather old in my ways. Don is twenty. His mother has babied and pampered him, so he is naturally spoiled. At times he is so kiddish. At present he is out of work.

Now, here is what I want to know: Would you advise us to marry? As far as a job goes, my dad could give him one. We could start off very nicely, as my mother owns a six-room house which she has promised to the first one in the family who marries. I have five thousand dollars in stocks which I could cash in and buy furniture with; but here, again,

it seems like a one-sided affair. What do you think?

In spite of all this, I'm still madly in love with him.

Don does not want to get married until he has a job; but, as I said, I think I could get my dad to give him one.

What do you say? H. M. S.

I say that if Don is anxious for a job, why not arrange to have your father help him right now? The two years difference in your age need not worry you; but, as this boy is only twenty now, it may not be a bad idea to wait a year or two. I think it detracts from a man's self-confidence if the wife uses her own money to buy more than the linen for the home. It makes him feel ineffectual and not quite right. After he's worked for a year, saved some of his income, and grown up a bit more, things will no doubt appear in a better light to both of you.

Most men like to feel they are the managers and bosses of their homes and families, and wise are the women who let them think so.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I love to read your letters in Love Story Magazine. Here is what I have to say about young marriages:

I was married at the age of seventeen. My husband never even asked me if I would marry him. He just came in one morning and asked my mother if he could get the marriage license. Of course, mother said yes, but I certainly felt funny. I had never gone out with a boy or had a sweetheart before.

My husband, however, had been disappointed in love four years before I met him.

We have been married eighteen years now, have been very happy, and have nine beautiful children, of whom we are very proud—five girls and four boys. They range from fifteen down to two years and are all well and strong.

My husband and I are still good old sweethearts. Of course, we have our little quarrels like every one else, but when one is on the rampage the other just keeps still till the worst blows over; then we make up again and everything is lovely. My husband is now forty-four.

So, even if some marry young and face hardships, they can be happy. I would not trade places with the richest woman on earth, as I am very happy with my children and my dear husband.

A TRUE LOVING WIFE.

Yes, some young marriages turn out all right. The fates have been kind to you, dear, and I'm happy to have your letter. No matter how we look at it, or how much we think we know about it, marriage is just like a game of cards; we never can tell what's ahead, who's going to win, or who will be the one to lose. Let's hear from you again.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a constant reader of your department, and I think you give every one who writes in to you sensible advice. I'd like very much to say a few words to Just Plain Mary. I was very interested in her letter, as the married man she's in love with is something like my own husband. I'd like to tell her a wife's side of the story.

Dear Mary, you are only a year older than I am, and you seem to be a nice girl. I'd like to tell you a bit about my life.

My husband is twenty-seven and old enough to settle down, but he never will. He's had his chance. We have been married three years and have two lovely children, a girl and a boy.

I like good, clean fun, such as movies, card parties, and sports. am careful, and keep my home and babies spotless. I've been true, and have done everything I possibly could to make our marriage a success; but I'm afraid there will be an end soon, and I can truthfully say it's all his fault.

Ever since we've been married he's been going out nights until two or three a. m., and has stayed away week-ends. Believe me, Mary, I've been a blue and lonely wife. Lots of times I've found rings and letters, compacts, and even beads around the house.

When my little girl was nine months old, I went home to my mother and dad. They were wonderful to us. After two months, my husband asked me for another chance, and, like a fool, I went against my parents' advice. I'm paying for it now. I've had nothing but more unhappiness since I came back, but I've stuck because I thought I loved him.

He has a car, but he never offers to take

the children or me out. We never go anywhere. He won't even let my folks come to see me. He spends money on gas and oil to get around, but if I want any money there's a row.

He talks to me of getting a divorce, Mary, but he hasn't a thing in the world to get one on, and if any one gets one, it will be I. Every time he sees me he tells me to take the children and get out. I would if I could, but it would be hard with two babies.

I shall go, though, the first chance that comes my way. I adore my children; they are both as sweet and pretty as can be. I can truthfully say I am through with him. He's not only broken all the trust I had in him, but he's killed my love as well, and Heaven pity the next girl he gets, for he won't treat her right, either.

So, Just Plain Mary, this is my side of the story. I don't believe the married man you say you love is as sincere as you think he is.

MOTHER OF TWO.

There are two sides to a story always. Doubtless your husband also goes in for the "misunderstood" tale of woe, and some foolish girl swallows every word of it. Concentrating on a married man, girls, is about as tranquil an affair as a Texas cyclone—something is bound to be broken or lost in the end. Anyway, there are enough single men to go around.

Try not to be so discouraged, Mother of Two. We never know what is ahead of us, dear, and you may yet find happiness, even though the present looks discouraging.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Having read some of the advice you have given others, I've decided to ask for your advice, also. I hope you will tell me what is the best thing to do.

I'm nineteen and very much in love with a fellow twenty-two. My father objected to him at first; but, not having succeeded in turning me against him, he decided to leave me alone. My sweetheart is sick in a hospital, and I am the only one who goes to see him. His mother has been very mean to him, although he has done

a lot for her. He has no home to go to when he leaves the hospital. My parents said he could board with us; but he thinks it would cause too much scandal, and tells me the only way he could stay at my home would be if he were my husband.

I told my parents, and they said: "Why not marry him?" They know he is not working, and said that if we were married they could do more for us than now.

Will you please tell me what to do in a case like this? My mind is in a whirl. Thank you for your much-needed advice.

DOUBTFUL.

When a man has little or nothing to fall back on, especially when his health is poor and he happens to have no job, it's a risky affair to let his in-laws do things for him, as it may lead to some phase which will not be agreeable to him.

Your parents might think now that it would work out, and that they could do more for him if he were their son-in-law; but I see no reason why he should not stay in your home without marrying you just yet, as long as your parents are there to look after him and chaperon you.

Don't you think it will be time enough to think of marriage when he has regained his health and has found a job? Perhaps your father could help him obtain work. Both you and the young man are young, and can well afford to wait a year or so.

Of course, you can take your parents' advice and marry him now; but I would suggest waiting a few months.

Oddity, won't you write again and send me your full name and address? I'm sorry not to be able to print your letter; but I shall be happy to advise you, and I want you to know I do understand.

"Take me away from him!"

"Lock me up so I cannot escape—beat me if you like—and I will tell you all I know. But while HE is my master I will not betray HIM!"

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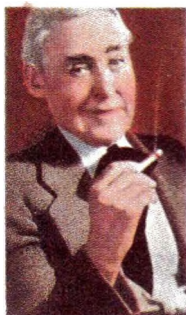
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● NOTE. In the sections where tobacco grows and where people know tobacco, Chesterfield is usually the largest-selling cigarette.

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