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STREET & SMITH'S

# LOVE STORY

EVERY WEEK MAGAZINE

OCT. 20

ILLUSTRATED

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1934



*beginning*

**FORGOTTEN**

**BRIDE**

BY  
*Cordelia  
Snow*



MCCREY STEIN

AGAIN ROYAL LEADS WITH  
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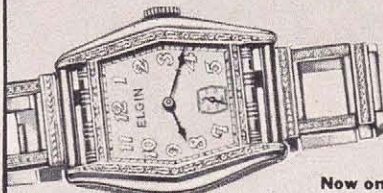
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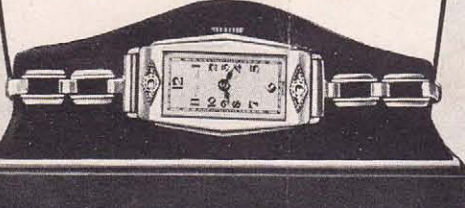


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JH-7... BULOVA'S most popular, slenderized Baguette at BULOVA'S lowest price. Daintily engraved; guaranteed BULOVA "radio time" movement. Lovely tubular bracelet. Only \$2.38 a month.

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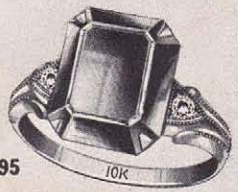
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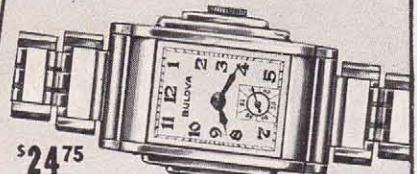
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JH-2... Two exquisitely matched, betrothal rings of beautifully hand engraved and pierced 14K Solid White Gold, for less than you'd expect to pay for one alone! 3 certified genuine diamonds in the engagement ring and 3 matched genuine diamonds in the wedding ring. Now only \$29.75 for both rings—\$2.88 a month. JH-2A Wedding Ring only \$12.50 \$1.15 a month.



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Don't miss, "Pay For Your Kisses," a new serial by Ruth Lyons, beginning in next week's issue!

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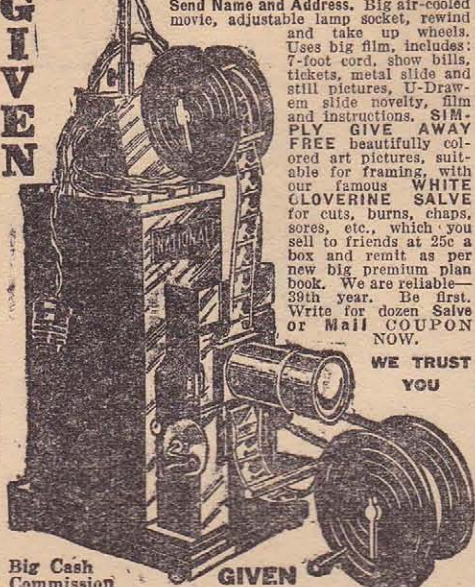
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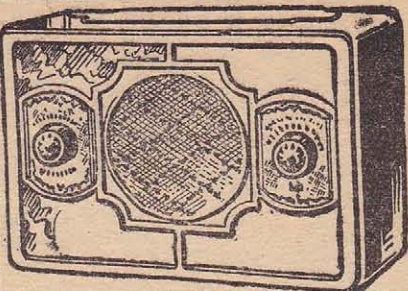


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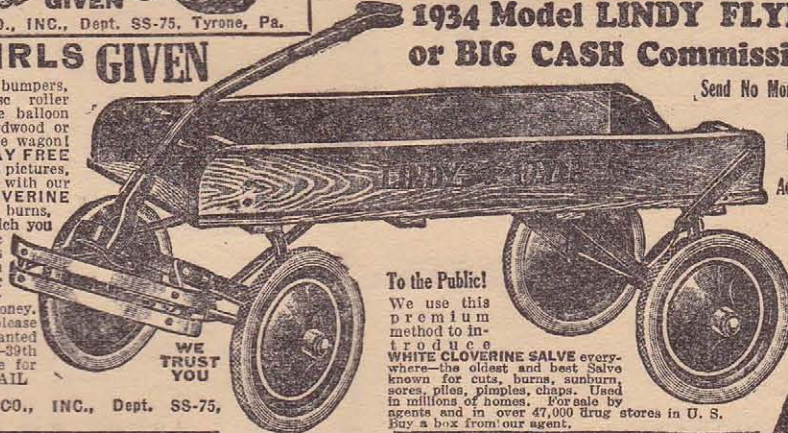


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Town ..... State.....

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**RICHARD ARLEN**,  
 (Personal Featured Player)

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 (Permanent Star) *Claudette Colbert*

**Better Foreign Reception**  
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*Judy Holloman*

**Thrill to Unequaled World-Wide Performance with this...**

**Amazing NEW 1935 SUPER Deluxe ALL-WAVE Radio**

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# Help Your Kidneys

## Don't Take Drastic Drugs

You have 9 million tiny tubes or filters in your kidneys, which are at work night and day cleaning out Acids and poisonous wastes and purifying your blood, which circulates through your kidneys 200 times an hour. So it's no wonder that poorly functioning Kidneys may be the real cause of feeling tired, run-down, nervous, Getting Up Nights, Rheumatic Pains and other troubles.

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But when your Kidneys need help, don't take chances with drastic or irritating drugs. Be careful. If poorly functioning Kidneys or Bladder make you suffer from Getting Up Nights, Leg Pains, Nervousness, Stiffness, Burning, Smarting, Itching Acidity, Rheumatic Pains, Lumbago, Loss of Vitality, Dark Circles under the eyes, or Dizziness, don't waste a minute. Try the Doctor's prescription Cystex (pronounced Siss-tex). See for yourself the amazing quickness with which it soothes, tones and cleans raw, sore irritated membranes.

Cystex is a remarkably successful prescription for poorly functioning Kidneys and Bladder. It is helping millions of sufferers, and many say that in just a day or so it helped them sleep like a baby, brought new strength and energy, eased rheumatic pains and stiffness—made them feel years younger. Cystex starts circulating through the system in 15 minutes, helping the Kidneys in their work of cleaning out the blood and removing poisonous acids and wastes in the system. It does its work quickly and positively but does not contain any dopes, narcotics or habit-forming drugs. The formula is in every package.

Because of its amazing and almost world-wide success, the Doctor's Prescription known as Cystex, (pronounced Siss-tex) is offered to sufferers of poor Kidney and Bladder functions under the fair-play guarantee to fix you up to your complete satisfaction or money back on return of empty package. It's only 3c a dose. Ask your druggist for Cystex today and see for yourself how much younger, stronger and better you can feel by simply cleaning out your Kidneys. Cystex must do the work or cost you nothing.



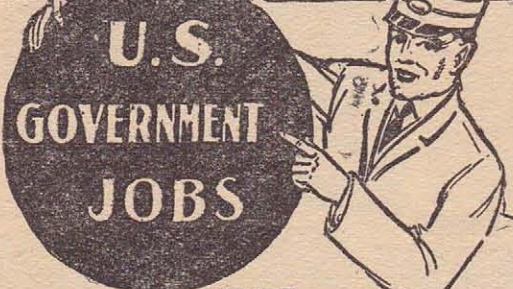
**City Health Doctor Praises Cystex**



Dr. W. R. GEORGE

Doctors and druggists everywhere approve of the prescription Cystex because of its splendid ingredients and quick action. For instance, Dr. W. R. George, graduate Medical Dept., University of Indiana, former Health Commissioner of Indianapolis, and Medical Director for insurance company 10 years, recently wrote the following letter:

"There is little question but what properly functioning Kidney and Bladder organs are vital to the health. Insufficient Kidney excretions are the cause of much needless suffering with aching back, weakness, painful joints and rheumatic pains, headaches and a general run-down, exhausted body. This condition also interferes with normal rest at night by causing the sufferer to rise frequently for relief, and results in painful exertion, itching, smarting and burning. I am of the opinion that Cystex definitely corrects frequent causes (poor kidney functions) of such conditions and I have actually prescribed in my own practice for many years past the same ingredients contained in your formula. Cystex not only exerts a splendid influence in flushing poisons from the urinary tract, but also has an antiseptic action and assists in treating the blood of retained toxins. Believing as I do that so meritorious a product deserves the endorsement of the Medical Profession, I am happy indeed to lend my name and photograph for your use in advertising Cystex." Signed W. R. George, M. D.



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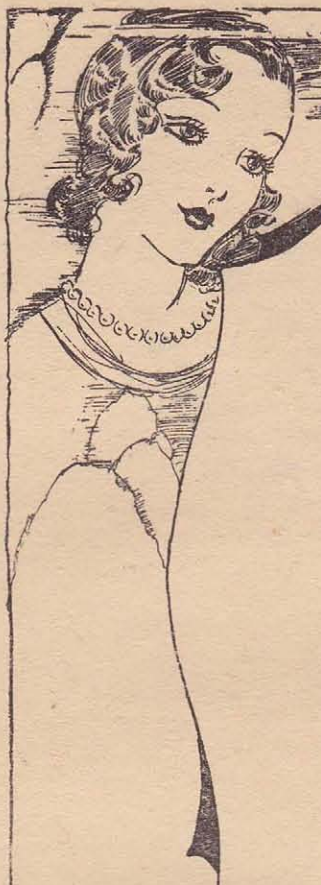
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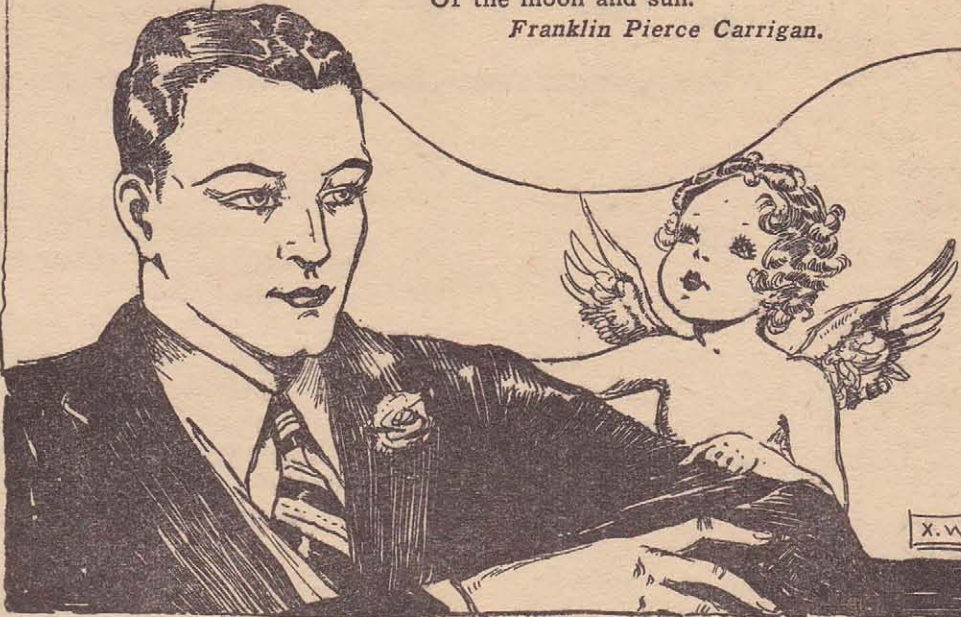
## Secret Fires

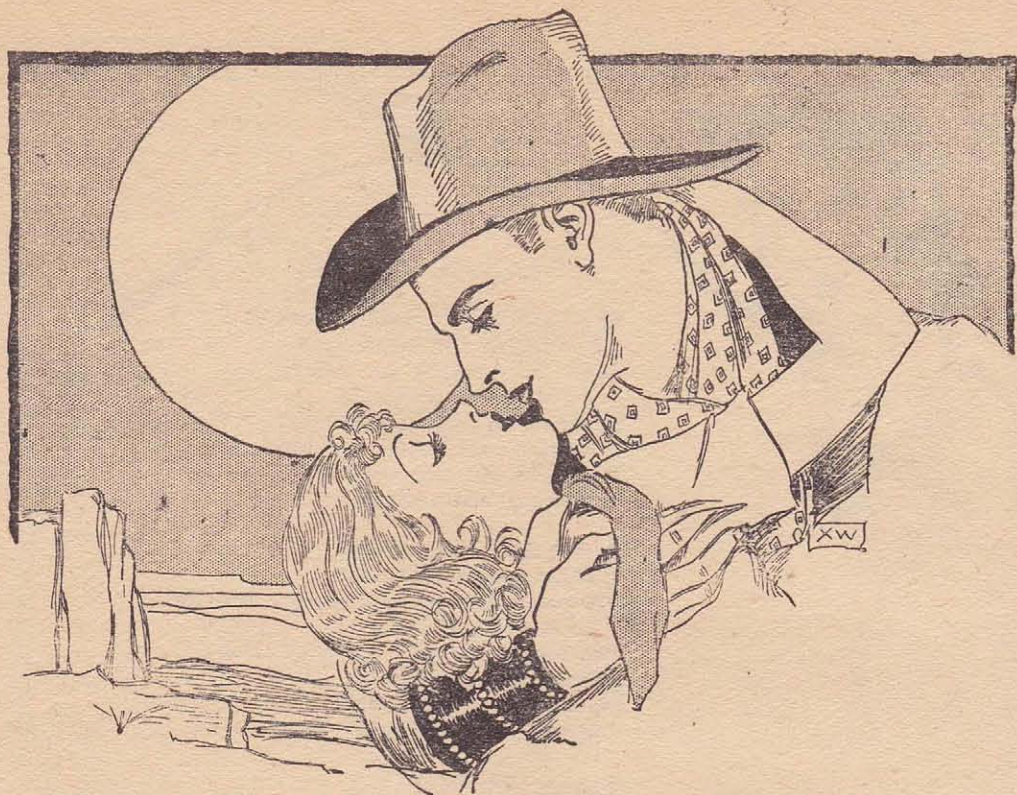
**S**ECRET fires yield a warmth  
Sweet and passionate  
With the longing and desire  
Born of destined fate,  
Drawing in their magic spell  
Hearts that throb and burn  
With the joy and ecstasy  
Seeking full return.

Secret fires seal the lips  
With emotion's thrall,  
Language has no words that breathe  
Love's instinctive call.  
Fervent hands and yearning arms  
Ever find their goal  
In the silent eloquence  
Binding soul to soul.

Secret fires are aflame  
In my heart for you,  
Shining, glowing like the lights  
Which are woven through  
Priceless diamonds where all gems  
Merge and blend as one  
In the passionate radiance  
Of the moon and sun.

*Franklin Pierce Carrigan.*





# Thrill Chaser

By Mary Ann de Forest

LINDA CARROLL'S gray eyes fairly smoked as she faced her sister across the breakfast table.

"I tell you, I won't!" she was declaring rebelliously. "I won't give up my own perfectly thrilling plans for this summer just to trail down to Long Island with you and your adoring husband. Bob is a peach, but——"

"Of course he is!" Helene Kershaw broke in sharply. "Or he wouldn't have put up with all of your wild escapades! Getting caught in that speakeasy raid! Doing stunt stuff

for the movies! And now it is practically on your account that he finally agreed to take that Kvale place for the season. Think of it! And Southampton is——"

"A pain in the neck, if you'd ask me!" Linda flipped, over a cup of black coffee. "Although I will admit the Kvale place is pretty hot, even if the house party they threw wasn't, and their son Ted, whom you insisted on my going there to meet, was even less so!"

"But, darling, it wasn't Ted."

"I know. It was Courtney, the older boy! I remember!" Linda

broke in promptly and to forestall a lengthy repetition of facts. "The only one of the Kvale's who could take it when the family fortune went pff-t. Well, that's grand! But since I didn't meet the hero, and since he later shoved off to parts unknown and there isn't a man in our crowd who could even leave a finger print on my heart, why go to all the bother of Southampton and a house party? It would only mean doing the same stupid things, entertaining the same stupid people!"

"But it wouldn't!" Helene said swiftly. "Because I've invited——"

"The most interesting young man!" Linda's imitation of past descriptions was perfect. "So different and absolutely thrilling!"

"Well, he is!"

Linda whooped. "Then that settles it. Count me out, because I positively draw the line at meeting even one more. Why, they're all just a lot of dimwit playboys turned out of college like so much cookies!"

"But where would you go to meet any other kind?" Helene asked.

"Right where I am going—West!"

"West!" came the astonished echo. "Where?"

"Anywhere! Oh, don't you see, I'm so fed up with boys like Ted Kvale, or the whoops-my-dear poet you all but had me anklng up the aisle with last winter. I want to go out where Bob came from, where men are men!"

"And wild Indians like you wear moccasins, not cerise sandals with their toe nails lacquered to match!" supplemented a voice from the doorway, where Bob Kershaw stood grinning down at the two girls. "But I'm for you, in spite of 'em, Linda. Go West if you like!"

"But, Bob," Helene cut in protestingly.

"Let her go," he advised, ignoring his wife's frantic protest. "After all, I understand how she feels!"

"Oh, Bob!" Linda had whirled about. Her voice was a hug. "You do, don't you? Oh, it's not that I don't like being with you and Helene, but all this"—her glance swept the severely modernistic breakfast room of the Kershaws' triplex apartment high above Sutton Place—"seems so artificial, somehow! And the men I play around with are so—so——"

"Tame!" Bob put in obligingly, taking his place at the table. "I know. Not a thrill in a carload." And after a pause: "Any definite plans?"

Linda shook her head. "Not very, only you've said so much about Nevada that I rather thought I'd try it."

"But, Bob!" Helene interrupted desperately, only to be silenced by a quick glance and her husband's prompt: "And why not Nevada? There's not a better spot in the country if you're looking for thrills!" There was a pause while he attacked



## RENASCENCE

By Lenore Fisher

**R**AIN melting the snow,  
Unveiling the lilies  
Starting to grow.

Tears melting my pain,  
Revealing my heart  
Beating again.

his grapefruit, then he turned to Linda. "I'll tell you! How about paying a visit to your uncle Andy Walton's? First-class outfit, that Lucky D Ranch at Echo Canyon, and a picturesque place if I ever saw one!"

"Of course!" Linda agreed, eyes shining. "But do you suppose he would want me?"

"Why shouldn't he? Loads of room. Fifty miles from the nearest railroad station and with no one but his partner and a bunch of cowhands around."

"Oh! It sounds exciting! You do think it would be, don't you, Bob?"

A thoughtful smile quirked the corners of Bob Kershaw's eyes as he caught his sister-in-law's glowing reflection in the mirrored table top: Dusky curls shot with blue fire in the morning sun; great gray eyes that alternately danced or smoldered beneath incredible lashes; an impudent nose; lips that were frankly painted and sweetly petulant.

"Lovely and completely spoiled!" was his mental summary. "Mostly my fault, too!" And aloud: "Exciting? Well, knowing Uncle Andy as I do and from all accounts of that fine young chap he's taken on as partner, I'd almost guarantee that it would be!"

It was. Linda reached the decision some ten days later, and within the first flickering moment after she had stepped from the train at Echo Canyon. It was a dream come true, a close-up of the picture that had been lingering in the far corners of her mind for weeks. The station itself, a ramshackle affair set deep in a mountain fork. Beyond it, a road, twisting upward to a rose-tinted sky line. And to her left, on the far side of the station platform,

a group of cowboys lounging about a hitching rail where their mounts were tethered.

Linda stared, blinked, and stared again. Wide-brimmed Stetsons; shirts that shrieked plaids; gay kerchiefs; chaps shaggy with dust, high-heeled boots! And the men themselves, ranging from short to tall, all darkly tanned! A half dozen pairs of eyes staring back at her!

Fully a quarter minute elapsed before she became conscious of them; one pair in particular, belonging to a slim young man standing a little apart from the rest, whose pale, watchful gaze caught hers with all the hard brilliance of the nickel studs on his leather chaps.

There was an instant of feeling oddly uncomfortable. Then she turned away, suddenly aware of the fact that not one of the group even slightly resembled the description of Andy Walton, and with the realization developed an unexpected sensation of utter desolation and loneliness.

It was short-lived, however, for almost in the next breath a tall, lank cowboy crossed the platform to greet her with a hesitant: "Howdy, ma'am. Lookin' for some one?" To which Linda gathered her scattered emotions sufficiently to reply: "Yes. I—I expected to find my uncle Andy Walton of the Lucky D Ranch!"

"You don't say. Well, that's funny!"

"Why?" Linda demanded.

"Because he ain't here. He left for Chicago a coupla days ago."

"Chicago!" she exclaimed. "But he knew I was coming. I wired him that I would arrive on an earlier train than I originally planned. Didn't he—didn't he even leave word with some one?" she ended a little vaguely.



*"Oh, don't you see, I'm so fed up with the boys in our crowd? There isn't a man I know who could leave a finger print on my heart. I want to go out West, where men are men!"*

"Not's I know of," came the prompt reply. "Unless"—the speaker turned to eye a roadster swirling down the mountain road—"unless Denny can tell you something about it."

"Denny?" she questioned, following his gaze.

"Sure. One of the Lucky D boys. That's him now"—nodding in the direction of the car that had miraculously reached a lower level in safety and was racing toward them.

"And mad as hops, likely, because he's late with the mail!"

In the minutes following, Linda's heart did queer things and all because of a total stranger. At first, she told herself it was due to the

devil-may-care ease with which he drove the car, the expert sureness which brought him about the final curve and to an abrupt halt almost at the edge of the station platform. Then, the instant he sprang out, she knew better.

The feeling went deeper than a momentary thrill. It was something about the man himself—tall, deep-chested in his cowboy regalia. Something about his eyes that were steely-gray and keen in his lean, sun-burned face.

"Hi, Denny!" Linda's companion hailed the newcomer. "Andy's niece is here. Miss——" He looked at her questioningly.

"Carroll!" Linda supplemented, stepping forward a little breathlessly. "Linda Carroll. Mr. Walton was expecting me."

"Yes, I know. But didn't you receive his telegram?" was the quick response. "It should have been delivered to you on the train!"

"Oh!" A faint flush crept up in Linda's cheeks. "It probably would have, only I left the train and flew part way because——" She almost said, "because I couldn't wait to get here," but changed it quickly to, "because I don't like trains. They're too pokey!"

"That's too bad." Steely-gray eyes were taking quick note of the suitcases and overnight bag ranged beside her. "Because I'm afraid that is the only way you'll be able to leave."

"Leave," Linda gasped. "But I can't! I mean, I've just come, and surely there must be some place to stay until my uncle returns."

"I'm afraid he won't be returning right away. You see, his son in Chicago is pretty ill, so it may be a week or more before he gets back. Of course, you would be more than welcome at the Lucky D if——"

"If what?" Linda demanded, when he halted uncertainly.

"If he hadn't sold it to his partner just before he left."

"Sold it? Then he won't be returning to the ranch?"

"No. He's quit ranching to attend to his mine over in a place called Silver City."

Linda thought a moment. "Then he'll probably go there."

"Yes, so you see——"

"I do," came Linda's decisive interruption. "I see that the sensible thing is for me to go over there and wait for him."

"But you can't do that," Denny objected. "You don't understand. It isn't a regular city; just one of those places that sprang up quickly."

"Marvelous!" Her face was suddenly radiant. "I always wanted to see a mining camp, the sort that grew overnight. There's a hotel of sorts, I suppose?"

"You could call it that. However, I don't think you ought to go."

"Fine!" she declared. "I always adore places other people disapprove of."

"But, Miss Carroll, it's all of sixty miles from here. Fifty by car and the rest on horseback over the roughest kind of trail. I know. I just came from there."

"And you are going back now?"

"Perhaps, after I leave this mail sack. But I tell you——"

"Please!" She pouted. "Don't try, because my mind is made up. The point is, will you be kind enough to take me back with you?"

"If you insist," he said shortly.

"But I still claim it's not the place for a girl. No women in camp, and the men a pack of hard-looking characters. I wouldn't be responsible for what might happen to you."

"Which makes the picture per-



fect," she tossed at him pertly, "because I draw the line at having any one responsible for me. By the way, where do we change to horses?"

"At my place."

"Great! I'll get into riding togs there." And to his very apparent dismay she picked up her overnight case, turned to the lank cowboy to add with a devastating smile, "Would you mind awfully, putting the rest of my baggage in the rumble seat?" and started for the roadster at a brisk pace.

Five minutes later they were off, Denny at the wheel, Linda beside him. For the first few miles she plied him with questions, but presently his gruff replies, mostly in monosyllables, stemmed the tide of her enthusiasm and she finally relapsed into a silence matching his own. One that held, except for an exchange of casual remarks, until they drew up at the rear of a rambling log cabin which, Denny announced, was their destination.

"Ducky place," was her thought as she sped inside to change. And after an appreciative inventory: "Just the sort one reads about! Plenty of huge comfy chairs, bear-skin rugs that make you want to lie down and roll, and what a fireplace! I'm half tempted to announce that I'll do my waiting right here."

But she didn't. Ten minutes later, she was outside again. And with the contents of her baggage transferred to Denny's duffel bag and that strapped on behind his saddle, they were on their way, Denny, grim-eyed, handsome, in the lead.

"Why did Uncle Andy call his ranch the Lucky D?" she ventured finally and because his silence nettled her. "What does it stand for?"

"Lucky Dice," he replied over his shoulder. "Because he won it on a seven up."

"Hot cat! Did they really shoot crap for ranches in the old days?"

"I'll say! And with gambling legal now, the stakes are even more insane, especially in a place like Silver City, where men and morals don't seem to be any too well acquainted."

Linda flushed. "You mean they gamble for unusual stakes?" she asked uneasily.

"For any," came the blunt retort. "They're a bad-looking lot, and I meant it when I said it wasn't the spot for a girl!"

"Oh!" was Linda's sole comment. And again the conversation lagged to a point where she was uncomfortably alone with her reflections, until at last, "It's all too utterly absurd," she told herself. "Hinting at ridiculous things that would never happen in a civilized country. He's just trying to throw a scare, probably because he doesn't like me! Or perhaps"—her pulse quickened perceptibly at the thought—"perhaps he's acting this queer way because he does! Maybe I sneaked up on his heart and he doesn't know quite what to do about it. Some Western men are like that. Bob said so. And the way he looks at me every now and then might mean almost anything!"

Presently, to test the theory and for several other vague and unanalyzed reasons, she said aloud and in her most captivating manner, "Are you really one of those strong, silent types one hears about out here, or is it just a pose to put the city child in an awed frame of mind before she meets all the big bad men?"

"Neither," he replied coolly. "If you must know, I am simply calling myself an idiot for getting mixed up in a situation of this sort."

"Really!" Little flames leaped into her eyes. "Well, I fail to see

how this could be termed a 'situation' or develop into one. You were merely returning to Silver City and I insisted on being taken along. When we arrive, you can wash your hands of me."

"It may not be as simple as all that," was his irritating reply.

"Why not? What's the weighty problem?" And when his answer was not immediately forthcoming, she mocked: "One lone woman in a mining camp, I expect. Of all the bosh! I suppose you think I'll have the entire population muttering in their beards."

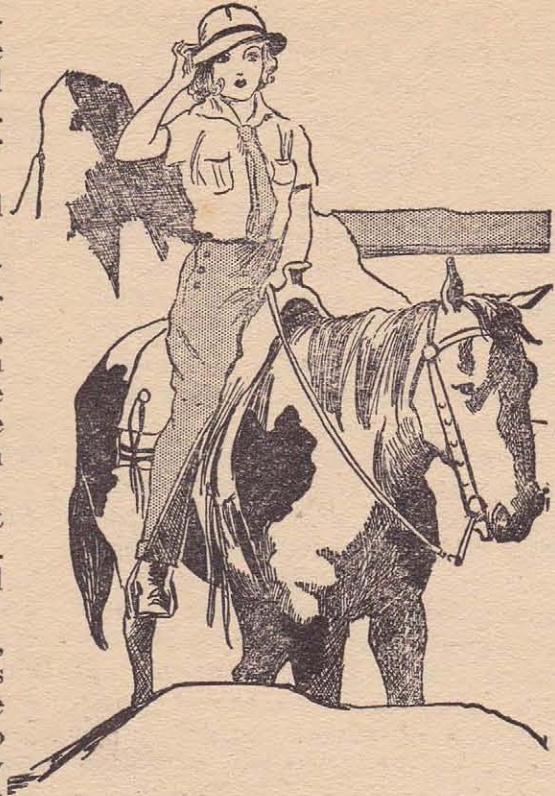
"Well, you can make a joke of it if you like," was his terse comment. "But you may change your mind after you get there."

In something less than two hours, Linda did. Even the approach was desolate and forbidding. An incline stretch up a barren mountain, so steep that looking ahead was equally as terrifying as glancing backward; then the summit, and a sharp dip, with the trail zigzagging down the very brink of rocky ledge to a sprawling plateau.

"Ugh! Scary-looking place even at dusk," Linda reflected, viewing the dingy log buildings and scattering of dejected shacks. "Maybe I shouldn't have come, after all."

The thought grew as they dismounted in front of a bleak, two-story structure labeled "Hotel" and proceeded up the steps. Almost at the top, Linda caught Denny's arm. "Who is that man?" she demanded, indicating a slim, skulking figure who had at that moment left a group of loungers and was disappearing around the corner of the porch. "He looks like the same pale-eyed, sinister individual who was staring at me so queerly at the station!"

"Couldn't be the same." Denny hurried her inside. "This is an en-



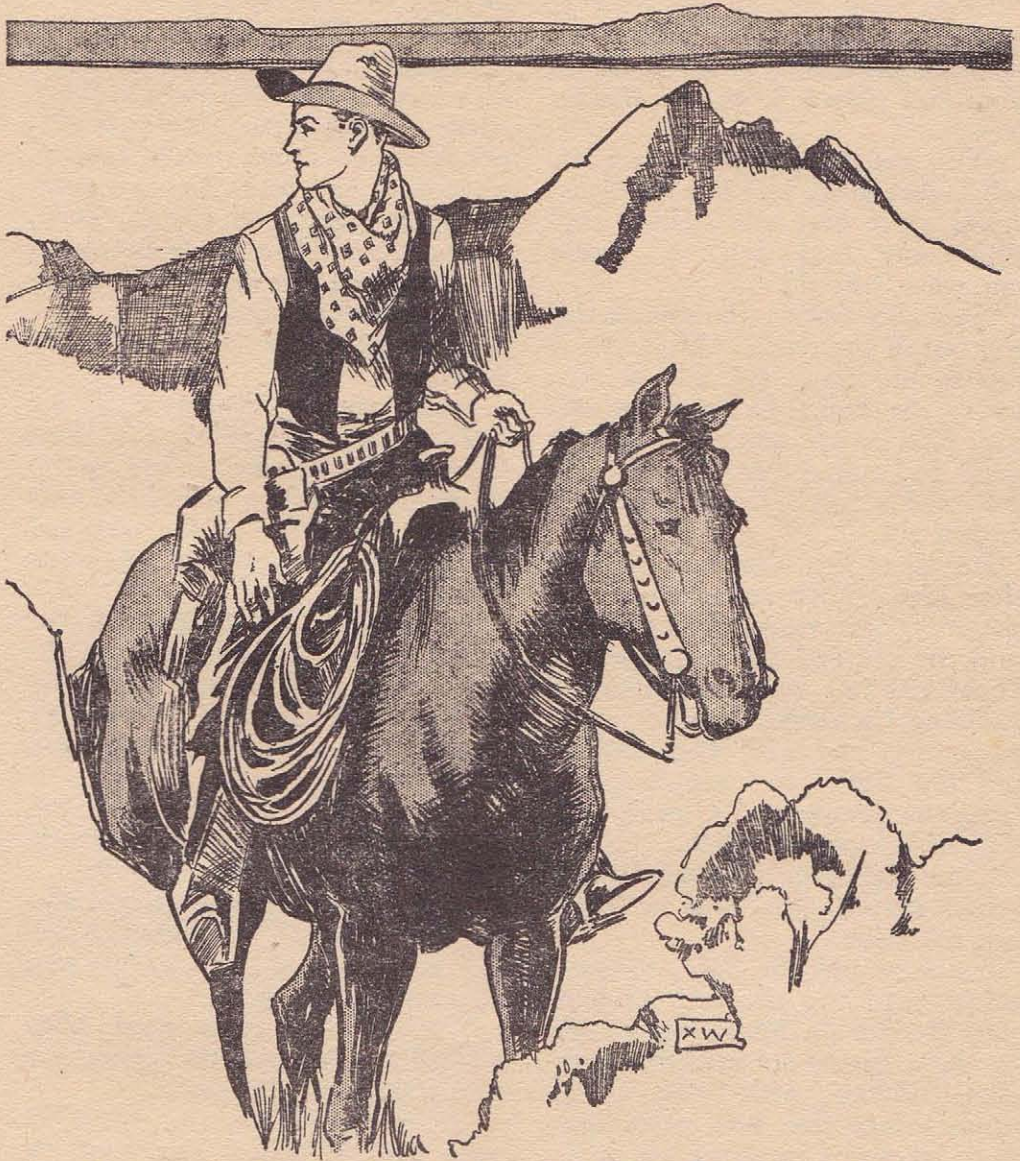
tirely different bunch." And to the rotund individual behind the desk: "A front room for Miss Carroll, Andy Walton's niece, Jake. And she'd like dinner upstairs."

"Oh, no," Linda interposed. "I want dinner——"

"Upstairs." Denny repeated it firmly, and before she could protest further, he had the key and was piloting her to the second floor.

Inside the crudely furnished room, Linda whirled on him. "What did you say that for?" she demanded. "I'm not afraid of a handful of prospectors, even if they are rough-looking. Why, I've eaten in plenty of speakeasies back home that were worse than anything here could be."

"And you are privileged to eat in as many more as you like without interference from me, when you return," Denny replied calmly. "But as long as I am under the same roof,



*"I meant it when I said Silver City wasn't the spot for a girl! Men and morals don't seem to be any too well acquainted there."*

you won't go into the camp mess room."

"Indeed!" Linda's eyes flashed. "And how long will that be?"

**LS-2A**

"One night only." He had removed a small bundle of personal belongings from the duffel bag and turned away. "I'm leaving for my

place first thing to-morrow morning. And I'll be glad to leave here."

"Oh!" The color fled from Linda's cheeks. "Then you—you came here just to bring me?" she faltered.

"Well, you insisted on coming, didn't you?" His eyes were stern, his voice impatient, as he lit an oil lamp and placed it on the shabby dresser.

"Yes, and I do thank you a lot, only"—her heart had left its accustomed place and was sinking rapidly—"only I—I won't be seeing you again, will I?"

"Probably not." He was on his way out of the room. "However, if you should want me, I'll be just across the hall. Better blow out your light pretty quick or you'll be eaten by mosquitoes." And with that, and a brief "Good night," he stalked out.

For all of ten seconds she stared after him. Then thoughtfully, reluctantly, she tossed her felt hat onto the bed and fell to unpacking. There was but one interrupting, a waddling Chinaman bearing supper on a tray; and with that finished and the duffel bag emptied, she faced the prospect of a lonely evening with weary rebellion.

"Fine ending for what should have been a perfect day," was her petulant reflection.

She blew out the light, tossed a pillow onto the sill, and dropped upon it, face on folded arms. She lay there, gazing out upon the darkened landscape, with things on her mind; things that had never been there before—a rambling log cabin, bearskin rugs, two huge chairs drawn up before a mammoth fireplace.

Drowsily, her fancy wove a picture of a tall, blond young man with stern eyes sitting in one of the chairs, of herself in the other.

Flames flickering low—lower as her eyelashes grew heavier. Music drifting through. Finally, a moment of breath-taking reality as the man rose, bent over her, and all but touched her waiting lips.

"Denny! Denny!" She awoke to the sound of his name, intermingled with raucous laughter and the tinny jangle of piano keys. Came upright, wondering in that brief moment whether it had been her own voice calling or some one else's. Then, having her mind suddenly distracted by a bellowed conversation from below, she turned again to the window to catch the full drift of its meaning.

A half minute ticked by while she listened, heart pounding, the blood flying to her cheeks. Then an instant of uncertainty, and in the next she had scrambled off the bed, fled to Denny's door, and was tapping frantically.

"It's Linda!" she whispered to the gruff inquiry. Inside the room she choked out: "Oh, I—it's outrageous—fantastic, I tell you! I wouldn't believe such a thing could happen, but it has."

"What has?" He was risen and was facing her across a paper-strewn table. "What's wrong?"

"Everything! Those great hulking brutes actually planning to roll dice for me—*me!* And calling you to get in on the game."

"Oh, so that was what they wanted." He was surveying her with irritating calmness.

"At first I thought it must be some sort of joke," she went on tremulously. "It was all so—so incredible, so utterly ridiculous, and then——" She paused for breath and presently added in desperation: "Well, aren't you going to—to do something about it? Are you just going to stand there?"

"What do you expect me to do?" he inquired with exasperating equanimity. "Challenge the crowd single-handed? Shoot up the place?"

"Oh, please," she begged. "Don't be like that! This is as serious as it is crazy. I know I was foolish to come and that I told you to wash your hands of me. But now I'm asking you to forget that and help me out of the mess. Surely there must be some way!"

"There is. I could join the game. If I won, that would settle things."

"But you might lose. No, that would be too risky." She thought a minute. Then: "I'll tell you! Why not go down, pretend to be looking on, then slip away and saddle the horses? I could skip down the back way and meet you."

"But there isn't a back way!" he told her. "I looked when I went to stable our mounts."

"Then I'll drop from your window."

"And break your neck."

"I wouldn't." She ran over to gauge the distance, then faced him breathlessly. "Think your pony could take it if I lit in the saddle?"

"Yes, but——"

"But nothing—that will shorten the drop. I'll pack and return here. Give a low whistle when you're ready."

"But, Linda, it's two stories from the ground. You couldn't make it without hurting yourself." There was genuine alarm in his voice.

"Nonsense. Stunts like that are my special hobby!" Her cheeks glowed. "Come on, let's get going!" And suiting the action to the word, she whisked from the room and across the hall to gather up her belongings.

Presently she was back. A glance at the table told her that he had left a bundle to be included in her

own. She stuffed it inside the duffel, blew out the light, and stole to the window to wait, heart pounding. After what seemed an interminable time, a whistle sounded faintly from below and she swung the bag over the sill. An instant later she slid after it. There was a moment of hanging precariously, fingers gripping the ledge, then, with a half twist, she let go and dropped expertly into the saddle.

"Good girl!" Denny applauded softly as she controlled the pony's plunging reaction and they started off. "Straight on. Head for the ledge."

"Think they've missed us yet?" Linda asked after a bit.

"Not a chance. They're too busy rolling dice."

"Then—what's that?" Almost in the instant of her speaking, a shot rang out, followed in quick succession by four more. Somewhere over Linda's head a bullet whined and she saw her companion clutch at his Stetson.

"Denny, you're not hurt?" she called in quick alarm.

"No, and with little thanks to some idiot." He whirled, snatched her pony's bridle, and started the mustangs on a wild gallop.

"But this isn't the way we came," she protested as he forced her on ahead into a cut through the mountain.

"I know. It's longer but safer. A bullet could pick us off that ledge like birds from a branch. Keep going and ride low. It's ten to one they won't follow, but we can't take chances."

They didn't. Except for a brief interval on the sharp up grades, they kept their mounts at top speed. Meanwhile, two additional shots had sounded. Then silence. Finally, when they reached a trail

Linda remembered and she was about to swing into it, Denny called sharply: "Not that way. Turn left. I'm taking you over to the Lucky D."

She pulled up short. "But I don't want to go there. You said——"

"Never mind what I said." He had ridden up beside her. "We're going just the same. At least, you won't be alone over there."

"And I won't be alone in your cabin, either," was her prompt reminder. "You'll be with me."

"That's the trouble!"

"You mean it wouldn't be proper!" she tossed back. "Well, right now I'm just a little fugitive from a mining gang and not interested in proprieties. Moreover, I draw the line on galloping up to a stranger's door at this hour to demand shelter, especially when I can be more comfortable in your cabin where I left my baggage!" And with a quick flip of her reins she swung her pony impudently about and started over the right-hand trail, leaving Denny no choice but to follow.

Thanks to moonlight and capable mounts, they made excellent time. But it was almost eleven o'clock when they finally reached the cabin, and Linda all but fell into Denny's arms getting out of the saddle.

"Tired, aren't you?" he remarked when they were inside and he had lighted a lamp. "You ought to be, after that hectic ride."

"More cold than tired." She tossed her hat onto a chair and crossed to the great open fireplace where Denny had already piled a huge log onto a foundation of lighted kindling. "Funny how chilly the nights are after that baking sun." And presently, raising her enchanting eyes teasingly to his: "Cozy here, isn't it? Now aren't

you glad that I drew the line at going to the ranch?"

He didn't reply at once, and then his answer wasn't in words. It came in a lightning gesture as he swept her into his arms, captured her lips with a swift and unnerving violence, then released them only long enough to say, "And maybe you won't draw the line at this—and this—and this," punctuating each breath-taking interlude with kisses that were less scorching but infinitely more compelling. Finally he put her from him voluntarily; left her standing there facing him, a hand to her trembling lips.

"Oh, I—I hate you!" she burst out after a long silence and because she was so terrifically afraid she might say what was really in her heart. "You—you're a beast!"

"I'm not and you know it." His eyes met hers sternly and squarely. "You asked for just what happened."

"Asked for it." She scrubbed at her mouth in outraged spoiled-child fashion. "Why, I never!"

"You did!" He was back to the flames, towering over her. "With your eyes, your lips, your attitude all day—daring me! Oh, I know your type! The East is full of them. The kind that gets a kick out of leading a fellow on and playing safe at it. You're just a little thrill chaser."

"I'm not!" she whipped back.

"Then why did you insist on returning to my cabin? And why did you want to go to Silver City with me in the first place?"

"Because I thought it would be nice to wait there for my uncle," she fibbed neatly. "And as for coming back here—well, I just liked the cabin, that's all; but I do draw the line at being—kissed," she ended in sudden confusion.

"Then I'll ask you to draw another one that will keep us far enough apart so there won't be any danger of its happening again." Denny strode to the center table, jerked out a drawer, and snatched up a piece of white chalk with volcanic determination. "Here, draw a dividing line"—indicating the middle of the room. "I'll keep strictly to the right side, which gives me the built-in bunk on the ground floor, and you may have the rest, with a bedroom off the balcony. I'm sure you will like it," he added with caustic politeness. "It's a new addition with locks that make it absolutely safe. In fact, at a glance, no one would dream there was a room up there."

In the brief silence following, their glances met and clashed. Then Linda tossed her head audaciously and, taking the chalk, marked a line up to and across the center table, ending with a flourish at the opposite baseboard. "And thanks for giving me the kitchen, too. That's a real break! However, I'll be lion-hearted and feed you at least three times a day—on your side of the table, of course!" she finished, heart doing a tap dance at the prospect.

But the next instant her hopes crashed, for he returned stiffly: "Thanks, but I know you will be relieved to hear there will be only one meal to prepare, an early breakfast, so we'll be sure to make the station in time to flag the morning train. And now I'll wish you good night and pleasant dreams."

"As though they could be!" The thought followed Linda forlornly up the short spiral staircase to her balcony room. "As though I could even sleep, knowing I'll have to leave and with my heart breaking! And it is!" she sobbed in despair during the interlude while she dis-

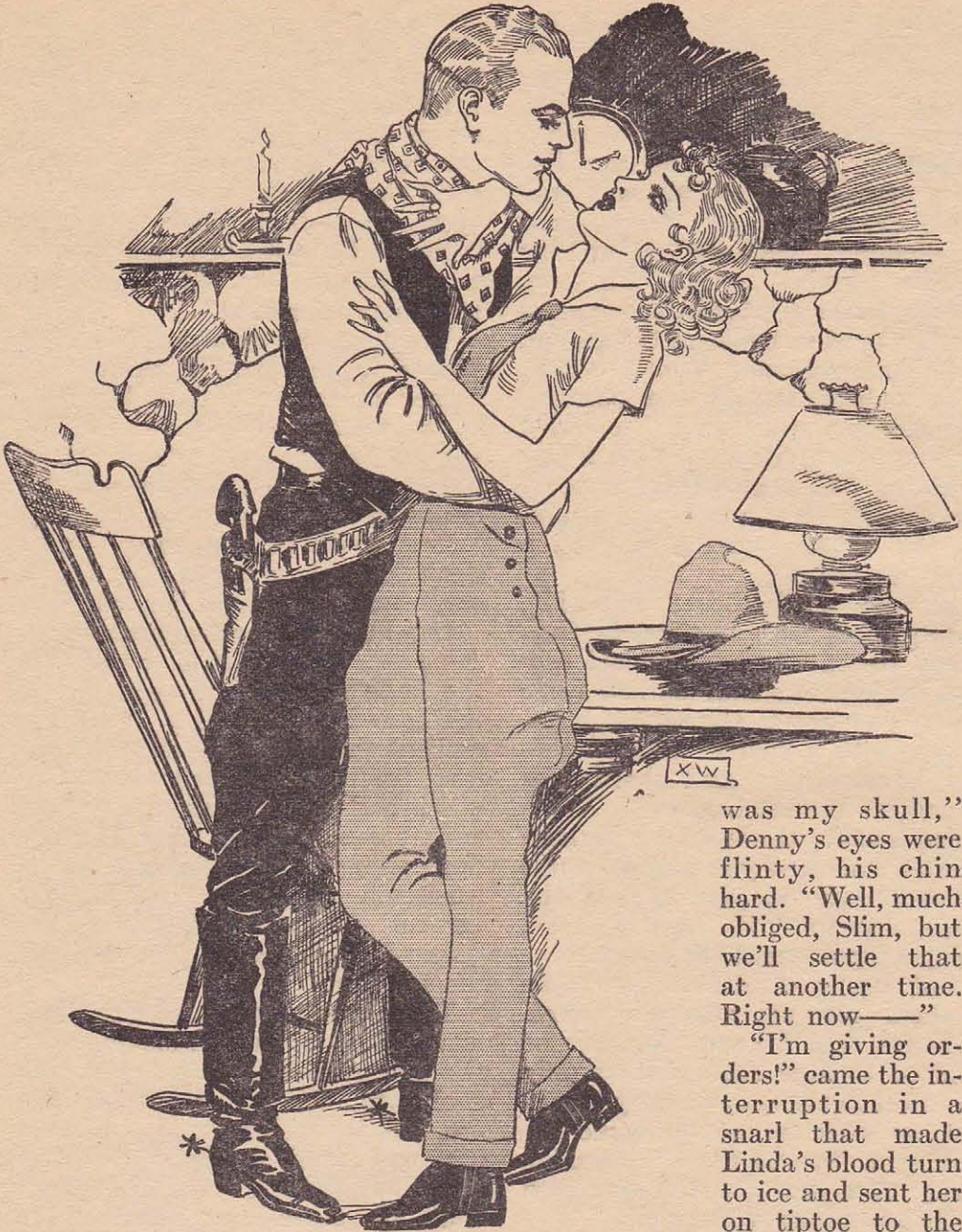
robed, bathed, and donned a mandarin suit that was the direct opposite of her mood, being a Chinese symphony in rainbow embroidery on an orange background. "Denny was right. I have been just a little thrill chaser, but I wasn't with him. It was love—from the first. I know it now. He s-stepped right out of that roadster into my heart, and he's there to s-stay!"

Weeping, she blew out the lamp, slipped in between the sheets, and turned miserably to hide her tears in the pillow. "Oh, I do love him—I do!" she choked. "Not that it will ever come to anything with his despising me the way he does, but I'd rather die than go away—and I don't know w-what to do. Oh, if only something would happen!"

In a little less than an hour, something did. She would have said that she hadn't closed her eyes, but in the instant of opening them she realized she must have slept. Realized, too, that the bellowing voice which had wakened her was strange and threatening and that Denny's tone, rising in crisp contrast, had a frightening quality; one that brought her out of bed and barefoot to the door where she could peer into the room below.

There was Denny, facing her, hands lifted, palms up, looking very tall and grim in his wool shirt and corduroys. There was a second figure, too, in leather chaps; a menacing and familiar figure, holding something in one extended hand, while the other hung fisted at his side.

It took Linda all of ten seconds to grasp that the "something" was a gun leveled at Denny's heart and that the slim young man was referring to herself when he said: "I tell you she did come with you! I saw two horses ride toward that



*In a lightning gesture he swept her into his arms, captured her lips with a swift and unnerving violence, and kissed her again and again. "Oh, I—I hate you!" she cried. "You—you're a beast!"*

mountain, and the girl was on your pinto."

"So you're the cur who put a bullet through my hat, hoping it

was my skull," Denny's eyes were flinty, his chin hard. "Well, much obliged, Slim, but we'll settle that at another time. Right now——"

"I'm giving orders!" came the interruption in a snarl that made Linda's blood turn to ice and sent her on tiptoe to the balcony rail, "This time I've got the upper hand, and I'm going to pull

a deal that will line my pockets with enough dough for a lifetime all in one nice, easy swoop! Get me kicked out of a foreman's job, will



you? Well, both you and Andy are going to pay plenty for that deal!"

"You wouldn't have been kicked out, if you had been on the level, you filthy cattle rustler!" Denny fired back. "As for making Andy or me pay, what has that to do with your ridiculous demand to see Miss Carroll and at this hour?"

"Plenty. Because I'm planning to kidnap her and take you along, too, just as an afterthought and to divert suspicion from myself. I had the kidnaping planned right after Andy said she was coming. And since you chose to make that impromptu get-away from the hotel to-night with her in tow, the scheme ought to work out swell, especially when it'll be your handwriting that goes to Andy and her folks demanding the ransom. Of course," he added with a flourish of his gun, "if I get good results, I may let you live to tell the tale, and then, again, maybe I won't."

"And you think I'll write your rotten notes?" Denny ground out. "Why, you——"

"Get back there! Undo them fingers and keep 'em high," "Slim" barked. "We've done too much talking already without getting anywhere, and a little more might make me plug you first and figure how much I needed you afterward. But right now I need that Carroll dame a darned sight more, so come clean and tell me where you hid her."

Linda didn't hear any more. Her mind that had grasped every word with terrifying clarity had reached a pitch where even threats ceased to have meaning. They were just so many words sliding through her brain. And above them a voice was pounding, "Do something—now—now!"

She stared wildly, head swimming, the room turning upside down. And

because one object was less familiar than the rest, it caught her eye and stopped spinning. It was a huge cartwheel with a polished rim, dotted at the spoke ends with oil lamps and hung by chains that merged into one. A crude but picturesque chandelier, which resumed its rightful place as the room stopped swirling and Linda's stunned mind snapped into action.

Of course—just the thing! A leap from the balcony to the chandelier. A surprise drop on that menacing figure below, bringing it to the ground, gun and all. Difficult, yes, but not impossible, for she had seen the stunt pulled time and again on a movie set. There was a chance, to be sure, that the gun might go off, but more than a gambler's chance the shot would go wild. Perfect plan, if it worked.

The bare flesh beneath her orange pajamas chilled at the thought of that initial leap. Even her fingers clutching the rail trembled. But it was a pair of steady gray eyes that measured the distance from rail to cartwheel; a brave heart that shut her mind to the consequences if she failed and opened it deliberately to the situation below, in time to hear Slim rasp out: "And I tell you, you got just thirty seconds to produce that girl. Ten's gone now, and in twenty more you'll be laid out like one of your rugs. One—two——"

There was a whirl of legs as Linda crossed the rail; an orange streak shooting into space. Then a mighty lurch when her fingers contacted the wheel and the floor rushed up to meet her, bringing bedlam with it in a mingling of shouts and oaths; a gun thundering, then oblivion.

"Darling—darling!" It was an anguished call, the pressure of tender, strong arms, that finally brought Linda to a wavering con-

sciousness. "Oh, my sweet, speak to me! Linda, precious!"

"Denny!" she whispered. "Oh, dearest, you're hurt!"

"Just a scratch where the bullet grazed my cheek. But you—you're all right?"

"Yes." She wriggled experimentally. "Probably a little black and blue, but——" She raised abruptly on one elbow and, finding herself in a huge bed in a strange room, added in sudden bewilderment, "Where am I?"

"At the Lucky D Ranch. We brought you here a half hour ago, but details later. Right now I'm interested in only one thing. Did you mean it when you called me 'dearest' a moment ago? Oh, say you did, Linda," he pleaded. "Say you love me—just a little. I've lived an eternity since I saw you make that terrible leap. I know you did it to save my life, and I'm no end grateful, but what if something had happened to you?"

"Or you," she added, the hunger in her eyes matching his own. "Oh, Denny, I've been such a little fool!"

"No, darling. You've been brave, adorable, and much too good for the blundering fellow who loved you the minute he saw you this morning. But tell me you do care for me."

She told him, lips to his; arms about his neck, clasping him as tightly as he clasped her, while seconds melted in the magic of kisses. And it was not until minutes later that she finally thought to ask: "But Slim, Denny—what became of him? And what made that chandelier come down? Tell me all!"

"O. K." He sat down on the bed and settled her comfortably against him. "Beginning with the chandelier, I might say that the idea of having it raised and lowered on a rope wrapped around nails on the

side wall was my own invention and working nicely until you turned acrobat. Then the nails gave way and Slim got the works."

Linda paled. "You mean he is dead."

"No—very much alive, in fact, but considerably damaged and now in the bunk house being patched up by some of the boys. You see, a couple of them at Silver City became suspicious when Slim followed us over the mountain, and they rode after him. When they discovered that we weren't at the ranch, they went on to my cabin, arriving just in time to find you unconscious and me half crazy for fear you might be worse than that."

"Silly boy," Linda teased. "Grumpy and stern for hours, then suddenly——"

"Don't," he begged, "remind me what a chump I've been. I should have told you the truth about Bob's scheme right off."

"Bob's scheme?" Linda came up-right in his arms. "What was that?"

"A wild attempt to show you the West as you imagined it was—hard riding, a tough mining camp, rough-necks rolling dice with your honor at stake!" He grinned. "In other words, a possible cure for the thrill chaser! The original plan called for Andy to take you over to Silver City on some pretext or other, but when he was called away and Bob wired me to arrange everything at the last minute, well, he had been so wonderful in getting me a job out here when I needed a start, that I just couldn't let him down!"

"You mean——"

"That the whole deal was a frame-up, staged by a company of actors on location. Bob got the idea when Andy wrote that some movie outfit had leased his mining property for a "Western." Naturally, the

plan called for a breath-taking flip of the dice as a finish, in which I would win and save you from the pack. However, your idea of slipping away appealed to me more, and I had planned to tell you the whole story on the way back to the ranch. Then the bullets started zipping, and, not knowing that Slim was around, I couldn't imagine what was up and decided not to say anything until I found out. Later, I made such a mess of everything that I thought the only sensible move was to let you return, wire Helene to pull the house party as originally planned, and follow you East to try my luck at winning you there."

"Helene—house party!" Linda faltered. "You know my sister?" And to Denny's quick nod: "Oh, then you must be that interesting young man she tried to tell me about."

"Interested, you mean! I've wanted to know you ever since Ted sent me your snapshot taken at our Southampton place. I even wrote Helene to fix it for me when she and Bob took our house for the summer."

"Your house!" Linda's eyes were wide.

"Yes. I'm Courtney Kvale. Didn't you know? But of course not! The boys here call me 'Denny,'

short for Dennison, my middle name. Andy suggested it when I first came. Said Courtney sounded too Park Avenue for a cowboy."

"But you are one, aren't you?" Linda raised eager eyes to his.

"I was, at first. Later Andy made me his partner. And just before he went East I arranged to buy his interest in the Lucky D, which means that you'll be a rancher's wife now, darling. But you won't mind that, will you?" he pleaded.

"Mind it?" Linda's heart pranced. "I'll adore it. But, if you really loved me so much," she whispered, nestling close, "why did you ask me to draw that horrid chalk line and tell me to keep on my side of it?"

Denny smiled a little. "Well, at the time, I probably imagined I was afraid to trust myself too close to you, honey. But now I can think of a much better reason."

"And that is?" she asked softly.

For a long minute he looked deeply at her. Then his head bent down, his arms closed tightly about her, and he said huskily, "Because chalk rubs out so easily, precious!" And in the next instant his lips flamed to hers in the burning ecstasy of first love; a love which Denny's kisses were promising would endure forever, transforming life into a glorious procession of thrills!

Ashamed of your looks?  
Sallow Skin?  
Blemishes? Headaches?



## STOP CONSTIPATION

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# Cornflower-blue

By Phyllis A. Whitney

**B**ARBARA sat on a fallen tree trunk near the edge of the woods and turned her back upon the sunset. What time had she for sunsets in this complete moment of humiliation? Now that she'd had time to realize the ridiculous depths to which she had sunk, she felt more ashamed than she had early in the afternoon, when the miserable thing had happened.

From the veranda of Pine Lodge came the chatter of voices. The late

summer guests were gathering for their evening fun—bridge, dancing; a group around the piano, perhaps, singing "Oh, Susannah!" with Bill Hampton's deep voice in the lead.

Barbara put her brown hands over her ears to shut out any possibility of hearing that voice. She never wanted to hear it again. Never, never! And yet the muffled echo of it sent an unwanted thrill through her.

A finger of sunlight, curious, per-

haps, of this rebel who refused to join in the sunset rites, slanted through the trees, seeking her out with its rosy touch. It tinted the pale-blue cornflowers of her thin dress and caught a tiny gleam of red in the neat brown coil of hair at the nape of her neck.

Barbara shrugged away from the warm touch and moved farther into the shade. She wished that darkness would come down and blot her out completely. If only that terrible laughter would stop ringing in her ears—her friend Adela's, high and scornful; Bill Hampton's, hearty with amusement.

If only she could have killed herself! Broken her neck or even an arm, so that they would have been sorry for her. But just to fall from the back of an old nag like Maude and land practically on her head in a soft bank of pine needles! It was too absurd.

She flushed at the memory.

Even then it mightn't have been so bad if Bill hadn't come originally from Montana where, it appeared, people were born with their feet in stirrups. Bill simply couldn't understand any one who wasn't able to sit a horse. And then, to make matters worse, there was Adela, who could ride like a rodeo queen.

The simile was Bill's and it had amused Adela tremendously. Adela Ash, heiress to goodness only knew how many millions, and accustomed to the most exclusive hunt parties in America, being likened to a rodeo queen! She had laughed until Bill's brown face had become one enormous blush, and then she had dug her heels into Sorcerer's sides so that he had gone off down the trail like the wild streak of lightning he was, and Bill had been hard put to catch her.

That was when Barbara had tried

desperately to follow and had dug her own heels into Maude's well-covered ribs. Maude, who had been nibbling an appetizer by the wayside, had been startled and had dashed clumsily after the others with great gallumps that made very little speed and served only to deposit Barbara ignobly in her bed of pine needles.

They'd returned after a minute or two and found her there, before she'd collected her wits sufficiently to sit up and pick the cones and needles out of her hair. Would she ever forget Bill's deep-blue, amused eyes as he'd sat in his saddle, looking down at her? Eyes that had somehow the look of the West in them and made her feel that if she gazed long enough she might find the reflection of hazy Montana distances in their depths.

"Hurt?" he'd said, and she could see his chest shaking with laughter that threatened to break free at any moment.

She *was* hurt. She felt sore all over, inside and out. Her hairpins were coming loose and so, she was certain, were her teeth. And by looking cross-eyed at the end of her nose, she could see the big lump of earth on its tip. But she couldn't sit there and ache and wait for his laughter to come. Adela was already laughing, and that was bad enough.

She managed a smile that she knew was lopsided and clambered unsteadily to her feet.

"Oh, no," she said. "I'm not hurt a bit."

She hadn't meant to say anything so ordinary. She'd wanted to make some completely flip and nonchalant remark that would show them how unimportant a fall from a horse could be. But she wasn't like Adela, who could think of smart

wisecracks on the spur of any moment. She just stood looking up at Bill with eyes that felt suddenly enormous because of the tears that were beginning to fill them. Much as she wanted to, she couldn't look anywhere else. She stared at Bill until his laughter spilled over and crushed her to the last humiliating depths.

"Your face looks so odd, Babs, dear," Adela said. "I think Maude must have stepped on it. Haven't you a hanky?"

Bill's laughter broke at that, deep, enormous, shattering, so that the very pines shook with the echo. Barbara kept widening her eyes, because if she squeezed them shut ever so slightly, the furious, scalding tears would spill over.

And then Bill's laughter stopped as suddenly as it had begun and he took an immense, snow-white, neatly folded handkerchief from the pocket of his shirt and handed it to her.

"Here," he said gently, "take mine."

She had taken it from him, very dignified, very stiff; said a polite "Thank you," and turned about on the trail.

"Hi!" called Adela, "You forgot your horse!"

But she was running by then—wildly, blindly. Through the woods; stumbling, catching herself against the trunk of a tree, then running on again. She hadn't stopped until she'd slammed the door of her room shut behind her and thrown herself on the bed to fill Bill's handkerchief completely with muddy tears.

Now, hours later, here on the edge of the woods, she could be calm about the whole affair, but no less depressed. From the first she had been an impulsive little fool.

Adela had so obviously wanted to go riding alone with Bill. But Bill had been polite enough to ask them both and she had accepted in the face of Adela's disapproval.

Adela had every right to disapprove. Had she not made this vacation possible by paying all Barbara's expenses, just for the sake of Barbara's company? It was wrong to suspect sometimes that Adela enjoyed having her along because she was like a quiet, brown little wren, and set off Adela's blond beauty to perfection. Thoughts like that weren't loyal. Adela could be so very sweet and generous, and most of the time she was. Had she not befriended Barbara back in school when she was just a nobody and Adela the most popular girl in their group?

It was just when some one crossed Adela's will that the knife edge showed.

There was a light crackling of steps on the path behind and Barbara turned about. It was Adela, her golden head rising from crisp, white folds of organdy and a scent of jasmine following her.

"Feel better after your Prince-of-Wales?" she asked gayly. "Bill and I nearly died laughing. I think even Sorcerer smiled."

"Just so Maude didn't join in the merriment," Barbara said grimly.

Then Adela's expression changed. "Come along," she said more kindly. "We'd better get started. A canoe ride after dark isn't much fun when there isn't a moon."

Barbara stood up listlessly. "Are we going for a canoe ride?"

"Just you and I. I was invited for a swim, but I told Bill I'd better stay with you this evening. After all, you've had a bad day."

Adela went ahead down the path toward the lake and Barbara found

herself following indifferently. So Bill had invited Adela for a swim? Well, why not? She was a marvelous swimmer, a spectacular swimmer, with all the graceful diving and perfect strokes that went to make up an exhibition performance; while she, Barbara, had only two or three steady, plugging strokes that were not notable for form, but that managed to keep her above water.

Adela was chattering on and on about Bill. Barbara found herself listening, suddenly intent.

"So here I am, Babs darling—head-over-heels in love. And with a wild man from Montana."

Some deep, secret little thing in Barbara's heart winced and twisted.

"You've been in love before," she said dryly.

Adela gave a quick backward glance over one shoulder. "The child grows cynical. But it's the real thing this time. I might even go through with it and marry him."

"And live on a ranch?"

"Don't be weird! He'll have to give up the ranch. Not enough money to keep it going. I'd get dad to give him a real job."

"Has—has Bill said anything yet?"

"No, of course not." Adela tossed her bright head. "That's what makes the game exciting. He likes me tremendously. But he doesn't know yet that he can't live without me."

The path dipped abruptly toward the water and they could see the landing below them, framed by the sweeping branches of a willow. The canoes bobbed with every ripple of the shining water and the boatman sat at the end of the wharf, his legs dangling, a corncob pipe in his mouth. He saw them coming and stood up.

But Adela was in no hurry. She

turned suddenly and looked up at Barbara on the path above.

"I'll win, of course. I've never yet lost anything that I wanted terribly. And I want Bill. I want him so much that I wouldn't stand for interference—from any one. Not even you!"

Barbara stared. "Not even me? What in the world do you mean?"

"You know what I mean. Do you suppose I didn't see those moon-struck eyes of yours this afternoon when you sat there on the ground staring at him? As though you'd never seen the man before! I won't have you making yourself pitiful. It may be your only weapon, but you're not to use it. He's such a big soft ninny of a man—as far as his heart's concerned—that he'd fall in love with a caterpillar if he got sorry enough for one."

She turned about and went down the path to the landing, all sweetness now and charm, so that the boatman bustled about fetching extra pillows from the other canoes.

Barbara took his horny hand numbly and slipped into one of the low seats. She felt chilled, shocked, terrified. Her fingers were stiff as she dipped her paddle in the rosy waters. The canoe slid away from the landing and out onto the wide, glassy world of the lake. How really awful of Adela to accuse her of—of making herself *pitiful* in order to attract Bill.

"I'll go home to-morrow," she said quietly. "It's been kind of you to bring me here, but of course, I couldn't stay after this."

Adela raised her paddle and twisted about in the seat ahead so that the canoe swayed dangerously.

"Don't be ridiculous. I apologize. I—I lost my head for a minute. It wouldn't do at all to have you leave suddenly in the middle of our stay."



*"I've never yet lost anything that I wanted terribly," said Adela. "And I want Bill. I want him so much that I wouldn't stand for interference—from any one. Not even you!"*

Barbara was silent. The trapped feeling of terror was growing in her heart. Had there been some truth in the things Adela had said? Had there been some special reason for her tears of shame and her wild, stumbling haste in the woods? A

more important reason than the fact that she had been made ridiculous by her fall from a horse?

She wielded her paddle fiercely so that Adela turned again and looked at her in surprise.

"Careful, Babs. Don't get ex-



cited and spill us overboard. The water looks icy to-night. It's getting much too late for swimming at this hour, though I wouldn't admit that to Bill."

Barbara controlled the motion of her paddle and the canoe slid quietly around a curve of the bank, bringing them in full view of the float and diving board out above deep water. And at that first quick glimpse of the float and its lone occupant, Barbara knew the answer to all her questioning.

She was in love with Bill. Through some cruel prank of Fate the very sight of him, tall and brown, poised at the end of the board, sent a sick feeling of despair through her body.

Adela's eyes were upon Bill, too. And Adela in the twilight was golden-white and lovely and fragile. Her bright lips were parted and her breath came quickly as she waited for Bill to see her.

The canoe drifted along the smooth surface and Barbara found herself leaning a little to one side so that her own small brown face looked up at her from the mirror of the water. What chance had a face like that—a face that seemed all wide eyes—against Adela's golden beauty? And even if there had been a chance, even a tiny sliver of a chance, she must not take it, because of the debt she owed Adela. What did it matter that Adela had turned suddenly cheap and rather dreadful, when the debt she owed stretched back through all the years of Adela's kindness?

She looked at the diving board in time to see Bill's lean, hard body cut the water in a clean knife-thrust of a dive. Bill did everything well—just as Adela did. What a pair they would make! When she, Barbara, did anything spectacular, it was

only because she lost her head and followed the first call of any impulse that stirred her. That was why she always ended in humiliation and shame.

Bill pulled himself up the ladder of the float and waved one long arm at the canoe.

"Watch this one, girls! It's new—just perfected."

He ran lightly out upon the board, steadied himself for an instant, drew a deep breath and shot into the air. Up and up, with all the grace and vigor of his youth. Then over and back down. But the dive was new and he'd misjudged his distance.

Barbara clapped a horrified hand to her mouth to stifle the scream that rose as Bill's dark head cracked sharply against the edge of the board just before he disappeared into the water. She did not know that Adela was whimpering wildly in the other end of the canoe. She did not know that she, herself, had risen precariously to her feet. She knew only that her whole body ached with the effort her eyes were making to see down through the center of that widening arc of ripples.

Then, still only half conscious of her actions, she kicked off her slippers and stood up on the seat of the canoe, while the boat rocked wildly beneath her. Then she was in the water, Adela's scream as the canoe went over, ringing in her ears.

The first shock was icy, deadening. The surface of the lake closed above her head and she could feel the downward drag of her clothing. Then she was up again, cutting through the water toward that terrible place where Bill had disappeared. A great breath of air filled her lungs before she plunged downward again, her eyes fighting

the cold, black depths of the lake.

Oh, God, let her find him! Let her find him quickly, before it was too late! She *had* to find him. Without Bill all the brightness and life would have gone out of the world.

She dived again, and struck into his body, floating near the surface. She clutched at it wildly, lifting his head, working furiously with her feet and one free arm to keep them both on top. It seemed that she would never get enough air to breathe again and Bill was so dead and heavy in the water. She could feel her strength slipping weakly away, while her mind, sharper than it had ever been, worked like lightning, focusing now here, now there, on every possibility of safety.

The diving float was appallingly far away, and so, too, was the shore line. She might make the float, but the possibility of clinging to it and holding Bill above water would be beyond her strength. The thought of Adela returned with a shock and her eyes swept the lake and discovered the overturned canoe, drifting steadily toward the opposite shore. For the moment there was no sign of Adela.

It would be better, then, to try for land. Perhaps she would find shallow water as she neared shore. She struck out valiantly, her left arm holding Bill's chin above water, while with her right she struggled for a slow progress. Her thin dress was heavy, impeding her every movement; her heart pounded in her ears, and each gasp of breath tantalized her and made the next one more difficult.

She thought of screaming, but dismissed the idea immediately. She was too far from the hotel to be heard above the singing and the music, and her breath was too

precious to be wasted in futile effort.

One more stroke, one more gasp of air, one more tired drag of her left arm, then the whole process must be repeated. A sudden, wild movement of her burden sent a splash of water into her mouth and nose. She choked and released her hold for an instant, backing away in the water. The clarity of her horrified mind told her instantly what had happened. Bill had returned to half-consciousness, and finding himself in the water had begun the natural struggles of a drowning man.

She was frightened now; more frightened than at any moment since that terrible crack of Bill's head against the diving board. There had been a chance of reaching safety with Bill unconscious. But Bill, conscious, was a menace to them both. A tiny spot of gold, far away toward shore caught her eye.

"Adela!" she called, her voice scarcely more than a whisper. "Adela! Help!"

Then Bill's hand closed brutally upon one shoulder, dragging her beneath the water. As she went down, she caught a single glimpse of his staring, unseeing eyes and she knew that in that instant—and through no fault of his own—he was completely mad.

She struggled fiercely against the grip that was drowning them both, twisting her shoulder wildly away from his fingers. Once, as they came to the top together, choking, fighting, she broke away, only to be clutched again and dragged under.

When they reached the top once more, she found that she was fighting insanely for her own life—as insanely as poor, half-conscious Bill was fighting for his. And in the horrified instant of her realization, a sudden cool reserve of strength came

to her and her mind cleared. What was it she had read about drowning people being easily knocked out?

She broke away and lifted a brown fist in the water. Bill floundered toward her at once and she struck him with all her might straight between the eyes.

He slumped at once and she caught his head and held it firmly above water. The remainder of her struggle toward shore was a nightmare of agonized effort; of tiny gasps of air coming like knife-thrusts to her tortured lungs; of weary muscles striving to do her bidding. In the end she was barely conscious of shallow water, of mud beneath her feet, and of Adela's strong white arms dragging Bill to safety. Then her knees sagged and a black wave engulfed her.

When consciousness returned she found herself lying half out of the water, her cheek against a bank of mud, her eyes staring into the mud-stiffened grass of the shore edge. With an effort she sat up and saw Adela on the bank above her, kneeling beside Bill's limp body, working with strong, sure hands to force the water from his lungs.

Adela glanced at her sharply. "Are you strong enough to go for help?"

Wearily Barbara dragged herself to her feet. "I—I think I can make it. Is he—will he——"

"He'll be all right."

Barbara turned and stumbled toward the path. Something was puzzling her, knocking insistently at the back of her mind. Some question to which she had to know the answer.

"Adela, why didn't you help me?"

"Don't be a fool!" Adela tossed her wet, curly head. "The two of you might have dragged me down,

if I had. Besides, I was half drowned myself after the sudden way you ducked me into that icy lake. It was lucky for you that I was able to swim for shore and was here in time to help you in."

"I see," said Barbara quietly.

The singers on the hotel veranda greeted her with shocked little cries as she strode suddenly out of the dusk and up the steps.

"Why, Barbara, my dear, you're absolutely soaked!"

"Babs! Did you fall in the lake?"

"Where's Adela? What's happened?"

And over and over again from all sides the word: "Adela!"

Barbara steadied herself carefully against pillar of the veranda. "Bill Hampton was nearly drowned. Adela's all right. She's giving him first aid now. You'd better go down there right away—somebody——"

She swayed a little, but they were no longer listening to her words. Two of the boys had vaulted the veranda rail and the rest of the party streamed after them. She waited a moment for her strength to return and then went to her room.

The tall mirror on her closet door gave back her dreadful reflection. Her blue-flowered dress had been torn half away from one shoulder, her brown hair was a limp, untidy mass, caked with mud along one cheek. She slipped out of her torn, wet clothes and put on a heavy beach robe. Then, having soaked some of the mud from her face, she went back to the veranda.

She was just in time to witness the return of the crowd from the lake. They had lit torches of pine and the flickering light fell upon upturned faces as the group came up the hill. Bill's face, white and smiling, as he stumbled along, aided by a strong shoulder on either side.



*"Don't be a fool!" Adela tossed her head. "Why should I have helped you save Bill? The two of you might have dragged me down. Go to the hotel for help quickly."*

Adela's golden hair glinting in the torchlight, her lovely body molded by her wet white dress. Two of the boys had made a cradle for her of

their crossed hands and she sat in it, swinging her bare feet, a triumphant young princess.

She was talking, her voice gay.

"Poor kid! You mustn't blame her and you mustn't laugh at her. I'll never forget the frightened look on her face when the canoe went over."

A voice in the background spoke up. "She might have helped you, at least."

Then Adela again, "That's not nice of you, Jerry. You know she doesn't swim very well. I think it was marvelous of her to get herself to shore and help drag Bill in when I gave out."

"Adela, you're so generous!"—a girl's voice, tense with worship.

And then Bill, suddenly. "Hush! She's up there on the veranda."

To Barbara it was as though a sudden pit had yawned sickeningly at her feet, leaving her with the knowledge that on all sides there was empty space, waiting to suck her down. She closed her eyes for an instant against the dizzy precipice.

So Adela had done this to her? Kind, generous Adela, who was her friend. Then she raised her lids again and her gaze fell upon Bill as he came up the steps. A warm flood of thankfulness filled her. What did it matter—so long as Bill was alive and well?

If it was glory Adela wanted—very well, she would give her glory. She would give her the thing she wanted so desperately that she was willing to lie and cheat for it. And when the giving was done, she, Barbara, would be free of Adela, out of her debt forever.

They came up the steps noisily and she waited, muffled and small in the great towel-like folds of her robe.

"Are you all right?" she asked as the two men who had been carrying Adela lowered her to the veranda.

"I'll say she is!" Bill said quickly. "She's got the strength and nerve

of three men. I must have been a handful out there in the lake."

Barbara could see Adela's eyes upon her in the lamplight from the veranda, cold, watchful, treacherous.

"You were a handful," Barbara said, and Adela broke in quickly.

"Never mind that. Come along, Babs, and help me into some dry clothes."

"We'll have to celebrate!" cried the girl with the worshipping voice. "We don't have heroines up here every day in the week."

"Right!" agreed Jerry. "A party in Adela's honor. Get you gone, woman, and into your glad rags."

Adela, with laughter on her lips and vigilance in her eyes, came quickly across to Barbara and took her arm.

"It'll have to be a party for us both. I couldn't have managed alone, you know. Come, Babs."

But Barbara had no intention of leaving the security of her railing until she had taken her stand and allayed Adela's fears.

"You were wonderful," she said gently. "I—I thought he'd pull you under for good once or twice."

Adela had the grace to wince, but only Barbara saw. Bill was laughing ruefully.

"You ought to have let me sink, my dear. I'm not worth one pretty golden hair of your head. I can't remember a thing that happened after that crack, until the time when I came to with you working over me, but I must have been a terror."

"You were!" Barbara repeated, with a reckless little laugh. She must say it now—now, before this growing weakness and nausea swept her away. "I—I saw it all from the bank. If she hadn't struck you, you'd have both been drowned. But she did, and then pulled you in!"

"Knocked me out, eh?" said Bill.

"Brave girl! Did I put up any kind of scrap when you got me to the bank?"

Adela shook her bright head. "You were limp as a rag when I turned you over to Babs, and you didn't even start to wake up until I caught my breath and got to work on you."

Very gravely Bill bent and kissed her full on the lips, while the others cheered and Barbara, leaning against the rail, closed her eyes against the dizziness that pulled her down. She mustn't faint. Not here—not now! This was Adela's moment and she must do nothing to spoil it.

Then, somehow, they had all swept away and into the lodge, Adela a laughing white water-sprite in their midst. Barbara felt her way to the steps and crept weakly down them. It was only a short distance to her log at the edge of the woods and she made it on wavering feet. Then she sank gratefully down upon its mossy side and closed her eyes.

She had done her part. She was finished. She could be nothing but a spoil-sport at the party, and if she stayed away, she would never be missed. The others did not want her. She had seen their looks of derision and scorn. To-morrow she would slip quietly away from Pine Lodge and never see Bill again.

Never see him again? Never see his dear brown face and laughing eyes? That was where the pain began.

A mist of tears came before her own eyes and suddenly she was down upon the ground beside the log, her head pillowed against one soft arm, while the sobs broke raggedly in her throat.

She felt the light upon her before she saw it and raised wet lids to its

glare. There was some one standing there, turning a flashlight upon her.

"Go away!" she cried. "Couldn't they leave her alone in her misery?"

"Sorry," said Bill's deep voice from beyond the gleam. "I didn't mean to startle you. But I had to find you."

Barbara wept into her closed fingers. "Oh, why did you? Why can't you go away and let me be?"

"Because," Bill said, "I had to ask you a question or two. Won't you try to answer me?"

She looked up then, straight into the yellow light and he moved the torch mercilessly and laid it upon the log so that its long beam fell upon his own face as well as hers.

"There are one or two things I had to know," he went on. "And since you saw most of what happened, I wanted you to tell me. You're quite sure I wasn't conscious at all on the beach—didn't put up any kind of fight while you were near me?"

She shook her head wearily. "Adela's already told you. You were only conscious once and that was out in the lake. The rest of the time you were just a rag doll."

"I see," he said gravely, and suddenly he was kneeling there in the grass, spreading something beside her on the log. "This is what bothers me—if the only time I put up a scrap was out in the lake when you were completely out of reach, how do you account for the fact that when I came to on the bank, I was clutching this in one hand?"

Barbara stared at the thing on the log. It was a torn scrap of blue-flowered material—the cap sleeve ripped from her blue dress. There was nothing to be said, no explanation that would serve. She could only look at it dumbly while her

heart commenced a wild pounding in her throat.

Bill took her hands gently into his own big ones. "Shall we go up and spoil Adela's party?"

Barbara started up from the log. "Oh, no—please!"

Bill's laugh was a joy to hear. "I knew you wouldn't want to. You're too brave and sweet and honest."

"Oh, no! No, I'm not. I was afraid out there in the lake. I was afraid you were going to drown me, and I wanted desperately to live."

"So you continued to risk your life to get me to safety. Just as you risked it earlier to-day when it was perfectly obvious that you were frightened to death of a horse. That's the kind of courage we like in the West, my dear. That's why you're going back there with me."

"Back there with you?"

He was laughing again—a tender, mocking laugh. "Do you think for a minute that I'd take 'No' for an answer? Sweet little Barbara! I've been trying to get you alone ever since I met you, but Adela was playing dragon. She played it again to-night when I asked you both for a swim. She said you were afraid of the water when it was cold and she didn't want to leave you. And all

the time she thought I didn't know she was lying."

"But—why did you kiss her to-night?"

"Because she all but asked for it. Because that was the pay she wanted. And so I gave it to her. Right on her sweet, lying lips—with a kiss that was a lie. But I didn't kiss her the way I'm going to kiss you."

Big arms swept about her suddenly and firm lips came down upon hers and Barbara knew that never in all her gay, spoilt life had Adela Ash been kissed like that.

After a long interval Bill lifted her in his arms. "Baby!" he whispered. "I've got to look after you from now on. Off you go to bed and you're not to get up till noon to-morrow. After that we'll go into the details that'll turn you into a ranch wife back in Montana."

Back in Montana! Somehow it sounded like home. Her head drooped wearily against Bill's shoulder as he carried her toward the lodge, but her heart was singing an endless little song of its own. And not even Bill saw that in one small brown fist she clutched for a talisman a tiny scrap of cornflower-blue.



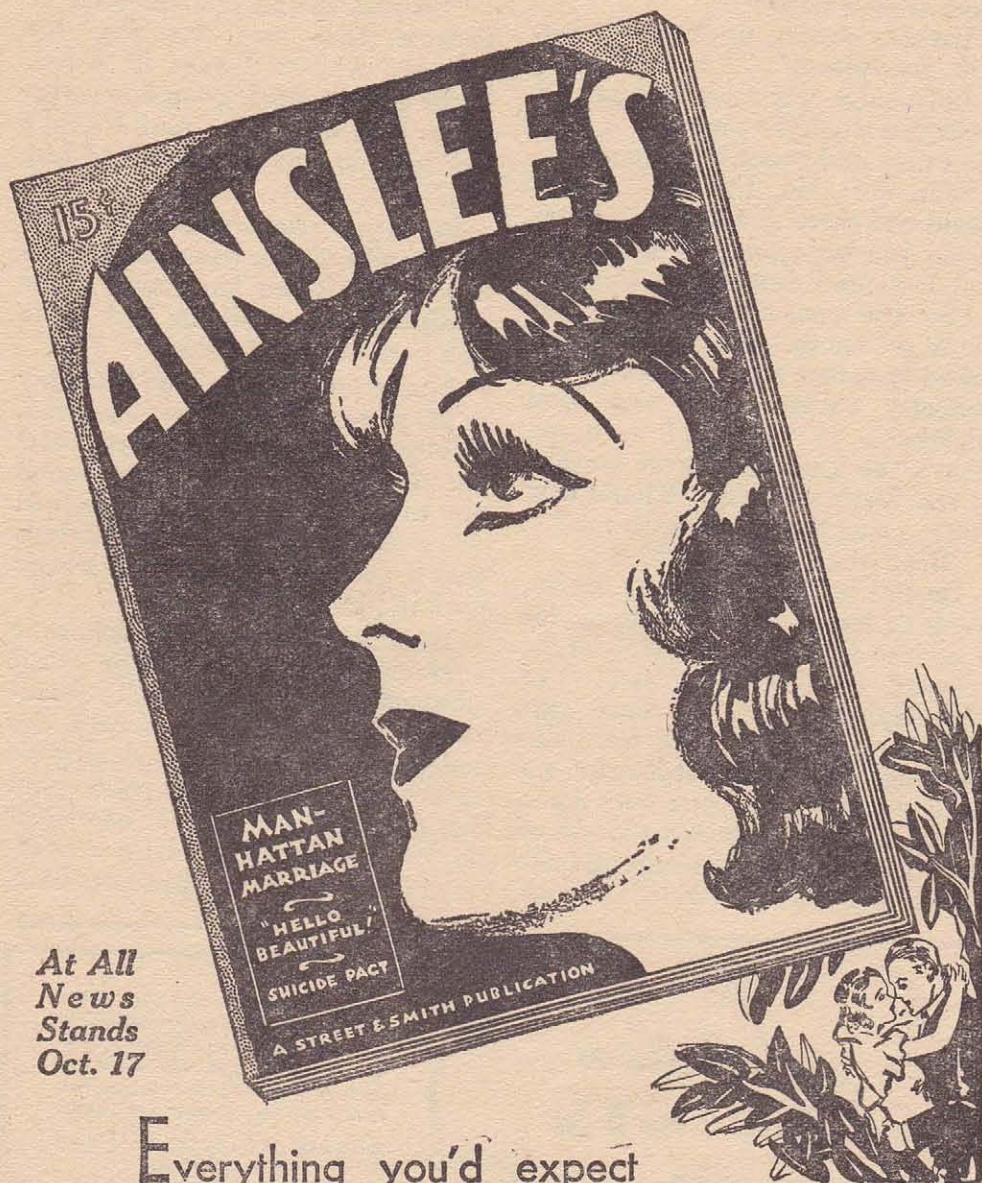
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# Forgotten Bride

By Cordelia Snow

A Two-part Story—Part I.

## CHAPTER I.

It was fall—late fall—with the tang of coming winter in the air. In their shrubbery-hidden nook, high on the ridge of Campus Hill, Dawn turned in Jack's circling arms, to stare before her, from smoldering, misted eyes.

Asters were blooming, long rows of them. Purple and yellow and white, they edged the winding walks, and clumped themselves against the school's walls.

The air was sweet with the odor of a hundred bonfires, and the waters of Lake Menhota, shown, a blue-green opal, between trees.

Beauty was a pain at Dawn's heart, an ache in her throat.

This college on a hill, this little world within a world—how she loved it! How she loved its youth and laughter and gayety. And the boy beside her, the boy whose arms held her, the gaunt, brown-faced boy, with the burning eyes and angry lips.

They had met early in the summer, Dawn Arden and Jack Laird. It had been at the Dunes, where Dawn and her aunt had been staying. Jack had been a life-guard. A golden-brown god high on his throne on Lake Michigan's yellow sands, and Dawn a violet-eyed neophyte, her seventeen-year-old worship, incense at his feet.

It had been love at first sight for both. An idolatrous, crazy love. A love of langorous days and glamorous star-lit nights. Of ecstasy and wonder and bliss. A love that swept even Dawn's staid and thin-lipped aunt on its surging tide.

"It isn't that Jack isn't a nice boy," she had grugged in answer to Dawn's pleading, "But I'll have none of this 'being engaged.' You're only seventeen, and that's too young. You must have a year in college—Jack's college, if you want it that way, and both of you free. Then, if you still want each other, still think you're in love——"

Still want each other! Still think they were in love! Dawn thought of that now, and snuggling herself against Jack's sweated shoulder, pulled his cheek down to hers and held it there, while she laughed against it, tenderly pleading:

"Darling! Silly, silly darling! To think of our quarreling over Phil Barnes! We ought to be ashamed, both of us! You know he's crazy about Det Henderson. That he's only dating me because Det's my roommate, and they've had a fight over something or other, and aren't speaking. All he does is to pump me about her, trying to find out what she's saying, what she's doing. You should be glad it's Phil and not some one else.

"And——" Her fingers twisted at his sweater sleeve, and her long lashes lay dark shadowed on her

flushed cheeks—"It's your fault, anyway, Jack. Just because Aunt Lu made you promise you wouldn't tie me down, that you'd give other boys a chance. I've never had a date since I came to this college, I wouldn't have broken for you!

"I'm mad about you, Jack! It—it frightens me. Just touching you makes me shiver all over!"

"Don't!" Jack's arms drew her close. His anger forgotten, he whispered his love against her ears. "You mustn't say things like that to me! They drive me crazy. You don't know men, darling, you're so young and sweet! And I'm so wild about you!

"I want you to go places. I want you to have a good time. I—I promised your aunt, I'd let you, and—I mean to. But not with Phil Barnes, and not to the Dells, and that's where he took you the other night.

"The Dells is a gambling joint, and it's in bad with the faculty. It's liable to be raided any night. Suppose it had been raided when you were there, and you'd been expelled? How would your Aunt Lu have liked that? Phil Barnes is a senior. He's older than you. He had no business taking you there!"

"Every one goes to Poke Brian's place," Dawn's red lips pouted, "the boys to see his pretty wife and the girls to see what makes the boys want to see her. You're not fair to Phil, Jack. You're jealous. He only took me once, and then only because I asked him to."

"Sure I'm jealous," Jack agreed twistedly. "I'm green with jealousy, if any one looks at you. I'll always be. But that isn't what I've got against Phil Barnes."

He hesitated, stared down at her from shamed young eyes: "I'm going to tell you something, Dawn,

that I've never breathed to a soul," he said. "And I feel like a dog doing it.

"Phil Barnes is dangerous. You mustn't be seen with him! You mustn't let yourself be seen with him!

"Don't look at me like that! I hate to tell you this, as badly as you hate to have me, but it's true. I've a way of knowing—a way I can't tell, but a good way. Phil Barnes is mixed up in a scandal that's going to rock this school if it's ever found out!"

Before Dawn could answer, before she could gather her shocked and angry breath, there was a step on the walk behind them, a jerk at the bushes, and Phil was beside them, his good-natured, weak face a twitching mask of rage.

"You jealous, dirt-peddling sneak!" he cried. "I heard you. I couldn't help myself. Any one walking behind those bushes could have heard! So I'm mixed up in a scandal, am I? Well, all I can say is, any scandal I'm mixed up in, wouldn't be one, two, three with the one that's brewing about you! You're sure got a nerve, boasting to Dawn about the way you hear things!

"I'll tell you where this guy gets his dope, Dawn, and I dare him to deny it! He gets it from Poke Brian's wife, that's where! And he gets something else from her too, or I miss my guess. Money!

"Wait now, Jack Laird! I'm talking, and I'm not finished. I've got a cousin living in your town. He knows your history. Your mother and father were divorced, and your mother ran away with another man when you were a kid. Your grandmother raised you. On a thirty-dollar-a-month pension. Poorer than church mice, both of you. Yet

you've had four years in college, a fraternity and everything that goes with it. That's a lot to get out of thirty dollars a month, I'd say.

"How about those stories that Hilda Brian is seeing you through? How about those secret meetings of yours, that aren't half as secret as you seem to think they are? How about the checks with Hilda Brian's name on them, that have passed through the bank here? Things like that get out, you know. And crushes like hers—they're common enough, heaven knows. A beautiful woman with more money than she can spend and a husband too old for her."

Jack's fists were doubled threats, and his bunched muscles strained at his sweater and corded his neck. Dawn threw herself between them, her arms out. She cried: "What an awful thing to say about any boy, Phil! What a terrible thing! That he would take money from a woman! Make love to her for money! Why Jack doesn't even know Hilda Brian! Doesn't want to!"

"Yeah?" Phil's lips twisted into a mocking smile. "How about it, Laird? Maybe that wasn't you I saw with Hilda Brian Tuesday night? Parked in her big blue sedan, out by the water tower. Maybe it wasn't you I saw kissing her good-by, when you got out and walked back to town?"

"Oh, I spied. Sure I did. Who wouldn't? But I've never told, and I wouldn't have told now, if you hadn't started things."

"Tuesday night?" Dawn cried, and stared stupidly fascinated into Jack's pale, still face. "Tuesday night? Why, that was the night you broke that date with me, told me you had to study! And instead

you— Oh, Jack! Jack! Tell me it isn't true! Please tell me!"

Afterward Dawn remembered a muscle in Jack's cheek, that twitched, and jumped. She remembered his eyes were bleak and gray and old. But then all she could think of, all she could hear, was his voice saying: "I—I can't tell you it isn't true. It is. I—I—did meet her. I kissed her, just as Phil said I did. But it isn't what you believe it is! I swear it, Dawn! I can't explain it now. It's—it's a secret, and it isn't mine to tell. Give me time. Give me to-night. For pity's sake, Dawn, please!"

He had been holding her to him. Holding her wrists tight locked in his fingers; holding her eyes in his, but as he finished, his eyes, pleading for her answer, Dawn jerked herself free.

She stood for an instant, swaying on unsteady feet. She was sick with the shock, stupid with it. Then, she heard Phil's ugly laughter and her chin went up. Her shoulders lifted themselves in proud defiance:

"It would take a lot more time than to-night, to square what you've just acknowledged," she said. "That you meet Hilda Brian by stealth, kiss her in dark parking places. That all the time you've been telling me you loved me, you've been two-timing me with a woman like that! A married woman! Maybe even taking her money! Money she steals from a husband who trusts her!"

"A lot of nerve you've got talking about Phil! As though anything he could do would be as bad as that!"

Her fingers on Phil's arm, swung him with her toward the down hill path. "If you want to go with me, Phil," she said, "come on. I'm going home."

Where the path swung over the hill's edge, she stopped for an instant to look behind her.

The setting sun sent red lights to glint in her dusky hair, and touched the creamy pallor of her skin with a rosy glow. It lay like a golden mist on the very air—a mist through which shadows danced and whirled, and through which she saw Jack, standing where she had left him, looking after her, his broad shoulders drooping, his hands dangling in loose dejection at his sides.

There were tears in her eyes. She brushed at them with angry fingers. Her lips trembled, and she bit them still with pinching teeth. "Crazy eyes, crazy lips!" she thought, "wanting to cry for one of Hilda Brian's lovers!" Crazy heart, aching over a man who could treat her so!

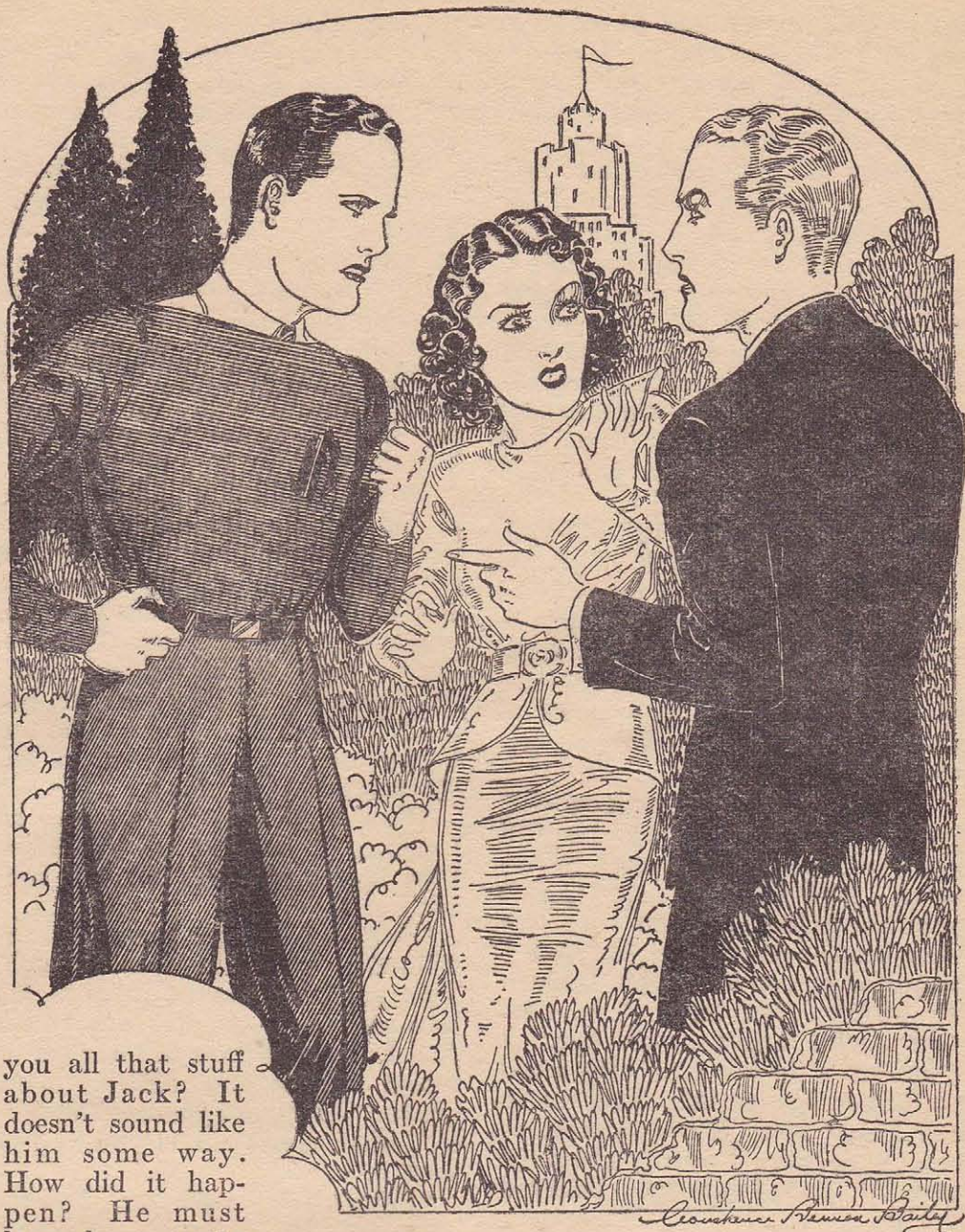
Back in her room at last, she found Det Henderson sprawled on the couch they shared together. She sobbed out her story, while Det listened, a cigarette held carelessly in her hand.

"Deceiving me when I'd trusted him so," Dawn wailed. "Lying to me, breaking dates with me so he could meet her! Taking money from her——"

"Now listen, darling"—Det raised herself on an elbow, and her voice was sharp and hard—"I don't believe Jack is taking money from Hilda Brian, and neither do you. Making love to her—yes. They're all alike, guys in a school like this. Getting a girl to fall for them, then doing something that knocks her faith into a million bits. They've all got a line. With some it's women, with others——"

She crushed her cigarette out against a book, dusted off the ashes, stared at Dawn from somber eyes.

"And you say it was Phil who told



you all that stuff about Jack? It doesn't sound like him some way. How did it happen? He must have been pretty sore."

Dawn nodded, her eyes shamed. "He was. He had overheard what Jack was saying about him. About his being mixed up in some awful scandal. I didn't mean to tell you, Det. I—I didn't

*Dawn threw herself between them crying: "What an awful thing to say about any boy, Phil! That he would take money from a woman! Make love to her for money! Why, Jack doesn't even know Hilda Brian! Doesn't want to!"*

think much about it, honest I didn't. Jack was just jealous because Phil had taken me out to the Dells, the other night. He was try-

ing to make me promise never to go out with Phil any more. He——”

But Det's fingers were pinching at Dawn's arm, and Dawn, shocked into sudden stillness, thought how strangely old Det looked, and how scared.

“Jack told you that? Jack? Did he say what it was Phil was mixed up in? Did he say it was going to get out? Did he tell you how—when?” Breathless questions that Det threw at Dawn, through frightened lips. Questions that, before Dawn could answer, she had shrugged away, with her old “hard as nails” air.

“Never mind, forget it!” she said. And added, bitterly: “If all you've got against that Jack of yours, is an affair with Hilda Brian, you're darned lucky. There are worse things a boy at school can do, than chase a woman. Particularly a woman old enough to be his mother!”

“That's just it,” Dawn wailed. “If she were a girl my own age, I'd know what to do. But she's thirty-seven. Phil told me. And Jack's only twenty-one. When boys lose their heads over women like that—beautiful women like Hilda Brian—it's awful! You know it is, Det. And Jack's crazy about her. I could see it in his eyes. He stood up for her, against me. Told me he had kissed her. It was almost as though he were boasting about it! And I'd trusted him so! Believed in him!”

“It doesn't seem as though I could believe in anything any more. I'm scared, Det. I'm terribly scared.”

Det's face was bleak and gray. “I'm scared, too,” she said. “But not for the same reason.” And she added listlessly: “The telephone's

ringing, Dawn. Answer it, won't you? It's probably Jack, wanting to make up. If it is, take my advice and do it. It isn't so hot, this thing of fighting with the guy you love.”

With her hand over the phone, Dawn whispered a little breathlessly: “It's Phil, Det. He wants to date me. Do you care if I go? I'd like to show Jack he can't boss me around.”

“Care?” Det snapped the word. “Why should I care? Phil and I are through. He can take a jump in the lake as far as I'm concerned. Tell him that for me, will you?”

Later, hunched behind the wheel of his roadster, and darting recklessly in and out through the crowded college streets, Phil said: Det was there when I called you to-night, wasn't she? I heard her talking to you. What did she say? And when Dawn didn't answer, but twisted miserably, her cheeks an unhappy crimson, he laughed at her through side twisted lips.

“You might as well tell me,” he jeered. “It couldn't be any worse than the things she's told me herself.”

“She said,” Dawn answered unwillingly, “that she was through. That you could take a jump in the lake as far as she was concerned. And I wish you wouldn't ask me to repeat stuff to you, Phil. I don't like to. Why don't you ask Det herself, what she thinks of you, if you want to know?”

“I don't have to ask her,” Phil replied moodily. “I know. She can't see me for dust. Well”—he put his arm around Dawn's shoulders and drew her close—“I'm not jumping into the lake to-night, for Det Henderson, or any one else. Not when I've got a sweet kid like you to ride with me, and there's a moon like that one, shining in the sky!”

"Here's to you, Mr. Moon!" and he kissed her. And Dawn let him. Laughed against his lips, a crazy, wild laugh, that tore at her throat. "Two-timing!" she told herself defiantly. "That's a game two can play at, Jack Laird!"

They had left the town behind them. The pavement stretched before them, a white ribbon against the dark night sky. In the headlight's glow, fences whizzed by. Trees became shadowy, fleeing ghosts, waving ghostly greeting with naked arms.

Cars, bright eyes in the blackness, bore down on them, blazed at them, and were gone.

They came at last to a place where the road forked, and where a sign, showing white in the moonlight, pointed: "To The Dells." Phil slowed his car. He said: "Do I have to ask you where we're going?" he grinned. And Dawn answered: "No. It would be the Dells for me to-night, if I had to crawl."

It was a sprawling, log-ribbed house, the Dells, set far back from the road in a grove of trees. A graveled drive, leading up to its brightly-lighted entrance, made a horseshoe curve back to the highway again. But at the side, fenced in by rustic, shrub edged rails, was a gate marked "Private." Because she had been there before, Dawn knew that it was through that gate, one reached the home of "Poke" Brian and his wife, Hilda, and, shivering, she stared at it, morbidly curious.

Anything that concerned Hilda Brian, sent hate chills down her spine.

Inside the crowded tavern, waiters were hurrying back and forth, threading their way between

the close packed, dancing throng. There was the throb and beat of music, soft laughter, the clink of glasses and the snap of corks, and from behind a baize-covered door, the whir of the roulette wheel, and the click of the ivory balls, settling into their tiny groves.

Phil found a table. It was far off to the side of the room, and near a door marked "Private," too. Dawn knew about that door, as she had known about the gate. That it led to the house where Hilda lived, and she stared at it, with the same hate chills pricking her.

Phil gave their order, and the waiter brought it. Put it on the table before them. Dancing couples passed them, joggled their arms. There were people from town and people from school. Some Dawn knew, and some she didn't, but Phil seemed to know them all, and answered their nods as he sipped his beer, and followed, with nervous, tapping fingers, the music's beat.

Poke Brian himself, making his regular rounds, sauntered by, and, stopping not far beyond them, leaned carelessly against the wall. Poke Brian was a huge man, with the body of a wrestler and a handsome, battered face, and Dawn stared at him, fascinated.

Following her eyes, Phil said, and smiled wryly: "And Jack Laird is playing around with that guy's wife! A fat chance he'll have if Poke Brian ever finds out! Why, crazy as that fellow is about his wife, he'd kill them both!"

As though drawn by Dawn's stare, Poke's eyes met hers. They were small eyes, steely, and narrow slitted, and beneath them, Dawn dropped hers, shuddering, to her plate. And she thought of Jack, meeting this man's wife, secretly. Of his kissing her, making love to



With her hand over the phone, Dawn whispered a little breathlessly: "It's Phil, Det. He wants to date me. Do you care if I go? I'd like to show Jack he can't boss me around."



her, in hidden places, and she wiped with shaking fingers at her cold lips.

All right to say she hated Jack. All right to try and think so, but, if anything should happen to him!

A boy, shuffling up, touched Phil's arm. A haggard, young-old boy, with a gray face and shaking hands. Startled, Dawn raised her eyes and saw him. Heard his low, pleading whine, and Phil's guarded: "Not here, you fool! Can't you see I'm not alone." With a shock of sick understanding, Dawn clutched at his sleeve:

"Phil! That's Dopey Shaw! I know him. He's in my history class. He's a drug fiend! Oh, Phil, Phil! *That's* what Jack meant! That's the scandal you're mixed up in! Drug peddling on the campus! How awful!"

Phil's glass crashed to the floor. "Don't you know any better than to blurt out a thing like that where folks can hear? Mind your own business, and I'll take care of mine."

Then, in a sullen whisper: "You came to see Hilda Brian, didn't you? Well, forget me a minute and look. She's over there by the door now. Poke Brian's wife."

## CHAPTER II.

In quick answer to Phil's gaze, Dawn swung to see the door beside which they sat, open, and through it came a tall woman, with fair, pale hair and huge gray eyes. And lips, that seemed to Dawn, in a sudden passion of envy, the most beautiful lips in all the world.

And seeing them, Dawn forgot about Phil. Forgot about "Dopey" Shaw and his pitiful, twisting face. Forgot about everything, but that those lips were Hilda Brian's lips, and that Jack had kissed them!

"As though he would ever want to

kiss me again!" she thought miserably. "As though any man would ever want to kiss any one else, after kissing her!"

In a stupor of unwilling awe, Dawn watched as Hilda Brian walked gracefully toward them. Watched as she reached their table and hesitated. Shivered to her nearness; to the fragrance of her body. She thought wildly: "She's going to stop! She's going to speak to me! If she does I can't stand it! I'll scream."

But she didn't. She passed, and, reaching Poke's side, her low-pitched, vibrant tones carried back to Dawn's ears:

"You won't need me to-night, will you, dear? I've a headache, and I'd like to lie down." And something else, too. Something that Dawn couldn't catch, it was whispered so close to Poke's bent ear. But, that it was about her, Dawn knew, for she saw Poke's eyes shift to where she sat, saw him smile and nod, and then Hilda was passing her table again, and looking directly at her, a straight, unswerving gaze, that in spite of everything Dawn could do, drew and held her own.

Dawn felt her flesh tingling. Felt her heart a choke in her throat. Beautiful eyes—eyes like a cool, gray sea, enveloped her. Beautiful lips—gentle, softly-curving lips, smiled at her. Such a wistful, ghost of a smile. A smile that pulled at Dawn's very soul.

A little wildly, Dawn thought: "It's as though she were asking me to like her!" And she clung to the hate in her heart with frantic hands. But, it was so hard to hate a woman with a smile like that! So terribly hard!

Dawn felt a strange, sick sense of release when she disappeared through the door once more, and

turning to find Poke Brian at their table, his fingers on Phil's shoulder, she listened in dull uncomprehension to his blunt short-spoken words. Hardly realized at first, that he was speaking of her.

"This girl's name is Arden, isn't it, Barnes? Dawn Arden? You are to get her out of here and keep her out. Why? Missus's orders. She doesn't like young kids like her coming here." And then he said something else, in a hoarse whisper close against Phil's ear. Something about a raid. "—got wind of it, just now. Better get along. I'm chasing all the college gang." And his broad shoulders were swinging down the room, stopping here, stopping there. Whispering to this one, touching that one.

Alone Phil was grinning down at Dawn, in reckless, impudent, white-toothed mocking:

"So what?" he said. "You heard. Orders from the missus. I'm to get you out and see that you stay out. Know where that came from, don't you? And who's behind that?"

"Sure," Dawn said, and her eyes were bitter. "Jack. He's seen Hilda Brian since this afternoon. He's told her not to let me come here any more. He's afraid I'll say something to her, maybe, or she to me. But I'll show him."

She held out her arms, her cheeks crimson with defiance. "Let's dance," she said. "If they get me out of here to-night, they'll throw me out!"

Phil laughed, but shook his head. "There's a raid due," he said. "Poke just warned me. We're scrambling. One thing I can't stand just now—any kind of fuss with the police."

"Come along, gal. We're beating it now."

They had just risen to their feet, Dawn straining obstinately against Phil's compelling hands, when the cry came. A boy's high and shrill as a girl's with fright:

"The cops!"  
Scram!"

Before the last word had left his lips, the lights were out. Clinging to Phil's arm, struggling in the murky darkness, Dawn felt a strong hand pulling at her, and close against her, almost in her ear, she heard Poke Brian's husky whisper:

"That you, Barnes—you and the Arden kid? You're to get her in the house part—quick! Here, I'm holding the door for you. In you go. It's steel, see, and there's a lock. When it's safe, I'll let you out. In with you now!"

And then the door was closing behind them, a soft, perfumed darkness was enveloping them, and Dawn found herself pounding with futile fists against a thick paneled wall.

"Have a heart!" Phil cautioned. "Be still, can't you? If you don't know a lucky break when you get it, I do. Didn't I tell you I couldn't afford any tie-up with the cops now?"

LS-3A



"You heard Poke. We're doing what he says. We're waiting here until he lets us out, if we wait all night!"

How long Dawn stood there sobbing, pounding, she couldn't have told. Seconds probably. To her it seemed an eternity. But, as her eyes grew accustomed to the soft darkness, and saw there the comforting security of everyday things—chairs, tables, book-lined walls—her panic left her, and something almost like curiosity took its place. This was *her* room—Hilda Brian's room. The rugs she walked on, the books she read.

"Might as well be comfortable," Phil said, and found an easy chair. He even lit a cigarette, and in the glare of the match, Dawn saw his face, pale and tense, but bright-eyed with excitement.

Across from her, on the far side of the softly-carpeted room, a nook of deep set windows, gave out on a terraced garden. They were open, for Dawn saw dimly, the stirring curtains, and felt the cool night wind on her hot cheeks.

Making her way toward them, Dawn leaned against the wide sill. The moon hung its golden lantern from a star-dotted sky. A cricket chirped. On the window ledge, almost beneath her hand, yellow chrysanthemums, in a huge blue bowl, sent their spicy fragrance through the room. She pushed them aside, and leaned, her hand still resting against the heavy vase, to stare out.

Beyond the tree line, where the highway ran, a white ribbon in the darkness, cars were honking. On the other side of the room's thick walls, came shouts and cries and muffled laughter, but in the little shrub-enclosed yard below her eyes,

the beauty and the stillness caught at Dawn's breath like a sob.

In the magic of the low-riding moon, the lawn had become a shimmering, golden sea, with a tiny, vine-covered porch, awning gay, jutting out into it, like a ship. "A ship in full sail," Dawn thought. And she pictured herself on it, with Jack. Sailing out into that golden sea, away from all this trouble and sorrow and shame.

She was still staring at it, blinking back the lonely, heartsick tears that filled her eyes, when she saw the white flutter of a woman's dress. A woman who, while Dawn watched her, walked slowly down the steps and out into the moon-sprayed night. That she was Hilda Brian, Dawn knew. Would have known it, she thought, had the night been black as pitch, because of the creeping chills that shook her.

There was a man with her, too. From where Dawn leaned, she could see his tall, dark-clothed form, and the white blur that was his face. And she thought, with a scornful, twisted lip: "How cheap she is! Meeting her lovers here at her home, under her husband's very eyes! Lying to him, telling him she had a headache, and then sneaking out to meet a man!

"If Jack could see her now!" she thought. "If Jack could only see her!"

A walk of mossy flags, skirted the yard, and passing under the window where Dawn leaned, led to an outside gate. Watching, Dawn saw them leave the shadow of the porch, and start down its narrow length, toward her, and suddenly her heart choked her, and the blood pounded against her temples. For the man's face wasn't a blur any more. It was a dark-eyed, thin-cheeked, familiar face. Jack's face! And, Dawn was



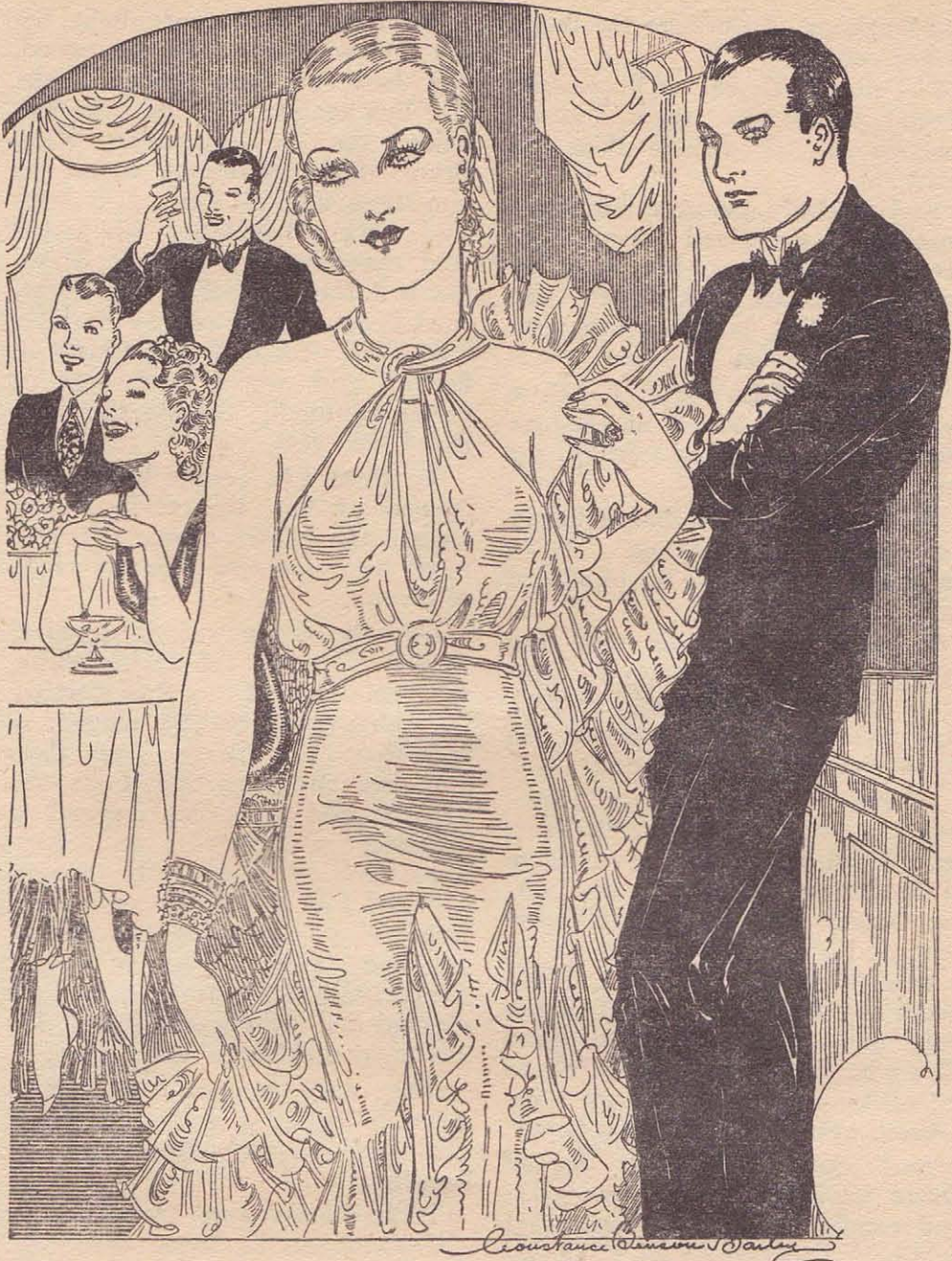
*In awe, Dawn watched Hilda Brian. A tall woman, with fair hair, huge gray eyes, and lips that seemed to Dawn the most beautiful in the world—lips that Jack had kissed! "As though he would ever want to kiss me again after kissing her!" she thought miserably.*

leaning against the sill, hidden in the shadow of the fluttering curtains, sick and faint and weak.

She thought: "If he looks up,

he'll see me." She tried to move and couldn't. Her feet were lead—tons of lead, weighing her down.

Her body was like a frozen body, it



was so cold and white and still. If she could only move away from that window!

They were talking, and their voices drifted up to her, muffled and soft in the thick, soft night. There was a laugh—Hilda's laugh—huskily caressing, and a tender:

“Darling! I hate to let you go, but you'd better. Poke will be coming any minute now, and it's dangerous your being here like this. And about the child——”

Dawn's fists clenched, her cheeks burned. “She means me!” she thought. “She's talking about me

and laughing! I can hear the laugh in her voice!"

"— about Dawn. I'll see she doesn't come here again. Leave that to me. I warned Poke tonight."

And suddenly, before Dawn could move, or tear herself away, those beautiful white arms had crept up and were about Jack's neck, and those beautiful, laughing lips were whispering against his face:

"Won't you kiss me, Jack, before you go? Won't you tell me you love me? I need it—oh, so terribly, my very, very dear!"

And Dawn had her hands before her eyes and was praying: "Make me blind, God! Make me blind and deaf!"

It was Phil, calling her name, that brought her about in stunned surprise. She had forgotten he existed. Had forgotten that he was in the same room or the same world.

"Dawn!" he was crying as he hurried toward her. "What's the matter? What are you seeing out there in the garden? Ghosts?" But halting beside her, his eyes followed hers, and his breath became an indrawn whistle. "Whew! Hilda Brian and Jack Laird! And there's Poke now—he's opening the door! He's coming in! He's right behind us! If he catches them down there—those two—he'll kill them both!"

And then, Poke was behind Dawn, his breath hot on her cheek, and caught by the tenseness that held both Dawn and Phil, Poke was whispering too: "What's wrong with you kids? What's going on out there? Move over—let me see."

Dawn had no time to think, no time to analyze the emotions that prompted her. Primitive facts beat against a mind suddenly as primitive as a child's.

Down there in the moonlight, below the window where she stood, was Jack, his arms about Hilda. Her lips against his. In a second, unless she did something, Poke Brian, Hilda's husband, would see him there, and kill him. Kill Jack! And, with a frightened sob and a wild, crazy sweep of her arm, Dawn grabbed the first thing her frightened fingers could touch—the huge blue bowl, with its heavy freight of flowers and water, and sent it careening madly toward the floor and Poke's feet.

To those two people below that opened window, the crash, coming against the sudden silence as it did, must have sounded like the crack of doom.

Dazedly, Dawn was conscious of them. Conscious of Jack's white, upturned face and of his startled, distended eyes. Swiftly, almost, as the click of a camera lens, their gaze met and held; then Poke, the window and what lay beyond it forgotten, was nursing an aching ankle, and swearing softly to himself, and Phil had his fingers on her arm and was dragging her toward the door, while across an empty dance hall, where hurrying waiters cleaned and righted and sorted, lay the night and Phil's waiting car.

They were on their way back to town, before, so it seemed to Dawn, she had begun once more, to breathe.

Phil's hands were trembling on the wheel, his lips were trembling. He was laughing beneath his breath, hysterical almost, as a woman.

"You certainly wrecked old Poke," he said, "knocking those flowers on him, the way you did! But if you hadn't! Gosh! It would have meant murder, sure as I'm living! A double murder!"

Dawn began to cry, harsh, jerky sobs. She felt like a rag wrung dry—miserable, forlorn. She wanted to die. "I hate Jack Laird!" she choked. "I hate him!"

Phil patted her shoulder in awkward comforting. "You're a square-shooter!" he said. "I don't blame you for hating him, but you sure saved his life and hers!"

And he added in awed admiration: "The nerve of Laird! Kissing Poke's wife under old Poke's very windows! Sure wish I had his nerve! Heaven knows I'm going to need it."

He drove for a while in silence, his eyes on the road before him, his lips sober. At last he said: "Dawn, you know all right, that I'm in a mess, and I think you know by this time, what it is or guess. It's drugs." And looking down at her pinched, white face, he said pityingly:

"Heaven knows you've got troubles enough of your own, you poor kid, but, maybe listening to mine will help you forget them. I've got to tell some one or burst!

"It was that Dopey kid you saw to-night who got me started. You see, he comes from the same town I do. I've known him all my life. My folks knew his mother before him. Kind of a relative of ours, in a way. She took dope before he was born. They'd no business sending him away to a school like this. He—he came to me here, crazy for the stuff—mad for it. Got down on his knees and begged me to get him some, I did. I knew a guy in town who peddled it, and I got it for him.

Oh, I'm not trying to excuse myself, Dawn. I know it's a rotten racket. I know there's no excuse, but the guy who sold the stuff to me was crazy to get into the college trade, and I—I was crazy for

money. Money to make myself a big shot for Det. He gave me the money and I delivered the goods. Peddling dope— Well, I'm telling you, gal, it's a darned sight easier game to get into than it is to get out of. Take it from me."

Dawn touched his hand with hers. She said: "I'm sorry, Phil. I—I can't tell you how sorry I am." And then, she forgot him, for her own trouble was too great and too near.

"Jack and Poke Brian's wife! Jack and Poke Brian's wife!" The words were a hum in her ears, a drone to the drone of the engine.

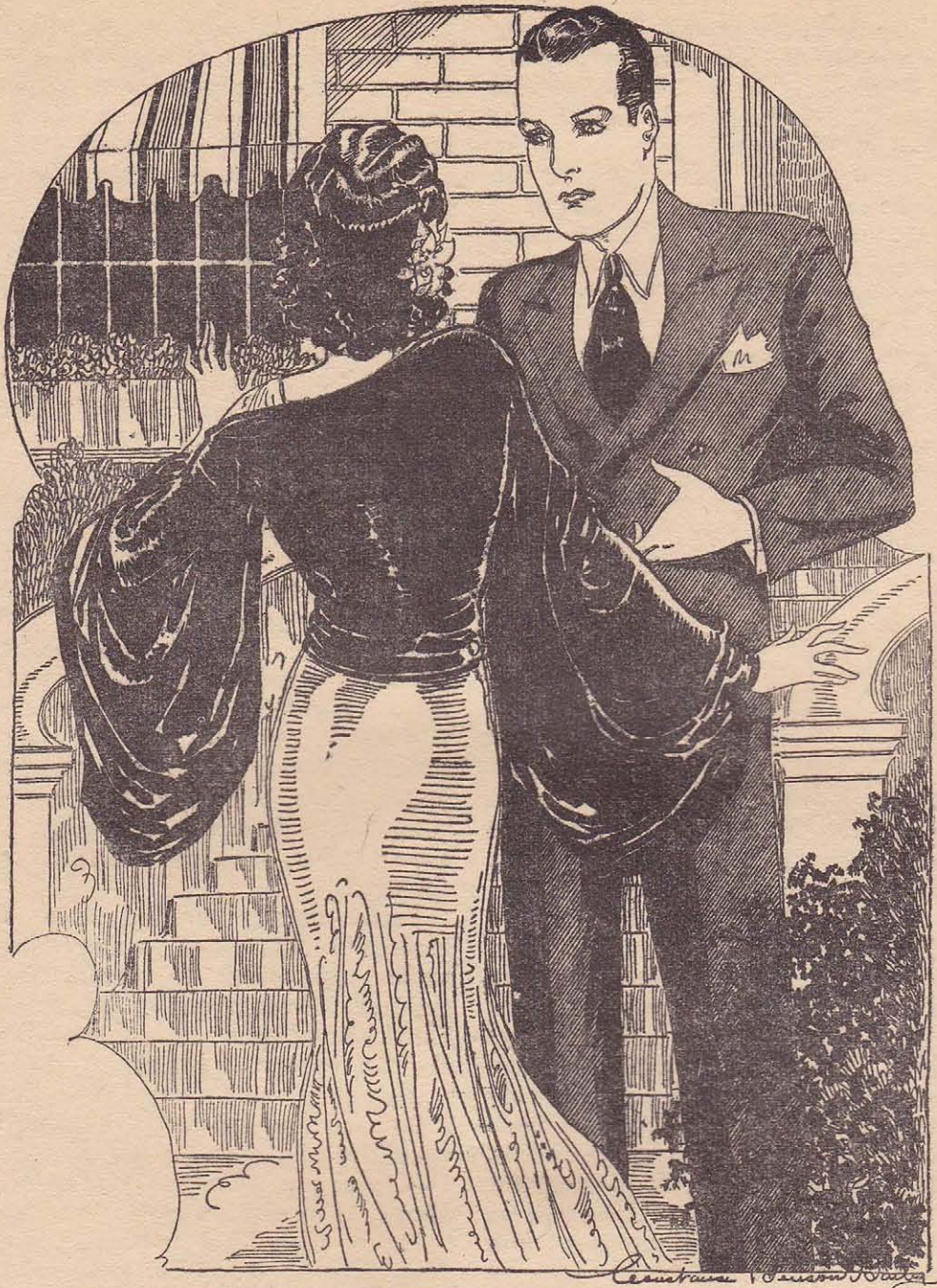
At the curb before the house at last, Phil stopped. He said: "Well, here we are." At the sound of his voice, and the harsh rasp of his brakes, two people, kissing in the shadow of the veranda steps, broke apart. The girl swung toward them, the door light, white on her face. It was Det. Seeing Phil, her face tightened for an instant, set in stern young lines. But only for an instant, then, with a taunting laugh, she waved at him, and ran through the door.

Phil's mouth twisted into a grotesque mockery of an answering smile. He tried to speak and groaned. Shaken out of her grief, Dawn stared up at him, shocked at the lost misery of his eyes.

He put his arm about her. "I'm a rotter. I'm a no-good. I deserve what Det's handing me, but it hurts. I—I wish you'd kiss me good night, Dawn. I'm so unhappy."

Dawn said, "I'm unhappy, too, Phil," and lifted her face to his, and they kissed, seeking comfort from each other, sharing each other's misery.

Then, Dawn climbed wearily out. "So long, Phil." And Phil answered: "I'll be seeing you," and stepped on the gas.



"I wish I had let Poke Brian find you!" cried Dawn. "Do you know that he was right behind me, while you were kissing his wife? Do you know that if I hadn't saved you, he would have seen you there, and killed you both?"

Dawn was halfway up the steps leading to her sorority house, when she saw Jack.

Hidden by a clump of bushes beside the balcony rail, he had been waiting for her, and stepping out,



held his hands up to her in a quick humbleness of pleading.

"Dawn!" he cried. "Darling! To-night at the Dells—you saw me, I know. I heard a crash and looked up, and there you were staring down at me from that open window! I hurried right here to explain. I've been waiting—it seems to me hours! I saw you out there in the car, kissing Phil Barnes! Oh, Dawn dear, don't misjudge me! Give me a chance. There's something I've got to tell you, but I can't tell you to-night. I—I can't. I promised. To-morrow——"

Swaying where she stood, Dawn looked down at him, and her face was frozen and white and cold. "Not to-morrow nor a thousand to-morrow!" she said. "There isn't time enough in this world nor the next, to explain away what I saw and heard this night!"

Then, in a flaming rush of anger, red anger, that blurred her sight and shook her speech:

"I wish I hadn't knocked that jar off onto Poke Brian's feet! I wish

I'd let him find you! Do you know that he was right behind me, while you were down there beneath that window, kissing his wife? Do you know that if I hadn't saved you, he would have seen you there, and killed you both?"

She ran up the steps. At the top one, she stopped to fling back over her shoulder:

"This is good-by! I never want to see you or hear your voice again, as long as I live!"

To drown his answer, she slammed the heavy door behind her. But it stuck, and she wasn't soon enough. As she pounded her way up the thick-carpeted stairs, as she clicked through the hallways and rattled at the door of her room, his words were ringing in her ears, and timing their threat to the throbbing of her pulses and to the angry tumult of her heart.

"Whether you want to or not," he had cried after her, "you're going to see me. And you're going to listen to me too, Dawn Arden, if I have to kidnap you to make you!"

TO BE CONCLUDED.



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# VICKS VA-TRO-NOL



# Fires Of Love

By Patricia Ellsworth

**G**LORIA slid her small, trim foot into the second of the scarlet moccasins the old squaw had brought in that morning, and stood up to inspect herself in the mirror. A mischievous smile dimpled about her Cupid's-bow mouth. Her warm brown eyes danced.

She was thinking of the tall, red-haired young fellow with whom, for

the past two weeks, she had been playing the old, old game of love, but in a new fashion. Gloria knew that "Red" McKenzie was interested—he couldn't help being. Men up here in this North country were no different than they were on Park Avenue. That is, they were no different in respect to falling in love with Gloria. The only thing was

that this broad-shouldered, steady-eyed young Alaskan had the power of hiding, behind a mask of apparent indifference, whatever he might be feeling.

Her smile faded to a look of pensive reflection. Gloria was wondering what Kirk Ralston would say if he could see her now. His cynical eyes would go slowly over her outfit—the scarlet fur-lined moccasins, with heavy wool trousers tucked into their tops, the red-and-black plaid shirt open at the throat to reveal a V-shaped section of smooth white skin—and after a leisurely survey he'd certainly nod his approval.

"Ripping winter sports costume, Glory, old thing!" she could hear him drawl.

And, after all, it *was* important what Kirk would think. Because in the end—no matter how many hearts she might break in this country of black, silent forests, fierce, rushing blue rivers, and raw, virgin gold—it was Kirk whom she would marry. That had been tacitly settled ever since Gloria left finishing school.

But the tall, slender girl in the colorful costume had no intention of letting thoughts of Kirk hamper her. Red McKenzie had so far baffled her most expert attempts at heart-breaking. He might be interested, but he refused to show it.

"Wait till he sees me to-night!" she thought, and suddenly became aware of the rush and roar of the storm wind, outside her window. Inside the road house where her father had left her while he made a flying trip to one of his mines, it was warm and cozy. But out there, where night was beginning to add its terrors to the tumultuous drive of the blizzard, men were pitifully out-classed.

Gloria raised a beautifully manicured hand to her wavy brown hair. She patted it into place, turned her head with the proud motion of a thoroughbred, and again smiled at the girl in the looking-glass.

"You're a rascal!" she said in a low, thrilling voice. "And to-night, as usual, you're up to rascality!"

She turned and went swiftly into the hall. Down wide stairs—each tread made of a single hewn log—and into the big room where suspended kerosene lamps gave out a cheerful orange light. At the farther end of the long apartment, a great log fire roared and crackled up the chimney. Near the center of the room stood a large Klondike stove, which really furnished the grateful warmth on nights like this.

The room was deserted, save for a solitary figure, standing with its back to the stove. Gloria, coming down the last four steps, was acutely aware of the steady scrutiny of those enigmatic gray eyes. She knew that her entrance was enough to set any man's heart to beating fast.

Then her own heart did a quick little bound and began to race. Red McKenzie was coming toward her! Not only that, but the mask was gone from his handsome, masterful face, and his eyes burned with an expression she had never seen in them before.

"Gloria!" he cried.

Just that one word. But Gloria suddenly knew that neither Kirk Ralston nor any of the other men with whom she played around back in New York could have said as much in five minutes. She stood on the bottom step, her dusky-red lips parted, her cheeks flushed, her eyes sparkling.

Suddenly and amazingly, she felt the wild impulse to turn and run. There was something in that deeply

tanned, resolute face that frightened her.

"I wonder if you know how beautiful you are!" he said in a low, vibrant voice. "Gloria, it's no use pretending! This is a country where men speak the truth. And you——"

Gloria's feet seemed frozen to that bottom step. A tiny voice within her cried: "Fly! Fly! You've started something you can't control!"

Then she was in his arms. Her face was against his, and Gloria found herself marveling at the satiny softness of his skin. He held her close in arms of steel.

"Gloria, my darling!" he whispered huskily. "I've tried to fight against you—you're the only thing in the world I've ever feared. Love—it can be so terrible. But it's no use——"

Gloria had recovered the use of her lithe young muscles. With a sudden twist, she freed herself. She stood facing him, breathing deeply. She knew that her eyes were still dancing, that her face was flushed.

But that was just the mechanical reaction to being kissed by a man as handsome and strong as Red McKenzie. It had been an interesting experience. However, this conflagration she had started must be quickly quenched.

"I'm so sorry!" she said, almost in a whisper. "Red—Mr. McKenzie, if I've led you to think—if you've misconstrued——"

He was looking at her with an expression that made her falter. There was amazement in it, and something else.

Gloria knew that now her face was blazing. For an instant she dropped her eyes before that accusing stare.

Then she forced herself to look squarely at him.

"I thought you'd remember our comparative circumstances," she breathed.

Red frowned. He stirred, as if he were going to take her in his arms again. Then he laughed, a low, scornful laugh.

"You mean that you are the daughter of a wealthy man, that you're listed in the social register?" he asked softly.

Gloria tried to think of some other way of putting it. Somehow, Red managed to make the reason back of her conduct so sordid and ugly!

Then she nodded.

"And you've just been playing with me?" he demanded.

Gloria wished she had never come down those wide stairs. She wished she'd never come to this North country. Almost, for the moment, she wished that she'd never been born.

Miserably, she nodded again.

"Oh, Red, I'm so sorry! I didn't think——"

"You didn't think I could feel pain! You thought a man like me—a rough, common person, with no background—was just something to be played with, and broken, and tossed aside!" His voice was as cold as the storm wind raging outside. "I see! Well, I can take it. And perhaps learn a useful lesson by the experience!"

He turned, and went striding across the long, mellowly lighted room, and out through a door that opened into the kitchen wing.

Gloria stood without moving. Her lips were parted; her eyes were wide and frightened.

Another door, over at the farther side, opened and a man came through. He was not as tall as Red, but he had enormous shoulders, and arms so long and powerful that they



*"You didn't think I could feel pain! You thought a man like me—a rough, common person, with no background—was just something to be played with, and broken, and tossed aside!" He gave a scornful laugh.*

made him look like some dangerous animal. His eyes were keen and narrow. He looked about, as if to assure himself that there was no one in the big room except the radiantly beautiful girl at the foot of the stairs.

When he came across, those cruel, shining eyes burned into hers.

"Ah, Miss Gloria!" he murmured. "You are beau-tee-ful to-night! Always you are beau-tee-ful, but now—see! I kneel before you."

Gloria drew back. There was something about Jacques Lacleve, her father's manager up here in Alaska, that made her flesh creep.

"I'm afraid I must leave you," she murmured, making a move to start up the stairs.

Lacleve was up from his kneeling position. With incredible speed and precision he glided before her, barring her way. Standing so close that she could see the little flecks of scaly color in his black eyes, he was again smiling that evil smile.

"This is Alaska," he said abruptly. "In this country men and women show their true natures! My beau-tee-ful darling——"

He swept her up in those long, powerful arms. Gloria twisted sideways, and her white, pearly teeth sank into the flesh of his shoulder.

With a snarling cry of pain, he dropped her. She sprang quickly away.

Jacques Lacleve rubbed the place where Gloria had bitten him. A slow smile spread over his dark, menacing face.

"Little wild cat!" he murmured. "But I like you so, my darling! And what Jacques Lacleve likes—he takes!"

He made no move to come closer. Gloria watched him with abhorrence.

"As soon as my father returns ——" she began.

Lacleve shrugged.

"When he returns, I shall be away on business. You will tell him what I have done? You will have me discharged? My beau-tee-ful darling, I have not been idle during these eight years I work for your father! I have feathered my nest. I am reech. I discharge myself!"

He paused, and his burning eyes went slowly and gloatingly over the slender, graceful figure of the girl who, with flashing eyes and dilated nostrils, confronted him.

"But I shall come back," he murmured. "At a time when you do not expect me—I shall come back!" He gave her a long, meaning look.

Then he was gone. Gloria drew out her handkerchief and viciously scrubbed the spot on her cheek where he had kissed her.

The wind was rising. She moved across toward the big round stove in the center of the room. Then,

abruptly, she paused and stood intently, listening.

Distant bells, and the fierce, exultant yelp of malemute dogs, racing for the shelter of the road house!

The door leading into the kitchen swung open, and she saw the vast figure of Jake Thompson, proprietor of the establishment. Usually his round, plump face was wreathed in smiles, but to-night he looked grave and uneasy.

"What is it, Jake?" Gloria demanded.

"A man just came through from the mines, miss," he told her. "There's word from your father."

Suddenly Gloria was trembling. She took an impulsive step toward the man.

"What is it?" she demanded sharply. "Tell me quickly! Don't just stand there!"

Jake Thompson rubbed his chin.

"Miss," he rumbled, "if you was to take something, a drop of brandy, to kind of brace you up——"

She darted across to where he stood, seized his shoulders, and tried to shake him.

"Tell me what's happened!" she cried. "Is dad sick?"

"He got hurt, miss. But there's a good doctor up there, and most likely he'll be all right. He was unconscious."

Gloria wasn't frightened. Now that the full force of the calamity had struck her, she was steady and resolute.

"I'll start for the mines at once!" she said steadily. "Please arrange everything."

But Jake was shaking his head.

"You can't possibly get up there till this storm's over!" he protested. "In two or three days, maybe."

Gloria stamped her foot. The

fur-lined moccasin made a thudding sound as it struck the log floor.

"Do as I tell you!" she cried imperiously. "Dad needs me! He may be dying! There must be some one who——"

Jake backed farther into the open doorway. He turned and looked into the kitchen. Then he faced Gloria, and drew the door partly shut.

"This musher who came down was nearly trapped by the storm, miss," he explained in a low voice. "But there's one man could make it. I'll talk to him."

Gloria knew. She had heard of Red McKenzie's prowess as a storm fighter. And she knew Red's male-mutes. He had given her lessons in driving them. For an instant her mind fought against the idea of asking a favor of a man who had talked to her as Red had. Then she thought of her father, unconscious, perhaps dying.

"Please tell Mr. McKenzie to be ready as quickly as he can. And tell him this is strictly business. I'll pay him whatever he asks."

A heavy fur cap that completely hid her shining brown hair, a parka, fur-lined and warm as eiderdown, mittens. Gloria was so wrapped away from the storm that she moved with difficulty out through the kitchen, where Jake Thompson stood shaking his head and fearing the worst; out through a door that was quickly opened and as quickly closed. In that instant, the blizzard struck her so roughly in the face that she gasped and turned her head.

Before she could turn back, strong arms swung her from her feet and were carrying her. She felt as helpless as a baby. Dimly, through

the driving snow, she saw the stern, impassive face above hers. Again her heart was pounding like a wild thing.

"Red," she murmured, "it's so good of you——"

"This is strictly business as far as I'm concerned, miss," Red McKenzie broke in.

He stooped and lowered her into the inclosed portion of the long sled. Out in front, their sharp ears tilted forward, she could see the dogs.

A long-lashed whip whistled and cracked with the resonance of a pistol shot.

"Mush, you rascals!" Red cried.

The sled was flying away from the road house into the storm. Red ran behind. The dogs yelped shrilly, and silvery bells attached to their collars tinkled against the wind.

The yellow lights in the windows of the log building were gone. On every side was the raging storm. Gloria nestled down into the warm space Red had placed her in. He had tucked heavy blankets about her.

She turned her head.

"Can't you ride?" she called.

No answer. The dogs were stretched out, racing fleetly away into the night. Red McKenzie ran like a panther behind the long sled. Suddenly Gloria felt how small and helpless she was.

"If he'd only be friends!" she thought, then felt her face burning again.

She hadn't been very friendly. She had deliberately flirted till she caught his interest. She had set herself to break through the barrier of reserve he had erected. Then she had pleaded the social register!

The dogs had settled down to their night's work. For a time they went briskly up a long grade. Then

they topped the summit, and Gloria saw the tall figure of her companion, balancing on the rear of the sled.

Impulsively, she spoke.

"Red—Mr. McKenzie, I wish you'd tell me more about your dogs. They seem so faithful and strong."

"Yes, miss. They're good dogs."

Gloria bit her lip. He certainly knew how to keep her at a distance! She cowered down into the sled and realized how lonely she was out here, in this untamed Northland—at night, in a storm that had sent experienced mushers running for cover!

Timidly, she looked up at him.

"Red, if I'd been born up here, if I were used to this wild country and——"

The sled struck the bottom of the grade, and Red was again running behind.

"Hi, Tillicum! Hi, Juno!" he cried. "Mush!"

Gloria bowed her head. She squeezed her eyes tight shut; but hot, salty tears were stealing down her face. They froze there, and she began to sob.

Abruptly, Red was again standing on the rear platform.

"Feet cold?" he inquired, and his voice certainly was.

"No; I'm warm as toast. But, Red——"

Abrupt and eerie, there came the sound of a long-drawn shout. Gloria caught her breath and listened.

The eerie voice came again.

"Ahoy, McKenzie! Pull up!"

Red McKenzie ignored the summons.

"Mush, you rascals!" he cried.

Another sound—the crack of a rifle shot, the whine of a high-powered bullet! Gloria cried out in terror.

"Steady! Give me that carbine," Red ordered.

She groped for it, and a second cracking shot ripped through the howl of the wind.

A dog yelped shrilly, the team whirled, and in an instant they were milling and fighting. Red leaped among them. Gloria could see him cutting straps, hurling something out of the track of the sled.

"Oh, Red!" she cried piteously. "One of your dogs——"

"Never mind that!" he snarled back at her. "Steady, you rascals. Tillicum—gee! There you are!"

He came swinging back, and for an instant stood staring toward the back trail.

"He's trying to snipe us, miss!" he muttered. "It's lucky I gave you some lessons in driving a dog team. You may have to use it!"

Gloria's heart was beating slowly, heavily. A great weight of fear crushed down upon her.

"You mean——"

But they were flying over the trail, and Red was running at her side. He had thrust the carbine back into her mittened hands. Looking fearfully upward, she marveled at the easy endurance with which he kept up with the flying malemutes.

A third crashing shot—and Red McKenzie stumbled and nearly fell. He caught at the crossbar of the sled. The dogs, sensing something wrong, slowed to a trot and stopped.

Gloria tried to scramble out. An unsteady hand pressed her back.

"Got me—through the shoulder!" Red muttered. "Listen, miss, you can drive. The dogs know the trail."

He swayed drunkenly. Next instant he had fallen heavily to the snow. He lay very still. Gloria, facing the crisis of her young life, took her courage in both hands.



Quickly, she stooped and grasped Red's shoulders. How heavy he was! Gloria had never tried to lift a man before.

She clenched her teeth.

"I've got to!" she whispered. "Red, darling!"

There was a crimson stain seeping out into the snow. The sight of it released an almost superhuman power in her slender body. Quickly, she slid her arms under him and staggered erect.

A snarling shout from behind, and Gloria had lifted Red into the sled. She caught up the carbine, whirled, and fired into the darkness. Then the gun was back, lying across Red's body.

Gloria's clear, eager voice rang out:

"Mush—Tillicum—Juno! Mush, you rascals!"

There was a sob at the end of that thrilling command. She was using the words she had so often heard Red use. And now she was balanced on the rear platform, and the dogs were racing with tense traces down a long grade.

No more shots. But she could hear the distant yelps of another dog team. She had recognized that hoarse, evil voice. Jacques Lacleve had taken advantage of her emergency. And his team would be pulling a lighter load than Red's malemutes.

Something loomed, over at the side. Gloria shaded her eyes from the blinding snow. Set back from the narrow trail, she could just make out the gloomy bulk of a cabin. There were no lights in the windows.

"Gee!" she cried. "Tillicum, Juno!"

They were swerving. They took the turn into the narrow gulch al-

most at full speed, and dashed up to the deserted cabin.

"Red!" she panted. "Red, darling, can't you hear me? Oh, I need you so!"

But there was no sound from the motionless figure lying in the sled. With flying fingers, Gloria unfastened the dogs. She crossed to the cabin door and opened it. The malemutes trotted into the dark interior of the building.

With determined chin raised high, she swung back to the sled. She got down on her knees, slid her round young arms under the figure of the man who had suddenly come to mean so much to her, and next moment was staggering across to the open door. She laid Red on a bunk in one corner.

A threatening shout roared out suddenly.

"You, inside the cabin! Must I keel you all?"

It was Lacleve's voice. Gloria crouched near the shattered window. The carbine rested across her knees. If she could just see him, that evil head, poised on those immense shoulders.

Confusedly, she found herself wondering at the strange, fierce strength that steadied her nerves and quickened her muscles. Was this the Gloria Carver who had played tennis at Palm Beach and Newport? Was this the careless, pleasure-loving young thing who had been going to marry Kirk Ralston, because he was the most desirable man in her set?

No sound, save the mighty voice of the blizzard. Gloria shivered.

Suddenly Gloria tensed. Something was stirring, back there.

The dogs yelped and snarled. A gun flamed, and one of the malemutes lay kicking.



Gloria swung the carbine, but the gun was knocked from her clutching hands. A dark, muffled figure was upon her. It caught her in gigantic arms, and whirled her from her feet.

Now Jacques Lacleve was kissing her. His face was crusted with frozen snow. He rubbed that icy cheek against hers, then again his burning lips were seeking her eyes, her throat, her lips."

"Red! Red!"

But it was not Red McKenzie who came driving upon them. A huge black dog snarled once and

*"Red!" she panted. "Red darling, can't you hear me? Oh, I need you so!" But there was no sound from the motionless figure lying in the sled.*

launched himself like an arrow for Lacleve's throat.

"Drag him down, Tillicum!" Gloria cried.

Lacleve evidently had figured that that one shot was enough to cow the malemutes. Now the lead dog had

hurled him to the ground.

Gloria, panting and shaken, had torn herself free from his arms as he went down.

"Red!" she cried. "Red, darling!"

Then, back there in the darkness, Tillicum was snarling and worrying something. Gloria saw that Lacleve was lying very still, and that the

great black dog was merely menacing his vanquished foe.

She raced across to the bunk where Red lay, and began to work furiously. Once Red opened his eyes and tried to mutter a protest.

"Leave me! You—the dogs——"

But he lay still and silent when she lifted him into the sled.

Then they were again flying through the storm. Red had said that his dogs knew the trail to the mine. Gloria, alternately running behind and balancing on the tiny platform, tried to realize that this was not just a terrible dream. It was reality! Somewhere in that whirling darkness ahead, her father lay, perhaps dying.

But the thing that brought a sob to her trembling lips was the glint of that white, still face, almost at her feet.

"Red, Red!" she whispered unsteadily. "I do love you! Why didn't I know it in time?"

The roar of the blizzard, and occasionally the sharp yelp of one of the malemutes.

On and on, till Gloria believed time had ceased and eternity had begun.

Nothing but black swaying trees, and then——

"Mush, Tillicum! Mush, Juno! Mush, you rascals; there are the lights!" Gloria cried.

She sat in a warm, tastefully furnished room in Doctor Tolliver's log house. The tall, ruddy-faced mine physician was bending over the bed.

He turned and looked wonderingly at Gloria.

"Gloria, lass, I don't see how ye did it! Red'll weigh one hundred and eighty, if he weighs a pound! Ye must have muscles of steel under that soft, warm flesh!"

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Gloria shook her head impatiently.

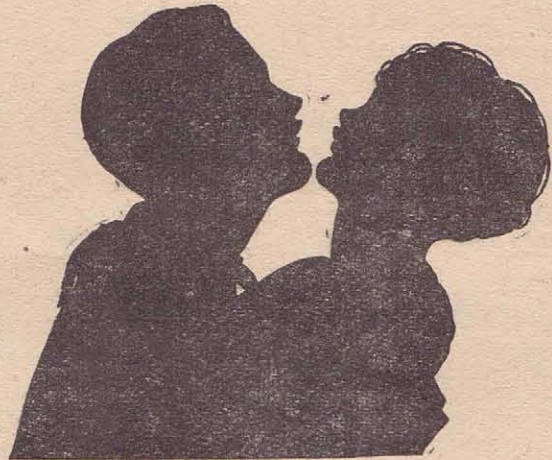
"Never mind me," she whispered huskily. "Is he—is Red——"

"It's only the good that die young, my dear," Doctor Tolliver said mischievously. "He'll be conscious any time, now."

Gloria stood up. Her face was radiant.

"And dad's coming along all right?" she asked.

"He's doing as well as ye can expect. It'll be a good four weeks be-



fore he gets the use of his legs."

Gloria stood looking down at the man in the bed. Her face had in it a light that made the old Scotch doctor shake his head and smile a bit wistfully.

"Do ye really love him?" Doctor Tolliver asked in a voice that was almost a whisper.

"Love Red? I love him so that I'm going to stay up in this terrible country, just to be with him, always!"

The old doctor carefully removed his glasses and wiped them.

"Then I'll let ye into a bit of a secret," he said. "The young rascal came up here five years ago from the States. The next year up comes

a fine gentleman, in Fifth Avenue raiment, looking for his son. No one by the name he wanted anywhere hereabout! But when he set eyes on Red McKenzie——”

Abruptly the shock of red hair outlined against the snowy pillow stirred. Red twisted his head and stared belligerently up.

“Shut up, doc!” he rasped. “That’s my secret!”

Doctor Tolliver chuckled.

“I’ll teach ye to play possum on me! And I’ll leave ye to whisper your own secrets! Remember, nurse, ye mustn’t excite him!”

Gloria sat on the edge of the bed. Her eyes were wide and wondering.

“Whatever did Doctor Tolliver mean?” she demanded.

Red grinned. He pulled her down beside him, tumbled her hair, rubbed that smooth, velvety cheek of his against her flushed one.

Then he took her face between his strong hands and looked deep into her eyes.

“Years ago,” he explained, “there was a family of nice people who had an apartment overlooking Central Park, and a summer home up in Westchester. They were the kind of people who keep their servants till they’re old and then pension them. Salt-of-the-earth people.

“All except one member. He was red-headed, and at the time I am telling you about he had freckles. He was the kind of boy who wants to know what is going on in those far places where the jungle crouches, warm and steamy, in the tropic sun, or up where men of iron pit their strength against the great White Silence. Then, one day, this boy misunderstood something his father did. It was done for his good, but he didn’t see it that way. Remember, he had red hair and a temper which

up to that time had never been disciplined.

“So he did what many other foolish young fellows do. He ran away. He came up here to Alaska, and every one called him Red. Before long he regretted what he had done, but he was too proud to admit that to any one. However, he wrote a confidential letter to a friend, and six weeks later the finest, most upright and kindly gentleman in all the world made the long trip by train and steamer, and for five hundred miles by dog sled, just to tell him that every one at home loved him. They loved him so much that they wanted him to live his own life in his own way. All they asked was an occasional letter, telling them that he was well and happy.”

Red laughed, a deep, vibrant laugh that made something in Gloria’s heart begin to dance.

“He had been a spoiled boy, back in the old days; but the Northland taught him that real strength is gentle, never boisterous or self-assertive,” Red told her. “Perhaps it made a man of him!”

Gloria struggled to her elbow. Her arm went under his neck and she bent over him, staring into his laughing gray eyes.

“And then another spoiled young thing came up here, and the man they call Red learned to love her?” she said tremulously.

But Red didn’t try to answer that in words. What use did Gloria have for words when Red was crushing her close as though he would never let her go, when his lips were pressed to hers in a throbbing kiss that thrilled her to the depths of her soul? With a sigh of content she relaxed in his arms, secure in the knowledge that nothing could ever extinguish the fires of love that burned so brightly in their hearts.



# Tender Arms

By Elise Phillips

**T**IRED?" Ward asked as they followed Louisa and Phil from the car into the lobby of the Piny Woods Manor.

"I'm tired, and cold, and hungry," Jocelyn replied. "And I'm cross."

Ward's voice was heavy with sarcasm as he said, "You amaze me."

"Oh, don't be funny!" Jocelyn dropped into a big armchair, her coat collar turned up to her ears,

her brown vagabond hat drawn down almost to the bridge of her slim, small nose. "Your wit is about as light as an elephant's foot."

She surveyed the people sitting and walking about the brilliantly lighted lobby, and wondered why she had allowed herself to be persuaded to take this trip. She hadn't wanted to leave New York. She had been enjoying the parties all

their friends had been giving since she and Ward announced their engagement, but he and Phil had gotten the idea that a couple of weeks in Pinehurst would be fun.

"And whatever Phil thinks, Louisa agrees to," Jocelyn told herself. "She's that kind of wife, and Ward expects me to be just like her."

She turned to stare at her sister, standing at the desk beside Phil, and noticed she was getting heavier.

"That's what marriage does to you," Jocelyn decided.

Suddenly she sat up straight, pushing her hat back with an impatient shove.

"Look," she urged Ward. "Look at that man over there."

His gaze followed hers to where a broad-shouldered young man in a dinner jacket sat reading a paper.

"What about him?" Ward inquired with a scowl. "Friend of yours?"

"Not yet," Jocelyn replied. "But isn't he the best-looking brute you ever laid your eyes on? He's got features like a movie star and that sort of come-to-me-darling look in his eyes. I'm glad I came to Pinehurst, after all."

"You're a flirt!" Ward growled, his hand on her chair knotting into a tight fist.

Jocelyn whirled about to face him, cornflower eyes, under her curling brown bangs, narrowed to slits. "What do you mean, I'm a flirt? Can't I even say a perfectly strange man is good-looking without your getting jealous?"

"I'm not jealous," Ward denied with sulky dignity. "But I do think that, for a girl who has been engaged only four weeks, you give a lot of time to other men."

At that moment Phil and Louisa joined them, and Jocelyn's retort

was cut off in the flow of Louisa's complaints about the rooms assigned them.

"They claim they never got our telegram," she said, as the four moved toward the dining room. "But that's ridiculous. They finally gave Phil and me a room on the second floor. You're up on the third, Jocelyn, and Ward is on the fourth. The clerk says he'll try to get us a suite to-morrow."

They were passing the man with the newspaper, and for a second he looked up, his eyes meeting Jocelyn's briefly. Deliberately, knowing Ward was watching, she smiled. An answering smile flashed across the other's face.

Jocelyn had been feeling sulky, but now a pleasant exhilaration lightened her spirits. The man was certainly attractive, and just because she was engaged it didn't mean that she couldn't even look at another man.

She became aware of Ward, stalking at her side.

"Are you making yourself conspicuous just to annoy me?" he demanded.

Her good nature restored, Jocelyn laid a placating hand on his arm.

"Don't be cross," she soothed. "You'll feel better when you've had something to eat."

"There's no good putting me off with talk about dinner," Ward retorted, and Jocelyn, looking up into his face, saw it was dark with anger.

Her own quick temper flared and her eyes blazed as she stood still, confronting him, at the entrance to the dining room.

"Don't be dumb," she snapped. "I'm not putting you off with anything. Are you still grouching because I happened to say, with perfect truth, that that man out there is handsome?"

"It's not only that man," Ward began. "It's——"

"Don't tell me it's the principle of the thing," Jocelyn interrupted. "When any one says that, I know he's trying to be disagreeable. The truth is, you're idiotically jealous, and I'm not going to stand it."

Ward surveyed her in silence a moment, his features granite-hard. An uncomfortably hollow sensation crept over Jocelyn. A little pulse of fear started vibrating deep inside her. She thrust out her hand with an inarticulate cry.

"I didn't mean——" she began, when Louisa's voice, sharp with impatience, cut her off.

"What are you two waiting for?" she demanded. "Come on and let's have something to eat."

Ward stood aside for Jocelyn with the hint of a mocking bow.

"When you and your sister have been fed we can continue this discussion about what you will and will not stand."

Jocelyn, silent and apprehensive, preceded him to the table where Louisa and Phil waited.

She sank into a seat and slowly peeled the gloves from her hands. Her eyes were on the big emerald that glowed on her third finger as she waited in silence for her order.

When it came, she couldn't eat. Her throat was tight, and a sense of utter weariness possessed her. Occasionally, from under her long lashes, she stole a glance at Ward. He was talking to Phil about golf.

"I think I'll go to bed," she announced suddenly.

Ward turned to her. "Wait a bit. It will do you good to get a breath of air before you turn in."

"Yes, do go outside a while," Louisa urged.

"She thinks you want to kiss me good night," Jocelyn observed.

"Better come and get it over with or she'll be disappointed. My sister has a romantic soul."

She led the way from the long room, then stepped out a French door onto a gallery running the length of the hotel. The autumn air was crisp and fragrant with pines. Jocelyn stood still for a moment, leaning against the rail, drawing in great, deep breaths of the bracing air.

Ward stood behind her, silent. Then, unexpectedly, his arms came about her and he pulled her into a tempestuous embrace, his cheek pressed hard against the girl's.

"I love you," he said, his voice rough with emotion. "And you continually make a mockery of it. If you loved me you wouldn't."

Jocelyn moved her cheek the least bit so the roughness of his rubbed against her tender face. His masculinity seemed to engulf her. She felt suddenly suffocated.

She wrenched free from his hold, facing him in the dim light filtering through the windows.

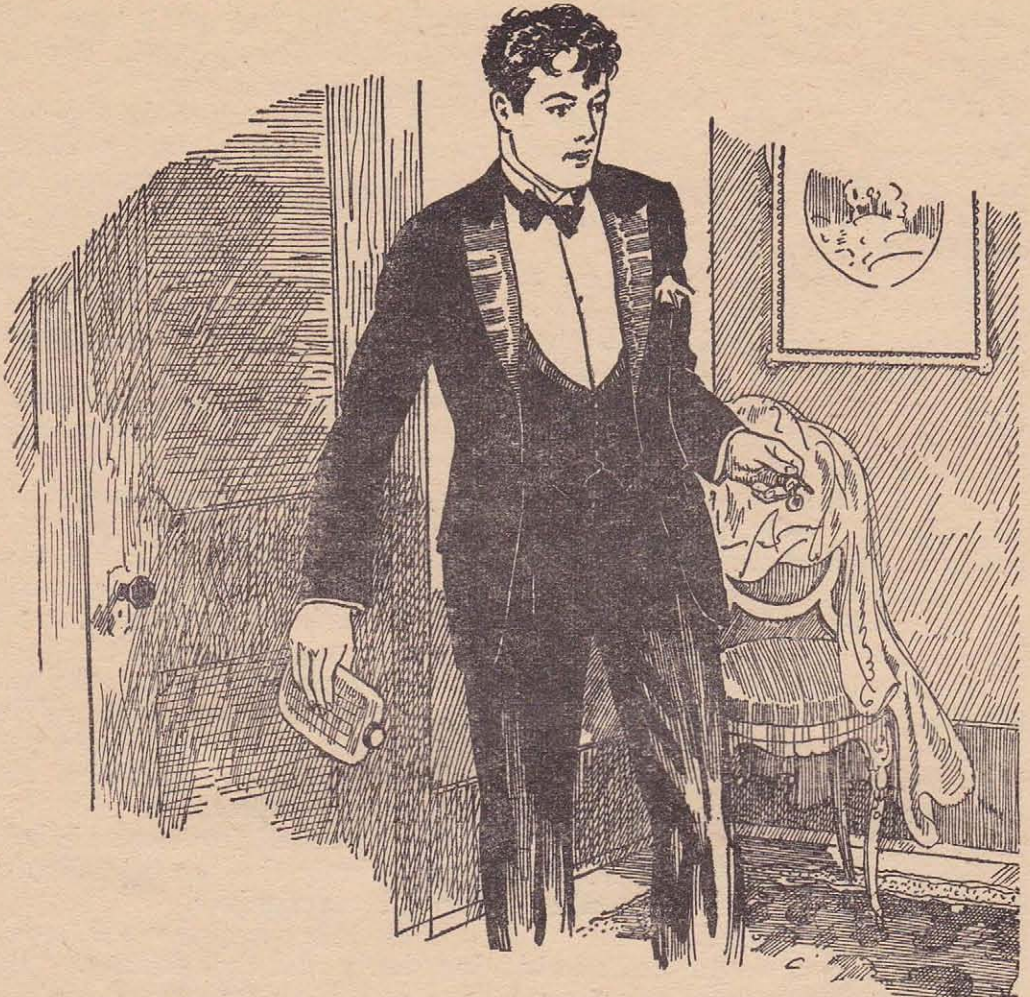
"I do love you," she said, speaking slowly and thoughtfully. "But I've got to be myself. I can't be watched and suspected all the time. Love, to me, means faith, trust. Unless you can trust me, I can't believe you love me."

"I do trust you," Ward broke in. "But you make it so wretchedly hard. You flirt with every man you see. There are times when I think you'd go off with the first one who asked you."

Jocelyn stiffened, rigid with shock.

"So that's what you think of me!" She pulled the emerald from her finger and held it out on the flat of palm. "Take it!" she cried. In spite of herself, her voice broke on a sob.

Ward made no move to accept the



ring. She let it drop to the floor and whirled toward the entrance.

"Wait," he begged, striding after her. "Jocelyn, I didn't mean——"

Some one had come along behind him, picked up the ring.

"Is this yours?" the newcomer asked Ward. And in the moment it took him to accept it, Jocelyn was gone.

In her room she dropped to the side of her bed, beating her clenched fists against the soft bedclothes. The tears she would not shed swelled in her throat.

She would take the train back to New York in the morning. She would get a job, as cook, scrub-

woman—anything. She'd never see Ward again. Jocelyn shivered, feeling herself exiled already.

She stared about the unfamiliar room with hostile eyes. Then, slowly, she undressed, pulled a nightgown of palest blue over her head, and tied its sash with a jerk.

She made a little pile on the end of the dressing table of her diamond-studded wrist watch, her gold compact, and her purse. Ward had given her the first two. She would leave them at the desk for him with a note.

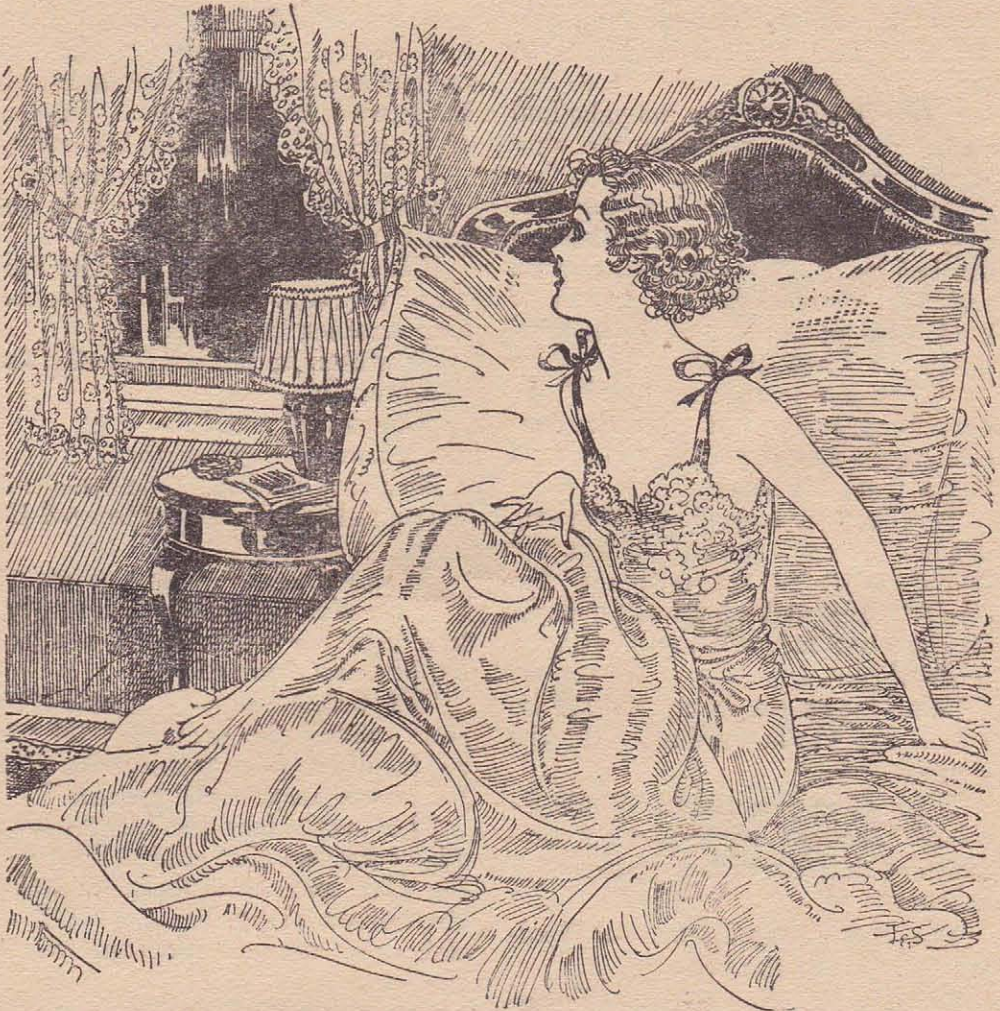
Jocelyn picked up a sheet of paper but could not find the right



words, and pushed it impatiently aside.

She hated Ward, she told herself, lying in bed, hands clenched at her

It had been easy for them to see a lot of each other, and at first his wanting to monopolize her, his open resentment of any time she gave to



*She awoke suddenly to the sure knowledge that some one was in her room. It was a man. "What are you doing here?" she demanded trying but not succeeding in keeping a sharp note of terror from her voice.*

sides, legs stretched out tense and straight under the covers. She reviewed their first meeting. It had been at a tennis match last spring. Seeing him, tall and bronzed, in his white flannels, the men about her had seemed infantile and boring. He was, it turned out, a classmate of Phil's.

other men, had been exciting, she remembered. Almost as exciting as the night, coming home from the theater, when he had asked her to marry him.

She closed her eyes, living again his passionate kisses, feeling the pressure of his arms that lifted her to breathless heights of exultation.

And now he dared to tell her he couldn't trust her, that she was no better than a cheap flirt.

Jocelyn's whole body burned with the indignity of it. She flung off the blankets, sat up in bed, taut and furious. Then she fell back against the pillow, sobbing.

She didn't know how long she had slept when she awoke to the sure knowledge that some one was in her room. Swiftly, without giving herself time to think, she jerked on the bed light. Then, blinking in its sudden radiance, she saw a pair of black-clad shoulders and the back of a smooth black head.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded, trying but not quite succeeding in keeping a sharp note of terror from her voice.

The intruder turned, and she recognized the man she had seen in the lobby earlier in the evening. He carried a key and a huge silver flask. His hair was mussed, and he swayed unsteadily.

"How'd you get in my room?" he asked, his words coming thick and slurred.

"I'm not in your room. You're in mine," Jocelyn snapped, her momentary fear gone in a gust of annoyance.

The man shook his head and advanced toward the bed.

"That's kind of compli-compli— You know what I mean; kind of mixed up. Let's have a drink and see if it straightens out."

Jocelyn waved him away. Inwardly she felt a renewed tremor of fright. Suppose he tried to make love to her? Suppose— Determinedly she forced herself to speak calmly:

"I don't want a drink, and you've had too many already. Go on, get out of here. I want to sleep."

"Aw, what's the hurry? My name's Conroy. What's yours?"

He was, she saw, young, and in spite of his being tight, almost unbelievably good-looking. A boyish grin lighted his face now, and before Jocelyn realized his intention he had seated himself comfortably in the chair beside the bed. In spite of herself, she could not feel angry.

"Do have a drink," he urged.

Instead, she took his key from him and studied its number.

"This is Room 317," she told him. "And your key is for 417. You belong another flight up."

He stared at her, apparently lost in admiration.

"Clever of you," he said. "I'd never have thought of that."

He got to his feet, none too steadily, and started weaving toward the door.

On an impulse, Jocelyn swung over the side of the bed, shoved her toes into her mules, and wrapped her kimono around her.

"I'd better see that you get to your room," she decided. "If you go breaking into places, like this, you're apt to get into trouble."

The man's legs seemed to grow unsteadier as she guided him out the door and up a flight of stairs. He walked along the hall with an elaborate caution Jocelyn found amusing.

At the sound of the elevator door clanging shut, she felt his arm, which she had taken to steady him, stiffen under her hold.

"It's all right," she assured him in the tone one uses to a fretful child. Then she, in her turn, grew stiff with horror.

Ward was coming toward them!

Jocelyn's hand dropped from her companion's arm. Her tongue was stiff and her mouth dry. With an instinctive gesture she pulled the

pale-blue silk of her kimono tighter about her.

She tried to speak, failed, then tried again, managing a husky:

"Ward!"

If he saw her it was impossible to guess it. Head high, shoulders squared, he would have passed her.

Jocelyn flung herself forward, catching at the sleeve of his coat with frantic fingers. Still without meeting her eyes, he attempted to shake her off, but Jocelyn hung on, bringing her flushed face close to his.

"You've got to listen," she panted. "It isn't what you think. That man was in my room and——"

"That's exactly what I am thinking," Ward cut in, his tone bleak as ice.

Hot blood flamed in Jocelyn's cheeks. Her eyes snapped.

"You would!" she cried. "I'm trying to tell you he's tight and got into my room by mistake. I must have forgotten to lock the door."

She drew away from him, standing stiff and straight.

"And now that I've explained," she added, "I never want to see you again."

She turned, suddenly remembering she still held the key to Conroy's room. Conroy was gone.

There was a sound of running feet, and then Conroy came into view, closely followed by a tall, heavy-built man in a gray uniform. Seeing Ward, the pursuer yelled:

"Head him off, sir."

Ward went into action, bringing Conroy down with a flying tackle, and holding him, in spite of his determined struggling, until the watchman came up.

"Now then," the latter said sternly, "I guess we've got you with the goods, Comisky."

The man whom Jocelyn knew as Conroy straightened, his lip twisted

in a sneer. The last evidence of his recent intoxication was gone.

"You're crazy, Murphy," he snarled. "You haven't got anything on me."

"We'll see about that. I'll just take a peek in your pockets."

Conroy grew threatening. "I'll have the law on you for this. Molesting a guest."

"Shut up," Murphy ordered. He drew from the man's pocket a wrist watch, a purse, and a jeweled compact.

Jocelyn, staring, gave a sharp gasp. "Why, those are mine!"

Understanding came to her, and with it, rage.

"You thief!" she cried. "You weren't tight at all. You deliberately got into my room to steal." Hysterical laughter shook her. Her voice rose to a shrill pitch. "And me helping you upstairs, feeling sorry for you——"

A touch on her arm restored her to self-control.

"Take it easy, miss," the watchman counseled. "That's his regular game, but we've never been able to get the goods on him before. Can you identify these things as yours?"

Jocelyn nodded decisively. "Oh, absolutely. See, there's my monogram on the watch and compact, and my name is in the purse. Mr. Rutledge"—she turned to Ward for confirmation—"gave them to me."

"Yes, I did," he acknowledged, without inflection of any sort.

At last Murphy and his charge were gone and Jocelyn found herself in the corridor, alone with Ward. The quiet seemed intolerable to the girl. She had quarreled with him before, but this flintlike silence was worse than any words.

She waited a moment longer for him to speak, to make some move. Then, with an inarticulate murmur,

she whirled and started along the corridor and down the stairs toward her room.

Her action seemed to galvanize the man. She could hear his quick footsteps behind her. He was gaining on her. Pulses throbbing, Jocelyn reached her door. At that moment Ward overtook her and crowded into the room beside her.

Startled and strangely apprehensive, Jocelyn turned to him. His hands were clenched at his sides. His face was working with emotion.

"Jocelyn," he burst out, "don't hate me."

Unexpectedly, her legs would no longer support her, and Jocelyn sank into the nearest chair. Instantly, Ward was at her feet, head against her knees.

"Forgive me," he pleaded. "After you left me I went out and tramped the woods, fighting things out with myself. I was going to beg you to give me another trial, to promise never to doubt you again. Then I came in, found you——" Jocelyn felt him shudder.

Leaning forward, she slipped her arms about his shoulders, cradled his head against her heart.

"It did look pretty bad," she admitted softly. "I don't blame you for thinking——"

"Don't," Ward interrupted. "I was a beast. I ought to be shot. Oh, darling, I love you so! I'll never doubt you again. I'm just going to love and trust you always."

Jocelyn's arms tightened their hold. Then Ward was kissing her, over and over, as though he could never get enough of her lips. They clung together, trembling, incoherent with the exultation that surged through them like a ruthless, overpowering tide.

"You poor baby, were you terribly frightened when you found that man in your room?" he asked presently.

Jocelyn shook her head.

"Not scared. Just mad. I wanted to get him out in a hurry."

She burrowed her cheek into his shoulder with a little sigh.

"I guess it depends on the man. There's one here now, and I don't care if he never goes."

"I do well to keep an eye on you," Ward teased. Then his tone deepened, became serious. "Some day ——" he began.

"What do you mean some day?" Jocelyn broke in, her voice warm and sweet, her eyes starry. "Isn't to-morrow as good a day as any—for a wedding?"



### THE GIFT

WE gathered rare orchids together  
 For the house by the little lagoon,  
 The beach held the magic of twilight  
 That covered the islands too soon.

The waves were like dancers in silver,  
 That tossed their pale stars in the spray.  
 But the night wrapped in tropical beauty  
 Brought us love, then stole softly away.

CHARLES BANCROFT.



# The Silver Duke

By Beth Farrell

**J**AN'S got to get out, ma, she's too pretty. If I'm to grab a rich husband, you've got to give me a fair chance. I can't do a thing with Jan hanging around. Men simply fall for her in rows. Even yesterday, when she was helping Sukey and looked awful, all Carleton Vance could see was Jan. I'm sick of it. Anyway, you've done enough for her. After all, she's just

a niece of papa's. She ought to have brains enough to get out and support herself."

"But what would she do?" was Aunt Millie's plaintive whine.

"I don't care," Lutie snapped. "I just know she's going or I am, and if I go, you'll be sorry," she finished meaningly.

"Lutie!" Aunt Millie cried in horror.

Janine didn't wait to hear any more, but slid out of the swing and through the moonflowers, down the back way to Anne Derry's, and as she went her anger grew until it shook her body with fury.

Janine was quite sure that Lutie, her cousin, had known she was in the swing. For another thing, Lutie knew that her cousin Janine had given Aunt Millie ten years of her life so that Lutie could stay in an expensive French school. Of late, Janine had worked harder than old black Sukey, who was growing too feeble to do much. Trust Lutie not to lift a finger, although she well knew that her mother's modest income could not keep a higher-priced servant and pay Lutie's school bills at the same time.

Janine reflected that this was the thanks she received. Lutie had been home less than a month, and Janine must get out. Janine's smile was a trifle grim. Lutie was far from beautiful, but she knew how to wear clothes, and she had a keen mind and a quick tongue. No one had been more surprised than Janine when Carleton Vance had devoted himself to her, rather than to Lutie.

Janine, her tousled coppery hair tied with an old blue bandanna of Aunt Sukey's, an outgrown blue gingham showing the slim roundness of her figure, and floury arms busy with beaten biscuit, had still claimed the rich, gay young man's attention. Janine couldn't blame Lutie for being peeved about it, but she did blame her for acting so unsporting.

All this Janine poured out to Anne, her friend, as she flung herself down under the big lawn umbrella.

"I'm getting out as fast as I can," Janine ended sullenly, biting her quivering lip viciously. "I don't know what I'll do. Miss Day's school didn't fit me for much useful

work, and Aunt Millie always said it didn't matter; I was to have a home with her until I went to one of my own."

"You *can't* leave, Jan. You'd never be able to get a decent job. Why, the Margaret Home is simply overflowing," Anne said gravely. "Mrs. Babbie called me only yesterday to ask me to get the League together, and see if we couldn't manage larger quarters for the girls. Her assistant is so overworked, she's leaving her flat."

Jan straightened. "Anne, right there is a job, and you weren't going to tell me about it."

Anne laughed. "You'd never do. Your aunt wouldn't even let you help us down there, let alone going there to live. You don't know Swantown in summer. It's the tenement district. Poverty, criminals in hiding. What do you know about such things? And what do you know about working in a place like the Margaret Home?"

"Well, I can learn. I'd scrub floors," Janine declared passionately, "before I'd stay another week under the same roof with Lutie."

"But, Jan, don't rush into it like this. Come North with me, and maybe by fall Lutie will be married and you can go back."

"Thanks, no, Anne. You know I haven't any money, and I wouldn't go as your guest. If Mrs. Babbie will have me, I'm going to work. Can we go to see her now?"

Anne Derry looked at Janine thoughtfully. She knew this mood of Jan's. Knew the sultry fires in the girl's passionate violet eyes, the fury twisting the beautiful mouth. Jan was equal to doing anything if she couldn't have her way. Besides, she was strong. Mrs. Babbie would be glad to have her. Jan had run

her aunt's home for years. Why not let her try it?

"Come along then, since you're so determined," Anne decided, and the girls went to get Anne's car.

Down through lovely, tree-shaded Beverly and across the tracks where, in the narrow space between railroad tracks and docks, lived the other half. Janine had never been across the tracks, for Aunt Millie had been firm about not letting her visit the Junior League's pet charity, the Margaret Home for wayward girls.

Mrs. Babbie, a plump, motherly-looking person, did not ask any questions, but fell upon Anne's choice of a new helper with open arms.

There was no room for Janine to live at the Home, but Mrs. Babbie gave her the address where her former assistant had stayed.

Anne was horrified at the small attic room, but Jan said it would do nicely, and still in her mutinous mood, paid her month's rent in advance. She'd have to share it with one Lizette Greer, a factory worker.

When Janine reached her aunt's home again, she found that Aunt Millie had gone to the country club with Lutie and had not left, as she usually did, a note telling Jan to follow. Janine, who had been rapidly weakening, grew angry once more, and hurriedly packed her things. Then she left the house she had come to as a sad, long-curved, nine-year-old.

Her roommate was curiously awaiting her arrival. She was a thin, attractive girl with odd, slanting eyes that never looked straight into Janine's.

"Ain't you going to unpack everything?" she asked, when Janine had unpacked what she thought suitable for Swantown and left the rest

in her trunk. Janine had known just how silly the other clothes would look in Swantown, those long, flowered chiffons, starched laces, rough sports silks, silver and gold slippers, exquisite silk underthings. She'd been silly to bring them, but she had not known what else to do.

If she could have trusted Lizette, Janine would have shown her the clothes and told her what had happened, but something in Lizette's shifty glance repelled her, so she kept silent. In the days that followed, when she dived into the trunk for this possession or that and exposed the lovely things, Lizette only looked knowing, so Janine guessed that her roommate had been through the trunk, but she didn't care.

Life at the Margaret was hard, but Janine learned rapidly, and Mrs. Babbie was overjoyed. Because the Junior Leaguers had all gone North for the summer, Janine did not have to dodge her former friends.

With some of the girls she easily made friends, but some remained hard and sullen to the last. Of them all, Jan grew really fond of only one.

"Buddy" Draconi was a beautiful black-eyed girl with curly dark hair and soft white skin. It took a long time to win her confidence, but when Janine did, Buddy was pathetic in her eagerness to be friends.

Her story was unusual, as Jan had suspected it would be. She had been loved by two men, rival gangsters, and had married one to be promptly widowed by the other. A friend had brought her to the Margaret. And as Buddy said, "No one would think of looking for Buddy Draconi in this joint, leastways not Danny the Knife."

It was soon after this strange friendship began that Buddy burst out with, "I bet the Silver Duke

would be crazy about you, Jimmy. You're his kind."

"The Silver Duke?" Jan repeated, smilingly.

"Yes, he's a swell like you. Just a night bird like the rest of us. Only shows up after dark. A gangster, see?"

"But why the Silver Duke?" Janine asked carelessly, not because she was interested. Her feet ached, and so did her head and back. She was sick to death of Swantown and its squalor. Sick of the smells and people, the gangsters who frankly claimed to be nothing else.

"My Buck named him that the first night he came to Carmini's. His eyes are exactly like silver coins, and he was such a real swell, Buck called him the Silver Duke and it stuck."

Janine went on filing her nails, listening carelessly. Wouldn't Anne laugh to hear Buddy proposing that Janine Broun have a blind date with a gangster named the "Silver Duke"? Certainly she had hidden Janine well under the "Jimmy Brown" that Swantown knew.

A trifle curiously, she eyed herself in the narrow mirror opposite. A shabbily dressed girl with ruffled copper hair cut just a little longer than a boy's, because the old Janine had worn hers long, bunched at the nape of her neck. She was white, and the old Janine would be brown by now. The pallor made her mouth startlingly scarlet.

"Oh, gosh! Here he is now!" Buddy's eager voice interrupted Jan's thoughts, and Jan looked up with a start of dismay, into eyes that were, as Buddy had said, as cool and silvery as coins. It was a long way to look, too, for he was well over six feet, tall, strong, but slim-hipped. In his white trousers and white turtle-necked sweater, he

did not look different from the crowd she ran with, and not at all as she had thought a dweller of Swantown would look.

"This is Jimmy Brown, Duke, and she's a swell jane, only she's half dead. She works harder than any of the other dames around here," Buddy introduced them.

"Buddy." Just one word of laughing dismay, in a warm, drawling voice that, for some reason, sent a tingle through Janine.

"Aw, nix, Duke, on making me talk your way, but isn't she a pretty keen kid?"

"Very keen." Somehow, Janine found her hand in a cool, firm clasp, and she was returning the Duke's smile.

"Take her for a ride, Duke. She's tired and hot," Buddy suggested. "I'm taking another girl's turn at the telephone to-night."

Janine wanted to protest, but didn't. Janine Broun going riding with a man from Swantown. Nevertheless, she found herself going down the hot street with the tall young man, his hand touching her arm at the crossings.

She didn't even think much about her rashness in trusting herself to him in the hot darkness of Swantown. Looking back over that night, she wondered why she hadn't been afraid, especially as he guided her toward the docks. Dark shapes slunk in and out of the shadows, and spoke to the Duke in gutturals. The water slapped sullenly against the docks, and only the riding lights of the moored freighters relieved the darkness.

"Why, it's a boat, not a car," Janine said with real pleasure, as her companion stayed her steps at a slip where a speed boat tugged at its moorings.

"Scared?"



"A little," Janine admitted honestly.

"Don't be. I'll take good care of you and see that you get safely home again. We can go up the shore a ways and get steamed clams and cold beer at a place I know. Dance, too, if you want to."

Janine nodded, and he picked her up and put her into the boat as easily as if she had been a doll.

The boat went like the wind, seeming to leap into the velvet night. Away they roared out of the bay and up the coast line. Janine drew in great lungfuls of the fresh air, and gradually the tiredness, the horrible weariness left her.

At a dock miles up the coast, the Duke shut off the engine and they floated to anchor beside a long, dimly lighted building. Music reached out gay hands to them, and Janine's feet tingled to be dancing once more, even though it was with a Swantownian.

The building was crude on the outside, but inside there was an excellent floor with tables all around the dimly lighted room, a good orchestra and an oyster bar that went the entire length of the room.

Duke might have been Carleton Vance himself, he was so courteous, and Janine forgot that he wasn't some new boy whom she had met in Beverly. Oh, well, she was just Jimmy Brown now, and girls of Swanton went with men like the Silver Duke and "Danny the Knife."

"Like it?" the Duke asked, bending his tall head as they finished their cold beer and fried oysters, to join the dancers.

"I love it. It was nice of you to invite me. Buddy practically shanghaied you into it," Janine laughed.

"No, she didn't. I could have said I had a date. Truth is, I'm

fed up on this lone-wolf business, and keen on having a pretty girl to dance with."

"I thought if young men didn't have those things, it was because they didn't want them," observed Janine innocently. "Surely there are plenty of good-looking girls just aching to go places."

The face of the man looked bleak, and his mouth became a grim line. Jan looked at him in surprise. Now he looked like the other men of Swantown, and she had thought him different. Then he laughed.

"Maybe there aren't too many Jimmy Browns in Swantown," he said lightly. "You can't tell me you were born there."

"Not very far from where I stay now," Janine said quietly. "I had been away working, but I had to leave, so I came to the Margaret when I heard there was a job open there."

"I should think you'd be too good-looking to be out in service. You wouldn't be a comfortable person for other girls to be with under the same roof."

Janine looked quickly at her companion, but he was plainly not trying to flatter her, for he was looking thoughtfully over her head, evidently thinking over what she had said.

"That was the reason I left. Another girl made her mother fire me," Janine admitted.

The door swung open, and a group of young people rushed in and took possession of the bar. Janine started, for at their head was Lutie, who should have been at their Northern summer home. Her cousin's companions were strangers to her.

Lutie pounded on the bar. "Action! We want action!"

Janine winced, hoping Lutie



*Lutie's cold black eyes pounced upon Janine's companion, for he was a striking figure, and she strutted over to them and put her hand on his arm. "Break, big man, and dance with Lutie," she commanded.*

wouldn't discover her in the dimness.

It was evident Lutie knew the place, for she went over to a wall

and pushed a button, flooding the room with light.

Lutie was in slacks, with a very insufficient bandanna tied around

**LS-5A**



her neck and tucked into the front of the slacks, leaving her brown back bare. She was attractive in a gay, gypsyish way, but the oyster bar was not the only kind of bar she had frequented that night. She swayed dizzily as she walked.

Her cold, small black eyes pounced upon Janine's companion first, for he was a striking figure, and she strutted over to them and put her hand on his arm.

"Break, big man, and dance with Lutie," she commanded in her high voice. "Aw, don't be so cross," she shrilled, as the Duke coolly swung away from her hand. She stared insolently at his companion, then blinked. "Well, for gosh's sake, see who he's toting. Say, big boy, you needn't go to the kitchen for dates."

LS-6A

Janine's cheeks were scarlet with embarrassment. She looked up at the Duke, but he had shaken Lutie off, and was smiling down at Janine as though they were alone.

Janine caught her breath at the miracle of that smile. It did queer things to her. Lutie was staring, too, and slowly turning scarlet. He looked at her, and her eyes wavered before the cold silver lances of the Duke's glance.

Her partner, a sleek-haired fellow, grabbed Lutie roughly by the arm and whirled off with her. "Served you right, Lutie, for stepping out of your class."

"Say, she can't get away with that!" Lutie's voice was shrill with fury. "I'm going to tell him a mouthful about her. She hasn't anything to be so snooty

about, and I'm not through with him, either. He's going to dance with me and like it!"

"Ready to go out where the air is cleaner?" the Duke asked distinctly, and at Jan's relieved nod, he guided her out of the door into the night. "That the girl who got you fired?" he asked, and Janine nodded again, glad she had not had to claim relationship with Lutie.

Lutie was at the bar now. Jan could see her there as she sat in the boat, waiting for the Duke to start the motor. Lutie was questioning the nearest chef. Jan's eyes sparkled angrily. Why couldn't Lutie leave her alone, now that she had driven her away from the only home she had ever known?

"She'll find out who you are and

chase after you. I'm afraid I've made trouble for you by coming to-night," Jan said regretfully.

"So you, too, know I'm hiding," the Duke said thoughtfully. "Well, don't let it worry you. She can't harm me, even if she drags me into the sunshine of—Beverly, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's where she lives," Janine replied, marveling at his quickness.

"It would have to be. There's only Swantown, Beverly, and the Campau."

Swantown put out a hot hand, reeking of asphalt, as they left the docks and the speed boat behind. Janine shivered a little. It was for a girl like Lutie she had chosen this life. Lutie wasn't worth it. She should have ignored her taunts and stayed where she belonged, and that wasn't prowling about with a hiding criminal.

The Duke, with his uncanny quickness, seemed to guess her thoughts, for he said quickly, "Don't worry, I'm safe company even for a tired little girl from the Margaret Home."

"This is where I live," Janine said quickly, confused. "On the top floor."

"Isn't it beastly hot up there?"

"When it is, my roommate and I take army cots to the roof. It's cool up there under the stars." She paused. "The ride was lovely, Duke."

"You made it so, Jimmy. I'm going to take you often."

Janine didn't believe he would. He wasn't safe for Janine Broun. She was afraid. Already, he made her heart beat fast. Would he expect her to kiss him good night?

Kisses didn't mean much to the crowd Janine had known. Maybe if he did kiss her, it would cure her of her growing infatuation. She was

instantly ashamed of the thought, but it was too late. The Duke's arms closed about her hard, and his face, smooth and cool, was close to hers. Then his mouth crushed down on hers, hot and fierce, until she gasped for breath. For a moment he held her there, against the virile steel that was his body, his mouth taking her very heart through her lips. Then he released her and melted into the darkness.

"Well!" Lizette's voice came from the darkness, and she raced after Janine, who was rushing up the stairs. "Baby face and the Silver Duke teaming up. Who'd have thought he'd fall for you?"

"Buddy Draconi asked him to take me for a ride on the water to cool off," Janine stammered, because Lizette's eyes looked so knowing.

"I'd say he did the opposite. Well, kid, he's rolling in do-re-mi. They say he did a big job and is in hiding until they quit looking for him. Draconi claims he's horribly moral. If that's so, you better tip him off to your past. Even gangsters have codes, y'know."

"Am I being dumb?" Janine asked, catching up her cotton pajamas and starting for the bathroom.

"Aw, come off. Guess I know about you. I suppose you didn't come here straight from one of the doll apartments of Campau. I've seen the glad rags in the trunk, only I'd have thought *you* could have held your man longer."

Janine went on to the bathroom, puzzled. Then suddenly she laughed. Of course Lizette would think that. The city was divided into three parts. Beverly, where the people of the idle class lived; Swantown, and the Campau, which consisted of the houses beyond the theaters where rich young men

maintained apartments for entertaining their friends—often girls from Swantown, with whom they amused themselves until their fancy changed. Lizette had decided that Janine had been discarded by a fickle young playboy. Well, let her think it, if it helped Jan to hide more securely.

Nevertheless, she wouldn't go around with the Duke. But she didn't know the Duke, nor anything about the terrible heat that lay like a pall over Swantown, turning its streets to black rubber, its skies to brassy smoke, and good resolutions into thin air.

Janine was glad to get away at night with the Duke, to the clean, cool water, where they spent the evening hours racing up the coast. He seemed to have unlimited funds, and Janine grimly pushed the thought of their source into the back of her mind, along with the other self who had once been safe in Beverly.

Buddy disappeared suddenly one night, and the Duke professed not to know where she had gone. Jan missed the vivacious, black-eyed, adoring Buddy more than she had expected. Aside from Anne, Buddy was the only real friend Janine had had, and it hurt incredibly to have her go without even a good-by.

The Duke had not repeated that mad kiss. Sometimes he seemed to be laughing at himself about something. Often he stayed away days at a time, but always, he came back. Useless to tell herself she was Janine Broun of Beverly. She was really Jimmy Brown, madly in love with a man who dared not show his face in the daylight.

Hurrying along the street on an errand one day, Janine surprisingly met Lutie face to face—Lutie, slim and cool and elegant, in her float-

ing flowered dress and wide hat. Janine stopped in surprise.

"What on earth, Lutie Broun, are you doing down here?"

"I could ask the same, only I happen to know," Lutie jeered.

"What do you mean, Lutie? I thought you had gone North long ago."

Lutie shrugged. "We were all ready to go when I ran into you that night. I've been looking for you ever since. Why not come home? I'll admit I was mean, but you got my goat. I'm going to marry Carleton Vance soon as everybody gets back from the resorts, so you can come home now."

"Why, Lutie, how nice," Janine said slowly.

"Nice, nothing! If you come, naturally the Silver Duke will tag along, and I owe that guy plenty," she flung out angrily.

Janine gasped. "You mean you want the Duke there?"

"Sure. You could melt here and I wouldn't raise a finger," Lutie retorted cruelly, "but I can't keep on coming here to see the Duke. I want to strut him before the girls, too."

"Come down here to see the Duke? You mean—"

"Sure," laughed Lutie. "Didn't he tell you? I've been to his apartment often, but he won't come where I am. Seems to dislike daylight," she said hatefully.

"I think you are terrible, Lutie Broun," gasped Janine, shaken with rage. The Duke and Lutie. Was that the reason she hadn't been seeing so much of him?

Lutie shrugged and laughed, but her thin face was flushed.

"I thought you were a nut to come here, but now I see. Oh, I got it out of Anne. Mother worried so. Where did you meet him, Jan?"

"Oh, does it matter?" Janine cried. "Can't you leave me alone?"

"Well, how about coming back?"

"Does he know I am your cousin?" Janine asked.

"No, you had kept it quiet, so I did, too. Coming back?"

"No," flared Janine angrily. "Now go back where you belong."

Lutie laughed. "Suppose I tell the police that the man they want keeps his boat tied up at the Wilson Slip?"

"You wouldn't!" whispered Janine.

"Not unless my other plans fail. He's rather a touch-me-not, isn't he, but when that type fall, they fall hard. And I'm going to be right there for him to fall on."

"But you have Carleton," Janine reminded her.

"Say, you don't think we're in love? His dad and my mother are crazy for the match. But Carleton and I made an agreement that we're each to have our own fun."

Janine turned away without replying. She heard Lutie's high, silvery laugh following her, like the jangle of small brazen bells, and her face flushed with fury.

Lutie and the Duke. Lutie and the Duke. It rang in her ears all the long evening, as she sat on the edge of her cot looking up at the silver stars swinging in the black velvet sky. The Duke hadn't been at the Margaret to bring her home to-night. Lutie had coaxed him away with her somewhere, and if she had not hated her cousin before, Janine hated her now with an intense, consuming hatred.

That night, alone in the tiny room, she faced the real truth, something that she had been afraid to do until now. She knew she loved the Duke; loved him so crazily, madly, that nothing else on

earth mattered. Time not spent with him was a nightmare to be lived somehow.

It was nearly nine the next night when Janine finished her work at the Margaret. The Duke wasn't waiting there to-night, either.

Slowly, drearily, Janine went home. She walked up the hot, reeking stairs to her room, and as she stood fumbling for her key, she heard Lizette's voice, and with it the Duke's, and was instantly wildly happy once more. As she opened the door, Lizette sprang up.

"I asked the Duke up to wait. I'm off for a week-end at Eddie's ma's," Lizette explained, and hurried out.

Janine looked at the Duke. He was standing beside her open trunk. It wasn't the first time she had come home to find that Lizette had been rummaging in it. Expensive dresses and silken lingerie were strewn over the edge of it. A silver slipper lay on the dingy carpet; a lacy negligee was thrown over a chair. All the lovely clothes Aunt Millie had managed to shower on her niece were exposed to the Duke's eyes.

"Lizette was showing me your things," he said in an odd voice. He whirled, catlike, and caught Janine by the shoulders, shaking her until her hair flew in a wild mess over her face. "Jimmy, I could have sworn you were as sweet and honest as you looked."

Janine stared at him, dazzled. His eyes were flaming. He cared as much as that!

"I actually walked the floor nights swearing because I hadn't kissed you again. I held off because your mouth was so untaught, I thought. I find you are my equal—no, worse, for I never claimed to be anything



*He caught Janine by the shoulders, shaking her. "I could have sworn you were as sweet and honest as you looked," he cried. Now I find you are worse than I am. No good girl could have things like yours and get them by doing housework."*

but the Silver Duke, a man who has to hide."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean you came here from the Campau. That was what Lutie

tried to tell me that first night, and I thought she was jealous. Well, I've learned the truth now. From her, from Lizette, and from these. No good girl could have things like

yours and get them by doing house-work."

"Go away," Janine cried. "If you think that of me, you can't go too quickly."

"Before I satisfy my hunger for your mouth?" he cried savagely.

Something in his face made Janine cry out. "Wait, let me——"

"I won't wait," he cried roughly, and crushed her close to him. She could feel the steely muscles that so often had made her think of a tiger's. She struggled to free herself from the savagery of the mouth that swept down hers, couldn't, and then she didn't want to. All she wanted was him to keep on kissing her in this mad way. Time enough for explanations later.

Tides of magic were sweeping over her, carrying her away from the safe harbors Janine Broun had known. She had become a wild thing in the Silver Duke's arms. Oh, she'd gladly marry him and hide with him. What did she care for Beverly and its calm, prearranged marriages?

Things were whirling about her, and some of the madness passed. She was fighting a force she couldn't understand, fighting the Duke and losing, under his hot, cruel lips. Then she was sent staggering back against the wall, and the Silver Duke was gone.

Slowly the room straightened and became just a dingy room in Swantown. The magic that had transformed it was ugly passion that had nearly carried her away in its swift current.

Janine sank down into a chair, shaking from head to foot. She knew now why Buddy had married a gangster, dark-eyed, vivacious Buddy. Why, Janine was so in love with the Silver Duke, she couldn't even think straight.

Perhaps she slept, she never after-

ward knew, but somehow the hot dawn was in the room and she was draggingly dressing for another day. A day without the Duke, for he wouldn't be back, ever, and she couldn't do as Lutie did—follow him to explain and coax him back.

At Mrs. Babbie's door, Janine saw Anne's car. Anne was upstairs in the Margaret, waiting for her. She cried out at the sight of Janine and put her arms around her.

"Poor kid, you look all in. I came just in time, I guess."

"I thought you were still up North," Jan said, dropping into a chair.

"No, we came home early. It wasn't any fun without you. I suppose you know that your aunt and Lutie didn't go, after all. That's what I came about, to ask you to come home."

"Did Lutie send you?" Jan asked coldly.

"No. Don't be that way with me, Jan. Your aunt sent for you. Lutie and Carleton eloped last night and saved the trouble and expense of a big wedding. His house is nearly done, so they plan to stay at a resort until it is ready. Your aunt always wanted you back, but we both knew you wouldn't come until Lutie left."

"I can't leave Mrs. Babbie without notice," Janine said weakly, and it seemed as though she'd die if she didn't get out of Swantown right away.

Anne smiled. "The girl who used to work for her came back, so you can leave this minute."

Janine felt faint from relief. Anne studied her white face anxiously. But Janine rallied almost at once, and in no time at all her packing was done, good-bys at the Home were said, and the two girls were



driving away from the heat and sordidness of Swantown. Jan was glad she didn't have to see Lizette again.

She was filled with hatred for the girl who had lied to the Duke out of petty malice. Maybe some day she'd thank Lizette, but not while the pain of losing the Duke was an open wound in her heart.

"I suppose you've seen a lot of Lutie," Anne said calmly, as they bumped across the last of the tracks into Beverly. "She bragged that she was going with some handsome thug down there."

Janine did not reply. She was drawing deep breaths of the clean air of wide, shaded streets. Behind her was Swantown, and all its sordidness and heat. The madness of loving the Silver Duke—that should be put behind her, too. She was once more Janine Broun, and even Lutie could not drive her back to Swantown.

Aunt Millie and Sukey both wept when Janine got home. To her surprise, it was no effort at all to pick up the threads of her former life and go on. Every one knew, through Anne, that Janine had been doing social work at the Margaret. They were glad to have her back, and the chapter of the summer in Swantown seemed gone and forgotten.

But not for Janine. She could be busy all day and dance half the night, but in the long hours of early morning, she would live over every moment she had spent with the Silver Duke. In her dreams she felt again the spray on her face as his boat took them up the coast, and wakened to find it was her own tears.

The first day after Lutie and Carleton returned, Lutie followed Janine to her room and shut the door.

"Does the Duke come here, Jan?" she demanded, going to the point Lutie-fashion.

"No, I haven't seen him since I left the Margaret."

"I have. I saw him riding with Buddy Draconi. She lives along the ocean at that big place that was shut so long. What was the trouble between you two?"

"Nothing. He left Swantown before I did," Janine answered gravely.

"I know that, too. I was at his rooms that night. He was packing when I got there, and was in a tearing rage about something. His face was so white it scared me. He seemed to have some crazy idea from Lizette Greer that you had come to the Margaret from the Campau."

Janine's violet eyes widened. "He told you that?"

"No, I picked it out of him."

"What did you tell him?" she asked in a strained voice.

"Why, you fool, what would I tell him? I said it was so. That Carleton was mad about you, and that when we got engaged I made him get rid of you." Lutie laughed at the sight of Janine's face. "Did you think I'd tell him that you were just too pretty to have around when I wanted to catch a rich man?"

"Why not? You already had Carleton," Janine said in a strangely dead voice.

"I wanted him, too." Lutie coolly lighted a cigarette. "If he had even looked at me, Carleton could have had you and welcome, but he didn't. I even threatened to tell the police about him, and he just laughed." Lutie's voice was choked with fury. "I don't believe he *was* hiding from the police. So you lost him to Draconi?"

Janine refused to reply, and finally Lutie left.

After she had gone, Janine stood for a long time in deep thought. She, too, knew where Buddy was living. Only the other day she had seen her on the lawn of a big house facing the sea. Buddy had not seen her, and Janine, smarting from Buddy's abrupt ending of their friendship, had taken care that she shouldn't.

Well, she was going to find Buddy now and through her learn where the Duke was hiding. Then she'd set him straight about her. She wouldn't have even a gangster believe the awful things Lutie had told about her. He'd realized the truth once she told him her name. After that, she would forget him as fast as she could.

Janine dressed in her simplest things. A coat of silky blue wool with a severe nun's cape edged with silver fox. A béret of the same material tilted on her coppery hair. Slim blue pumps. In her aunt's small coupé, Janine set out to call on Buddy.

Janine was in luck, for Buddy was walking down the driveway of the big house. She stared coldly at Janine as the girl brought her car to a stop beside her.

"Well?" she said in an unfriendly tone, cool black eyes sweeping Jan's smart figure.

"Get in here," Jan commanded, her voice as cold.

At the note of command in Janine's voice, Buddy stared, then obeyed.

"First I want you to tell me why you left without a word."

Buddy's black eyes flashed. "I thought I wasn't fit company for a nice girl like you, and the Duke agreed, so he helped me beat it. If I'd known——"

"You didn't know anything and neither does the Duke, see?" Janine

said angrily. "Did you ever hear of Janine Broun of Beverly?"

Buddy nodded. "She's a Junior Leaguer," she said sullenly.

"Well, that happens to be who I am," Janine said coldly. "My cousin, Lutie Broun, came home from school, and she was a scrawny little thing out for a rich husband and I cramped her style, so she made her mother send me away. A friend of mine knew Mrs. Babbie needed a helper, and I insisted on taking the job. That's the whole story. My family didn't know where I was for a long time, and when they did, they sent for me. Lutie was married, so I went home."

Buddy's big black eyes had grown wider and wider, and when Janine finished she made a little, stabbing motion with her hand.

"You shoulda bumped off that Lizette Greer and your cousin for giving the Duke a wrong steer. How come you didn't tell him the truth?"

"Because I was a snob," Jan said honestly. "He was hiding from the law, and I didn't want to fall in love with him. It's all right. I just wanted you to know. You can tell him. I've got to get back now." Janine's voice was unsteady, and to her horror one tear after another began to slide down her lovely face.

Buddy gave her a quick hug. "Get back, nothing. You come along with me to supper. Lucky you got me when you did, because Danny and I are beating it out West to start over. Oh, don't look like that. I married him to get him because his mob got Buck, and then I got weak and liked him too much. So we're going West. Isn't that a joke? Danny the Knife going straight and turning farmer?" But Buddy's tone was proud.

"You aren't with the Duke, then? I might have known Lutie was lying



A sound in the doorway made her look up, and she stared, wide-eyed. The Silver Duke stood there. For a moment she saw surprise and stark hunger mirrored in his face, then he seemed to don a mask that shut her out.

again," Janine said slowly. "Of course I'll stay for supper."

Buddy leaned forward and snapped on the car switch, and Jan drove up to the house and followed Buddy in through a side door.

"We're staying with some folks Danny knew," Buddy said, hustling Janine into a great, cool living room. "I'll go set an extra place. Drop somewhere, I won't be a minute."

Janine looked around the room.

It was a cool day, so there was a low fire flickering on the hearth. Three kittens tumbled there. Buddy and kittens—Janine smiled at the thought and bent to pet them. A sound in the doorway made her straighten up, and she stared, wide-eyed.

The Silver Duke stood there looking at her. For a moment she saw surprise and stark hunger mirrored in his face, then he seemed to don a mask that told her nothing, shut her out.

"Buddy did not tell me," stammered Janine, then hushed, for her voice sounded strange in her own ears.

"Why did you come, Jimmy?" the Duke asked stiffly.

"I came to find Buddy. I wanted her to know she had me all wrong, and so did you. Lutie lied and Lizette lied. Lutie told me about it to-day. Those clothes and these, I earned myself. I am living with Lutie's mother again, as her companion, the same position I had before Lutie came home from school."

Why she didn't tell him she was Janine Brown, Jan never could afterward fathom, but that small omission saved her happiness.

The Duke came forward and turned Janine's face to the light, his hand under her chin. A thrill went through Janine at his touch. Then she was still, but her breath was hurrying, hurrying.

"I believe you, Jimmy. I went back to find you, and found you had gone, but Lizette was there. I choked the truth out of her. She admitted she knew nothing about your past, that she had lied. It didn't matter, nothing mattered except finding you."

Janine felt the room swing about her, and at her white look, the Duke put his arms around her. "Was it

that way with you, too, Jimmy? Did you love me enough, so that the past didn't matter?"

Janine's pride became a thing of dust. "Yes, yes," she cried, her arms creeping up around his neck.

"Would you marry me now, not knowing anything more about me, Jimmy?"

"Could we? I mean, without waiting days for red tape and all that?" Janine asked bravely.

"I attended to that—I got the license long ago. Mrs. Babbie gave me your full name, J. M. Brown, but she didn't know any more than that."

Buddy's laughing face suddenly appeared between the curtains.

"Buddy, call that judge who lives down the street right away," ordered the Duke in a gay voice that Janine had never heard from him before.

When Buddy disappeared, the Duke looked down at Janine.

"You meant it?" And at her shining look he bent his tall head so he could reach her lips. This time Janine returned his kiss with all the hungry longing of the long weeks they had been separated. It was heaven to feel his arms around her, hurting her; the hard firmness of his mouth bruising hers. Recklessly, she put behind her all her doubts and fears.

Buddy brought them back to earth, triumphantly leading the plump judge and a tall, handsome blond youth who did not look at all as Janine had thought Danny the Knife would look.

In no time at all, just as she was in her blue dress and blue coat, and tumbled coppery hair, Janine became Mrs. Silver Duke. Of course, he had another name—Neal Riding. It was as unfamiliar as that of Silver Duke had been to her a few weeks before.

"Maybe our wedding won't be exactly legal," Janine murmured confusedly, when she discovered that Buddy and Danny and the judge had vanished.

It was the first thing she could think of to say under the shining-ness of the Duke's eyes.

"One letter ought not to matter," she added, gaining courage. "Just try letting it matter whether I'm Jimmy Brown or Janine Broun."

The Duke's arms loosened, and he said something under his breath that sounded like swearing.

"Jimmy, Jimmy, you blessed idiot, why didn't you say so before?" There was a choked groan in his voice. "Not that the difference of a letter matters, but if I had known, I would never have married you."

"Then I'm glad you didn't know. Anyway, I haven't a cent to my name except what Aunt Millie gives me for an allowance." Janine put her head firmly back where it had been, tucked under the Duke's chin.

"You don't understand. Janine Broun was mad to marry a man like me without knowing all about him."

"Then she loves being mad. You—you didn't kill any one."

For a moment the Duke held Janine close without answering, then he walked over to a desk and brought her a handful of clippings. "Read them," he commanded in a harsh voice.

Reluctantly, Janine bent over them. It was a sordid story of a

man who had killed his wife and her lover, then himself; and how his son, the innocent member of a tragic family, one Neal Darrel, had been hounded by the tabloids until his life had become unbearable and he had disappeared.

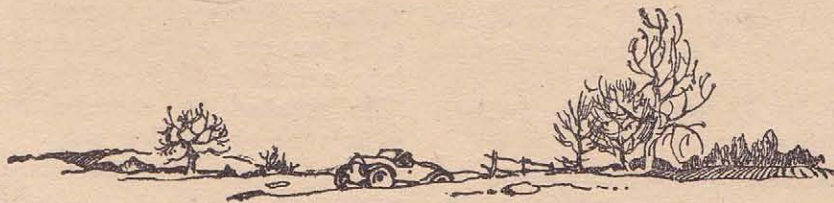
"That poor boy, Neal Darrel, was you, Duke?" Janine asked her voice soft with pity. "But you said Neal Riding——"

"I had one friend, a judge, who had my name changed to Riding. I came down here and bought this place, but the habit of hiding was too strong. I lived in daily fear of some sob sister ferreting me out. Only in the shadows of Swantown did I feel safe."

"And that was all?" Janine asked, a great relief flooding her with happiness. "You never were a gangster at all?"

"Never, but don't you see? Some day some one will recognize me as that unfortunate son of a father temporarily crazed by his wife's unfaithfulness. Thank Heaven she was my stepmother, not my real mother. They'll force you to live through that hashed-up scandal."

"As if I care," Janine said, with loving scorn. "I won't be afraid of anything as long as I have you." Janine, looking up into his eyes, shivered with happiness as his arms closed about her and his lips crushed down on hers, hot and fierce, in a kiss which made their very souls one forever.





# The Fourth Proposal

By Mona Morrow

AS the train rolled out of the station on its westward journey, Mrs. Huston, pale and grave, sat quietly with her hands in her lap, while Thelma, bubbling with excitement, opened the various gift boxes that had been brought by her many friends.

"What did Larry want when he called you aside?" Mrs. Huston in-

quired with more than ordinary interest.

"It was nothing important, mother," Thelma answered indifferently as she tossed an empty box into a corner of the compartment. "He wanted to come along and marry me at the first stop."

"And——" Mrs. Huston eagerly prompted, since Thelma had offered

no information as to what her reply had been.

"I told him he was just wasting a proposal on me. I couldn't possibly see him as a husband."

Mrs. Huston sighed and touched a weak hand to her iron-gray hair. "I don't know what you are waiting for, Thelma," she said kindly and concernedly. "The average girl considers herself fortunate if she gets one proposal. You've had three that I know of. Nice young men, too. Aren't you making a mistake passing up all these fine opportunities? The man you are waiting for may not even exist. He may only be a creature of your imagination. You'll be twenty-three next month, you know."

"Don't worry, dear," Thelma laughed. "I won't die an old maid."

Mrs. Huston made no answer. Her mind went back over a bridge of years. She thought of her own sister, Roberta, who at one time was pretty and charming and vivacious, as Thelma was now. Roberta had rejected many offers while waiting for an ideal who never came. The years crept up and she eventually resigned herself to spinsterhood. With all her heart and soul Mrs. Huston prayed that that would not be Thelma's fate.

Abruptly stopping her exploring, Thelma put her arms around her mother. "Just forget about me," she said. "And think of yourself only. You've got a job ahead of you. You've got to get strong and healthy. Surprise New York when you get back."

Without a second's hesitation, Thelma had volunteered to go with her mother to the Bar X Dude Ranch in Montana which the doctor had recommended. A six months' stay, the doctor felt, would make a new person of Mrs. Huston.

However, thinking always of Thelma's future, Mrs. Huston objected to her going along. It would be a waste of six precious months of her life. But Thelma insisted and the idea of a nurse for a companion was discarded.

John Cromwell, the owner of the dude ranch, a husky six-footer, escorted Thelma and her mother down the row of log cabins to the one in which they would live during their stay. He wore hand-tooled boots, a ten-gallon hat and a red plaid shirt that always impressed Easterners.

As Thelma glanced from left to right, taking in the immediate sights of the ranch, her eyes suddenly widened and unconsciously her steps became shorter. On the porch of one of the log cabins sat an exceptionally handsome young man of about twenty-eight. His dark-blond hair was brushed back smartly and his strong white teeth were clamped on a curved pipe. He was reading a book and was so absorbed that he never raised his head at the sound of their approach.

A feeling of breathless excitement surged through Thelma's veins. Her heart suddenly commenced to race. A strange and pleasing warmth enveloped her body. Her lips parted in a blessed smile and her eyes shone with an instinctive recognition.

Her head nodded slightly. Yes, that was the man she had been waiting for. That was the man whose vague image had filled her dreams for so long. She had always felt that somebody like him simply must exist and that some day she would find him.

An insatiable curiosity seized hold of her. Who was he? Where did he come from?

She quickened her steps and

caught up with Mr. Cromwell, who was holding her mother's arm. "That man looks familiar to me," she remarked after they had passed his cabin. "Who is he?"

"That's Mr. Stephen Ross," Cromwell informed her. "He's here with his brother, Philip Ross. They come from Chicago. They're in the steamship business. Mr. Philip is going to be here all summer, but Mr. Stephen is leaving at the end of the week."

The information was welcome, though not very promising. But there was one thing she desired to know above all others: Was he single?

She didn't want to ask the question point-blank, so: "Going home to his wife?" she asked, her heart trembling at what the answer might be.

"No. Don't think he's married."

Gladness and relief swelled her heart. Yes, it had to be this way. There should be no barriers when she found him.

"Here we are," Cromwell announced, stopping at the next cabin. "While you were having lunch, I had your trunks put inside. I hope you'll be very comfortable."

There were four rooms in the cabin—two bedrooms, a living room with an open fireplace, and a bathroom that held a tub and shower. Indian blankets and game trophies hung on the walls. Hand-woven rag rugs were scattered over the wooden floors. Each room was provided with electricity from the ranch's own power plant. Like all dude ranches, it combined the best features of the outdoor West with many of the comforts of the East.

Thelma suggested that her mother lie down and rest while she unpacked. The windows were wide open and a fine sweet-smelling

breeze fanned the rooms. Before she was half finished, Thelma noticed that her mother had fallen asleep. That was perfect. The more rest her mother got, the sooner would she regain her health.

Thelma took a shower and changed her dress. From the window of her bedroom, she saw Stephen on the porch of his cabin. "I wonder," she said half aloud, "if you've been waiting for me as I've been waiting for you. I'm coming over and I hope you get the same sort of shock when you see me that I got when I saw you."

Assuring herself that her mother was asleep, she strolled out with a glad heart. Near Stephen's cabin she halted and contemplated him for a moment. "How are you, neighbor?" she called out gayly.

He raised his head. For a second his blue eyes showed keen surprise. Thelma's jet-black hair glistened in the sun. Her large, expressive gray eyes, shaded by long black lashes, sparkled with an intriguing friendliness. She presented an exquisite picture as she stood there, slim and straight. Then his eyes clouded. "How do?" he answered coldly and dropped his eyes to his book again, dismissing her completely.

Aghast, Thelma stood there in a state of bewilderment. She had been snubbed. It seemed incredible. And shocking, too, after what she had anticipated.

Something was wrong. Men usually warmed to her, found her interesting and desirable. It didn't seem possible that this man for whom she felt she had been waiting all her life shouldn't even desire to exchange a word with her. It sent a little shiver through her.

For a moment she hesitated, then thrust out her chin and deliberately walked up the wooden steps of the





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porch. She dropped into a chair opposite him and crossed one silken leg over the other.

"I'm sure it must be something you ate," she said with a friendly smile. "You couldn't possibly have

such a bad disposition, Mr. Ross."

His brows narrowed as he stared at her. He couldn't help but notice that she possessed a rare beauty. A beauty that was more than perfect features. A beauty that was vitally alive. But he had no use for girls, especially beautiful girls.

"I don't believe I've ever met you before," he said with no eagerness in his voice.

"You haven't," she answered. "I'm Thelma Huston. I'm here with my mother in the next cabin. I asked Mr. Cromwell and he told me your name. I didn't bring any recommendations with me, but I think, if you'll put the book aside, you might find that I'm not terribly boring."

"I'm sorry," he said abruptly, "but I'm not in a conversational mood. Besides, I just remembered that I have some letters to write."

He rose to his feet, tall and handsome. A romantic figure with a white broadcloth shirt that was open at the throat.

Thelma waited a few moments, her cheeks stained red, then got up and walked slowly back to her own cabin. In all her life no man had ever been so rude to her. And the cruelest part of all, was that she should receive this rebuff from the one man in the world whom she was most anxious to interest.

During the short time that she had been sitting opposite him, she had felt her heart melt. She had felt that every particle of her belonged to him. Had he held out his hands to her, she would have come to him in happy surrender. He was cold; he was aloof; he was cruel. Yet, deep in her heart, she knew that she had fallen madly in love with him. That he was the one man she had been waiting for. The man

who could stir her without even touching her.

Her mother was still asleep, so she walked about the ranch aimlessly. Soon she reached the corral. She leaned against the log fence and watched the antics of the horses within. Her cheeks still burned.

Some one came up and stood beside her. "Mind if I introduce myself?" that some one asked.

Thelma turned her head and saw a nice-looking young man of twenty-one, the collegiate type, rather slim, with pale cheeks. "Not at all," she said, although she would have preferred to be alone.

"I'm Phil Ross," he said. "I'm Steve's brother. I should also add eavesdropper. I happened to be in the room off the porch when you came up to the cabin. I heard the whole thing and I felt sorry for you. I think you're swell. You're a real sort of a girl. That's why I went out to look for you.

"I want to tell you about Steve. He's not as rude as he pretended to be. You just happened to hit him at a rotten time. He's sore at all girls now and he thinks they're all poison.

"Some time ago, a girl named Natalie Fulton came up to our place looking for a job as a stenographer. She was the prettiest thing I had ever seen. Steve fell in love with her on the spot. When they went out, there wasn't a head that didn't turn to stare at her. And was he proud!

"Two weeks ago she eloped with a millionaire Steve had introduced to her. There was no good-by, no word of regret. I always suspected that she was a gold digger, but Steve thought she really loved him.

"He came out here for a few weeks to forget. He's bitter. So you see you stepped in at a bad moment."

"Thanks for telling me," Thelma said. "It makes me feel a lot better. I couldn't imagine how any one could take such a violent dislike to me."

"He couldn't if he was in his right senses," Phil remarked with admiring eyes. "But under the circumstances, while that thing is still fresh in his mind, it's best to leave him alone."

Her mother awoke in time for dinner and together they walked to the dining hall. At one of the small tables she saw Stephen and his brother Phil, but Stephen never once looked at her. She wondered what she should do. Should she avoid him entirely as his brother had suggested?

No, she kept repeating to herself. But how could you interest a man if he refused to talk to you, if he walked out on you? He was leaving at the end of the week and something must be done quickly.

It wasn't, however, until the next evening that an idea came to Thelma. She and her mother were among the last to leave the dining hall after dinner. They stopped for a few moments to talk with John Cromwell in reference to some special food for Mrs. Huston. Then they strolled along leisurely toward their cabin.

The idea came like a bolt from the sky just as they were approaching Stephen's cabin. It was a promising idea, but the fact that her mother would be involved, made Thelma hesitate. She weighed it carefully in her mind, then feeling certain as to the outcome, she acted.

"You're making a mistake," Mrs. Huston said as Thelma led her up the steps of Stephen's cabin. "This is not our cabin."

"I know it, but I want you to meet some one, mother."

A mischievous twinkle in her eyes, Thelma knocked on the door. Stephen answered and when he beheld the unexpected visitors he was dumfounded. In a fit of temper he could forget himself and act ungentlemanly toward Thelma, but never could he be rude to the pale, sweet-faced woman, with the kind eyes and iron-gray hair who stood beside her.

"Hello, Stephen. I brought you a guest," Thelma said gayly. "Mother, this is Stephen Ross, a great book reader and a renowned authority on etiquette." She couldn't resist the chance of getting even.

For a fraction of a second his eyes flashed anger. Then he turned to Thelma's mother and said pleasantly, "How do you do, Mrs. Huston?"

Thelma's eyebrows went up in a delightful gesture, highly pleased that he had remembered her second name. "Won't you show mother how two bachelors live?" she asked pertly. "It might give her a thrill and she'll have something to write to dad."

The girl was clever. There was nothing to do but surrender gracefully. "Of course," he said. "Won't you come in, Mrs. Huston?"

"Thank you, Mr. Ross. I hope we're not intruding."

"Don't worry, mother," Thelma said impishly. "Mr. Ross just loves to have people drop in for a chat."

He held the door open for them. Philip rose from his chair in the living room, a grin on his face, laughing inwardly over Thelma's strategy.

But once inside, Thelma discarded all attempts at sarcasm and became her own sweet natural self. It wasn't only beauty that made her the most popular girl in her set, that made her the recipient of three pro-

posals. She was bright and clever and witty. She had personality and charm.

But Stephen refused to warm toward her. "He doesn't want to like me," she said to herself. "I'm beating against a stone wall."

Philip brought out his mandolin and offered to play if Thelma would sing. In a pleasing contralto she sang a number of popular songs. Stephen forgot himself for a moment and joined in one.

"I don't want to spoil this lovely party," Mrs. Huston interrupted, "but I feel a bit tired. You may stay, Thelma, but I'm going back to our cabin."

"Oh, not alone," Thelma seized her opportunity quickly. "Stephen and I will go with you."

He realized that she had tricked him. In silence they walked to the Huston cabin. The air was clear and a full moon shone down upon them.

"Thank you, Mr. Ross," Mrs. Huston said. "I hope you'll visit us sometime. You two can go back now. I can manage alone nicely."

As Stephen turned to go back, Thelma turned with him. A short distance from her cabin, she took hold of his arm with a jerk and stopped him. "What's the matter with me?" she demanded. "Do I use the wrong perfume?"

A smile hovered on his lips. "No." What sort of girl was this?—he wondered.

"Then why are you trying to run away? Can't you stand me near you? I've done everything but a fan dance to interest you."

He glared at her and shrugged his shoulders. "You do and say the darnedest things."

"But you force me to," she replied. "I'd much prefer to have you make the advances."

"What!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, don't be so shocked. I'm not trying to be smart. I'm not picking on you for a little fun. I love you. Do you understand? I know all about the other girl. Why don't you let me help you forget her?"

She put gentle hands on his shoulders. "Stephen, look at me, please. Can't you see that I'm telling the truth?"

Blue eyes looked deep into eyes of gray and floundered in their depths. All evening he had fought against liking this girl. Why should he believe that she was different? All girls were mercenary. Didn't they speak of men as "catches"? He was all right for Natalie until she met a richer man. Why should he put himself in that terrible, humiliating position again? He didn't need a vacation. He came West because he couldn't face his friends. It would be foolish to get mixed up with another girl even if she was sweet and adorable.

But her hands on his shoulders did strange things to him. The nearness of her was like an intoxicating perfume. Her shining eyes and her soft, provocative lips drew him with a magnetism that overpowered his reserve.

His arms went around her in an eager embrace. His lips sought hers and drank deep of their tenderness, their sweetness and their fire. He was stirred beyond words.

For Thelma it was the moment of moments. The most perfect kiss she had ever received.

"Good night," she said softly when he released her. "Good night." Her eyes glowed and her lips trembled.

In a spirit of ecstasy she fled to her cabin. She wanted to treasure



"Oh, I'm not picking on you for a little fun. I love you. Do you understand? I know all about the other girl. Why don't you let me help you forget her?" she pleaded.

He stood perfectly still and watched her go. Then a frightened look crept into his eyes and he hurried to his own cabin.

Mrs. Huston was getting into bed when Thelma burst in with a cry of joy. "He kissed

that moment, to keep it apart from all others. To remember forever.

me, mother, he kissed me."

Mrs. Huston's face beamed. "If

you're happy, so am I. I think he is very nice."

"Nice!" Thelma echoed. "He's wonderful. He's the man I've been waiting for!"

The next morning when she dressed for breakfast, she looked forward joyously to seeing Stephen.

She saw Philip eating alone and waved a friendly greeting. No doubt Stephen would come in any moment. But the moments dragged by and there was no sign of him.

She went over to Philip's table and asked: "Where's Stephen?"

"He packed and left for Chicago early this morning," Philip informed her.

"Oh!" she gasped, staring at him with incredulous eyes. "Do you mean that he has gone away and won't come back?"

Philip nodded his head. "I tried to reason with him, but it was no use. He can't drive Natalie Fulton out of his mind. And what she did to him has poisoned him against all girls. I'm sorry, Thelma."

"Thanks," she said, blinking her eyes.

She returned to her table and in answer to her mother's question, told her what had happened. "But I can't understand," Mrs. Huston declared. "You gave me the impression last night that you were in love with him and that he was in love with you. Why should he run away without saying good-by?"

Thelma's bright-red lips twisted sadly. Briefly she told her mother the truth of her first encounter with Stephen and of the scheme, of which she was not so proud, whereby she had gotten admittance to his cabin with her mother.

Because of her daughter's keen distress, Mrs. Huston readily forgave her. "I noticed that he acted perturbed," she said, "but I thought

it was due to shyness. However, I don't approve of your running after him. And apparently he doesn't either. Why not forget him? There are so many other men. If you sent a telegram to Larry, he'd come out here on the first plane."

"But I don't want Larry." Her eyes filled with tears. "I want Stephen."

She sat around the cabin that morning as if in a daze. His absence had left a terrible emptiness in her heart. Within her there was a mad desire to go after him. But he was so far away and she dared not desert her mother.

It was going to be torture staying here day after day, week after week, while he took up his life again in Chicago where there would be many things to remind him of Natalie's treachery and to steel his heart against love. What chance did she stand if he was determined not to come back to the ranch, determined not to set eyes on her again?

She took up with Philip because she was lonely, because he was nice and because through him she hoped to hear of Stephen. Philip received mail from Chicago regularly, but Thelma's name was never mentioned.

"All he does," Philip informed her, "is stay home and read when he gets through at the office. It looks as if he is practicing to be a bachelor. Gosh, I could ring Natalie's neck. Steve is a swell fellow. Hasn't an enemy in the world. And now he's living the life of a hermit. I wish I could shake him out of it."

So did Thelma. She felt that there was love behind that kiss which he had given her. Love that he was trying to stifle. In time, she feared, she would become just a vague memory to him. But how could she bring him back?

Exactly two weeks from the day he had left, Stephen arrived at the ranch unexpectedly. An angry, disturbed and worried Stephen whose mind was filled with hate for Thelma.

"Say, this is a surprise!" Philip exclaimed. "What brought you down?"

"I want you to pack up," Stephen said. "Doctor's orders. You're going to another ranch."

"What for?" Philip demanded. "I'm getting stronger here every day. What does the old doc know in Chicago? I like it here and I'm not moving."

Stephen regarded his brother suspiciously. His desire to stay here merely confirmed the anonymous letter received by Stephen which had caused him to drop everything and rush out to the ranch.

"But suppose I insist?" Stephen asked.

"We'll talk it over later," Philip retorted. "I've got a date to go riding with Thelma. You know, Steve, she's a swell girl."

Swell girl! Stephen snickered inwardly. He was almost tempted to show him the anonymous letter. But decided not to for the moment.

"Would you mind waiting here until I returned?" Stephen asked. "I'd like to see Thelma alone for a few minutes."

"O. K. But don't be long."

Stephen's jaw was set in determination. His eyes blazed with anger as he walked up the wooden path to Thelma's cabin. The sound of his footsteps, which she misjudged for Philip's, brought her to the door.

Attired in riding breeches and boots, she looked young and boyish, sweet and lovely. For a fraction of a second his eyes widened, then they turned to cold steel-blue.

"Hello, Stephen," she cried gayly as she held out both hands to him. "It's grand to see you again."

He took her hands, and despite himself felt an electric thrill pass through his veins. "Hello, Thelma," he said coldly. "I want to talk to you."

"How nice!" she declared, ignoring the tone of his voice. "Mother is asleep and I wouldn't dare disturb her. Let's go down to the brook."

They walked the short distance in silence. "Shall we sit down?" she asked with an encouraging smile.

"No. What I have to say can be said standing."

"You don't sound very pleasant," she remarked, while the corners of her lips curled up mischievously.

"I'm not going to be, either. I came to talk about Phil. I want to tell you something very bluntly. My father left his business to both of us, but Phil doesn't get his share until he is twenty-five. Meanwhile, I'm the boss and I can cut him down to any salary I wish. I'll make it so small, you'll starve. So if you think you're going to lay your hands on a fortune by marrying Phil, you're doomed to get the surprise of your life."

"What makes you think I want to marry Phil?" she asked innocently. "Why, the idea is ridiculous!"

"Look here," he said angrily. "You can't fool me. I know what you're up to. In every letter that Phil wrote me, he mentioned your name. You've been spending an awful lot of time with him. But don't think it hasn't been noticed. There is some one on this ranch who knows you—from New York probably. And that some one wrote me a letter." He fumbled in his pocket. "Here, read it."



Thelma took the letter from his hand. Without a trace of emotion, she read:

MY DEAR MR. STEPHEN ROSS: I believe it will interest you to know that Thelma Huston is becoming very friendly with your brother. I happen to know the young lady very well. She's a little gold digger who is always on the make. Your brother doesn't realize the danger he is in. I ad-

*Without a trace of emotion, Thelma read the anonymous letter Stephen had received saying she was a gold digger who was always on the make. And not being able to get him, was now making a play for his brother.*

vise you to take immediate steps to break up this friendship.

Sincerely,  
A FRIEND.



"Quite interesting," Thelma remarked, returning the letter.

He stared hard at her. "It doesn't seem to make you angry at all," he declared. "Which proves that it is the truth. You're not denying it. You are a gold digger. You couldn't get me, so you tried to get my brother." Her radiant beauty, the look of innocence on her face and the enigmatic smile on her lips angered him. "I'm glad I discovered you in time," he blurted out. "I was almost fool enough to fall in love with you myself. I used to sit home and think of you, remember every word you said and every gesture you made. And especially that moment when I held you in my arms and kissed you.

"As the days went by, I found myself forgetting Natalie, thinking only of you. Wanting to be with you, wanting to hold you in my arms again. And just as I had decided to come back here, I received that letter."

Thelma gasped. "You were coming back of your own accord?" Her heart leaped.

"Yes, but now I'm glad I found you out. You're just another edition of Natalie. I'll take Phil away from here if I have to do it by force."

"It won't be necessary," she answered. "Have you a pen in your pocket? And a piece of paper?"

She probably wanted to write a note to Phil, he thought. Very well.

He tore off the unwritten half of an old letter he had in his pocket and gave it to her together with his fountain pen.

In a few moments she rose from the ground and tossed away the flat rock on which she had rested the paper. "Read it, please," she said.

With incredulous eyes he stared at it. His brows narrowed, then he gazed at her, wide-eyed. "Why, this is," he gasped, "an exact copy of the anonymous letter I received. And it's the same handwriting, too. Did you send it to me?"

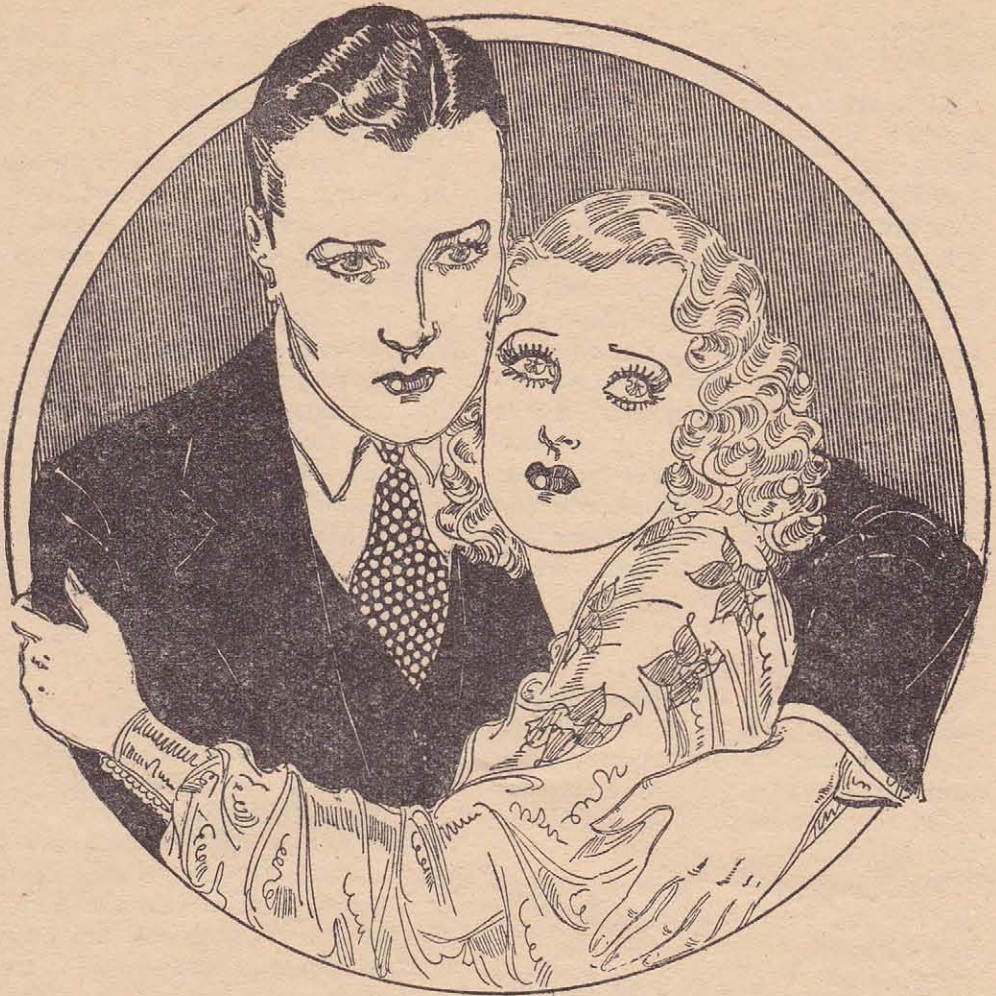
She smiled at him with glowing eyes. "Yes, I wrote all those terrible things about myself. I wanted you to come back. And it was the only thing I could think of to bring you. I was afraid you'd never come back."

His face brightened. This was no Natalie who stood before him, but a rare and precious creature.

"I'm glad it turned out this way," he said with a sigh. "I was terribly upset when I received the letter. But now I'm the happiest man in the world. What I felt for Natalie was just pride of possession. I liked to display her as you would a beautiful painting. But you, dearest, I love you with all my heart. I don't want you for the world, I want you for myself only."

His arms went around her hungrily and his lips sought hers, blessing them with kisses. Thelma sighed happily. She had gotten the man she had waited for.





# Strand Of Gold

By Helen Addison

A SERIAL—Part IV.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**B**ILLIE awoke the next morning to look out at a dismal, rainy day which exactly matched her mood. To her, as she lay in bed, it seemed as if the trials, the misery which should have been divided

among many people, had been concentrated on her. Her whole life had been miserable. Each bid she had made for happiness had always failed, turned into misery. She had thought that if she ever found herself free to marry Len, she would at last have achieved happiness.

Now she was free. Yet fate had made her free under such circumstances of horror and death that she was worse off than she had been before. She was accused of the murder of her husband, with little chance to free herself from suspicion. She wondered why she was not allowed to enjoy happiness like other people. In the abjectness of her misery, she buried her face in the pillow and sobbed.

Of course there was one thing for which she could be thankful. They had not arrested her. They probably felt that there was not enough evidence against her. They had taken her to Montycroft the night before. And she was thankful for her own bed, and for freedom, even if it was under surveillance.

She rose and bathed, and then went downstairs to learn what new developments there had been since the night before. While she breakfasted, the previous night's events ran through her mind over and over. The one thing which stood out significant in her mind was the fact that the canoes had been set adrift. But she could not prove even that.

After breakfast, she got the paper from the front porch and, half fearful of what she might find there, she opened it. It was the Burlington paper, first edition, off the presses a little after midnight in time to come down on the early-morning milk train. The information available at the time of going to press had been very meager, but the story had been given a good deal of prominence. The fact that the excursionists aboard the *Ticonderoga* had been the first to see the dead man, and that their searchlight had picked out a woman running away from the body, had been played up. Mr. Robinson, the article went on to say, was on the staff of Camp Arrow-

head. It gave, too, a short résumé of his life, evidently gleaned from a long-distance call to Warren.

On the whole, it was better than Billie had expected. The paper was careful not to say a word about murder, only hint at it, and the woman had not been recognized by those aboard the *Ticonderoga*.

Billie hardly had finished reading the newspaper account of the tragedy when a reporter arrived, followed almost immediately afterward by three more. Billie's first inclination was to refuse them an interview. But she very wisely decided that if she told them her version of the story first, she might profit a great deal by it. And if she could enlist their sympathy, there was no telling how much good they might do her.

The reporters were still at Montycroft when the two troopers of the night before, together with an officer, arrived. They dismissed the reporters, and then cross-examined Billie for an hour or more. Most of the questions she had already been asked. At first she was patient and helpful, but as it became plainer and plainer that they were trying to make her confess to the murder of Gil, she lost all patience.

"Listen," she snapped, "I tell you once and for all, I didn't do it. I don't know who did it. And I don't much care. And how do you like that? Anybody with the brains of a brainless donkey would know I didn't. And at that, I'm probably insulting the donkey."

She was angry, and she expected them to be angry. But they grinned at her, as if it had all been a huge joke. That turned her anger into exasperation. They left soon afterward, the interview, as far as Billie could see, having accomplished nothing.

They were hardly out of the

drive, when Florence drove up. She was a very different person from the Florence who had made that other visit. A lot of her languor was gone.

"Listen," she said without preliminary, "Len is telling around down at headquarters that you and he were engaged to be married as soon as you could get an annulment of your marriage. He's just pulling that to get you out of a tight hole, isn't he?"

Billie's anger, soothed by the grins of her trooper tormentors, flared again instantly.

"On the contrary, he's telling the truth. I doubt if he ever did love you, or was ever engaged to you. You probably bought that ring yourself."

"That's all I wanted to know," Florence snapped. "You two think you pulled a fast one on me, don't you? I suppose he thinks he did something big in giving me the run-around. Well, if he doesn't change his mind right off, he'll find himself in plenty of trouble. I know a lot more than you think I do, and I'll talk. I'll get even with him if it takes the rest of my life."

Florence hurried down the steps, slammed the car into gear with a great deal of noise, and shot away.

"Well," Billie said to herself, "that was certainly short and sweet. I'd hate to be in Len's shoes. Of course she can't really *do* anything to him."

But Billie was wrong. Within an hour, Billie had a telephone call from trooper barracks, telling her that on information sworn to by Florence Lane, they had arrested Len to be held for trial by the grand jury on a charge of murder.

It took Billie just four and a half minutes to reach the Forestport jail.

After a good deal of delay, she was led into a visiting booth where she found Len facing her in another booth on the opposite side of a heavy wire screen. She wondered a little at having been granted an interview with him so easily. But she found out later that every word they said was heard over a hidden telephone connection between the two booths.

"Len," Billie said in a choked voice, her eyes bright with moisture, "they can't hold you for this. They can't say you did it."

Len shrugged resignedly. "Florence came in and told them plenty."

"What—what did she tell them?"

"That she was out on the island and overheard you and me talking. You remember the night we saw the woman's footprints? Well, Florence must have made those."

Billie was beginning to comprehend.

"We talked about your quarrels with Gil. And your threatening him if he didn't leave me alone, and his threatening you when he caught you kissing me."

"And the fact that if we could get rid of him, we could marry. She made it all sound as bad as possible, especially the kissing business and my threatening him."

"But they won't believe her. It will be just her word against yours. Len, they can't believe it."

"Well, they unfortunately thought of Mrs. Morley. She overheard the quarrel there at Montycroft. She couldn't help it with all the shouting we did."

"But, Len, even that——"

"And I wouldn't deny it. In fact, I let them believe it was true," Len said. "It saved me the trouble of confessing."

"Of—of confessing?" Her eyes were pitiful, horrified.



"You two think you pulled a fast one on me, don't you? Well, if Len doesn't marry me, he'll find himself in plenty of trouble. I know a lot more than you think I do, and I'll talk. I'll get even with him if it takes the rest of my life."

"Sure. They were getting a pretty good case against you. I couldn't let them take you. It was better

that they work on me. I had just as much or more of a chance of getting out of it."

"But, Len, you—you didn't do it?"—uncertainly. Then suddenly sure: "I know you didn't do it, Len."

His face relaxed its grim lines, and he smiled gratefully.

"Thanks for the confidence, Billie," he said with a momentary return to his old-time manner. "No, I didn't do it. In fact, I guess you must realize by now that until we found out that our boats had been tampered with, I thought you had done it yourself."

"But, Len, you've got to deny it. Otherwise, they may find you guilty."

"I'll deny it after I'm sure you're not being considered. And I've got a lot of confidence that something will turn up in the meantime."

But Billie couldn't feel his confidence. Always misery had followed everything she did. Len would be found guilty. If he didn't, the road to happiness would lie open before her. But she, somehow, couldn't believe that she was destined to travel that road.

As she was passing the office on the way out, a trooper stopped her and asked her if she would step inside for a moment. Another trooper sat at the desk, a set of ear phones lying in front of him.

"Miss Preston," he said, "I'm beginning to be more and more interested in this matter of the missing canoes. What are your theories?"

Billie thought it peculiar that he should have changed his point of attack so suddenly, but she had no idea that the reason for his doing so lay in that pair of ear phones in front of him.

"I have no idea," she said, "who could have been out there. Somebody who knew that Gil would be there. And I'm sure he kept that fact fairly secret."

"Well"—the officer nodded pleasantly; more pleasantly than any of the troopers had acted toward Billie since the affair had started—"we'll keep our eyes open. And if you have any ideas, let us know."

Back at Montycroft, Billie decided one thing. She would not give up this chance at happiness. And since she loved Len so much, she would not let them punish him for a thing he had not done. Never. Somehow she would find a way to exonerate him. She had no idea how she would do it. But somehow she must.

The popular idea that all beautiful women must of necessity be dumb, is a long way from the truth. Like many thousands of others, Billie was a living refutation of that idea. Bewilderment and desperation gradually wore off, and gave place to quiet, organized thought.

Billie finally came to two startling conclusions. One was that somebody might have come out to the island to kill Len. And in the dark killed Gil by mistake.

The second was that if Mr. Holland were really in love with Florence, he would have had a very good reason for getting rid of Len, whom Florence loved.

Billie sat bolt upright in her chair out on the porch, her eyes surprised and staring. Once started with that train of reasoning, thoughts came thick and fast.

Where had she seen Mr. Holland before? In New York obviously, or else she had seen a picture of him. Perhaps he was sufficiently disguised from his real self to fool her, yet at the same time to have that vague familiarity. Why was the sight of him always linked in her mind with evil? There must be some reason. If her feeling that Holland was crooked should prove to be correct,



then he might very easily be the one who was trying to steal the treasure away from Len. By sticking to the mistaken identity idea, that would make a double motive for his killing Gil, whom he thought was Len. First, to rid himself of a rival; and second, to get the treasure book, which Florence must have overheard Len say he kept

with him constantly. Perhaps Holland had accompanied Florence on her spying trip to the island. Or

*"Len," Billie said in a choked voice, her eyes bright with moisture, "they can't hold you for this. They can't say you murdered Gil Robinson. I know you didn't do it, Len."*

perhaps he had been following her, checking up on her, and had overheard the same conversation she had heard. Billie distinctly remembered the two canoes which had passed her hiding place, one following the other.

She rose hastily from her chair and went out to the car. If one had a hunch, the thing to do was to play it for all it was worth. She drove down to the local photographer's.

"There's a gentleman named Holland staying over at the inn," Billie explained to the proprietor, "and we've got to pick up a picture of him for a scavenger hunt. It occurred to me that you might have a snap, either alone or in a group, that you could let me have."

The photographer shook his head slowly.

"I'd like to oblige you," he said. "I've been stumped on these scavenger hunts myself. But I'm not sure I can. He's only had two rolls of films developed here, and most of those were pictures of Miss Lane."

He paused, thinking.

"I tell you what," he said brightening, "it wouldn't make much difference whether it was a good or a bad picture of him, would it? Not for a scavenger hunt. Well, in that last roll there were several that weren't good enough to print, and one was of him. When he looked them over, he dropped those in the wastebasket. You let me go out back and I think maybe I can find them. Then I'll print up one for you."

Billie waited, hoping against hope. After all, a poor snap would be better than none at all.

After a long time the man returned triumphant, a smudged light-struck, but recognizable snapshot of Holland in his hands.

"There," he said, "that ought to do the trick. And I'm glad I could help you."

Billie thanked him profusely, and then went to the post office. She sent the picture by special delivery to a friend of hers who clerked in the police records bureau in New York. She requested in her accompanying message that the identity of the man be telegraphed to her at once, together with his criminal record, if any. She went home then to wait, very much pleased with herself.

The next morning she went again to see Len. If anything, he was bluer than he had been the day before.

"Boy, it seems good to see you!" he said. "This place is giving me the jitters. Why do you and I have to be dragged so deep into this mess when it wasn't our fault? Of course," he added loyally, "I still think it's better for me to be here than for you."

"Len," Billie protested, and it seemed then as if that wire screening which kept her from taking him in her arms, from comforting him, was the cruelest thing in the world, "you've got to stop thinking about me. You've got to think about yourself, and try to plan a way to get out of this mess. I'll work as hard as ever I can to get you out. But you've got to tell them that you're innocent. You've got to make a big fuss about it."

"Not till I'm sure you're safe," he told her doggedly. And she knew it was useless to argue.

"Listen, Len," she changed the subject, "have you still got that book with you." And when he nodded: "And will you trust me with it? I've got an idea."

He nodded assent gravely, instantly.



"When the guard comes, I'll send it around to you by him. I had the devil's own time getting them to let me keep it."

They talked a while longer, and then Billie left, promising to come back that afternoon if she could. She waited until the guard came out to her with the book, and then returned to Montycroft, to find a telegram waiting for her. It read:

LOOKS LIKE JAMES NORCROSS  
ALIAS SMOOTH JIM ESCAPED CON-  
VICT STOP WAS SERVING LIFE  
SENTENCE DANNEMORA FOR MUR-  
DER STOP CAN YOU HELP AU-  
THORITIES LOCATE HIM

Billie waited as patiently as she could until the time when she could see Len again without exciting any one's suspicions. Meantime, she telegraphed her friend in New York not to do anything until she heard from her.

Immediately after luncheon she was again ushered into the booth where Len was waiting.

"Len," she said, "you told me once that your father was a judge. Did a man named Norcross ever come before him? James Norcross?"

Len nodded.

"Sure did. Dad sent him up for life for murder, and this Norcross swore he'd get even. There was a lot about it in the papers at the time. I was personally sort of relieved when they convicted him. Why, what do you know about him?"

"Nothing," Billie assured him vaguely. "I was just wondering if your father was the Judge Cooper I had read about who was on the bench during that trial. How's the food here?"

Len said a great deal about the food, most of which must have made the gentleman with the ear phones

very uncomfortable. And having thus successfully changed the subject, Billie stayed a while longer, then went back to Montycroft. As she rode along, she was very thoughtful. Pieces of this jig-saw puzzle seemed to be fitting together now. This made the third and strongest motive for murder, in line with her theory of mistaken identity.

She called Holland on the phone immediately.

"Mr. Holland," she said, "this is Billie Preston. I've got a proposition to make to you which will be to your advantage as well as mine. Could you come out to Montycroft?"

Mr. Holland assured her that he was always willing, even eager, to hear propositions that were to his advantage. And would she have dinner with him at the inn that night. She would? Fine.

That night Billie was just as careful in dressing as she would have been if she had been going out with Len. She strove for a touch of worldliness in her appearance, which would fool Mr. Holland.

After they had ordered, Billie went directly to the point.

"Mr. Holland," she said in a voice pitched so low that there was not the remotest possibility of its being overheard, "we might as well understand each other at once. To start with, we'll just pretend that you're James Norcross."

Not the slightest flicker of surprise crossed his face. He laughed easily.

"Of course that's crazy, but if it will please such a grand-looking girl, it's O. K. with me."

"Now what I want to know is this? Are you or aren't you, interested in a certain treasure that Len Cooper knows about?"

"Well," he spoke slowly, choosing his words carefully, and his eyes had become calculating slits of animated marble, "we'll just pretend that I am. What about it?"

"Only this. I'm in a position to give you the information you need regarding the whereabouts of that treasure."

"In return for what?" He leaned forward a little, the only sign he gave of his excitement.

"In return for something big. Len and I are both to go free of any suspicion of guilt in regard to the murder of Gil Robinson."

He spread his hands in the patronizing gesture of a man who talks to a child.

"And how would I be able to do that for you?"

"Easily. I know that you murdered Gil Robinson, thinking he was Len. I *know* that!"

This time the shaft struck home. His face showed no change, but his eyes became harder, more cruel, if such a thing were possible.

"All right," he snapped, "if you know so much, what are you going to do about it? I've got an air-tight alibi. You can't prove a thing."

"I know it"—Billie nodded imperturbably. "I'm not going to try."

He looked at her, wondering just what her game was.

"Well, what is your game, anyway?"

"I'll tell you when you tell me that you killed Gil. There aren't any listeners."

"All right. I knew Cooper was going to meet you, and when a guy came sneaking along the path, I let him have it. It was going to even up a lot of things, and get me the book. And then it turned out to be that other punk. I didn't have anything against him. But so help

me if you try to pin it on me, I can prove——"

"Oh, don't be childish. I'm not going to try to pin anything on you. I've got a proposition to make, and I'm going to make it. You can take it or leave it, and that will end the whole thing."

"All right, I'm listening."

"Well, you must realize that you're standing on dynamite. Now that I know who you are, you won't get a chance at the treasure, because you'll have to leave town. And if they catch you, you go back to prison for life. All right, they wouldn't be after you any harder for an extra murder than they are now and always will be. And with the money from that treasure, you could go a long way from this country."

He leaned forward again, suddenly, intent.

"Are you suggesting that you'll give me the book if I'll confess Robinson's murder?"

"Exactly." Billie nodded grimly. "That's the proposition. If you do it, nobody finds out that you're James Norcross. And you get a good start before I spring the written confession you're going to give me."

She watched him anxiously, as he slumped back in his chair, thinking. So much depended on this for her, for the man she loved, that she had all she could do to keep from yelling out, anything to break the tension. He roused himself just once.

"How do I know you can deliver the book?"

"You've got to take my word for it. That book is hidden where you'll never find it. I'll give it to you when I get your confession."

Again he slumped back into the chair, silent. And after a long while he sat up, his lips set. He

stretched a hand across the table, and so great was Billie's relief, that she laughed hysterically.

"O. K., baby, you're on," he said.

## CHAPTER IX.

When Billie met Holland the next morning, she was nervous and worried. She knew exactly what she was going to do, but knowing what you are going to do and doing it are two different things, especially when a mission is as dangerous as the one on which she was embarking.

"You got that book?" he demanded immediately. He had two men with him as well as a diving crew and a large motor boat.

"No," Billie told him calmly. "I went out to the island and hid that book yesterday evening. And I won't tell you where till I have what you're going to give me right in my hands."

"So you don't trust me?" he asked with the first grin she had ever seen on his face.

"Not any farther than I could throw this boat," Billie grinned in return. She knew that they understood each other.

They rode out to the island in the boat, and Billie examined the diving equipment, the air motor, and the auxiliary hand motor in case there should be engine trouble while the diver was below. She tried to lift the massive helmet and the lead-weighted shoes. The diver explained to Billie the air-control valve inside his helmet, which he worked with his head. With it he could let the air out of his suit and stay down, or let the suit fill with air and come to the surface. If anything happened to him, he would automatically come to the surface, because with no pressure on the

valve, the suit would fill with air. He let her feel the wrist bands of the suit, so tight they almost cut off the circulation. The boat and diving equipment, she found, were his. Whether he thought he was embarked on a legitimate enterprise or not, she had no way of knowing.

When they reached the wharf and landed, Holland drew Billie to one side.

"Now," he said, "where's that book?"

"Now," Billie mimicked him, "where's that paper?"

With rather poor grace, he drew a folded sheet of paper from his pocket and handed it to Billie.

"See if that suits you," he snapped.

Billie read it through, and then put it into her bag.

"That's all right. Come with me."

She walked down to the boat-house and took the book from under a loose board. Holland grabbed it from her.

"Didn't mother ever teach you not to grab?" Billie demanded. "Where are your manners? Anyway, you can't do anything till I tell you which page to look on. It says that that particular ship sank about one hundred feet due north of the end of Whale-back Island nearest the mainland. Read it for yourself. It's on page ninety-four."

Holland flipped the pages, reached the page he was looking for, and then read rapidly. Billie watched him. So much treasure was a high price to pay for Len's freedom and for her own. But she may have realized that if she gained love, no price was too great. At any rate, she did not seem too terribly disappointed.

"Now," Holland said with a satisfied smile when he had finished reading, "we're getting somewhere."



*"I know that you murdered Gil Robinson, thinking he was Len! In return for your confession, I'll give you the book containing the information of the sunken treasure, and time to make a get-away before I spring the written confession."*



"And now," Billie told him, "I'll be starting back for the mainland."

An instant change came over him.

"Listen, baby," he leered, "you're staying right here, see? You ain't going to any mainland with any dynamite like the paper you got there. I ain't trusting you to hold

off showing it till I get the dough and get out of here. You're staying right here on this island. I'll have one of the boys watch you."

Billie had to agree to that, because there was no other course open. She had been afraid of it. And she had planned for just such an emergency.

Because she knew, knew as well as she knew her own name, that Holland would not find any treasure.

For a while Billie watched the diving operations from a bench up among the trees. One of Holland's own men had been left behind to keep an eye on her. But she did not show any inclination to move, and gradually he wandered farther and farther away, caught by the excitement of looking for the gold. Billie watched him, carefully waiting her chance.

After a while Holland called from the boat, and the man on shore went in search of a large block of wood. Billie quietly slipped away from the bench, strolled along until she was sure she was out of sight, and then ran for the house.

When Holland did not find any treasure, he would be after her, she knew. And his signed confession meant too much to her to lose it. Of course she could hide the paper, but she had no illusions about the good that would do her if she herself was still within Holland's reach. He would make her give it back, torture her until she told him where it was hidden. She dared not start for shore, because the boats were all in plain sight of the anchored diving boat. She'd have to hide.

But that was easier said than done. She had thought about it a long time before she had decided on a place. Even then, it was a toss-up whether or not she would be found.

She knew that first of all they would search the house, so that she did not plan to stay there. Yet she went there first, let herself in, and ran down into the cellar. She hid the precious paper in one of the furnace pipes, and then went out the

back door. She looked around carefully to be sure that no one was watching, and then started toward the water tower. There was a metal ladder at one corner of the framework which held the huge tank, and she climbed this cautiously. The tank loomed high above her. Its water was supplied from the lake by a windmill, and it was, of course, maintained to furnish pressure for the house. Before she was high enough in the air to see the diving ship at the end of the island, she had reached the protection of the tank itself, and was crawling up its side.

When she reached the top she lay there for several minutes. Then she took off the trap-door cover and looked inside. The tank was full, just as she had expected, and she nodded grimly to herself. She lay there and waited, taking care that only one eye and part of her cheek should be visible from the path below.

She waited hours. At last she caught a glimpse of something moving along the path. The figure of a man running; two more men.

She slid carefully through the trap-door into the cold water of the tank. It was dark—pitch-dark. She swam over to the far side and grabbed the ends of the bolts which held the ladder in place. The cold of the water was worse than it would have been if she had been swimming, because she was not moving around.

She could hear the men shouting to each other near the house, looking for her. She heard doors slam, and knew that the house was being turned inside out.

At last they gave that up and began to search the island. They went about the task systematically, and she was glad she had not chosen

to sit in a tree as she had at first planned. Still, a tree wouldn't make you so cold that your teeth chattered; so cold it seemed as if you couldn't stand it. The cold ate at her heart, breaking down her resolution, making her want to climb out where the sun could warm her. The consequences of being caught by Holland seemed very remote to her then, and the cold seemed very real. For herself she might have given in, but she was working for Len. For Len and their happiness.

She gritted her teeth and stayed where she was, not moving, hardly daring to breathe. Shortly she heard voices again, closer and louder. She realized that the owners of the voices were standing directly underneath the tower.

"I tell you, she's gone ashore," one voice urged, "and we ain't safe here a minute."

"And I tell you she hasn't," Holland's voice answered impatiently. "She's hiding on this island. And we've got to find her. We haven't looked up on that tower. She might be there. Climb up and see."

Billie's heart sank. She could feel the vibration through the ladder bolts as the man started to climb. Well, this was the end. Might as well make the best of it and be a good loser. She had staked everything on their not thinking of the water tower. And now she had lost.

The man climbed higher and higher until she could sense that he was directly outside the place where she herself was hanging on. He looked over the top, and then called down to Holland, his voice hollow and deafening inside the tank.

"Nobody up on top here."

"Look inside," Holland commanded.

Billie played her last card as she heard the man scrambling forward.

She took several deep breaths in quick succession, and then quietly sank below the surface, held herself down there by bolt ends farther under water.

All she could do was hold on until her breath gave out. At first it wasn't hard, but gradually it became horrible. Her lungs began to ache, a splitting, awful ache. Yet she held on grimly. At least it took her mind off the cold water.

Her head began to ache next, worse than it had ever ached before. Yet she held on. And when the pain began to bring unbearable, fiery darts before her eyes, she let her breath out gradually. Panic overtook her. For a few moments longer she fought it, and then she came to the surface, sucked in a great gulp of air, breathed again and again. Her head still ached, and her body was weak. She had no control over it.

There was no shout of triumph as she had half expected. And when she could see, she realized that there was no man's figure in the trapdoor opening, looking in at her. She had not been seen. Then, because she was so weak, and the effort had been so great, because relief had flooded her at last, she began to sob.

She fought the cold and stayed there as long as she could, even after there were no more sounds below her. Then she came out and lay in the sun, and after a long time her shivering stopped, her clothes dried. Far off toward shore she could see the diving boat, but she dared not take any chances. One of Holland's men might have stayed behind in hiding.

She remained up on the tower until dark, then went to the furnace for the paper. After that she

walked silently down to the beach. She waited a long time before she dared run across the sand in the open, shove off a canoe, and start for the mainland.

But no one followed her. And an hour later she walked into the office at the jail, threw the paper onto the desk and stood there while the man glanced through it.

That long she held her poise, and no longer. She had been through too much. She sobbed a little, trying hard not to, and she felt a great relief in being where it was light. Darkness was horribly unnerving. A few moments later, Len came in, his kindly face full of love for her, his eyes shining. And a second later she was in his arms, those strong, protecting arms which had the power to shut away from her all the evil and unhappiness in the world.

"Honey," he said at last, "tell me about it. I want to know. If he's tried——"

"Come on and sit down," she said, "and I'll tell you. But please don't take your arm from around me, Len. I—I guess I need it."

So, his arm around her, she told him. And when she had finished, he said:

"You did exactly right, sweet. The treasure wouldn't have mattered if we had been somehow kept apart. Our being together is the only thing that matters. And you're especially right, now that we know there was no treasure."

"But there was—there is," Billie told him, and her eyes danced.

"But, Billie, you said Holland didn't find——"

"And he didn't. He was figuring just the way you're figuring. The end of Whale-back Island nearest the mainland. And he didn't know, and you never stopped to think, that the two islands were joined before the government dredged between them. And that the whole thing was called Whale-back. There wasn't any Diamond Island then."

His eyes were startled as he began to realize what she meant.

"So the end of the old Whale-back Island nearest the mainland," he said, "would be what is now the shoreward end of Diamond Island. The opposite end of the two islands from where Holland looked."

"Exactly," Billie murmured, "and I knew they wouldn't find anything where they were looking. And that's why I hid. And that's why I dared make the offer to him in the first place."

Joyfully he drew her to him.

"Say," he said, just before he kissed her, "I not only have the swellest-looking girl in forty-eight States, but she's got more brains than any three men!"

"Forty-eight States and the District of Columbia?" Billie grinned up at him.

"And the District of Columbia," he assured her. "Two districts, both of Columbia."

A week later Billie and Len stood arm in arm at the shoreward end of Diamond Island, watching the same diving boat which Holland had hired, bringing







"Honey," Len said, "I'm glad we're rich. But the thing that matters is that we have each other—and love. And that means everything, Billie."

over the side a heavy iron chest, rusted out at one end, but with most of its precious contents recoverable. It awed them a little to think how

much was to be theirs, into what luxury they were graduating. There would be no want for them now. Everything in the world they could

think of, they could afford. Len expressed the thought which was there between them.

"Honey," he said, "I'm glad we're rich. But the thing that matters is that we have each other—and love. And all that means. It means everything, Billie. It means happiness whether you're rich or poor. And riches mean unhappiness without love."

"I know," Billie answered softly. "Lots and lots of times I stop and tell myself that all the misery I had before is being made up to me now. Now that I have you, the happiness is supreme. I don't think half so much about the things our treasure will buy, as I think about our life together."

His arms stole around her, and he kissed her rapturously.

"And we owe it to you," he said huskily. "Because you were brave and clever. I'm glad they caught Holland. I would have been nervous if he had still been at large."

For a long time they stood watching the work going on before them. And in their hearts was the beauty of their surroundings, and the wonder of their love. It seemed to Billie as if her misery were far in the past, so great was her happiness now.

Len kissed her again and held her close and forgotten was the wealth that was so soon to be theirs. Finally Billie said, almost reverently:

"I love you, Len. And my vacation sweetheart is going to be my full-time, all-day, all-through-my-life sweetheart from now on—for always."

THE END.

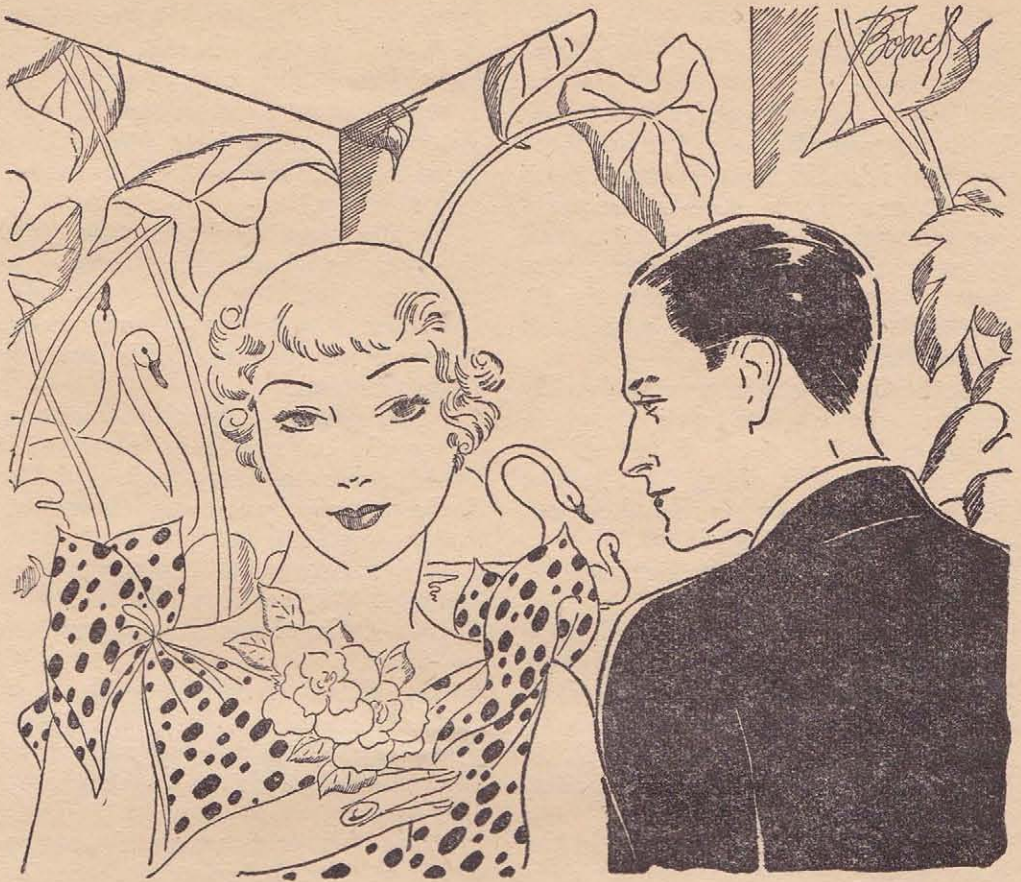


### MY BEAUTIFUL DREAM

THOUGH all my dreams are luring  
 And evermore strangely fair,  
 Like the petals of fragrant roses,  
 That drift on the summer air,  
 Whenever I meet you, darling,  
 As dusk walks the ghostly dew,  
 My tremulous heart discovers  
 My beautiful dream is you.

Dear lass, when we keep our trysting  
 And cling by the lilac tree,  
 As you and your yielding kisses  
 Are saying you love but me,  
 The earth is a mystic heaven,  
 Where all of my dreams come true,  
 Because my glad heart is knowing  
 My beautiful dream is you.

EDGAR DANIEL KRAMER.



# Her Great Moment

By Floria Howe Bruess

**S**YLVIA!" a voice called in joyous surprise. Esther Dorn, sitting on a bench in the park, looked at the young man who was apparently hailing her. As she stared, his chauffeur brought the car to a stop and the young man sprang out and crossed the road to the girl. His face was eager, his eyes alight.

"It's either mistaken identity or an attempt at a pick-up," Esther thought swiftly. "But he looks sincere and glad to see—Sylvia."

Esther was lonely. It was Sunday. There was nothing to do. She did not care to go to a concert or show alone. She had gone for a walk in the park, had become tired, and had sat down on a bench.

Jack Deering stood beside her, hand extended, smiling a warm, quick smile.

"When did you get back, Sylvia? I passed your home a few minutes ago and it's still boarded up. Your last letter said you wouldn't be writing me again as you expected to sail very soon, and here you are. You must have left your parents in Europe? Never mind, I won't ask questions."

Esther looked at him intently. He really believed she was Sylvia— whoever Sylvia was. It would be fun to carry this along for a while. He would discover his mistake soon, and they would laugh it off.

"Can't a girl change her mind?" she asked lightly.

"Especially you," he agreed smilingly. "You're the most changeable person on earth. You've even changed your voice since you've been gone. But I like that lower note. Keep it." He laughed softly, and seated himself beside her.

"It seems funny to see you in the park alone. What are you doing?"

"Looking at you," Esther replied impishly.

What a nice laugh he had. And how good-looking he was, with his wavy blond hair, blue eyes and tall, slim figure.

So far he hadn't discovered his mistake. There must be an extraordinary resemblance between her and Sylvia, Esther mused. She had heard of such resemblances— doubles, but this was her first experience.

"Staying with a friend, Sylvia?"

"Yes. You don't know her." That much was true, Esther thought, for he would not know Kitty.

Kitty taught drawing in the girls' private school where Esther taught piano. Kitty had gone home over the week-end, else Esther would not

have been so lonely. Kitty would be back late that evening, however, for the next day was Monday.

"And you returned alone? You've got something up your sleeve. But I am glad to see you! I've missed you terribly."

Esther wondered who he was. Everything about him looked expensive—that big car, a liveried chauffeur, the thin platinum watch he wore on his wrist, his smartly fitting clothes.

"You aren't set for the afternoon, are you? Let's go some place. We could drive to Long Island. The Jamesons are back, and there's always something doing there."

"I'd rather not," Esther replied quickly. "I feel lazy. That's why I was sitting here soaking up the sunshine."

She lifted sparkling dark eyes, and smiled at him. "Where were you going? You were on your way." She glanced at his car parked across the road.

"I've forgotten where I was going," he said, looking at her keenly. He reached into an inside pocket. "Look at this and laugh, Sylvia. I've been carrying your last letter in my left pocket where it would hear my heart beat."

He extended an envelope. Swiftly Esther read his name and address. This was getting good—she knew his name now. Her eyes danced and she laughed.

"Go ahead. I knew you'd laugh." He replaced the letter in his pocket.

"Oh, I didn't laugh because of that. I think that was sweet—" She stopped abruptly. Would Sylvia have said that?

"That's the nicest thing I've heard you say. Look here, Sylvia. Be nice to me, and give me the afternoon and evening. Let's step high, wide, and handsome."

"What would you suggest?" she asked curiously.

He glanced at his watch. "It's three thirty. Let's drop in on dad for cocktails, then we'll——"

Esther shook her head. "No dropping in on anybody to-day. And I'm going back to—Kitty's. The wind is getting cold." She rose and held out her hand. She had better put an end to this before she got into deep water.

"What a 'No' girl you are. You'd stun me if you said 'Yes.' But I'm driving you to where you're staying. And I'm calling for you to-night at eight and we're dining," he persisted.

Well, there was no reason why he shouldn't drive her home. It was a nice apartment house she lived in. It would be pleasant driving in that beautiful car. She wouldn't talk much. Mustn't let the cat out of the bag.

He took her arm and they crossed the road. The chauffeur touched his cap to Esther as he opened the car door.

"How do you do, Miss Wylie," he said.

Esther smiled. He, too, thought she was Sylvia, whose last name apparently was Wylie. Sylvia must have driven often with Jack. Esther felt a little twinge of envy.

She gave Jack the address, and leaned back luxuriously as the big car purred through the park.

Jack talked about his summer in Canada. Esther gathered that he was in business with his father. Exporters. All too soon they arrived at her apartment.

"I'll call at eight," Jack said eagerly.

About to refuse, a swift recklessness swept away Esther's caution. Why not go? Kitty would not be

back until ten or eleven. It would be such a long, lonely evening.

Jack was so obviously a gentleman. And with his sense of humor he would laugh, consider it a rich joke when later on she would tell him.

Jack crossed to the vestibule with Esther and looked at the cards over the letter boxes.

"Ring Apartment 3D to-night," she said gayly. "I'll be ready at eight."

"You're a darling." He smiled his quick, warm smile.

"Katherine Burrows," he read. "That's Kitty, I suppose. Who is Esther Dorn?"

"A friend of Kitty's," she said quickly. "Good-by, Jack."

"No chance for me to come up now and mix a cocktail?" He held her hand, and bent his deep-blue eyes upon her.

"Not a chance. Kitty doesn't keep the makings. Neither does Esther."

"Nice little girls," he laughed.

What a dear boy he was. Esther sighed as she stepped into her apartment and closed the door behind her. Sylvia was a lucky girl. She had Jack, and a mother and father, and was in Europe. That meant money, background. She was not alone in the world as Esther was. She was not dependent on her own efforts to make a living.

Oh, well. Esther's brown, silky head went up and the dark-brown eyes sparkled. She was in for adventure! It wasn't every girl who could have a lark like this. Mistaken for another girl—wouldn't Kitty howl!

"I'd better see where Sylvia lives." Esther flipped over the pages of the telephone book. Wylie. Too many of them. She'd have to be careful about that to-night. She

turned to Deering. Here it was: John Deering & Son, Exporters. The residence was on Park Avenue. That was the address on the envelope she had seen.

"To-night will be my one great moment. I'm glad I had a wave and manicure yesterday." Esther sang under her breath as she laid out her new dinner dress. "I must be careful and not talk out of turn."

Long before eight o'clock she was dressed. A flame of excitement blazed in her dark eyes. Her head rose like a flower from the silvery gown that clung like mist to the slim roundness of her figure. Her slippers were the blue of the antique turquoise necklace she wore. A necklace her grandmother had worn, and Esther's one piece of valuable jewelry.

Her heart beat furiously when the bell rang. She pressed the buzzer to release the outside door.

"This is like stage fright," she thought, as she stood in the door awaiting him.

Jack's eyes, that held the blue of ice and the blue of fire, lingered on her as he approached the doorway. How exquisite she was! Hair like soft-brown threads of silk, eyes the deep-brown of pansies. Her skin was like satin; her lips like rose petals.

He drew a deep, unsteady breath. "I've never seen you look so beautiful, Sylvia." He stepped into the living room.

"Ready in a minute, Jack." Her voice was a trifle unsteady, also.

"This is a charming room," he said when she reappeared with wrap, gloves and evening bag. "Aren't you going to let me meet your friends? I'd like to know Kitty and Esther. They have good taste. I like those etchings and that clock. It looks like a Terry."

Esther was about to say, "It is. It belonged to my grandmother," but she caught herself in time.

"I say, aren't those Hepplewhite chairs?"

"Yes. They belonged to Esther's grandmother. When Esther came to New York she brought the things she liked best with her. Her grandmother raised her, and when she passed on Esther secured a post here. She teaches piano."

"That accounts for that grand. I'd like to meet Esther. She showed extraordinary good taste in arranging her antiques."

"I'm ready, Jack," Esther said, anxious to terminate the conversation.

"You'll slay 'em to-night, Sylvia," he said, holding the door open for her. As she passed him he bent his head and kissed the brown silky hair.

"Don't, Jack," she said faintly.

"That's the weakest 'don't' I ever heard from you, my dear." He laughed softly.

It was with trepidation Esther entered the big, brilliant dining room in the towering hotel. If some one who knew Sylvia should see her— It was a risk, but it was worth it to spend one enchanted evening with Jack.

"I'll tell him to-night on the way home," Esther promised herself, not realizing then that promises are often gossamer, frail, easily broken.

She sipped her cocktail, eyes on his.

"Beautiful eyes, Sylvia. To-night there are little golden lights in them."

"Perhaps it's the table light. It has a yellow shade."

"Has it? I haven't time to look." His eyes held her own as though helplessly he was drowning in them.

She, too, seemed as helpless to look away. The waiter finally broke the spell.

"Dance?" Jack queried, after they had finished their *entrée*.

Esther rose at once, glad to escape from the eyes whose blue fire was burning into her heart, racing through her veins.

The feel of his arm around her left her breathless. The clasp of his big, firm hand on hers sent little thrills, like pointed darts, coursing through her. They danced in almost complete silence. Esther's eyes were brilliant, reckless, when they returned to their table.

"Sylvia, I feel somehow that you like me better to-night than you ever have. Am I right?" He leaned forward, eager, expectant.

Something that was young and ardent, and devastatingly alive, and that had no connection whatever with caution and common sense, beat in her veins.

Again the waiter intervened as he placed the *consommé* before them.

"Darned waiters," Jack growled. "They're never around when you want them, but they're always on hand to spoil a perfect moment!"

"What a gay dinner companion he is!" she thought as she sipped the wine, a delicate *Château Margaux*. Her fingers were white, delicate as lily petals. Jack's eyes were upon them. She hoped he did not observe they were unsteady.

Over the alligator pear-and-romaine salad with its *mignonette* dressing, Esther thought:

"Soon the clock will strike twelve for me, and this will be over. I must not see him again. In fact, he won't want to see me when he learns that I'm not Sylvia."

She raised stricken eyes to Jack, then quickly lowered her lashes. They made alluring little shadows

on her soft round cheeks. Jack was watching them.

With the dessert, Esther knew she was head over heels in love.

"It's too early to say 'Amen' to the evening," Jack said when they had dined. "Let's drive out to a place I know," he urged. "You've never been there, I believe. They put on a swell floor show. And it's a glorious night—moonlight, starlight, everything turned on."

"I'll call Kitty and tell her I'll be late," Esther murmured.

In a phone booth she dialed the number.

"I may be late, Kitty," she said, when the familiar voice came over the wire. "I'm stepping to-night. Who? I'll tell you about it later. Listen, have you ever heard of Sylvia Wylie?"

"Wait a minute. I'll think. That name is familiar," Kitty replied slowly.

Kitty was an information bureau, Esther reflected while she waited. Born in New York, an enthusiastic reader of the society pages, she had names, gossip, even bits of scandal at her finger tips.

"I remember now. She's that girl that's a dead ringer for you. Remember I told you when I first met you at the school? I've seen her picture in the papers and she's been pointed out to me several times. Why, Esther?"

Esther had forgotten about Kitty's remark of three months before when she had first come to New York.

"Is she a society girl? Wealthy? And is she reported engaged to any one?"

"Yes to all your questions. She's a last year's deb. She's been reported engaged a dozen times, once to some English lord, but it fell through. I guess she can't stay put.

They say she's spoiled and headstrong."

"Did you ever hear of John or Jack Deering?"

"Sure. Father and son. They're in business together. Exporters. Nice people, but not society, though the young fellow goes out a bit. I've seen his name in society columns. For the love of Pete, why all the questions?"

"I'll tell you when I come in. Thanks a lot, Kit." Esther hung up.

Sylvia was spoiled, changeable. Jack was in love with her. Sylvia had been flirting with him—she was not serious, but he was. It all added up. Well, Esther was not hurting Sylvia by taking this precious evening. No one would be hurt except herself—but it was worth it.

On the drive home she would tell him. She rehearsed the words. "Jack, get set for a big laugh. I'm Esther, not Sylvia. I've been playing a game——" She could go no further. It was no longer funny. It was cruel. "Put it out of your mind," she told herself fiercely. "Be happy while you may."

Love. This was love. She had often wondered if love would come to her. And now, how strangely it had come.

Jack was very gay, and seemed to be happy. Esther forced the shadows from her heart and fell in with his mood.

Finally they left the highway and turned into a narrow road. Music floated out to them on the cold night air. Lights in a long, low building twinkled and beckoned. Cars were parked on the side of the building, their tail lights shining like red eyes.

The night club was filled to capacity, brilliant with lights, sparkling

jewels and the sheen of velvet gowns.

Esther thought they were going to a quiet place. But this was brilliant, smart. "If any of Sylvia's friends are here—— I'll just have to take it," Esther told herself. But it wouldn't be fun if one of Sylvia's friends—who had known Sylvia so much longer than Jack had, and therefore would be able to see beyond the striking resemblance—should upset the apple cart. Esther herself wanted to tell Jack. She did not want another to tell him.

But good fortune often favors the bold, Esther told herself, and head up, shoulders back, she walked down an aisle to the ringside table Jack secured.

They spent a gay hour there. An hour heady with happiness for Esther. Everything seemed a little unreal. She felt like a leaf swept away on a stream of joy she had never dreamed of.

Jack looking at her, eyes ardent. Dancing with Jack, the hard beat of his heart so near her own. Then the drive back, a late moon silvering everything, lending beauty to the drabest object.

Twice she started to tell him, but every beat of her heart protested against shattering the magic that inclosed her.

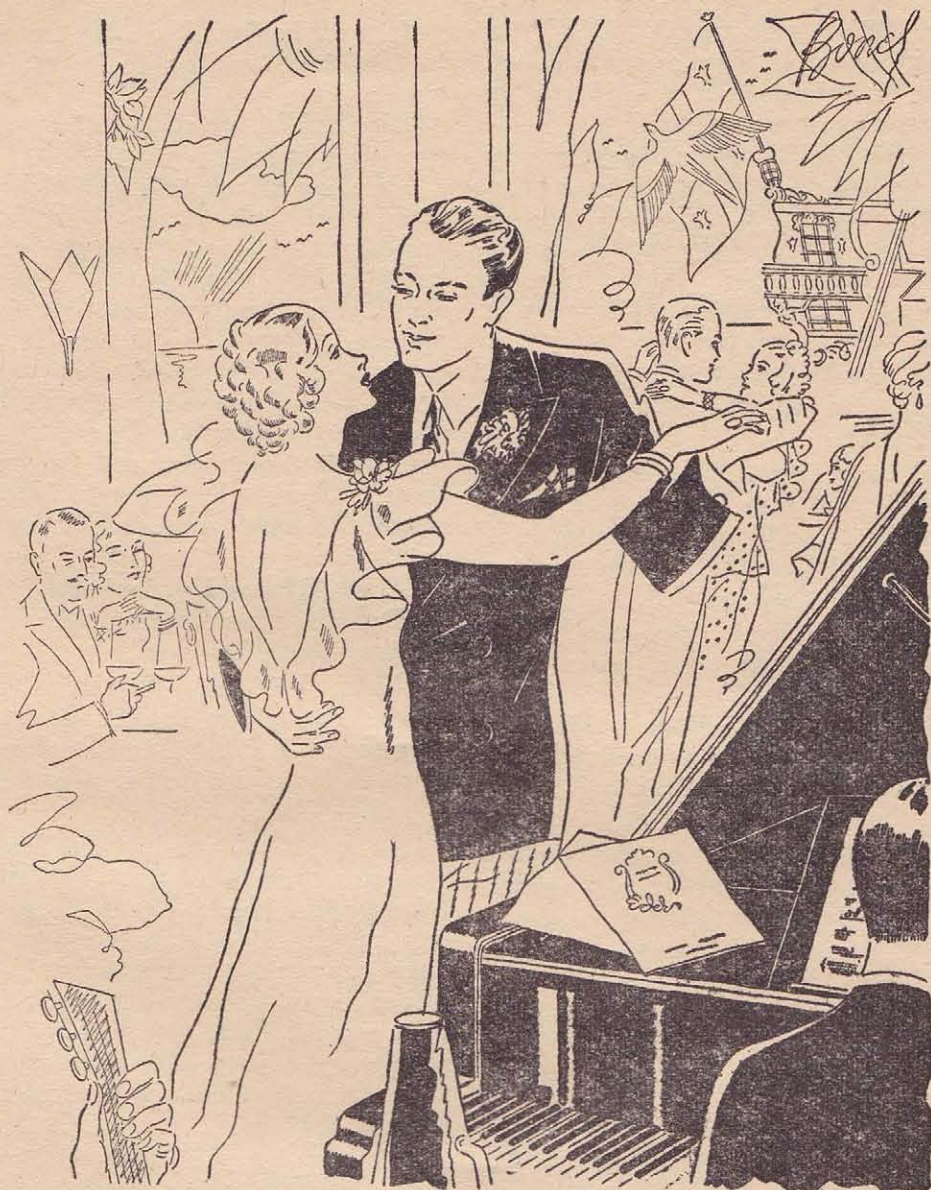
Then they reached her apartment, the revelation stillborn on her lips.

To-morrow night—to-night, it was now, he was taking her to a show. She would have one more evening then.

"Let me wear your black velvet to-night, will you, Kitty?"

"Are you going out with Jack Deering again? That's five nights in succession! Esther, you're riding for a fall. He wants to marry Sylvia. Perhaps he's in love with





*Everything seemed a little unreal to Esther. Jack looking at her, eyes ardent. Dancing with Jack, the hard beat of his heart so near her own.*

her, or perhaps it's her social position. He wants to sit pretty in her set. He's probably ambitious, and even though you could be her twin sister, you're a poor girl with no social background. So write your own answer."

"I know. I'm going to tell him

to-night." Esther's eyes were suddenly tragic.

"Well, he certainly has knocked you for a loop. You're crazy about him, aren't you?"

"Don't talk about it. I——" Esther turned swiftly from her friend's searching eyes.

"Better get dressed, kid," Kitty said softly. "Wear my velvet and my new wrap. The white fox collar will look lovely on you."

Half an hour later the downstairs bell rang. Esther sprang up to press the buzzer. "Kitty, don't call me Esther," she pleaded softly as she went to the door. "Don't give me away!" There was a frantic note in her voice.

Kitty looked at her, pity in her eyes. Slowly the pity turned to laughter.

"You can say I'm dressing. If I don't meet him I can't be a party to the second part or whatever it is." Kitty closed the bedroom door as the doorbell sounded.

Jack brought gardenias. He placed the box on a table, then caught Esther's hands in his. Slowly she drew them away. She was breathless and frightened at the shining light in his eyes.

While she arranged the fragrant flowers on her shoulder, Jack picked up a beautifully framed photograph of a white-haired woman.

"This is a distinguished-looking old lady. Who is she, Sylvia?"

"Why, she—she's Esther's grandmother."

"So? Good blood there."

Suddenly Esther's heart stood still, for Kitty was opening the bedroom door, and strolling into the room.

"Jack, this is Kitty. I mean—Mr. Deering, Miss Burrows——" Esther stopped, confused, face hot. What was Kitty up to?—she wondered. Why had she come in?

"I've heard a lot about Kitty," Jack smiled his swift, winning smile, as he held out his hand.

"It seems to me I've heard a word or two about you." Kitty laughed.

"I'm ready, Jack." Esther turned to the door, anxious to be safely out.

"Good night, Sylvia," Kitty said, eyes wide and innocent.

They had driven only a short distance when Jack turned to Esther and caught her hand. "Darling, you know I love you, that I'm mad about you. And you care for me, you can't deny it. I've seen it in a hundred little ways, this past week. Let's drive out to Greenwich and get married now. To-night."

Esther's heart pounded in her throat. She couldn't speak. Jack caught her hand again, held it hard and fast.

"Sylvia!" he said, voice tense.

The name roused Esther. Quickly she drew away her hand.

"Jack, I'm not Sylvia," she blurted out. "I'm Esther. It was all a joke. I didn't intend to keep it up so long. At first it was only a lark——"

"At last!" Jack cried. "I've been waiting for you to tell me! To-night I forced your hand. I couldn't wait any longer. You little humbug, I knew you weren't Sylvia after I had talked to you two minutes that day in the park. Two people may be alike as peas in a pod, but they'll have different voices, different mannerisms. I didn't know whether you were Kitty or Esther until to-night, but I've known all along that you weren't Sylvia. And I love you, Esther."

"Jack!" All her passionate longing, all the aching tenderness of her love was in that exclamation.

"Why didn't you tell me days ago, darling?" Jack asked, reproachful tenderness in his voice.

"I thought you loved Sylvia and—oh, I intended to tell you to-night on the way home. Truly I did. But

it was so hard. I thought I'd never see you again after you knew——"

But no more words were necessary, for she was in his arms, lips pressed against his in a wild, sweet kiss that was a throbbing song of ecstasy. After a time Jack said softly:

"Sylvia was only a crush, darling. But you are love, my one and only.

I've loved you from the first night we went out together. I'll always adore you, my darling—forever and ever."

The chauffeur had turned the car into the park, and in the sheltering darkness of the tree-lined road, their lips met and clung in a tender, passionate kiss that fused their hearts together for all time.



YOU

YOU were born for summer days  
And flower-cup perfume,  
And all the green of April  
And all the gold of June;  
You were meant for dancing  
Every sunlit meadow through,  
Where thrushes spin their melodies  
Beneath a tent of blue.

And I was born to follow you,  
To grant your smallest need,  
To keep your garden flower-filled  
And free from stone and weed;  
To walk in joy beside you  
And to tell you all the day  
That my love is deep as heaven is  
And cannot go away.

That ever here beside you  
My heart is waiting, lest  
You tire of the dancing—  
And come home to me and rest!

BERT COOKSLEY.



# Office Scandal

By Marie McGookey

**T**HE office was buzzing with talk when Jill came in, and she wondered why every one stopped the moment they saw her. That is, every one except Myra. Myra had her back to the door, and in the sudden silence her voice sounded shrill.

"It's good-by to little Jill now," Myra was saying maliciously. "I wonder how she'll feel, turning her job back to Lisa Bennett. Jill is out of luck, all right. No more lunches with the junior partner——"

Some one nudged Myra, and she stopped suddenly. Jill slipped be-

hind her desk. She was glad to sit down. Her knees were weak.

Lisa Bennett! Jill hadn't wanted to remember Lisa these last two months. At first she used to think, "A few more weeks and Lisa would be back." She told herself that when she began to notice how big, and handsome, and kind Bruce Carroll was.

Jill hadn't wanted to fall in love with Bruce. She had tried not to, but trying didn't do any good. Bruce had only to look at her to make her heart leap crazily. And he looked at her frequently. Perhaps the sight of Jill's smooth auburn hair and deep-blue eyes did something to his heart, also.

Anyway, there had been those lunches Myra had commented upon, and more—much more. Rides in Bruce's big car, and dinners at quiet restaurants, and dancing together; breathless, exquisite moments in his arms while the music wove a magic spell for them both. Until Jill had forgotten that she was only a substitute for Lisa. And then, last night—

Bruce's buzzer was sounding. He wanted her. Jill gathered up her notebook and pencil. She felt as though her heart were tied into a tight little knot, but she lifted her chin defiantly as she opened Bruce's door. Last night was over, and this morning— This morning Lisa was back.

Bruce grinned boyishly as he stood up.

"Good news, honey! Lisa is back."

He actually said it. Jill stiffened, but he didn't seem to notice.

"That lets you out, Jill. You won't have to slave for me any longer."

"Slave for you!" Jill bit her tongue. She had almost said, "I

love to," and she would rather die than say that.

Bruce's arms went around her.

"Remember what we talked about last night? We won't have to wait now. We can be married right away." In spite of herself, Jill trembled. She couldn't hold herself stiff when Bruce was crushing her close—so close that she could feel the uneven beating of his heart. "Lisa can take your place here immediately. You won't have to break in a new girl. She called up the first thing this morning, and said she's ready to go to work."

That was more than Jill could stand. She pushed him brusquely away.

"Of course she is. And I'm ready to quit. But I'll never marry you, Bruce Carroll. Never!"

"You don't mean that, Jill," Bruce said, amazed.

"I do. Do you think I haven't heard the stories about you and Lisa that are going the rounds of the office? I tried not to believe them. I thought she wasn't coming back."

"Just what sort of stories?" His voice was stern.

Jill drew a deep breath.

"About you—and Lisa. About working after hours, here in your office. They say you used to have dinner sent in, and you had a radio installed, and instead of working —" She gulped, but kept on steadily. She listened to her voice and couldn't believe it was her own. She couldn't believe she was saying these things to Bruce—all the gossip she had hated even to think about.

Bruce didn't deny anything. He simply looked at Jill.

"You think I'd do that?" he asked softly.

"How can I help thinking it—now?" she demanded furiously.

"You're glad to have Lisa back. You're glad to be rid of me!"

"You know why I want you to leave—so that we can be married."

"And you really expect me to marry you, with Lisa here in the office? That would be a swell arrangement." Jill was so angry she could have cried, but her pride wouldn't let her. "As long as Lisa was"—she paused before she could say it—"well, your past, I didn't say a word. But I'm not going to marry any man who insists on bringing his past along with him into the future."

Bruce laughed aloud at that.

"Stop laughing! There's nothing to laugh at." But he didn't stop, and Jill clenched her small fists desperately. "How would you like it if I brought my past home some night and introduced him to you? Would you laugh then?"

Jill didn't really mean to say that. She only wanted to make Bruce stop laughing. And she did. So suddenly that it scared her.

"Your past? Now you're talking nonsense!" He sounded angry.

"Perhaps." Jill was shivering inside. "You don't think you're the only one who ever loved any one else, do you?"

"Listen!" All at once Bruce seemed to tower above Jill. She could almost feel herself shrinking. "Pasts don't bother me in the least. You love me now; that's all I want to know."

"I don't love you." She tried to make it sound true. "I was mistaken last night. It was—it was just the moonlight—and everything."

Bruce grasped her shoulders.

"I wasn't mistaken, and I don't believe you were, either. I love you, and you love me. You're jealous."

"I'm not!" Jill twisted from his

grasp and started toward the door. "I'm going right now. You can keep your Lisa," she gasped tearfully, "and I hope she makes a better secretary than I did."

The phone rang, and Bruce reached for it mechanically.

"There's no use trying to talk here. I'm coming to see you to-night, and I'll make you change your mind."

Jill paused with her hand on the knob.

"There's no use talking, because I won't listen. And you needn't come to-night. I don't want to hear any explanations."

Bruce acted as though he hadn't heard. "I'll come," he said quietly, "to-night, because I know you love me."

For answer Jill slammed the door.

"I don't love him," she whispered as she ran through the outer office. "I don't," she repeated defiantly as she jammed on her hat. She didn't even look at herself in the mirror or wait to powder her nose.

All the way down in the elevator Jill was glad she was angry. And she would have to stay angry, so that to-night, when Bruce came, she would be able to send him away. She mustn't be foolish or weak. She mustn't remember Bruce's kisses, or last night, or anything.

Jill stumbled as she stepped into the street, but no one paid any attention. How could any of those people know that she had left her heart in Bruce Carroll's office? And that hearts can't be taken back simply by saying, "I hate you!"

Jill's mind was still whirling with thoughts of Bruce and Lisa when she started across the street. One car skidded around her, and another driver swore softly as his front wheels went over the curb, but the third didn't have room to turn. He



*"Lady!" The driver was helping her to her feet. "That's no way to cross the street, unless you want to commit suicide." Jill glanced at him, and saw that he was young and blond and good-looking.*

yelled and jammed the brakes, and Jill went down in a little heap.

"Lady!" The driver was beside her in an instant, helping her to her

feet. "That's no way to cross the street, unless you want to commit suicide. And in that case it's not fair to make me an accessory."

Jill glanced at him, and saw that he was young and blond and good-looking.

"I'm sorry," she murmured shakily. "It was all my fault."

A curious crowd was gathering, and the man took a firmer hold of Jill's arm.

"Let's get in the car," he urged, "before we're arrested for obstructing traffic."

"You can move on." Jill didn't exactly know whether she wanted to go with him or not. "I'm not keeping you."

But he wouldn't take "No" for an answer, and the next moment she found herself in the car beside him.

"Do you think I'm cold-blooded enough to drive away and leave you here?" he asked her reproachfully as he started the engine. "I'm no hit-and-run driver. Not when I run down any one as pretty as you."

"Don't be silly," Jill said a trifle impatiently. "I'm not hurt—really, I'm not. I was just going home. There's no need of you—"

The young man grinned.

"Then home we'll go. After all, I did bump into you, and the least I can do is see that you get home safely."

After a moment's hesitation, Jill gave him her address and leaned back. She was still a bit wobbly. Then she thought about Bruce, and sat up straight again.

"I'm awfully sorry this happened," the young man was saying. "If there's anything I can do for you, just tell me."

Perhaps it was that the accident that made Jill light-headed. Anyway, she took one look at the man beside her and spoke very fast.

"There is something you can do, to-night." She drew a deep breath, like a diver about to take a plunge.

"You can come to my apartment and pretend that you're my past."

After that she had to explain. Not everything. Just enough so that the young man wouldn't think she was crazy. At the end he glanced appraisingly at Jill and laughed.

"I'm to be an ex-sweetheart resurrected for the evening. I get the idea. It's a good one if it will give me a chance to know you better."

"Don't count too much on that." Jill flashed him a smile. "It's a past I want, not a present or a future."

"I've a bad memory. And I'll be so good that, after you've given the boy friend the air, you'll get the past all mixed up with the future."

They stopped in front of the house where Jill had a tiny one-room apartment.

"How about having dinner with me?" He leaned forward eagerly. "There's lots we ought to talk about."

"I couldn't." Jill drew back hastily. "But you can come early to-night. I want you to be there when Bruce"—she stumbled a little over the name—"arrives."

"Wait a minute! You haven't told me your name. I'm Hilary Borden; Harry to an old sweetheart."

Jill didn't quite like the way he said it.

"I'm Jill Ainsley," she spoke hastily. "Good-by. I'll expect you about eight."

Jill was trembling with excitement as she closed the door of her apartment. She must have been crazy to think up a stunt like this; but, crazy or not, she couldn't back out. And she didn't want to. She'd show Bruce Carroll! If he could go back to Lisa, she could have some one else, too.



He couldn't put his arms around her, couldn't kiss her and make her change her mind—not with a good-looking ex-sweetheart in the room. Pasts didn't bother him. That's what Bruce had said. Well—Jill tossed her head scornfully—she hoped this one would—plenty!

She ought to fall in love with Harry Borden just to spite Bruce. She ought to— But Jill couldn't think any further. She didn't dare let herself think, for fear she might forget that she hated Bruce Carroll now, and only remembered that last night she had loved him.

At ten to eight Jill felt like running away. Any place where she wouldn't have to see either Harry or Bruce again—ever. Her fingers were shaking so she could scarcely hold her lipstick, and her lips were quivering so she could hardly get it on straight. And then the bell rang.

For a moment she was afraid it was Bruce, and for a fraction of a second she hoped it might be. But it wasn't. It was Harry Borden.

"Lady!" His glance traveled over Jill's slim figure admiringly. "You sure look good to me. No wonder I bobbed up out of the past to claim you. You can make up your mind you're not going to get away from me again."

Of course, Jill knew he was only pretending, and he smiled when he said it, but there was something about that smile that made her feel little and alone.

"I won't keep you long," she said hurriedly. "Bruce won't stay. He's not the kind to push himself where he's not wanted."

"And we'll show him he's not wanted here. Won't we, gorgeous?" He took a step toward Jill, and she noticed with a shiver of distaste that he had been drinking. "Leave it to me; I'll get rid of Bruce."

That was what she wanted, Jill reminded herself—to get rid of Bruce. But something was wrong, and suddenly she knew. It was Harry Borden! He was what was wrong. She should never have brought him here. Jill realized, then, that she couldn't bear to have Bruce think she loved a man like Harry Borden.

"It's no use." She faced him determinedly. "I've changed my mind. I can't go through with this. I can't pretend that I ever loved you."

"You can't!" Harry wasn't smiling any longer. "You thought you could this morning, and I'm sure you can now. You asked me to come here, didn't you?" he asked darkly. "You invited me to play the part of an old sweetheart. Well, I'm playing it, and I intend to keep right on—"

The sound of the bell interrupted him. It was Bruce! Jill looked about wildly. She had an absurd impulse to push Harry Borden under something—anywhere, to hide him, to get him out of the way.

But Harry had no intention of being hidden. He reached out and grasped Jill roughly.

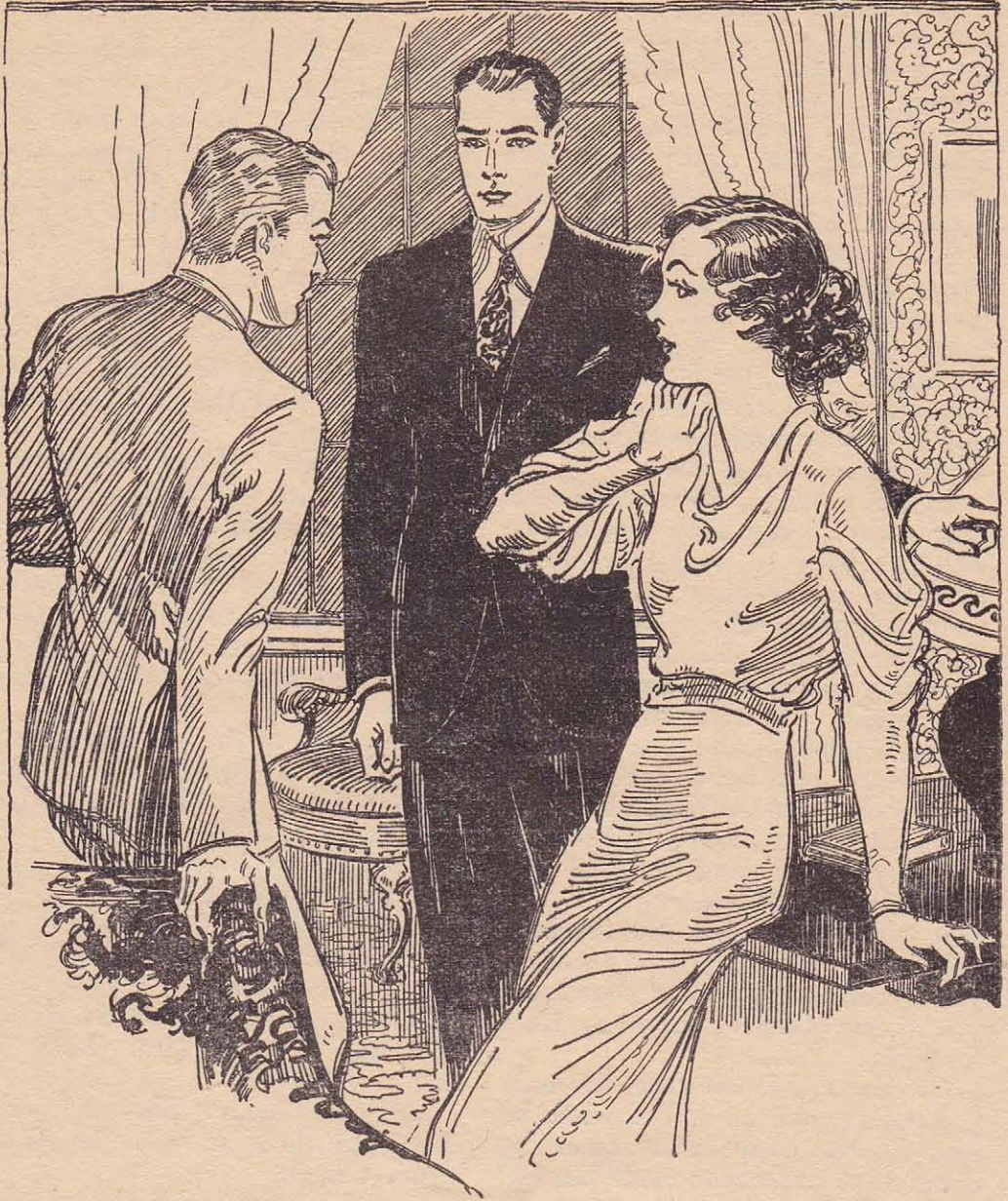
"Come on! Let's put on an act that will convince him. Let's do this up right."

Jill jerked away. She ran to the door and flung it open to admit Bruce Carroll.

For a moment she thought he wasn't coming in. He stared at Harry Borden and back again at Jill. Jill's hands automatically flew to her hair. She knew how she must look—flushed, slightly disheveled, exactly like a girl who has just been kissed.

Harry spoke first.

"Don't you think you're intruding? Perhaps you can't see this is



*Bruce stepped into the room, but left the door open. "From now on this is going to be a private party," he told Harry curtly, "and you're going to be on the outside."*

a private party," he said meaningly.

Jill couldn't say a word. At that moment her thoughts raced back to that morning when she had listened to the office gossip and, believing it, had walked out of Bruce's life. Her heart seemed to stop beating. She

couldn't even breathe. It was Bruce's turn now. Would he believe Harry Borden? Or was his love big enough to trust her?

Bruce didn't hesitate. He stepped into the room, but left the door open.

"I can see one thing," he said curtly. "From now on this *is* going to be a private party, and you're going to be outside."

Harry began to sputter, but Bruce silenced him, and in another moment the door was closed and she and Bruce were alone.

"It was my fault." Jill tried desperately to keep her voice steady. "I asked him here. I—I wanted to show you——"

Bruce wouldn't let her say any more. His arms were holding her close—tender, understanding arms. His kisses were on her lips—thrilling, rapturous kisses of almost unbearable delight.

"Bruce!" she whispered brokenly. "Bruce, darling! I've loved you all the time."

Bruce kissed her again. "Are you telling me?" he asked joyously. "I knew that from the beginning."

He picked her up and sat down in Jill's big chair. It was marvelous how comfortably two people could fit in one chair.

"And now about Lisa."

"You don't have to tell me about Lisa." Jill snuggled closer. "I was a jealous little idiot."

"I want to tell you about her," Bruce interrupted firmly. "She did work after hours in the office, and have dinner there, and dance; but"—he smiled down on Jill—"I wasn't the man who was with her. Perhaps you remember that writer friend of mine, John Howard Turner, who explores odd corners of the world, and then turns up every once in a while with a best seller on his travels."

Jill nodded vigorously—as vigorously as she could in the tight circle of Bruce's arms.

"Well, he dropped in one day last summer with some typing that had to be done immediately, and he borrowed my office and Lisa to do it, and—you know how attractive some secretaries can be. Soon he was borrowing my office whether he had work to do or not. They used it as a regular meeting place, because Lisa hadn't as yet obtained her divorce, and they didn't want to be seen together till after she was free."

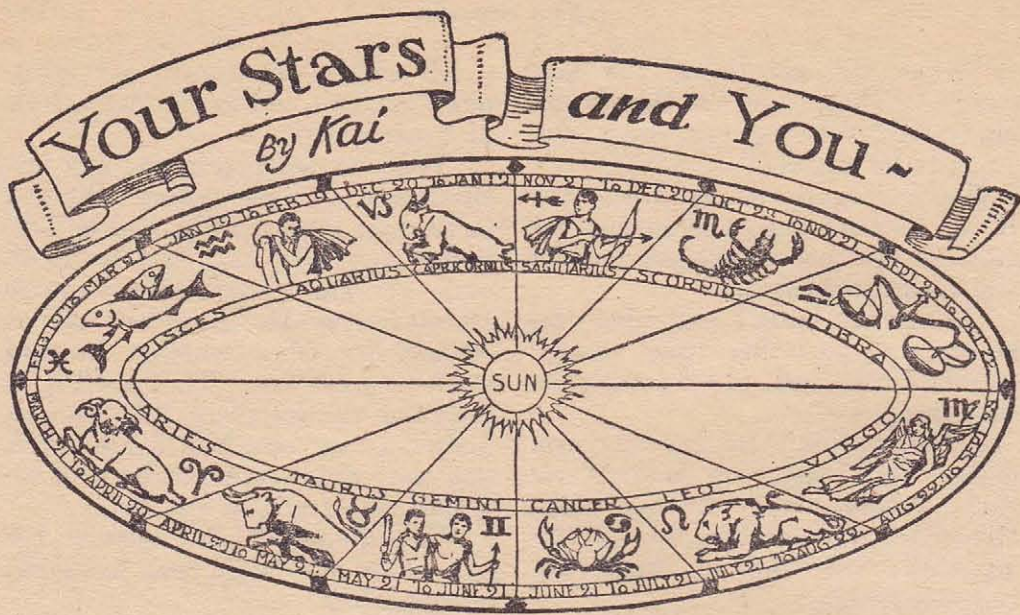
"Her divorce!" Jill opened her eyes wide. "I didn't even know she was married."

"Scarcely any one did. She has her divorce now. That's why she went away—to get it. As soon as Turner comes back again they're to be married. She'll stay with me till then, and break in a new girl so that"—he paused a moment and then finished very solemnly and tenderly—"we can be married at once."

"And to think"—Jill was almost breathless with happiness—"I almost let a silly office scandal spoil our love. I've learned one thing. Love isn't all romance and kisses. A big part of it is trust, and understanding, and forgiveness."

Bruce's arms tightened about her and his eyes met hers for a long, wonderful moment. Then slowly, tenderly, he kissed her, and as Jill thrilled to the rapture of his lips on hers, she knew that always their love would be a glorious thing, because of their utter faith in each other.





### YOUR WEEK

This week will bring new perceptions, intuition and originality. Effort in new and untried lines is advisable, always avoiding the elusive and impracticable channels of activity. Mentally you will be alert, explosive and aware of the new and original. Physically you will be impulsive, erratic, and independent, but enterprising. It is possible to acquire knowledge about many things this week and the wise person will convert knowledge and experience into practical application, so that a smoother and more profitable life may be endured. Some of the days this week will be hectic and irritating, but that is not the idea. Keep on your way and try to make every one of your actions count, without burning up all your energy. Obtain as much rest as possible and relax whenever you are not actively engaged in pursuing your interests.

### DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time

Saturday,  
October  
20th

♃

The day begins in an energetic fashion and it will be possible to clear away details which have accumulated satisfactorily, throughout the morning hours. Between 1:00 and 3:30 p. m. is not a serene period, there being the probability of delays and sharp criticisms. The following hours are quite pleasant until about

7:30 p. m., the subsequent hour bringing disappointment and restraint in handling activities. However, after 8:30 p. m. you may plan all recreational and enjoyable affairs with confidence.

Sunday,  
October  
21st

☺

This is an energetic day in spots and a very pleasant one at times. The undercurrent is erratic and many happenings will be unexpected. The morning hours are unusually active for a Sunday and the afternoon hours bring energy, too. There will be a tendency to follow rash impulses between 6:00 and 6:30 this evening, and between the latter hour and 9:30 there will be emotional and domestic conflicts. Plan to indulge your feelings late in the evening. The late hours are balanced, sentimental and conducive to arranging and settling emotional disturbances.

Monday,  
October  
22nd

)

The Full Moon occurs this morning at 10:00 a. m. The trend of the morning hours is the necessity to attend to routine and details, but there will be an unstable quality present and emotional upheaval. Do not try to move

too fast this morning and use judgment in putting new ideas into effect. The noon hour brings special rash feelings. This is a day which will be difficult to handle. The will to do and execute matters rapidly is paramount and yet the feelings are unreliable. Take it easy. The evening is hectic.

Tuesday,  
October  
23rd

♂

The Sun enters the sign Scorpio this evening at 9:36. This morning brings a continuation of the conditions of yesterday. If you made mistakes yesterday, this will be a period doubly hard to handle. There is nervousness and uncertainty this morning and the inclination to stress petty matters. Watch the written and spoken word all day, particularly the first few hours this morning and after the dinner hour this evening. The better personal influence occurs after 10:00 p. m., but do not endure after midnight.

Wednesday,  
October  
24th

♂

The desire to create domestic turmoil and an upheaval personally is indicated until 8:40 a. m. The later hours, until 5:00 p. m., are favorable and can be utilized in an efficient manner. The day is active and productive generally, depending upon your ability to handle matters rapidly and with judgment. Watch your step this evening. There is the tendency to be rash and irritable. If you feel upset do not inflict yourself upon others. Stay to yourself, especially around midnight.

Thursday,  
October  
25th

♂

This is a fair day and an uninteresting one from a planetary viewpoint. There is too much emotion for efficiency and accomplishment, so your control over your temperament is the basis upon which you will have to work. Part of the morning period can be made productive if you get started early, then deliberate

judgment should prevail until 9:00 p. m. to-night. After that you can plan to indulge in mild pleasures.

Friday,  
October  
26th

♀

All day yesterday and until noon to-day you will have seen and realized the necessity of doing many things which are distasteful to you. This morning especially brings lethargy and fatigue, but you will need to stay on the job and handle petty and undesirable factors. The afternoon and evening hours are exceedingly pleasant generally, and the evening especially brings harmony, enjoyment, interesting activities and vital conversations. Make plans for the evening which will enable you to add something of a tangible and delightful nature to your welfare.

#### IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN

March 21st and April 20th

(Aries ♈)

—Aries people born between April 14th and 20th are more affected this week than the other groups. You will feel the full force of the planets and there will be deep emotional upheaval. Try to plan your days and avoid erratic actions. If changes transpire, take them philosophically. Try not to become upset. There will be financial crises, but you can utilize your balance and poise if you make the effort. Those born during the latter part of March or the first eight days in April will have occupational difficulties and annoyances, and the finances of other people will cause concern. Most of your problems are temporary ones.

April 20th and May 21st

(Taurus ♉)

—Taurus people born between April 20th and 26th will feel intuitional and inspired this week, but there will be altercations with business and domestic partners. Be careful what you say and write. If born between May 1st and 9th, you will have a busy and hectic week. Keep your temper. Do not take your affairs of the heart too seriously. Emotional affairs are likely to reach a crisis but no definite decisions should be made. If born between May 15th

and 21st, you will have restraint and delays and no voluntary changes should be made in business. Handle superiors with care and try not to allow your impulses to conflict with your judgment.

May 21st and June 21st  
(Gemini ♊)

—Geminians born between May 21st and 27th will have good and bad days. The emotions will be difficult to control and the current week brings disconcerting and exciting conditions in the home. Try to foresee difficult domestic conditions and be prepared. If born between June 1st and 10th, you will have petty occupational worries this week. Watch the diet and do not try to adjust confusion in the domestic situation. This is a week of change, balance, and social advancement, if born between June 15th and 21st. Continue to progress.

June 21st and July 21st  
(Cancer ♋)

—Cancerians born between June 21st and 26th will begin to realize the opportunities at hand. Exert every effort to arrange your affairs so that you can benefit. Pass up no change for advancement. An unusually active week is at hand. If born between July 1st and 9th, you will have a satisfactory week mentally. Use your intuition and your ability to create. Worry about nothing; use common sense. If born between July 15th and 21st, you will find the week hectic. Do not place too much stress upon your emotional affairs. Avoid sensitivity.

July 21st and August 22nd  
(Leo ♌)

—Leo people born between July 21st and 27th will find their attentions placed mostly upon domestic affairs, although this is a week when finances will absorb your interest. Utilize your talents and be aggressive in creating a foundation which will increase your income. If born between August 2nd and 11th, you will have a difficult week because of the tendency to be fearful about the outcome. You will be irritable and a bad companion. Try not to quarrel with the folks at home. Postpone letter writing, if possible. If born between August 15th and 22nd, you will have a trying week because of restlessness and the desire to act, but through the force of circumstances there will be restriction which will be most displeasing to you. The week socially is enjoyable.

August 22nd and September 23rd  
(Virgo ♍)

—Virgo people born between August 22nd and 26th have opportunities at hand but your judgment is poor this week. Refuse to quarrel with any one or any policy. If born between September 1st and 9th, you will find your mind responsive this week. Inspiration and careful thinking will afford results which will surprise you. If born between September 15th and 23rd, you will have a pleasant week socially and the expenditure of money will bring you enjoyment. Be adaptable.

September 23rd and October 22nd  
(Libra ♎)

—Librans born between September 23rd and 30th will find the week very satisfactory. Continued results will be apparent from past efforts and plans; it is a very active and busy seven days. If born between October 1st and 10th, you will find your mind responsive this week and the intuition and mental functions are reliable. If born between October 15th and 22nd, there are features to the week which will not be entirely satisfactory. Social affairs will be enjoyable and some joy can be derived through the emotions, but changes and the unexpected are imminent and this will disturb you. Handle each development separately.

October 22nd and November 21st  
(Scorpio ♏)

—The planets promise many good things for Scorpio people, but do not be discouraged if everything does not come at once. The group which benefits first have birthdays between October 22nd and 28th and this week brings opportunities and busy days. If born between November 1st and 10th, you should make plans this week and rely upon your intuition. Follow routine cheerfully and do not to be too critical. If in the writing profession, you will find the week quite satisfactory. If born between November 15th and 21st, you will not like some of the developments at this time, but the changes and restlessness cannot be helped. Do not be discouraged over delays and concentrate upon pleasure. Good socially.

November 21st and December 20th  
(Sagittarius ♐)

—Sagittarians born between November 21st and 26th will find the week hectic in business matters. Do not make the mis-

take of quarreling with those in higher positions. Opportunities are at hand but do not be too hasty. If born between December 1st and 9th, you will find the current period confusing and it is important that you do nothing which will cause unfavorable criticism to descend upon you. This is a good week mentally. If born between December 15th and 20th, you will have final changes and stability. A pleasant week socially.

December 20th and January 19th  
(Capricorn ♄)

—Capricornians born between December 20th and 27th will have an active and busy week and opportunities are at hand. Capitalize upon all past efforts and plan for the future. If born between January 1st and 10th, you will have an excellent week in any matters related to the mind, literary endeavor, selling and correspondence. This is an inspirational week for you. If born between January 14th and 19th, you will find the week disturbing in domestic matters, property angles and social participation. Live cautiously and conservatively. Most of the annoyance is temporary.

January 19th and February 19th  
(Aquarius ♒)

—This is not an especially good period for most of the Aquarians. If born between January 19th and 26th, you will have financial problems and your emotions will be difficult to handle. Do nothing impulsively. If born between February 1st and 9th, this is a week filled with petty worries and discord in the home. Do not be too critical and try to keep your feelings to yourself. Watch your diet and refuse to worry. If born between February 15th and 19th, you will feel restless but there is nothing for you to do about the delays and restrictions. It is a pleasant week socially and it would be well for you to concentrate upon your life in its phases of relaxation as much as possible.

February 19th and March 21st  
(Pisces ♃)

—Pisceans born between February 19th and 26th will have an irritating and busy week, but your influences are just beginning to be most favorable and it is time that you planned seriously about your future. If born between March 1st and 9th, you will have confusion in your emotional life. Your judgment is good this week in practical matters and you should utilize the written

and spoken word freely. If born between March 15th and 21st, this is a stable period and the changes which transpire are for your eventual good. Hold to nothing which is of no value to you.

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★ THE STAR QUESTION BOX ★  
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R. E. W., born October 14, 1911, Maine, 4:00 a. m.: I do not know how you mean to improve your home conditions. True, I can see that you have been thinking of leaving your husband from the positions in your chart, but you did not give me one scrap of information as a basis of judging the circumstances. Your husband is not as contented as he would like to be, either. I do not advise a separation and it would be most unfortunate for both of you if there is an outside emotional interest on the part of either of you. It would result in a permanent break. The only remedy I can suggest is a temporary separation—a marital vacation, so to speak. If this is done, I believe you would come back together again.

Mrs. J. H., husband born in February: That is the trouble. Your husband has had things coming his way too much. You should have sent me your birthday, also. I do not believe he will ever overcome his liking for liquor and his control of the habit will have to come from within himself. He is the type of person that has to learn through experience and I cannot tell whether or not you have any influence over him without your hour of birth, but I doubt it. He is a very stubborn and opinionated young man. The only thing you can do is to continue to cooperate and allow him to work out his program for himself.

TEXAS A-1, born August 23, 1913, noon, Texas: It is obvious that you are interested only in having a home. You have many capabilities, among them being an artistic talent and the capacity to write. You will have to make your own choice. The year 1935 is a fine one for you in which to do some creative work. I do not think you would like stenographic work at all. The young man has influence for marriage next spring and you will have the impulse, too. It is all right to enter matrimony, if the conditions are acceptable to you.

"APXY," data omitted, by request: How can I tell you about C? There is a set of circumstances which you have to discuss between yourselves, even though I realize he is hard to handle at this time. He is vague and confused in his mind and does not know what he wishes to do. If there is another interest in his life, my advice is to ignore it. The wise course is to go along and keep up the pretense. Forget your pride until he comes to his senses. He will be more serious next year and his financial status will improve. For Heaven's sake, be tolerant! If you make one false move now, you will regret it and there will be no more marriage. Your future adjustments depends entirely upon you and the best course is for you to appeal to his emotions. He is most susceptible to love and kindness. Hope you work out the problem.

Mrs. M. C., born July 26, 1913, Kansas, 6:00 a. m.: Sorry, but I believe this affair is over. You were foolish in acting as you did and his pride is hurt. Your chart does not blend well with his, anyway, and you will have other opportunities to marry, the strongest indication being in 1936. If I were you, I would admit to him that I was wrong and try to renew the friendship, but keep it as a friendship. This man is the type to be through when he has once made up his mind, and you will find yourself getting along with him much better if you keep your relations purely upon a friendly basis.

Mrs. C. M. E., born July 9, 1903, 7:00 p. m.: I can appreciate your position and sympathize with you. That is an unpardonable situation to have on your hands. Surely there is something you can do to eliminate this person from your home. It should be done as soon as possible. I do not blame you for your resentment. Has your husband no influence at all in that quarter? After all, it is up to him and while I know it is difficult for him to take drastic steps with one of his own family, it is unfair to you. Wish you had sent me the birth dates of all concerned. I could be more definite, if you had. You will be much happier next year, as your personal influences are improving. But I do not think you should tolerate the present state of affairs. There are changes indicated for you next spring, and if you are unable to accomplish your purpose before that time, you should take every way possible next May. Otherwise, you will miss the value of your improved planetary conditions.

L. O. R., born August 20, 1913, 9:00 p. m.: You forgot to tell me where you were born, young lady. The young man is right in putting his career before his interest in you. He is ambitious, and if you care for him, you should be glad that he wishes to be financially solvent before undertaking marriage. His influences are good this year, and I am glad to see him starting in business under his present aspects. I believe he will make money in 1935. Your charts blend well, but it is up to the young man to create the opportunity for marriage. If you are a wise girl, you will be sympathetic and helpful and not try to force issues. Just be patient. I do not believe you will regret it if you wait.

Miss M. L. S., born November 27, 1913, Kentucky, 10:00 p. m.: You certainly were right when you said that you were temperamental, but you will get over that as you get older. And yet, you are the type of person that has to have deep feelings and an emotional interest in anything that you do in order to succeed. You should be in the business world. You like the feeling that a successful commercial venture brings. Just how you are equipped in training and environment to accomplish this purpose, I do not know. The next three years will bring you accomplishment and fulfillment, but the results depend upon yourself. The planetary conditions are favorable and will be helpful, if you care to use them. Marriage is indicated in the summer months of 1936.

Miss A. L., data omitted, by request: You just go right ahead with your work and wait for marriage until circumstances bring it to you. There will be a deep emotional interest in your life in 1935, but you must not force issues. There is marriage in the future but if it does not come until 1937, do not worry about it. You can marry next year, if you like, but I advise you to wait. You have no idea how much progress you are going to make in the next two years in the commercial field and in 1936 you will be able to increase your income. Thanks for your interest. You should undertake the study of astrology as a hobby. You would like it and find yourself making strides in it very shortly.

L. Z., born December 6, 1909, Indiana, 7:00 a. m.: The reason you have lost faith in people is because you have built your belief upon too idealistic a plane and forgotten that your fellow man is human.



Also, I would like to say that you are fortunate in having had only one year of what you are pleased to call "bad luck." Your entire life is ahead of you, and while Jupiter is helpful, you have to be practical and take advantage of opportunities, meanwhile making your own, too. Most of your difficult influences are past and the next two and one half years look very promising. Wake up and get a new viewpoint. Be serious about your business career and coordinate your forces. Keep your writing as a hobby for the present, but do not give up your literary inclinations. You will be able to capitalize upon them in the future. Even if you do not marry before you are thirty, you have nothing to worry about. There will be an opportunity for such a step the latter part of 1936 and there is more than one marriage in your life.

I. D. R., born March 27, 1899, Wisconsin, 6:00 a. m.: It requires longer than I would like to get around to your letters, but you readers are patient souls and seem to understand the length of time it takes to prepare our magazine for national distribution. Sorry you had to wait. Comparing your data with the other two charts, I shall have to discard the October one. He is attractive to you and there is a strong physical urge shown between you, but the August person is much better suited to your temperament and he will be more likely to fulfill your ambitious and expectations. There is no indication of an immediate marriage for you, unless you took that step this fall, and you might have done so due to the strongly emotional planetary conditions. There is a strong indication in 1936 of an attraction and there is a definite one about three years from now.

Miss M. U., born August 26, 1912, Belgium, 11:00 a. m.: I advise you to pursue both these courses. The man's chart blends with yours very nicely and I believe you could have a pleasant life together, if both of you make up your minds not to nag and criticize each other. There is no reason why you should give up your career just because of marriage.

**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.

Mrs. G. S., born December 20, 1913, Michigan, 1:15 a. m.: It seems to me that the current circumstances are desirable for you as there is little harmony shown between the two charts. Of course, it is obvious that you do not wish your life to be subjected to criticism because of the untruths some one has circulated about you and you are wise to contest the action. If this party had any chivalry it would be understood that you would be the aggressor. Perhaps you can sell the idea and create an amicable situation. Try, anyway. It is always unfortunate to have this type of thing end with bitterness. It looks to me as if you two might be able to get together on this. Planetary conditions in 1935 are better for both of you.



#### WHY QUESTIONS ARE NOT ANSWERED

*Kai does not send answers by mail.*

Miss N. S. F., March 28, 1910: Sorry, but I cannot answer you without the birth data of the young man.

Mrs. A. A., October 29, 1908: I cannot answer you without the birth data of your husband and the other man.

EDNA, August 11, 1908, Atlanta, Georgia: Sorry, but I cannot answer you without complete birth data of the two men concerned.

V. J. P., July 8, 1917: You did not send me the young man's birth data. I cannot answer questions pertaining to marriage without the birth data of both parties concerned.

Mrs. K. F., November 1, 1879, Germany: I cannot answer you without your husband's birth date.

Will woman born April 8, 1893, in New York State, who signed herself "M. W. B." kindly send us her address? The services of this department are free to the readers of Love Story Magazine.





# 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.

**F**AR off from an archipelago in the Pacific Ocean comes an eager, friendly call for Pen Pals everywhere. Here is a girl who lives in the fascinating Philippine Islands. She is a lively, interesting young person, and every one of you girls will surely like her. Sincerity is her foremost qualification. Write her a letter, Pals, and get acquainted with Fificha!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonesome girl in my late teens. I live in the Philippine Islands, and would be very glad to hear from girls all over the world. I have brown hair, big brown eyes, a very friendly disposition, and am interested in every one and everything. My hobbies are dancing, reading, writing letters, and tennis. I also enjoy the movies. I'll be glad to exchange snapshots. Girls, get busy and write to me!

FIFICHA.

Exchange entomology secrets with this young couple.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Is any one interested in collecting butterflies and moths?

My husband and I are, and we would very much like to hear from girls and young men who are keen on this subject. We are both twenty-three years of age, have dark hair and eyes, and are considered friendly and easy to get along with. We promise faithfully to answer all letters. We love to write, especially to people we have never seen.

MR. AND MRS. BUTTERFLY.

Sweet Sue's letters will pep you up.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Did I hear some one say letters? The only thing I'd rather do besides write letters is to get them. I'm a girl of eighteen, interested in almost everything, and always like to enjoy myself. However, I haven't many friends, and would welcome lots of Pen Pals. Young or old, sad or gay, I want all of you to write to me.

SWEET SUE.

A California wife longs for Pals in Canada.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please, will any of you Canadian and other girls, single or married, write to me? I'm twenty-one, married, and the mother of a two-year-old boy. I love the great outdoors, enjoy reading,

dancing, and writing letters. I'll welcome letters from Pals from nineteen to twenty-five, but there really is no age limit—I crave mail from every one. LA FAYETTE.

Modern Ruth likes all sports and loves to play the guitar.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl in my early teens, have traveled a lot, and can tell you girls about some of the interesting places I have visited. I love sports, like school, and have had the thrill of playing my guitar over the radio. Won't some of you girls please take a chance on me? I have lots of hobbies, and you can tell me about yours. I hope some of you Pals in the Hawaiian Islands will also answer my plea.  
MODERN RUTH.

Who'll write to lonely Bachelor Sam?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please help me find some Pen Pals? I would especially like to hear from Pals in New York. I'm a young Chinese man of thirty-four, friendly, good-natured, and ready to hear from any one who wants a true friend. I promise to answer all letters.

BACHELOR SAM.

Her friendliness will bridge the miles.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a brown-eyed, golden-haired girl of eighteen. I live in California, and would like to hear from girls all over. I am interested in all sports, and as I haven't many friends, I get terribly lonesome at times. I will be glad to exchange snapshots, and promise to be a true Pal to any one who takes the trouble to write to me.

ALVISO PAL.

You'll want a letter from Brown-eyed Jewel.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please print my plea in your Corner? I'm a girl in my teens, full of pep, enjoy outdoor sports, reading, music, and dancing. I collect pictures of movie and radio stars, and will be glad to exchange snapshots, picture post cards, and other things of interest. Won't some one write to a girl who wants true friends?

BROWN-EYED JEWEL.

Who'll write to Detroit Honey?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young girl interested in dancing, swimming, skating,

LS-10A

and tennis. I'm really very lonesome at times, and as I love to write long letters, I will be only too glad to hear from girls everywhere. I'm considered a very good singer and dancer. I'd like to hear from girls between fourteen and sixteen years of age, and will exchange snapshots. I'll be waiting, girls!  
DETROIT HONEY.

Give this girl a taste of real friendship.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Just a line from a lonely young girl in Rochester. I am twenty-three, love anything that spells a good time, and am working as bookkeeper. Come on, girls everywhere, drop me a line. Life gets monotonous sometimes, and writing to Pen Pals will surely be interesting.

BOOKY.

She plays four musical instruments.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a sixteen-year-old girl from Oregon. I'm interested in sports, and can play four musical instruments. I have brown hair, gray eyes, and am full of fun. I want to hear from girls all over the world, and promise to answer all letters received. Girls, send your letters to  
PORTLAND ANN.

Life behind footlights fascinates Paul E. F.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I please enter your Corner? I'm a young man interested in corresponding with Pen Pals everywhere. I am of French-Spanish descent, six feet two inches tall, with light hair and blue eyes. I like social life, enjoy sports, music, movies, and my ambition is to become an actor. I live in Canada, but I hope that this won't prevent all you fellows from writing to me. PAUL E. F.

She's had some sorrow in her life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm in search of true-blue Pen Pals. I'm a married woman of eighteen, but for the past year and a half have been separated from my husband. I certainly am disappointed in love and marriage. However, I still believe that there are true friends to be found, and I would be very glad to hear from single and married Pals everywhere. I'm sure you'll find my letters interesting, girls, as I have been around quite a bit. I promise to answer all letters received, and will exchange snapshots.  
ARKANSAS MILLYE.

Letter writing is a hobby with Cheerful Celie.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's another S O S for Pen Pals. I'm a girl twenty-one years of age, have brown hair and eyes, and some of my friends tell me I look like a famous movie star. I'm fond of movies, dancing, sports, needlework, and reading. I will exchange snapshots, and will be waiting for oodles of letters. Girls, everywhere, let me hear from you! CHEERFUL CELIE.

Here's another lively Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope lots of Pen Pals will send their letters my way. I'm a girl of twenty, full of fun, enjoy outdoor sports, and hope to be an artist some day. I want to hear from girls everywhere, and will be glad to send some of my pictures to any one who is interested. I'm from Pennsylvania, and I want to hear from all of you. SPITFIRE.

Let Rad tell you about his travels.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Just a line from a lonely young man living in the heart of Texas. I'm twenty-five, full of fun, like sports, and have traveled extensively. I have had some very trying as well as thrilling experiences, and am sure that I can make my letters interesting enough to keep you fellows busy writing to me. I will exchange photographs, and am sure I will enjoy writing to all you boys. RAD.

Jean Gloria hails from Trinidad.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a sixteen-year-old girl living in the West Indies on an island called Trinidad. I have light-brown hair, brown eyes, and a fair complexion. I would love to hear from girls in the United States and Mexico. I've seen a lot of strange things, and would certainly like to tell you about them. Pals, won't you please send me your letters? JEAN GLORIA.

Here's a busy actress, dancer, and singer.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl nineteen years old, and have done lots of interesting things. I've played in a stock company, have done professional dancing, and at present I am singing with a dance orchestra. I love to dance, swim, drive a car, and write letters. Girls, I'll answer all letters and exchange snapshots. Give me a break, won't you? MAXIENE.

Here's a loyal Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm in search of Pen Pals who appreciate sincere friendship. I'm a girl of twenty-three living in Chicago. I was once a singer, but am now working in an office. I love many things, and chief among them is music. I also enjoy poetry, serious books, and am acquainted with many interesting people. I've known much unhappiness, and will welcome any cheer sent by Pen Pals. Don't you girls want to know me better? CYNMAC.

This Pal is interested in you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young girl of seventeen, considered pretty, and am not very lonely. However, I would like to hear from girls everywhere. I enjoy all outdoor sports, especially tennis, basket ball, and swimming. Won't all of you tell me about the place you live in, your ambitions, desires, and dreams?

ELLWOOD CITY PAL.

A call for stamp collectors.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope Pals from all parts of the country will write to me. I'm a young man interested in collecting stamps. I am considered friendly and agreeable, like to make friends, and am not at all hard to get along with. Please, won't some of you fellows consider my plea? I'll be very glad to hear from every one.

JIM OF HUNTINGTON.

Exchange letters with this happy bride.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very happy young bride of four months. I am twenty-one years of age, five feet three inches tall, and have brown hair and eyes. I have lots of spare time on my hands, and would like nothing better than to correspond with single and married Pals all over the country. I promise to answer all letters, and will be a true friend. DANA.

A very friendly girl.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's another lonely girl, just eighteen, who would like to hear from lots of Pen Pals. My hobbies are basket ball, hiking, collecting pictures of movie stars, and writing long letters. I am also greatly interested in travel. I would especially like to hear from girls living in Hollywood and New York City. I don't go out much, and have very few

friends. So please write to me soon, girls. I'll be waiting for your letters.

PATIENT ANN.

A Pal for you older women.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would very much like to hear from Pen Pals living in the United States and Canada. I am a widow of forty-five, have two grown sons, but I am alone a great deal of the time. I love to write, and can promise interesting letters. I also like poetry, music, and often write my own songs. Please, Pals, don't pass me by. I will more than appreciate your letters.

THORA.

Some one you'll want to confide in.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Could you find room in your Corner for me? I'd like to be a real Pal to all the girls. I'm in my teens, and am considered steady and reliable. I like outdoor sports, and am also a movie fan. I'll exchange snapshots and post-card views with any one who is interested. Tell me your troubles, girls; I'll lend a friendly ear.

MARTHA OF NEBRASKA.

Toledo Russ is an orchestra leader.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please print my plea in your Corner. I'm a lonely young man of twenty-eight looking for Pen Pals. I'm a lover of outdoor sports, have traveled some, and am an orchestra leader. At present I am in a strange town, and find it very lonely indeed. I have lots of spare time, and writing letters is one of my hobbies. Won't some of you fellows please write?

TOLEDO RUSS.

She'll send a souvenir.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonely girl of nineteen, fond of sports, and anxious to get in touch with Pen Pals from all over the country. I will be glad to exchange snapshots with any one who cares to write. I can tell you girls much about Florida, especially Miami. Every one who writes to me will receive a souvenir. Come on, girls; there is only one qualification—sincerity!

JOY OF NORWICH.

Two happy-go-lucky Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two happy girls sixteen and eighteen years of age. We

live in the country near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but have plenty of fun and are seldom bored. However, we would love to hear from girls everywhere. We like swimming, dancing, and other sports. We'll exchange snapshots, and promise faithfully to answer all letters.

NIP AND TUCK.

She wants to hear about your town, no matter where it is.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I want to hear from everybody everywhere, but most of all from girls around twenty years of age. I'm a girl with brown hair and eyes. I love music, enjoy outdoor sports, sewing, cooking, and writing letters. I will exchange snapshots, and promise to answer all letters. Don't disappoint me, girls!

CASNOVIA DORRIE.

All you girls of school age, here are some Pen Pals who are waiting to hear from you!

BOODIE is sixteen, and will exchange snapshots with every one; NEW YORK COWGIRL is seventeen, plays the guitar and sings cowboy songs; ESTERA, MACRITA, ORA D., AURORA PATSY, FAIRBANK BABE, TINY OF GEORGIA, CORSICANA, and WACO DIMPLES are all sixteen years old, will exchange snapshots, and are ready to write long, chummy letters. Then there are several fifteen-year-olds who will welcome your letters with open arms. Their names are MAINE MAID, VERA OF D. C., MERRY FRANCES W., CISSYE, TENNESSEE LIZ, and BRISTOL EL.

At twenty-one he's a veteran of the stage.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonely young man of twenty-one, and have lived in San Francisco for the past five years. I have been on the stage for fourteen years, and have made a lot of friends, but haven't found a real Pal yet. I've been married twice, have done a great deal of traveling in the United States, and am sure that I can make my letters interesting. Come on, all you women haters, drop me a line. I'll exchange snapshots.

ACTOR BILL.

She'll show you some letter-writing speed.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May an eighteen-year-old girl enter your Corner? I am a high-school graduate, of Irish-English ex-

traction, enjoy cooking, sewing, and outdoor sports. I am interested in every one and everything, and am very anxious to show you what a good friend I can be, and how quickly I will answer your letters. I live in Washington, D. C., and can tell you all about this beautiful city.

PEGGEE.

This busy young mother still finds time for letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young widow of twenty-three, and have a four-year-old daughter. I am a nurse, and though I am kept busy enough, I still have time to spare when it comes to corresponding with Pen Pals everywhere. I'd like to hear from other young widows, although every one is welcome, and I will answer all letters received.

MARCIE.

Girls, send your letters to this lonesome Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I do hope that some of the girls who read my plea will write to me. I am a girl twenty years of age, and being an invalid, I am confined to bed most of the time. I am part French, and have dark hair and blue eyes. I try to be jolly and cheerful, enjoy watching others engage in all kinds of outdoor sports, and I love to read and write letters. I'll be so grateful to you Pals if you'll write.

VIRGINIA JUDIE.

She likes books, flowers, and good music.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a lover of flowers, enjoy reading, and adore good music. I also love birds and the great outdoors. I suppose some of you readers may consider me a bit old-fashioned, but I manage to keep in touch with the rest of the world. I am thirty-one, married, and want to hear from other wives around my age. I'll answer all letters. WABASH LADY.

You'll find him agreeable.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young fellow of twenty-four, jolly, generally agreeable, and manage to get along well with most people. I like swimming, fishing, hiking, and dancing. I want to find a few true Pen Pals who have a sense of humor and appreciate real friendship. Please don't disappoint me, boys; I'll be waiting!

AGREEABLE.

A call for Western and Southern Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to correspond with girls between seventeen and nineteen years of age, especially those living in Southern or Western States. I'm a girl of seventeen, fond of sports, and everything that spells fun. Please, girls, won't you write and make me happy? I've never had a Pen Pal, and think it would be thrilling to have friends everywhere.

JOLLY BEE.

Tell these two chums what the rest of the world is like.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two girls nineteen and fifteen years of age. We live in Wisconsin, enjoy the movies, listening to the radio, and dancing. We are good-natured, jolly, full of pep, and want to hear from girls all over the country. Girls, let's give the postman a run for his money!

SHEBOYGANETTES.

Here's a Pal for you younger girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope that some of the fourteen-year-old high-school girls who read my plea will write to me. I am also fourteen, have brown hair and eyes, and am fond of swimming, dancing, and most outdoor sports. I promise to answer all letters promptly, and will exchange snapshots. My real hobby is letter writing, and I want Pals everywhere.

EVELYN R.

What's your hobby? These two Pals are interested in it, too.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think that some of the girls would be interested in writing to two eighteen-year-old Pals living in California? We like all sports, especially horseback riding and hiking. We are interested in the hobbies of other girls, and would love to have them write and tell us about them. We promise to answer all letters, girls, so give us a break!

NELL AND KAY.

You'll want a letter from this lively Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lively and peppy young fellow of nineteen, with blond hair and hazel eyes. I'm interested in art, music, and the finer things of life. I like all sports, and can promise prompt and lengthy replies to all letters. I'll exchange

snapshots, and want to hear from men everywhere, regardless of age. How about it, fellows?  
LEWISTON PHILL.

A true Californian.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please help me find some Pen Pals. I'm a true Californian, a young girl interested in every one. I enjoy books, magazines, appreciate good music, and am an ardent screen and radio fan. Last, but not least, I am fond of writing letters, and am sure that if you girls drop me a line, you will not be disappointed in me. I'm very eager to hear from all of you.  
BERNADINE RENE.

Share dreams with a dreamer.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Is there room in your Corner for a teen-age girl who craves excitement? I'm a freshman in high school, have red hair, blue eyes, and a cheerful disposition. I like to daydream sometimes. My favorite hobbies are swimming and dancing. I'd like to hear from Pals everywhere. Come on, girls, what do you say?  
EXCITEMENT HUNTER.

A Red Cross life guard.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a friendly girl of twenty-one, with dark hair and eyes, fond of dancing, travel, and swimming. I'm a Red Cross life guard, and rather ambitious. I like to read, write long letters, and hope to hear from Pals everywhere. Every one, write to me; I'm lonesome.  
A RED CROSS LIFE GUARD.

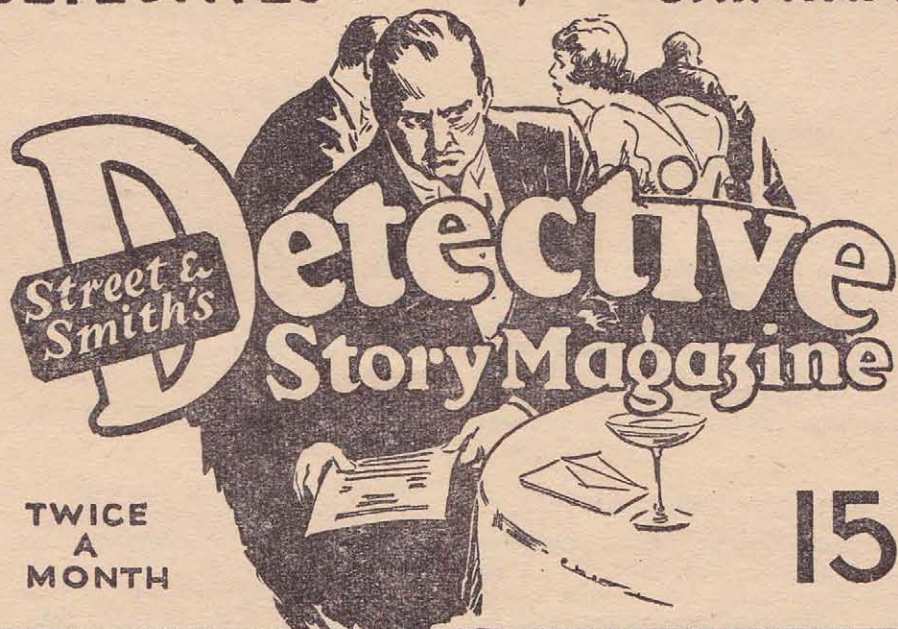
Here's a peppy sixteen-year-old.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hello, everybody! Do any of you girls between sixteen and nineteen years of age want a lively Pal? If so, write to me. I like outdoor sports, swimming, skating, and hiking. Of course, I also like dancing. I'm considered popular, and would enjoy hearing from girls everywhere.  
CALL ME JEAN.

A modern young wife who craves Pen Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very modern, happy-go-lucky young married woman of twenty-four. I have three children, but

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manage to have enough spare time on my hands to dance, enjoy outdoor sports, sew, and make friends. I want to hear from single and married Pals all over the country, regardless of age. I will do my best to write entertaining letters. **FEFF.**

She'll be happy if you drop her a friendly line or two.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** I want to hear from girls who are looking for a true Pen Pal. I'm a girl seventeen years of age, with blue eyes and brown hair. I'm interested in tap dancing, singing, and anything in the line of music. I have a sense of humor and a lively outlook upon life. Pals, I'm lonesome; don't keep me waiting long.

**MESSIEN OF TORONTO.**

Boys, here's a call from the army.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** I'm a young fellow of twenty-one, have served in the army, and can tell you some exciting stories of my stay in China. I was born in Texas, but am now living in California. Come on, all you army buddies, and write to a fellow who has just come home.

**HUMORIST.**

These two Pals are interested in you.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** We are two fourteen-year-old girls very eager to correspond with Pen Pals who are interested in outdoor sports, and who like to write and receive letters. We live in Michigan, and like to make friends. Please, won't some of you Pals consider our plea?

**TWO LACHINE PALS.**

She dreams of a stage career.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** Here's another girl of seventeen looking for Pen Pals. I can sing, dance, and have been on the stage. I enjoy all sports, especially mountain climbing, baseball, swimming, and horseback riding. I want to hear from girls who like dancing and dreamy music, and who can play some kind of musical instrument.

**SINGING BOBBY.**

Western Pals, answer this plea.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** Won't you please help me find some Pen Pals? I'm a girl eighteen years of age, and a senior in high school. I like reading, dancing, and enjoy most outdoor sports. I am particularly anxious to hear from girls living on ranches,

and will answer all letters received. I will be waiting to hear from you, girls!

**THELENA.**

Boys, here are some Pen Pals from all over the country who will be glad to receive your letters. They guarantee prompt replies, so be sure to write to each one!

J. R. J. is twenty-eight, and is working in a reforestation camp; **LONESOME KENN** is twenty-three, and fond of movies and dancing; **ANDREW DE R.** is twenty-two, and is six feet tall and good-looking; **LELAND FRED** is interested in psychology; **BARABOS TOM** is twenty-seven, likes sports and is broad-minded; **GOOD-NATURED JIM** is eighteen and hails from Kentucky; **SPRINGFIELD TOM** is twenty, likes ping-pong and checker tournaments.

You'll want a letter from this Brooklyn wife.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** I'm twenty-nine years old, married, and live in Brooklyn. I love to write letters, and as I have lots of spare time when my husband is away, I'd like nothing better than to have lots of single and married Pals to correspond with. I am good-natured, have a sense of humor, and am sure that I can write interesting letters. Please write to me, Pals.

**LONELY BROOKLYNITE.**

Help this Pal out of a rut.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** I am hoping that you will find room for my plea in your wonderful Corner. I'm a red-headed, blue-eyed widow of forty-five. To say that I am very lonely, is putting it mildly. I find myself in a rut, and am sure that letters from Pals everywhere will help me to cheer up and find life more interesting. So please, every one, write to **ALL ALONE GERTY.**

Her chief hobbies are dancing and writing letters.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** I'm a girl of fifteen, and am always on the go. I like all sports, but my hobbies are writing letters and dancing. I am sure that I can write interesting letters, and hope to hear from girls all over. How about it, Pals? Will you give me a chance to show you that I can be a real friend?

**ESSIE.**



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# 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.

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IT is human to yearn for the spoken word of approval, love, appreciation, and praise from those who have it in their power to produce upon our heartstrings either sadness or happiness. Most men are apt to get plenty of attention from girls who love them. Most wives, too, do not neglect to make some outward show of approval of their husbands. And yet, many men seem to scorn the idea of reciprocating these same little gestures so dear to every woman's heart. When compliments and praise cease, and a woman is allowed to become starved for attention and the little niceties the man of her heart once showered upon her, disappointment in love is not far off.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a young married woman, not yet twenty-seven, and have been married six years. We have two darling children, a boy and a girl. My husband adores them, and so do I.

The trouble is that although I think my husband loves me as much as he ever did, sometimes I am tempted to believe that most unhappiness in marriage is caused by the man taking his wife too much for granted.

During the first three years of our marriage my husband used to pay me all sorts of compliments, the way he did when we were engaged. He'd notice if my hair was done differently, or when I had something new to wear, and was always interested in how I spent my time. He'd tell me I looked sweet, and even my culinary efforts weren't overlooked.

But how different everything is now! I know he loves me, and yet he seldom notices what I wear, how I look, or cares where I go and what I do. It isn't as though I'd let myself go as some wives do. I am still considered very attractive, have naturally golden hair, blue eyes, use make-up, and dress well, if not better, than I used to before I was married.

Of course, I long to be noticed, especially by Tom. I'm not so aged that I don't care whether or not he thinks I look nice. But I am losing heart, Mrs. Brown. Must a girl's sweetheart turn out to be such a flop after marriage when it comes to love-making? Why are men so blind once the girl they courted is tied to them for life? Sometimes I seem to be just about as exciting to him as a piece of furniture.

My husband expects me to be interested in what he does, and to show him that I appreciate everything he does for me and the children. If I should ignore him as he does me, he at once thinks there is something wrong with me. He seems to want me to think that his interests are of the greatest importance, and mine of none at all.

I am sure there isn't another woman in the case, Mrs. Brown. Is it so unreasonable for a wife to expect her husband to notice her, and to show her that he appreciates her, as he used to do before marriage?

Whenever I read about lonely wives, and how some of them accept the attentions of other men, I often think it serves a husband right if he neglects his young wife to the point where she is starved for some attention.

As long as I love my husband and have my children to think of, I suppose I'll try to put up with this indifference on his part. But it certainly isn't all honey for a wife, once the sweetheart idea has worn off to a shadow. I would love to hear from other readers, and especially men, as to why husbands forget that a wife is human and needs as much attention after five or ten years of marriage, as she did before marriage.

ALMOST DISGUSTED.

It would seem that from time immemorial men have been used to feminine praise, and have taken it for granted that such praise is due them because they have to go out and toil for their families. But do they really forget that their wives also toil, and that praise and an outward show of appreciation we humans find so sweet would be welcome when the monotony of house-keeping is over for the day?

Let us observe any two young people in love. They compliment each other, pay attention to each other's likes and dislikes, and are usually careful not to appear indifferent to each other's interests.

But what happens in so many cases after several years of marriage? Judging from the countless letters that reach this department, it would appear that husbands are often to blame for many unhappy marriages because they forget that wives are warm-hearted human beings hungry for compliments, soft flatteries, and comments of approval.

A man may love his wife, think

all the lovely things in the world about her, but if he stints on words and actions of praise, how can she know what he feels?

If men would only remember that a few sincere compliments mean so much to a woman, one of the serious thorns in marriage would be quickly removed.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May I say a few words to girls who are in doubt as to how they can keep their boy friends interested? The main point, I'd say, is to know your man.

If my two experiences will be of help to some other girl, here they are: I went steady with a young man for a long time. We became engaged, but because I showed him that I did not care for the company of other boys, and wanted him only, he got the idea that no one else could possibly be interested in me, with the result that our engagement is now a thing of the past.

Then I met another boy I liked. I thought I would try a different method with him. I teased and led him a merry chase, went out with other boys, and he was never sure of me. He finally decided that I couldn't possibly be constant. So, you see, what you can do with one man you can't do with another. Some men like to be tackled, and give the girl the reins to steer them hither and yon, while others like to be the hunters in love, and feel disgusted with high-handed tactics.

However, I, for one, have decided to play high-hat and wait for my phone calls, even if I have to wait the rest of my life. A girl has only her pride and reputation, both of which men are ever so ready and willing to snatch. Why not give the boys a run for their money? Let them come after you. I have had plenty of experience that showed me the wisdom of this decision.

BABY FACE.

Your turn now, family. Should men, as Baby Face says, be given a run for their money? Are they really so selfish and mercenary as to stand ready to snatch a girl's pride and reputation? Let's hear from you!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May I talk to you for a little while, and tell you my story?

About nine months ago I fell deeply in

love. My love was returned, of that I am certain, and for a while I was in heaven. I wonder now if that sense of utter happiness is ever permanent. We were both weak, and all the time I was conscious of the fact that I was doing something wrong; that no matter how much we loved each other, I was lowering myself.

For him it was different. At least, I thought so, because although I am a girl, I believe in the double standard. In other words, it was wrong for me, but not for him; still, I couldn't break away. I was foolish enough to believe that if that was the way he wanted me, I'd do anything, even go as far as to fling everything I held sacred to the four winds.

About this time my aunt opened her winter home in Florida and I went to spend three weeks with her. During that time (it seems ages), I discovered what I was already almost certain of; that other men might amuse me but never hold me.

I enjoyed their company, even had marvelous times, but I couldn't forget. Underneath it all I wasn't satisfied. There was always something missing, and I was discontented. The evening before I left for home I "chucked" my social obligations and rode alone almost all night trying to find the answer to at least a few of my questions, and when I returned home it was with the determination to end things.

I saw him that evening, Mrs. Brown, and before he left I had the courage to tell him we couldn't possibly go on as we had been. I didn't ask the impossible, that he change for me; merely that he stop calling. And when he told me he couldn't, I used the only argument left. I told him I no longer loved him.

I know I hurt him horribly, but I couldn't help it. When he kissed me good-by, he said he didn't see how it was possible to love so completely as he loved me, and not have that love returned. But true to his word, he hasn't tried to get in touch with me since.

I have lots of social obligations that must be fulfilled, but each time I sit across the table from some chap, I see another face, and every time I dance, it's with his arms around me. I know I've literally thrown away my chance of happiness, and even though what I did took strength, I've not a shred of it left to carry on with.

Mother thinks I am plain crazy to have sent him away when I care so much, but she doesn't know why, and I pray she never may. Dad, however, agrees with me that I am too young to become serious, and

wants mother and me to go to Europe for a change. I'm so sick of doctors, tonics, warnings about not eating enough, and nervous breakdowns, that I really don't care where they take me.

One thing I do want you to know, and that is that marriage doesn't enter into this at all. I'm too young, and though this boy is two years my senior, he's not ready to settle down, either. Do you think I've done the right thing in breaking up with him?

Even though I've done wrong according to conventions, I can't say I'm sorry, because this love has given me some wonderful moments. It will be very hard to forget him, but I am not sure that our love will last until we are old enough and ready to marry. Do you think I should wait for him, and expect him to wait for me?

POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL.

It is undeniable that experience is the great dispeller of illusions, especially when youth begins to discover that there is a price to be paid for too much freedom where love's young dream is concerned. You don't say how old you are, but if neither you nor this boy is old enough to think of settling down to marriage, then you're probably too young to think seriously of love.

It's sad but true, that very young people are apt to mistake the novelty of an exciting romantic adventure for real love. Having a crush on a boy who has captured your fancy and forgetting conventions, does not balance the scales where real love is concerned.

Much as I would like to do so, I am not endowed with mystic power that would enable me to look ahead and tell you whether or not any affection that may now exist between you and this boy will last until you are older and ready to consider marriage. But if you have already sent your friend away, wouldn't it be wiser to leave the matter as it stands, continue with your other interests, and let Father Time take care of your to-morrows?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a girl of twenty-three, and for the past four years I have been going with a young man four years my senior. I am considered good looking, dress well, and hold a good position.

I'm not engaged to this boy, and never have been, but during the first three years we went together I saw him almost every night. Of course, we quarreled now and then, and parted several times, but we always made up.

My family have continually nagged at me to give him up because he drinks and behaves terribly when drunk. About two years ago he started to slap me when he was in this condition. The next day he'd beg me to forgive him, saying he was sorry. But the same thing has happened many times.

A year ago a man around thirty years of age came to work in our office. He asked me to go out with him, but I refused. One day, however, I had a quarrel with my boy friend, and he beat me up. After that I made up my mind to go out with others. So the next time this new man asked me for a date, I accepted.

He seemed so considerate and wonderful, after what I went through with the other boy, that I started to go out with him quite often. I know you'll think me terrible when I say that this man was married and I knew it. The first time I went out with him was because I was so discouraged about the other boy, but gradually we began going out three and four times a week.

Then some one told his wife, and she left him. I continued to date him. After a year of that I finally realized how wrong it was for me to go out with him, so I gave him up. I made up with my first boy friend, but when he found out about the married man, he accused me of pretty nearly everything. He struck me, and told all our friends I was cheap enough to run after a married man.

Finally this man made up with his wife, but he kept telling me that he wasn't happy, and that he loved me. I was still going with my first boy friend, in spite of his abuse, but we parted a few weeks ago because I just couldn't stand it any longer. He follows me around, however, stops me whenever he can, tries to talk to me, and if I won't, he slaps me. He's always throwing it up to me that I was a married man's sweetheart.

But this married man never made any advances to me. I sent him away because

I realized that it was wrong. He even wanted to get a divorce and marry me, but I managed to convince him that we could never be happy if we made his wife unhappy. He still loves me, and I love him, though I'll never let him know. I told him I loved the first boy, though that's a lie, because I sometimes hate him more than it seems possible for one human being to hate another.

Last week the three of us met at a party, and when my first boy friend met the married man, he struck me. Since then he comes around to my place of business and tells me that I deserved the beating because, he says, I invited this married man to the party so I could see him. But I didn't. I couldn't help it if some one else brought him along; I didn't even know he was coming.

In the four years I have been going with this boy he ran around with married and divorced women, and denied all the stories I heard, until I saw him myself. He was to blame for my actions, and now he wants me to make up. I know if I marry him, I will have a terrible life.

I know you'll tell me to forget him, and I would like to do that, but he just won't stay away. He tells me that if I ran around with a married man once, I'll do it again, and he's there to see that I don't. Three days ago this other man phoned and asked me to see him, but I refused. He told my friends that if he couldn't have me, he hoped I'd never marry the other fellow, because he has caused me so much trouble. I am desperate.

UNHAPPY ARLINE.

No girl is obliged to marry a man who is as despicable as your first boy friend, Arline. For goodness sake, shake yourself awake and remember that this is 1934. If he won't keep away from you, tell your family about it. And if they haven't sufficient influence to make him stay away from you, the mighty hand of the law will, I'm sure, bear some weight with him. You needn't be quite spineless simply because, like a bad boy, he says, "I won't!"

When a girl is thinking of marriage, she should try to choose a man of character and dignity.

Every girl wants a husband of whom she can be proud, and who will treat her with consideration. But she can't blame any one but herself if she allows herself to be bullied into marriage.

As for the married man, make it a final "No"—and make it *sound* final. I'm sure that if he sees you are firm, he will stop calling.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: How can a girl be normal, happy, and carefree, if all around her she sees nothing but bitterness and bickering that would drive any one crazy?

I'm a girl of sixteen. My father died when I was quite young, and my mother married again. For a little while everything seemed to be all right, but you should visit my home now. It's fight, fight, fight, all the time.

I've seen so many unhappy marriages, that I don't think I will ever marry. My mother goes out with other men, and my stepfather does his share of going places with other women.

Sometimes I think that I have seen enough of life to make any one sick of it. I've had a little experience myself. I started to date boys when I was fourteen. At fifteen I kept company with a boy of twenty-two. Right now I'm going out with a married man who doesn't live with his wife. He is thirty. But what's the difference? People say: "Like mother, like daughter." They don't give me a chance; they expect me to be bad, and they'll talk anyway. I often feel as if I'd like to give them something to talk about.

Before I started going with this married man I was crazy about a young fellow. I think I was really in love with him. Then some one lied to him about me, and he believed that person. He didn't even give me a chance to explain.

You may say he couldn't have cared for me, and maybe he didn't care as much for me as I did for him, but that didn't stop my loving him. I still think of him, even though I tell some of my friends that I hate him. I'm so lonely that I could cry, but I smile and pretend I'm happy. All my so-called friends would laugh if they heard me say that I was lonely.

SAD SIXTEEN.

When a girl has such a poor example of what happiness can really

mean, it is small wonder that she feels disillusioned and somewhat hopeless regarding marriage and her own future. I sympathize with you, my child, but let me assure you that unhappy marriages are the exception, and not the rule.

Whenever young girls of sixteen moon around and think they're in love, it usually turns out to be nothing more than a schoolgirl infatuation. Perhaps there is no harm in an attack of puppy love now and then, but it's unwise to allow yourself to think that life isn't worth living just because some boy disappoints you.

It isn't always a simple matter to erase unfavorable impressions from a youthful mind. But I think that if you would stop dating boys—drop them altogether for six months or longer—and harness your interests in other directions, life would take on new meaning for you.

Join girls' clubs, and, if it is at all possible, go to live with a relative for a while. It's really a pity that your mother has so little consideration for you, and so little respect for herself. Perhaps you can even go back to school. If you have to hold down a job, go to night school where you can take up some course that might interest you.

If you throw yourself wholeheartedly into the change, a more balanced perspective will gradually return to you. Come again!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a young fellow of twenty, but feel about fifty after all I've gone through. Ever since I was fifteen I have been going with a girl I knew from school, and about a year ago we became engaged. We planned to get married last May. Two weeks after our engagement was announced I found out that the previous spring she had been in trouble and that the man had paid her several hundred dollars to straighten things out.

Of course, I thought that she had learned

her lesson, and because I really cared for the girl, I saw no sense in bringing it up. It hurt me deeply to find this out about her, but I decided to forgive her and go on as before.

Things ran along smoothly. I had several hundred dollars saved to start our home with, but the bank in our town closed up, and I don't know yet whether I'll ever get my money or not. When I went to see my fiancée she treated me very coldly. She said she was sorry this happened, but she behaved as if I were a stranger, and we quarreled. Then she became sweet again, but it didn't last. I hated to think that because I'd apparently lost my money, she didn't want to marry me.

One day when we were quarreling I told her that I knew about her and this man. She said that I was very old-fashioned and jealous, and if I thought she was going to stay home waiting until I made more money and could take her places, I was mistaken.

But the next day she wrote that she was sorry and didn't think what she was saying, and begged me to forgive her, which I did. A week or two after that she came to see my mother, who wasn't feeling well at the time.

After she left our home, she went to see a cousin of hers who lived in the next block and spread the story that my mother was lazy because she didn't even try to serve my fiancée something to eat while she was there. However, once more I forgave her. Then she wrote me that she didn't want to get married, and sent back the ring.

Three weeks ago I saw an announcement of her engagement to another fellow. He is very well off financially, and can give her lots more than I could. I met her on the street after that, and she begged me to forgive her, but she wouldn't break up with this other fellow, she said, because he takes her out a lot.

For the past two weeks I have been going with another girl trying to forget, but I don't seem to be able to do that. This other girl has told me that she loves me, and wants to get married. She is very sweet, and thinks I feel about her as she does about me, but I hate to keep on deceiving her. I only told her I cared for her to find out how she felt about me.

I really do think a great deal of her, and when we are together I don't feel so bad about the other girl. In fact, I've almost decided to marry this girl because she believes that I love her, and I wouldn't want

to break her heart. My former fiancée knows I go with this girl, and says that if I take her back she will break with this fellow.

Please tell me what to do, Mrs. Brown. My heart tells me to take her back, but my sense of honor, and common sense, tell me to marry the other girl who, I'm sure, wouldn't treat me like the first girl did. I often think that if I marry the second girl I'll be happy with her because she is so good and sweet. DISAPPOINTED READER.

Habits and points of view, as well as traits of character, are pretty well fixed before two people marry, and nothing is more foolish than to try to convince yourself that the person you're attracted to can make you happy, when the finger of better judgment points against it. Perhaps that is where the saying that love is blind comes into its own.

The girl you've been engaged to has proved by her actions that she isn't quite worthy of your love, and if you give yourself a fair chance, you will, in time, become much more deeply attached to another girl; but I wouldn't advise you to marry a girl you know you don't love, even though she is sweet, and good, and sincere, and you feel that you may learn to return her affection.

You know the old saying about haste? My suggestion is that you do nothing for at least two or three years. Why? Because you're too young to really know your own heart and mind, though you may think you do, and because you're not in love with the girl you think you should marry. You should also have something set aside to start housekeeping on, and, above all, because you're upset, disappointed, and are not at all sure what you want to do.

Let it all pass; make no rash decisions; waste no more time on the first girl; go on being friendly with

the second girl, and have other girl friends, too. By the time a couple of years pass things will clear up for you, not only in your own mind, but financially, too, and you'll be more sure as to what you should do.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Two years ago when I graduated from business school I found a position with a firm of lawyers. I was then eighteen years old.

The firm consists of four lawyers; my job is to take dictation from one of them, and help out another member of the firm. The other two have their own stenographers.

The lawyer I worked for is a bachelor around thirty-two. For about a year everything was all right, and I liked my job. Then he started to tell me funny stories, and asked me personal questions as to how many boy friends I had, how often I dated them, did I go to dances, et cetera.

Then he surprised me by asking if I would kiss him. I said, "Not unless I'm forced to," but didn't realize at the moment how foolish, and perhaps even inviting, this remark must have sounded.

Anyway, a day or so later, he put his arms tight around me from behind as I was sitting at my desk, and kissed me. This happened many times. Of course, I protested, but he seems to make it a sort of habit.

He's asked me several times to go out with him, but so far I've refused. He hasn't gone beyond kissing me. I would hate to resign as I like my work, and need the money, and work is rather scarce just now. Also, I am almost the sole support of our family. I've asked him countless times to leave me alone, but he just laughs it off. He kisses me when I least expect it.

I don't know what to do. Am I doing wrong in allowing him to go on like this? A girl can flirt and kiss other men, and it seems all right, but when it comes to her employers, why is it different, and considered terrible? I know that if the other girls in the office knew about this they'd be gossiping about me all the time.

SECRETARY BETH.

Business is business, and as a general rule, flirtations between girls and their employers mix no better than oil and water. There's no question that there exists the type of man who labors under the

impression that just because he pays a girl's salary he can play *Romeo* during business hours.

Judging from your letter, however, I doubt very much if your employer would go on kissing you, once you really put your foot down and make it very plain to him that this sort of thing must stop. If he's a gentleman he will not force his attentions on you, if you show him that his advances are distasteful to you.

But perhaps your vanity is flattered that he's keen enough about you to ask you to go out with him, and there may be something in your actions which does not quite convince him that you actually resent his advances. You may not have been firm enough with him.

Of course, if he persists, you'll have to find another way out. Couldn't you talk to the head of the firm, for instance, and ask him to assign one of the other girls to take this man's dictation?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I was married at nineteen and have been very unhappy. I have tried my best to make our marriage a success, but somehow, things went wrong.

Bill and I both worked after we were married, and though neither of us earned a great deal, our combined earnings were enough to provide a fairly comfortable living. However, Bill started to drink, and when I begged him to stop, he paid no attention to me. Finally his drinking cost him his job.

I never wanted very much. I wanted a little home, furniture of our own, and was satisfied with few clothes. But no matter how hard I tried, I didn't seem to be getting anywhere. I left Bill four times because I couldn't stand seeing him drunk around the house, and because I hoped it would wake him up. He promised to do better each time I left, and, of course, I always went back.

When I found out finally that I couldn't go on like this, and that I didn't really love him any more because he had killed all the feeling I've ever had for him, I left town. Once in a while I went out with

other men. The men I really liked wanted to marry me after a while, but marriage, of course, was out of the question for me. Can't men be just pals?

I'm twenty-two now, and in the past two years I have lived in four different cities. I'm so discontented and restless I don't know what to do to find a little peace and happiness. I know there are many things I should be thankful for. I'm healthy, can easily earn my own living, and I have lots of friends. But I feel that something is wrong.

When I go to a party I'll start having a good time, and then suddenly I want to get away from every one, see new faces and just drop every one I know. Of course, I don't do exactly that, but now and then I don't see any one for a week at a time, and I stay home.

I have been in this city four months, have a good job, and I ought to be happy and satisfied, but I'm ready to pack up and be on the go. Do you think I'm silly? I'm all alone. My parents died four years ago, and I have no brothers or sisters.

Is there any way I can overcome this feeling of restlessness and dissatisfaction? I don't like to brood—there's nothing I like better than to laugh and be gay. I have some nice girl friends, and know several worth-while men, so I shouldn't be lonely. I'll appreciate anything you can tell me.

RESTLESS SHIRLEY.

In spite of everything, life holds happiness for every one of us; but it doesn't come done up in packages and handed over a counter. You may say that you're not lonely, or that you shouldn't be lonely because you have men and women friends, but deep down in your heart you are very lonely, and the sense of having failed, or missing the really vital thing so important to most women—a happy marriage—is what makes you miserable.

You can spend a lifetime rushing from place to place, groping among new interests for that mysterious "something" which you think will make you happy, but no one in this world ever found happiness by flitting around restlessly.

If there's not the slightest chance of your husband pulling himself together so that you can make a real start together again, then why remain in this uncertain and exasperating situation? You're not exactly a wife, and you can't be a sweetheart. Make up your mind definitely one way or the other, and then act accordingly. Happiness is a thing of slow growth; it has to be fought for before it can be won.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Four years ago I married a boy one year younger than I. I really loved him then, and still do, regardless of all the heartbreaking things that have happened. The first two years of our marriage were perfect in every way. But aren't the first two or three years always perfect? The last two years have been nothing less than a nightmare. I wonder what others would have done if they had been in my shoes?

The trouble started when my husband began to drink. From liquor to running around with women was a short step. I don't smoke or drink, but I'm not at all old-fashioned, and consider myself modern in every other respect.

I tried several methods in my effort to reform my husband, but I failed each time. After almost a year of staying home alone nights and trying to pay our bills out of what was left of his salary, I just couldn't put up with things any longer.

I told him that I was going home. I packed my things and left, and went back to work. My husband pretended that he didn't miss me, but he started to act wilder than ever. Every one who knew us pitied me. Finally, I decided that divorce would be the best way out.

Needless to say, I was heartbroken, but I thought it might wake him up if I demanded money. Well, I got my money, but he didn't change, and I wasn't any happier. Then my husband fell sick. He caught cold and it developed into pneumonia. He called for me all the time, and at last I went to see him. He wanted me back; he said he loved me. I remarried him. For two months everything went fine. Then he went out one day, got drunk, and never came back. He stayed away eight months.

I worked night and day trying to for-



get my misery. I went out, of course, and even had three proposals to marry, but every night I sent up a prayer for my lost husband. I learned to take knocks with a smile. I became independent and promised myself not to let anything hurt me again.

A month ago my husband came back. He seemed changed in looks, was more quiet and refined, but he didn't find me as easy as I had been before. He begged me to give him another chance, so I put him on probation for a year. I felt that it was a year against a lifetime. I know that I won't change my mind and take him back before that year is up, no matter how often he begs me to make up now.

I haven't given up yet, and I'm going to keep right on hoping that things will turn out all right. My husband seems a changed man, but I will not let him break my resolution. If he disappoints me, I won't let him hurt me as he did before.

I hope some other wife tries this method; it may solve her problem. It is now seven months since my husband and I are good friends. I see him once a week; the rest

of the time he works. From what I can see, it would appear that he's working hard.

Last week he showed me a bank book with several hundred dollars to his credit. So it looks as though he's saving his money, and I haven't noticed that he's drinking, or running around with other women. He lives two blocks away, and his landlady says he seldom goes out, and then only to a movie. I think my plan is going to work out all right. I hope so.

DOROTHY S.

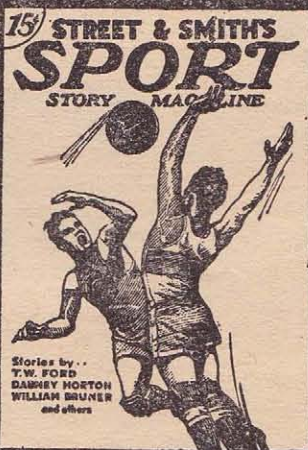
And I hope so too, Dorothy. Belief and strength in your own convictions will help you find ultimate happiness. If your husband is working so hard to get you back, it looks as if he'll turn out to be the right kind of husband after all, when the year of probation is up. Good luck to you; won't you write again and let us know how things have turned out?

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DEAR MRS. BROWN: Why are men so easily deceived by women who have nothing to do but break up homes and enjoy themselves by vamping other women's husbands? I suppose mine can be considered an old story; but no matter how old the story is, it's usually new to the person who is on the wrong side of it.

Six years ago I married a man I loved dearly; I still love him. He loved me at the time of our marriage, and for four years we were very happy. Then came promotion in his work, and a transfer to another branch of the business brought him in contact with women, and that's where the trouble started.

The first thing he did was to begin to drink—just to be sociable, he said. Then he started to run around first with one woman and then another, lied about business engagements, and stayed out all hours of the night. We have no children, and I am glad of it now, because of what happened.

Then my husband began to complain when I wanted him to take me out. I thought it might be my fault, so I started to take an interest in the things I knew interested him, and kept my home in fine order. For a few months he forgot to complain, and then the same things began to happen again. One day he said he was going out of town on business, and hasn't returned.

Of course, I don't mean that I haven't heard from him. I have; he arranged to send me an allowance, and I continue to live in our cozy little apartment. The worst of it all is that I love him dearly, and probably always will. He was the only man I ever cared for, and I know that a reconciliation is out of the question now.

A wife seems to mean so little in a man's life. Are men not to be trusted with a woman's heart? I feel as if there is nothing for me to live for. I'm sure I can't love any other man. I've lived alone for

almost two years now, and I feel worse all the time.

Mrs. X.

Tragic as it is, many comparatively young women are confronted with an early marriage failure. Some wives may be partly to blame, some may not; but always, life must go on. And although it is much easier said than done, it is only logical that broken dreams should be shelved along with the other disappointments Fate hands out to every one of us in one form or another.

The most important thing for you to do now, my dear, is try *not* to sour on marriage, men in general, and the idea that life can hold nothing more for you. Such an outlook is apt to ruin your disposition, and unbalance your perspective.

Living cooped up with your emotions, marring each day with old heartaches isn't going to help you get over the past. If another marriage is out of the question now, find other interests and gain the happy satisfaction that comes from accomplishing something worth while.

No matter what your disappointments, you still have a life to live, and it is up to you as to how you're going to live that life. Whether it's going to be filled with misery, or made tolerable and purposeful, is for you to determine.

I'm sure some of our readers will be glad to tell you how they've started another chapter in their own lives with a new grip on themselves.



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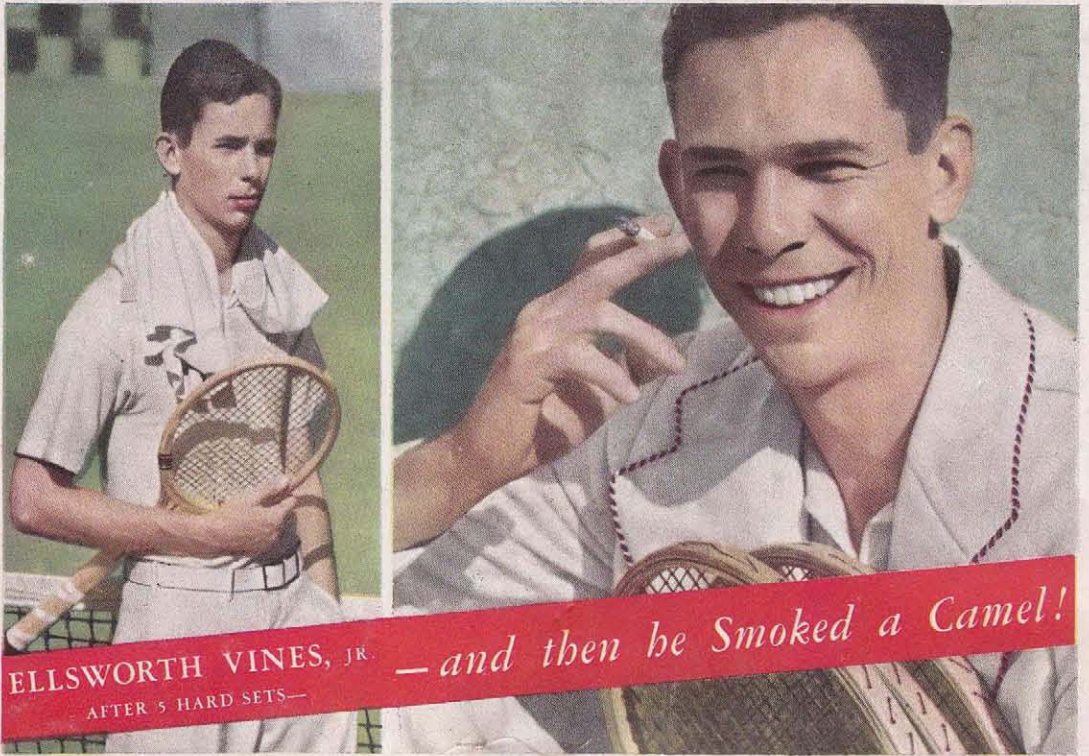
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