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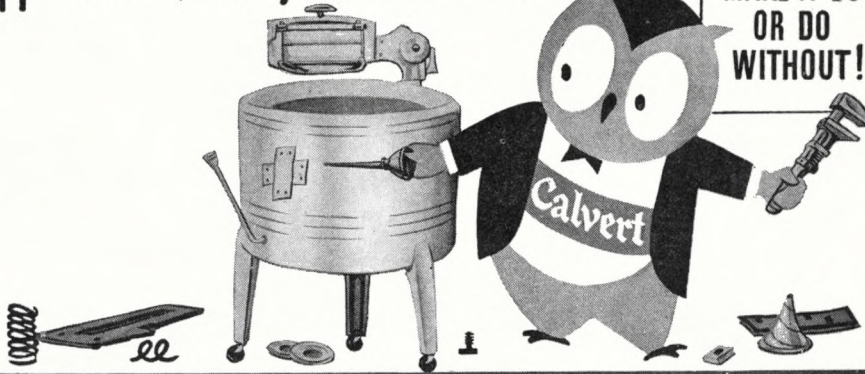
EARLE BERGEY

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THE SEA
A Complete Romantic Novel
By **MONA FARNSWORTH**

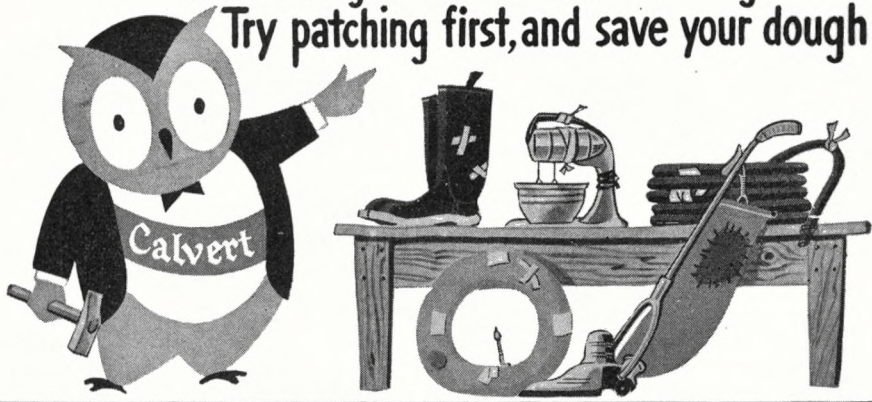
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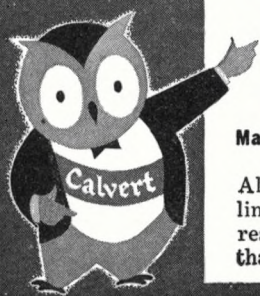


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Vol. XV, No. 2

MARTHA TRASK, Editor

November, 1943



A Complete Romantic Novel

LOVE SAILS THE SEA

By MONA FARNSWORTH

Treachery, intrigue and heartbreak stalk the decks when courageous Honesty takes over a Coast Guardsman's fishing boat for the duration—and sees the job through despite all obstacles! . . . 15

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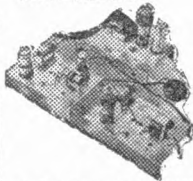
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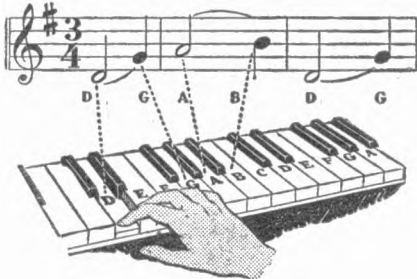
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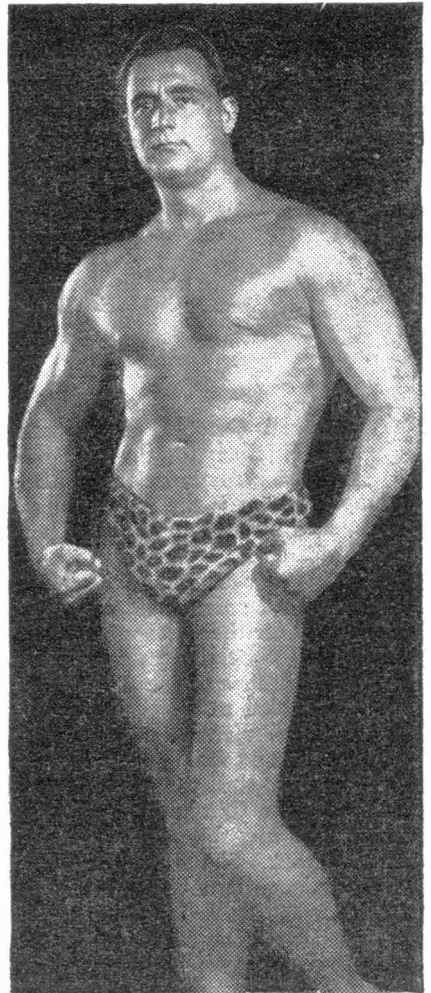
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Love NUMEROLOGY

By SYLVION

THE October girl is influenced by Number 10, the true male and female combination. This means that companionship is the important thing in her life and she should never shut herself in any kind of a shell.

She cannot be happy by herself—she is born to be a wife. And her outlook on life should be for the welfare of her mate as well as herself. Selfishness will make her unhappy and never give her the breaks that she is entitled to.

Thus, the give-and-take attitude is to her advantage, and from her childhood she must learn the value of tact and consideration.

When the October girl makes "me first" her aim in life, she will end up as a remorseful, spinster. She has the courage and the independence of a Number 1 girl—but she also has the stubbornness of the zero.

She must watch out for phobias which tend to groove her mind. When she refuses to listen to others or to trust anyone, there is no power to produce the warmth which lies dormant in her soul. She can be a great leader carrying out the purpose of others rather than herself.

The Secret of Fellowship

In everything she does, she must think of service rather than reward. For after all, by giving service one receives happiness. That is a fundamental law of spiritual strength. And the October girl who has found the secret of fellowship is happy.

Jane Macauley was a typical October-Number 10 girl. She had been born in a splen-

did family, being the only daughter among four brothers.

Perhaps it wasn't entirely her fault that she grew up expecting others to give in to her and always consider her happiness first. Brothers sometimes are too indulgent toward their only sister. But even without brothers, the October girl has the tendency to think of herself first. That is the test which Nature gives her before rewarding her.

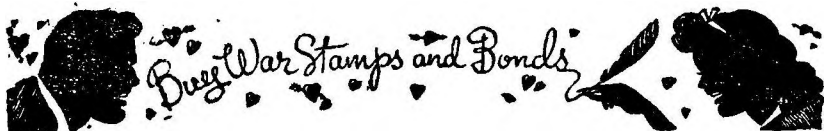
Thus, when Jane became the sweetheart of Ronald Brown, chief engineer in a local war plant, she held to her brother complex, expecting Ronald to consider her wishes first. But Ronald had three sisters and being the only boy in the family, he too had received more consideration in his youth. So there was somewhat of a clash between Jane and Ronald.

Ronald, however, had had a tough time of it working his way through college, and by these hard knocks had come to realize that life was no bed of roses. He had learned that teamwork was essential to achievement—but he also knew that one sometimes has to be cruel to be kind. He loved Jane and believed she had a great character. His engineering mind made him want to polish her to perfection.

Jane Rebels

But Jane refused to be just a machine. Their first quarrel came when she told him he treated her like a guinea-pig. His reply had been: "guinea-pigs aren't selfish." They hadn't spoken for several days, but finally

(Continued on page 10)



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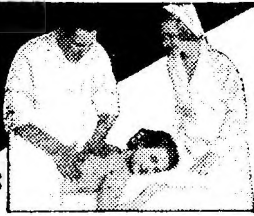
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LOVE NUMEROLOGY

(Continued from page 8)

they made up and agreed not to argue any more.

Then another girl came into the picture—Grace Doran, who was the secretary to the owner of the local plant. Jane was jealous, for she had found out that Ronald had called at Grace's house several times. He had been seen talking to Grace very seriously on many occasions. Jane was suspicious but said nothing, although the rivalry was keen.

It came to a head when the Community Club ran a contest to decide on the most popular girl. It was a matter of getting votes through the selling of bonds. It had narrowed down between Jane and Grace. And here was where Jane pulled a fast one—she went to her rich uncle asking him to help her. Ronald heard about it and accused her of unfair play, because Grace had no rich relatives. Jane snapped back:

"If you care for Grace so much, why don't you help her?"

Jane was sorry the moment she had said it, but the damage was done. And as the night approached for the decision, Jane held enough secret votes to put her over at the last moment. She looked around for Ronald. He wasn't there. Neither was Grace.

Beaten by Selfishness

Jane realized she had lost. Her selfishness had beaten her. She had gained the title, but had lost love. And as the last call was made from the platform for the turning in of votes, Jane came to her final test.

Should she let her brother turn in those votes? No—she would be a good sport. She'd give them to Grace and then go away for a visit with her uncle. She could take it.

So she gave her winning votes to Grace. There were tears in her eyes. But then something happened. Ronald and Grace, accompanied by the Chief of Police, stepped to the platform.

(Continued on page 12)



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LOVE NUMEROLOGY

(Continued from page 10)

Ronald asked for attention. This is what he said:

"Ladies and gentlemen—this has been a wonderful night. Through the co-operation of Grace Doran, who is a secret agent for our government, we have captured a spy in our plant. But we also have another heroine present tonight—Jane Macauley, who has just cast fifty votes for Grace Doran instead of herself. I move, therefore, that this contest be called a tie between Jane and Grace—and furthermore, Grace Doran is leaving tonight to marry her life-long sweetheart, Lieutenant George Montgomery of the United States Navy."

An Expression of Character

The cheers were deafening. The decision was unanimous. Jane felt like falling. Tears came to her eyes. She had been weighed in the balance and had been found a winner. Before she knew it, she was in Ronald's arms, and he was whispering:

"That was a fine thing you did, Jane. I love you for it. It proves why I have always loved you. Why can't we be married, too?"

Thus, real popularity and love came to Jane Macauley because in the final judgment, she had forgotten self and had cast her votes for Grace, believing Ronald loved the other girl. That was an expression of great character which is the heritage of every October-Number 10 girl who listens to her soul.

(Continued on page 92)

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"Oh, Jonathan," was all she could say—and then she saw Garth Halcker looking at them (CHAPTER I)

Love Sails the Sea

By MONA FARNSWORTH

Treachery, intrigue and heartbreak stalk the decks when courageous Honesty takes over a Coast Guardsman's fishing boat for the duration—and sees the job through despite all obstacles!

CHAPTER I HEART'S DESIRE

JONATHAN told her about it up on their favorite spot in the dunes. High up where the dunes piled on dunes until it was like a bluff overlooking the far gray reaches of the restless Atlantic.

Jonathan told her and she sat, not

saying anything, but twisting her fingers gently and trying to beat back the ache in her throat, and the way her heart felt, squeezed to the point of agony. Of course she had known he would do it. But—

She closed her eyes and pulled her breath in slowly, deliberately. Then she felt Jonathan's warm hands on her so suddenly cold ones.

A FASCINATING COMPLETE ROMANTIC NOVEL

"Honesty"—he said her name softly—"Honesty, you wouldn't have me do anything else, would you?"

"No," said Honesty, past the catch in her throat. "No."

"Ever since Pearl Harbor I've wanted to enlist," Jonathan's voice went on, "and until now I couldn't. But now that—Mother's gone—"

"I know," said Honesty, and her fingers curled a little around his.

Jonathan's mother—you couldn't feel sorry she'd gone. An invalid all these years, so patient, so sweet, but suffering so much. Now she was out of it all.

"I'm going to Boston in the morning," Jonathan said. "I've decided on the Coast Guard, Honesty. It's nearest to all the things that stand for home to me. A man who's spent all his life fishing the cod banks as I have—well, the Coast Guard is more of the same. Almost."

"Yes," said Honesty, and curled her fingers a little more tightly around his.

Then she dropped them suddenly. She had no right to curl her fingers around Jonathan's. Maybe he didn't want her to. He'd never let her know. And just because a girl has loved a boy since she was ten and he was fourteen is no reason to believe he has ever loved her at all.

Honesty folded her hand with the other one in her lap.

"We'll miss you, Jonathan," she said primly. "And—"

She thought abruptly of all his going meant to other people. More, in a way, than it meant to her. "The fleet," she said, almost frightened. "Who'll run it with you gone? There's no one left but Garth Holker. And the men don't like Garth."

JONATHAN turned from her, not saying anything, and looked out to sea. Far and far out to that distant edge where the gray of the Atlantic merged with the horizon blue of the sky.

Finally he murmured, so low she could hardly hear him:

"Imagine a year when the fishing fleet won't go out from Jason."

They sat there, together, thinking about it. Jason, the straggling New England town that climbed over the dunes and scattered itself back over the low, sandy, juniper-covered hills. Those

little hills that, under the hot August suns, were so fragrant with sweet fern and bayberry and the pungent sharp smell of pines. Jason, a town, like so many other towns, whose well-being, whose livelihood, depended on fishing.

"What will happen to us all, Jonathan?" Honesty said wonderingly. "I mean, how are we going to get along if the fleet doesn't go out and there's no fish to market?"

"I don't know," said Jonathan.

And she knew he was seeing the thing as she did. The women and children who would go hungry if the fishing industry died. The two canneries in Stark's Point that would close. And, more than that, the way fish was needed now to take the place of meat, to help a nation at war, a nation that was not only feeding itself but reaching out large arms to feed a starving world.

"The fleet's got to go out!" said Honesty, "There *must* be a way!"

"I've been thinking about it," said Jonathan. There are some old men left, and a few boys. If Garth Holker—"

"They won't sail with Garth!" Honesty burst out. "And I don't blame them. He's a hard driver and not fair in his divisions. There's not a man in town trusts him, even though he's a fine man on a boat, and the only captain this town'll have with you away and the Snow brothers in the Navy and Sam Hopkins gone to take the defense job and—"

"I know." Jonathan's shadowed eyes were still on the horizon. "There's nobody left here, really, but the girls and women—and gosh knows they can't fish."

Honesty laughed. "Men!" she said. "The conceit of them! Some women I know can fish as well as any man who ever dragged a seine. They can manage boats, too."

Jonathan laughed at that, his eyes turning from the horizon to look at her. Honesty felt her breath catch. Such blue eyes he had, blue as the sea with the sun on it, and with the same golden sparkle when he laughed. But there was something else in his eyes, too, and it was this that made Honesty's breath flutter in her throat.

Then, quickly, his hands were again cradling hers—close.

"Honesty," he was saying, "there's

"Jonathan, can't
I talk to you?"
she pleaded
(CHAPTER VII)



something more important, now, than even the fleet going out. Honesty—it's us. I mean. . . . Oh, Honesty, don't you know what I mean?"

"No," whispered Honesty. She was so afraid she didn't! "What—what do you mean?"

Jonathan didn't smile. His lips just looked warm and tender and a little doubting—and eager.

"You must know, Honesty," he said, low. "Your heart must have told you a thousand times, in all these years." She smiled. "There haven't been so

many years, Jonathan. Just nine. Ever since I was ten, and you gave Garth Holker a black eye for trying to kiss me. Remember?"

"I remember. And you've been my girl ever since, haven't you?"

"Yes," said Honesty lifting her eyes. "Ever since."

Jonathan chuckled. "You see? You do know what I'm talking about after all!"

HONESTY started, her eyes flashing to his face. He was laughing at her! His blue eyes sparkling, his lips broken by mirth. Honesty felt the quick burning flame of her flush, the hot stab of hurt anger. She jerked away from him.

"You make it sound funny!" she cried. "You . . . Oh, you're mean. I d-didn't want it to b-be like this. I w-wanted—I w-wanted—"

She choked then and turned to run, but Jonathan shot out an arm and caught her. He turned her swiftly within the circle of the arm and tilted her chin until her eyes met his.

"Honesty"—just a tender murmur, but his heart was in it—"Little Honesty, I'm sorry. I wasn't laughing at you. I was just laughing because . . . Well, when a man has waited as long as I have to tell a girl he loves her, and the time finally comes, he—well, he kind of feels like laughing. He's so happy. See?"

"Yes," whispered Honesty. "I see."

"And so, I love you," said Jonathan, "Do you—love me, a little?"

"Yes," whispered Honesty. "Yes."

He kissed her then, kissed her until her heart stopped beating and all the world hung waiting—waiting for the wonder that was coming. His lips met hers, and for a fragment of time it was as if the earth had blown apart. Then it all fell away and she was flying through space and the stars were singing with the golden glory.

Jonathan lifted his lips gently. His eyes were warm with wonder.

"Honesty," he said, and there was awe in his voice, "I didn't know kissing you would be like this. Why—*why* didn't I do it before?"

"I don't know," said Honesty. "I've often wondered."

Jonathan didn't smile. He was thinking out loud.

"There was Mother," he said. "I was afraid to kiss you for fear it would be too hard not to marry you. And while Mother lived, I couldn't. Do you understand?"

"Of course," said Honesty. With Jonathan's kiss so warm and fresh and dear she could understand anything.

He kissed her again, after that, and again, and again. Then they walked down the dune together, his arm around her and her head just reaching to the hollow of his shoulder.

When they got to the bottom he kissed her again.

"Little Honesty," he said, and his eyes were warm with tenderness, "is *this* the way you wanted it to be?"

"Oh, Jonathan!" was all she could say, and bury her head deeper in his shoulder.

When she lifted her eyes again it was to see Garth Holker leaning against a pine tree, his hand stuck negligently into his pockets.

"Oh!" she said sharply, and stood away, out of Jonathan's arms.

"What—" Jonathan said, and turned to follow her eyes. "Oh—hello, Holker," he said.

Garth smiled, a faintly scornful, mocking smile that made Honesty flush because she knew he was laughing at her. Since they were little, Garth had always laughed at all of them. Laughed with that light in his eyes, that swagger of his shoulders, that curl of scornful mockery on his lips.

He had seemed, always, to have secret jokes on the whole world, jokes that let him stand aside, amused at everything.

WHEN you found me doing what you're doing," he said, "you knocked me down and blacked my eye. Remember?"

"Yes," said Jonathan, "I remember." He grinned then, too, a grin that turned into a chuckle. "You want to fight me about this? Because Honesty has just promised to marry me and I think that's worth fighting for."

For a second the mockery in Garth's eyes flickered, then it came back, taunting.

"Oh," he said, "Honesty's going to marry you, is she?"

"Aren't you, Honesty?" said Jonathan.

"Of course," said Honesty. "I've always been going to marry Jonathan."

Her voice was smooth and certain, but her eyes, caught and held by Garth's eyes for that second, flickered a little. Garth was laughing at her again.

"Oh," he said. "You are, are you?" And then he said to Jonathan, "I hear you're joining the Coast Guard."

"Yes," said Jonathan. "Tomorrow."

Garth's eyes went back to Honesty.

"Well," he drawled, "isn't that fine? You know, Honesty"—he took a step or two toward her and his look held hers—"that stiff knee I got, fighting the rocks off Store's Light years ago, won't let me join anything. Isn't that lucky—for us?" His eyes turned to Jonathan and he lifted a hand in gay salute. "So while you're away I'll still be here, taking care of her for you." His voice broke into a chuckle and before they could say anything he had turned and was striding off.

Jonathan made a quick movement after him.

"You leave Honesty alone! If you—"

"Don't," said Honesty, and laid a hand on his arm. "He won't do anything. You know Garth—just talk."

Jonathan stopped, obeying the touch of her hand, but his eyes were smoldering. Then suddenly his anger was gone and his chuckle was back.

"A fine way for a man to propose," he said. "Goaded into it by another man. But you are going to marry me, aren't you, Honesty? You knew I meant that when I said I loved you, didn't you?"

"Of course!" Honesty was laughing too. "Do you think I'd have kissed you the way I've been doing if I weren't?"

Of course, after that, Jonathan kissed her again.

men was greater than any man's need for anything else. So he wasn't taking the leave and he knew Honesty would agree he had done right. He would see her soon, he hoped.

Honesty laid the letter down in her lap and folded her hands on top of it. She had brought it up on the dune to read—up where Jonathan had first told her he loved her and where she could be alone. She didn't want anyone's eyes watching as she read her first love letter. She didn't want anyone asking questions.

At the end of the letter Jonathan had written:

I love you. I'll always love you—in this world, when I come back to you, in the next if anything happens. It must be like that because the way I feel about you is too enduring to die with just the brief years of this life.

Honesty thought about that, her eyes on the far horizon rim. To have Jonathan love her forever. To have him near, so that all she had to do was reach out and find the comfort and security of him. She closed her eyes and let the beauty and wonder of it flow through her. To have Jonathan—love her—forever. . . .

"Pleasant dreams, Honesty?" said a voice and Honesty's eyes whipped open.

Garth Holker was looking down at her. Against the background of sky and dunes he looked enormous, his shoulders broad, his arms, under the blue jersey, powerful. Honesty scrambled to her feet.

"Don't run away, Honesty," he said in a tone she'd never heard him use before. "I'm—I followed you up here. If I shouldn't have, I'm sorry. But all my life I've wanted to talk to you, and you've never let me!"

The words burst out from him in a rush and Honesty stared, surprised. She had never seen Garth like this, his eyes so frank and clear with an almost little-boy appealing light in them, and his smile so warm and friendly.

"Why, Garth!" she said. "Why—I mean what have we got to talk about?"

"You," said Garth.

He came a step closer and, with the step, something electrical seemed to pass between them. Honesty felt it, like a kind of excitement, run through her, and her eyes must have showed it be-

CHAPTER II

TWO KISSES

TWO days later Honesty got a letter from Jonathan. He had passed everything and was in. He was wearing his uniform. They'd offered him a leave to settle his affairs but he hadn't any affairs that needed settling—except seeing Honesty again—and the need for

cause she saw Garth's smile grow deeper.

"Honesty," he said, "why haven't you ever given me a chance?"

"A chance?" said Honesty, and took a step away from him.

"I've always been crazy about you, Honesty," he said. "Ever since we were kids. Haven't you seen it? Didn't you know?" His eyes held her and forced an answer.

"You always seemed so mocking," she murmured. "Laughing at us all. You always seemed—as if you were in a world of your own. Just being amused."

He came close to her and his voice, low, came clear.

"I had to be like that," he said, "or go crazy. Do you think I wanted everyone to know how I felt about you? How, every time I saw you, I felt more in love with you than ever? If they'd known that they'd have laughed at me—because you never knew I was on earth. And I"—his eyes narrowed a little—"I don't like to be laughed at. So I laughed at them. To protect myself. Can you understand that?"

"Why—" said Honesty. "Why—"

SHE felt confused by this sudden declaration of Garth's love, but more confused by the effect his nearness was having on her. A strange breathlessness fluttered in her throat and all her feelings were a queer whirligig within her.

"I could make you love me, Honesty," Garth said, "if I had a chance. I'd love you the way a girl like you should be loved. Not the way a prude like Jonathan—"

The name brought Honesty to.

"Jonathan's no prude!" she flared. "He's wonderful. And I love Jonathan! I'll always love him. I—"

"You don't know what love is!" said Garth. "Look—" She was in his arms suddenly, and his voice was nothing but a low urgent whisper in her ears. "Has Jonathan ever held you like this, close, so that you couldn't move? Couldn't breathe? And has Jonathan ever kissed you—like this?"

His lips were on hers, softly first, then deeply, deeply, till the strength of him seemed to take her, whirling, off the earth, then return her, limp to his arms.

He released her and in his eyes was a look she had never seen in a man's eyes before.

"Honesty, I didn't know they made girls like you!" he said. And then he said, his voice insistent, "you've never been kissed like that before, have you? Not by Jonathan or—or anyone else. *Have you?*"

Honesty stared at him, then, amazingly, burst into tears.

"I hate you!" she cried. "I hate you—hate you—hate you!"

Turning, she ran down the dunes, up the beach road, and never stopped until the calm quiet of the village square, with the lovely graciousness of its bending elms, came into view.

Finally she stopped to get her breath, realizing how good the familiar scene was, how comforting it was to come back to these simple things she had known all her life after that strange, tumultuous moment in Garth's arms.

The square was peaceful as it always was, the small plot of grass, the grace of the bending elms, the toylike spire of the white church. It all lay tranquil in the dappled gold and dark of sunlight and shade.

But the men bunched on the steps of Cy Baker's general store were not tranquil. They shouted, they murmured, they went into a huddle and muttered, they separated with grunts of disgust. Old men they were mostly, with silver beards and a look of far horizons in their eyes, but there was a scattering of boys amongst them too.

Honesty had seen men like this, had listened to their talk, ever since she had been a little girl. It was fish they talked about, and the fleet going out, and the size catch there was apt to be according to certain signs all fishermen knew.

Honesty walked past them slowly. And then she heard Garth's name spoken.

"Garth Holker!" One of the boys was speaking, and his voice was angry. "I wouldn't sail with him if Jason never got a scale of fish on its beach again!"

"Aw, gwan—Garth ain't so bad," old Cap'n Snow drawled. "He c'n sail the sea like a dolphin an' he c'n fish like a fool. Ain't no reason—"

"Plenty of reason," said the boy. "You go out with him with a bonafide agreement and he comes back rich and

you come back poor. I've seen it happen over and over again. Why, last winter Job Winthrop told me—"

RISING murmurs from all the men drowned his words. Honesty walked on, slowly. That bit about Garth somehow had cleared the confusion within her.

This was the kind of thing you always heard about Garth. This was the kind of thing that had made her keep away from him, had influenced her so that, as he had said, she had never given him a chance.

Well, she wouldn't give him a chance now, either. Up there in the dunes she had hated him, in a sudden scalding wave, because he had made her feel more deeply than Jonathan had ever made her feel. She had been shaken, torn, by some emotion she couldn't understand. It had frightened her—so she hated Garth.

But now, just hearing those words about Garth, had returned him to his proper place. It had been a mad moment up there on the dunes—but Garth was not changed. He was still as she had always known him, still a man to be avoided, a man whose friendship she didn't want.

Footsteps and the tapping of a cane and the sound of her name called made her turn. Old Captain Snow had left the knot of men by the store and was stumping after her, his eyes a crackle of blue fire.

"Them fools!" he burst out. "Ain't they got no sense to see what's comin'? Don't they know this ain't no time to say 'I won't sail with him 'cause I don't like the cut of his jib?' Who the tarnation is askin' what anybody likes? We need fish. The country needs fish. Them starvin' folks over in Europe need fish—an' these crazy yuppies stand here an' argue and fuss! They oughta be taken out behind the woodshed and get well tanned. I wish to Godfrey I was able to take the *Susy Carey* out again. I'd show 'em! I'd—"

He stopped. He seemed to sag, his shoulders, his knees; and his gnarled hands bit hard into the nubble of his cane.

"Ain't no use," he muttered. "I'm too old. Won't never go to sea no more. Better keep my mouth shut." He turned



Garth's arms gripped Honesty and she was safe in the dory (CHAPTER XI)

abruptly and hobbled off, still muttering.

Honesty stood looking after him. Too old. He certainly was. Old Jephthra Snow with his silver hair, his flowing

beard, the wrinkles etched deep all over his wind-burned face. He was shaking a little with the palsy, too, and there were a lot of days when all he could do was sit in the sun. The other old sea captains left in town were the same way—all except one.

Thinking of that one, Honesty suddenly began to run. She didn't stop until she had reached the little cabin up on the point where, in summer, wild roses and honeysuckle made a bower and where, in winter, the white snows piled against the rosy warmth of the fire within.

She knocked on the door, then pushed it open. The old man sitting on the floor looked up. He was half buried in folds of fish net, and above the drab stuff his blue eyes glared at Honesty in fire-spitting scorn.

"No manners!" he snapped. "When I was young if I'd busted into an old man's house like that I'd a got myself a strapping."

"Oh, I'm sorry, Cap'n Obadiah," said Honesty. "I was just excited, I guess."

"Excited!" snorted the old man. "Excited ain't no excuse. If yer manners ain't strong enough to hold through excitement ye jest ain't got none—that's all. Go on out an' come through that door agin."

"Yes, Cap'n Obadiah," said Honesty, and meekly she backed out the door, closed it and knocked discreetly.

"Come in," growled the old captain, and Honesty pushed open the door.

"Good afternoon," she said politely, and added, "you old tartar."

CAPTAIN OBADIAH chuckled.

"Ye're a young whelp," he said. "If ye was my daughter I'd have had ye so beaten into shape by this time ye'd mind yer manners."

Honesty leaned in the doorway. The sun was warm on her back and it felt good—like gold running through her veins.

"I am practically your daughter," she said. "Isn't that so? You've had a lot more to do with my bringing up than Uncle Toby and Aunt Martha have."

Captain Obadiah looked down at the fish net. He carefully caught up a broken end of twine, knotted it and tied it fast to another broken end.

"I feel more like you was mine than

Toby and Marty do, most likely," he said gruffly. "It was me was with yer pa when he got word yer ma'd died gettin' ye born—an' 'twas me with him when th' high seas come aboard and swept him off. I allus figured John Payne was the kinda man who'd want me to keep an eye on his baby girl—so I done it."

"If you weren't such a barnacle-encrusted old crab I'd kiss you," Honesty said.

"Women allus was the death o' me," Captain Obadiah said, and lifted a weathered cheek.

CHAPTER III

A PLEA FOR FOOD

AFTER she had kissed Captain Obadiah, Honesty crouched down on the rim of the gray heaps of fish net.

"Look," she said, "I've got an idea."

"I knew it," said the captain. "Minute I looked up an' seen ye, pert as a sun-fish, I sez to myself, I sez, 'Trouble, Obe, sure's you're a foot high. No gal ever had that look in her eyes without she was thinkin' up some kinda trouble.'"

Honesty laughed. "You won't think it's trouble," she said. "It's just that I want you take Jonathan's *Laughing Girl*, and go to sea with the fishing fleet again."

Captain Obadiah sat back on his heels. His eyes widened and his mouth dropped open between its drifts of snowy beard.

"Me?" he said. "Go to sea? Again? At my age?" His voice held surprise and doubt. His eyes held incredulous delight.

"You know you'd rather do it than anything else in the world," Honesty said. "You know you hated it when you felt you ought to retire. And you only did it because you thought young men, like Jonathan, deserved their chance. Well—young men, like Jonathan, aren't here to sail any more. So it's up to the old men. Like you."

The delight went out of Captain Obadiah's eyes.

"Old men," he said. "They're all dodderin', except me. Lookit Jed Snow, shankin' along on a cane. Lookit Amory

Hopkins bunched up like grapes with the rheumatiz. Lookit—"

"Well," said Honesty, "there are some boys. Big, too, some of them."

Captain Obadiah snorted, "Boys! What good's boys? Smart's a new cut, fresh's paint, ain't no use. Nope"—his shoulders slumped a little and his fingers were again mending the net—"might's well forget it. This's one spring when no fishermen'll go out from Jason—first spring, most likely, since Sixteen-fifty such a thing's happened."

Honesty looked at him in sudden anger.

"Oh!" She stamped a foot. "You make me sick! All of you. All the men and boys huddling on the store steps talking, snarling that they won't sail with Garth, sighing that there'll be no fishing, moaning that everybody's going to starve. Of course they are if everybody in the world takes the same namby-pamby point of view you all do here. Don't you know how important food is in this war? Don't you know how badly the fish we've always brought in is needed? Why don't you *do* something about it instead of just moaning? If I were a man—"

"Wal, y'aint," said Captain Obadiah. "Ye're a gal—an' ain't a woman born ever knew a whoop 'n' holler about fishin'."

Honesty stamped her foot again.

"That's not true!" she cried. "There are fifty women in this village who can fish as well as any man. And if I could I'd take the fleet out myself!"

Captain Obadiah's eyes crinkled and his beard twitched with his grin.

"Well," he drawled, "why don't you do it? If you're so pop-eyed sure ye can—"

Honesty could feel her eyes going wide as all the things she was thinking took shape, burst into the flower of an idea. Without another word, she whirled and flew back to the village.

She telephoned all the women and girls she could reach and she told them to tell the rest. They met that evening, right after supper, in the big barn in back of Honesty's uncle's house. Women and girls from the village and from ten miles all around, their hair brushed to shining neatness, their eyes gleaming with curiosity, their dresses crackling with starch.

WHAT'S it all about, Honesty?" Voices buzzed around her. "Why didn't you tell us what you wanted? You just said it was a chance to show the men—and not a woman in the county but'd run to do that!"

Honesty laughed. She'd thought that would get them out.

She herded them into the barn and climbed up into the low hayloft. She stood there, small and slim, her hair bright in the gloom.

"Look," she said. "How many of you think you can fish as well as a man?"

A dozen hands went up, a dozen pairs of eyes began to shine. The older women, women with small children, merely shrugged. Honesty paid them no mind. She looked at the girls who thought they could fish. Strong girls, fine girls, with firm shoulders and faces bright with health.

Honesty told them what had happened that afternoon, all Cap'n Snow had said, all Cap'n Obadiah had said, and some of the things she had said. She flung her arms out appealingly.

"It's up to us!" she said. "Can't you see how important it is that the fleet go out—this year, of all years? Other times it's just been important to us, and to the people here at home or near home who bought our fish. But now the whole world is hungry and every fish we can catch is important. It means dried fish for the Army and Navy, canned fish for Europe, and fresh fish for the folks at home. We've *got* to carry on! Can't you see it's up to us?"

She bent toward them, her eyes so deep that tears seemed not far off, her arms flung toward them, begging.

There was a second's stillness, then somebody began to cheer. Somebody else took it up, and suddenly the rafters were ringing, for Honesty, for the fishing fleet, for themselves.

Only one girl didn't cheer much, though she had raised her hand. Her father had been drowned with the fleet eight years before and her three brothers had fished until they all joined the Navy. Her name was Ruby Peebles, she had a froth of yellow hair and eyes as blue as a china plate. Honesty had never known her well, even when they had all gone to school together.

Now, as Honesty climbed down from her hayloft Ruby walked over, a gleam

in the back of her pale blue eyes.

"I don't like this idea, Honesty," she said. "Fishing's a man's business. Garth can take the fleet out—he's home and it's his affair. Besides"—her pale eyes met Honesty's—"he's not going to like our butting in."

"Oh," said Honesty, "he isn't?"

She looked at Ruby and remembered little things she had heard. Ruby was crazy about Garth, but Garth had never paid her much attention. Ruby was crazy about him the way some girls get crazy about one man, and there is never anyone else. Honesty, remembering this, said, gently:

"I don't think we're cutting under Garth, Ruby. I happen to know if we don't take out the fleet ourselves it won't go out. Garth can't fish alone so—" She smiled. "If you don't believe me, Ruby, ask anyone in the village. They'll tell you the same thing."

Ruby turned away, in her eyes a new sharp look.

Honesty forgot about it. The other girls were crowding around asking a thousand questions. Though there was one girl, tall and quiet and hazel-eyed, who asked none. Finally Honesty turned to her.

YOU'RE going with us, Lucy, aren't you?"

The girl's eyes glowed, and a smile touched her lips, but she shook her head.

"I can't," she said, "I'm needed home."

"But," said Honesty, "we'd bring home in one ship-load as much for your share as would take care of your family for months. And you can get old Nellie Grogan to nurse your mother while you're gone."

A new flame lit the girl's eyes. "You think so?" she said. "You really think so?"

"I know so," said Honesty. "Come on—sign up."

Three-quarters of them had signed before they broke up. Priscilla Snow came up to Honesty with tears in her amber eyes.

"Look," she said. "If I went with you do you—do you think I'd earn enough money to send Dad to the hospital for that operation? Dr. Winship's almost sure if we could afford the specialist, Dad would live for years. But if we

can't—" Her voice trailed and she bit her lips sharply.

"Don't, Pris," Honesty said. "I know your father's everything in the world to you but—don't." Then she said, cheerfully, "And there's not a reason in the world why your share of the catch wouldn't be enough to pay for the specialist. I don't know what they charge, but anything within reason—" She broke off, then burst out enthusiastically, "Darling! We've a wonderful chance! Almost no competition from the men because they're mostly away, and the sea for ourselves! Of course sign up!"

She said it over and over. She offered assurances, she made enthusiastic promises, she carried the girls over the brink of doubts by the sheer force of her own sweeping certainty.

"But who'll we sail under?" they all wanted to know. "Garth's the only one and—"

"No, he isn't," said Honesty, but she wouldn't tell them who else there was. She wasn't going to tell anyone until the next morning.

The sun next morning was still a pale young gold on the sea when she knocked on Captain Obadiah's door. She waited, this time, until she heard his voice, then she waited some more.

"I was trained," she called out, "to wait till my host had opened the door and invited me in. Do I have to wait till noon?"

The door was yanked open and Captain Obadiah stood there, brilliant in sea blue pants and a red flannel undershirt.

"Red, white and blue," Honesty said, laughing. "You must have just washed your beard."

"Ye young whippersnapper," Cap'n Obadiah said, "I s'pose if ye're waitin' to come in I might's well let ye an' be done with it."

He held the door wide and she slipped past him. She turned, in the middle of the little room, to face him. He watched her, his eyes a little narrow, his beard moving a little.

"G'wan," he said. "Spit it out. I ain't knowed ye this long to be fooled by ye now. What's on yer mind?"

Honesty exploded like a bottle of pop. She flew at Cap'n Obadiah and grabbed his red-flannel-clad arm.

"Darling!" she whooped. "I did it! I've got the girls to sign up for fishing. We're going to use the sails on the *Laughing Girl* instead of the engines so we can save oil and some of the girls know enough about sails to help man the crew. I think we can get the boys to join up as crew, too—and you're to be captain! You're—"

"Me!" Cap'n Obadiah shouted. "Me, cap'n to a mess o' females? Me, who ain't never sailed with a woman yet 'cause they're worse'n albatrosses for bad luck. Not me! You get yourself some young fool. This old fool's got too much sense."

Honesty had expected this, and she knew just what to do. She had been doing it, whenever she wanted anything out of Cap'n Obadiah, ever since she had been a little girl.

still wet on her cheeks.

She reached the door and passed through it. She started down the path. The tears were real now, and Honesty's throat felt hot and tight and aching. Cap'n Obadiah wasn't going to give in, and there was no one else to ask. She hadn't known how much the fishing project had come to mean to her. It seemed, suddenly, more important than anything she had ever done in her life. So much depended on it, so many people's livelihood and food, and now if Cap'n Obadiah wouldn't. . . . She bit her lips.

"Ye crazy, bamboozlin' little blame fool!" said Cap'n Obadiah. "Are ye really cryin' about it?"

"Of course I'm crying!" said Honesty. "What did you think I was doing—playing mumbletepeg?"



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She just stood still and looked at him, and two big tears quietly spilled out of her eyes to slide, pathetically, down her cheeks.

"There isn't anyone else," she said. Her voice threatened to break but she went on, though a little raggedly. "You're the only man the girls are willing to sail with. None of them would go with Garth and—"

She broke off, turned away, and her shoulders sagged. The sight of her—so she figured—was enough to tear a heart of stone. But her voice was brave and resigned.

"Of course, if you won't, you won't," she said. "And there's nothing I can do. Good-by—d-darling."

Her voice quavered on the last word and for a second she was afraid she had overdone it. She started for the door, her head still quietly high and the tears

She sobbed then, and felt Cap'n Obadiah's arms around her.

"Ye little idjit," muttered the old man. "Ye dad-blamed little no account fool, stop that blubberin' an' tell me when yer female fisher folk'll be ready to harpoon their whales."

Honesty flung her head up. Joy was like a blaze within her that dried the tears on her cheeks and those spilling from her eyes.

"You darling!" she cried. "You wonderful, beautiful, adorable, angelic darling!"

"Whoa!" said Cap'n Obadiah. "Haul in yer mainsail, Skipper."

In her joy Honesty kissed him for the second time in twenty-four hours on his weathered cheek.

They began to plan to leave the end of the following week. The tide would be right then for them to sail in the

middle of the morning.

"And gosh knows," Cap'n Obadiah muttered, ye oughta go in the broad daylight with bands playin' and flags wavin', 'cause nothin' like this ever happened before in th' history of a respectable industry. A mess o' females goin' out to haul in fish! Scuttle my timbers if I ever thought I'd be anchored to a run like this."

"You love it, you old fraud," Honesty told him. "You know you do."

CHAPTER IV

AND THEN CAME MEMORY

ONE person in the village didn't love Honesty's fishing plan. Two mornings after Captain Obadiah had agreed to captain the ship Honesty met Garth down by the blacksmith shop. She had just come from the post-office in Baker's store and a letter from Jonathan was like a song in her heart. Then, glancing up from the letter, she saw Garth.

He was standing in the wide, shadowed door of the blacksmith shop, with the glow of the smithy forge like a jewel gleaming in the dimness. The minute he saw Honesty he stepped down from the door and came toward her.

"I didn't think it of you," he said, and his eyes touched her with the old mockery, except that, now, they were shot with scorn, "I thought you were too big and fine, Honesty."

Honesty stopped, staring at him.

"Too big and fine for what?" she said.

"You know for what," Garth said.

"Too big to stab me in the back because I—kissed you the way I did. I couldn't help that, Honesty. And I'm not sorry for it. I'd kiss you again—"

"No!" said Honesty, for once again the spell of him was touching her, and suddenly, in a rush, she could remember vividly every second that his lips, demanding, strong, had been on hers. "No! You'll never kiss me again!"

"Afraid, Honesty?" he said softly. "Afraid I'll show you what love really is? Afraid I'll make it impossible for you ever to be content to go back to Jonathan's milk-and-water love-making?"

"No," said Honesty, and she lifted her chin and stared at him coolly. But there was something she couldn't quite keep out of her eyes and Garth saw it and laughed.

"You can't fool me," he said. "And that's just exactly what you are afraid of."

"What did you mean just now—about my stabbing you in the back?" Honesty said, quickly, desperately. "I haven't—"

"You have," said Garth. "Just that. You knew I was depending on the boys here to crew my ship. And you—"

"I didn't make the boys sign with me," said Honesty. "They asked to come and Captain Obadiah took them on."

The mockery had gone once more from Garth's eyes and they were deepening the way they had up there on the dunes. Honesty looked away.

"All right," he said quietly, "I'll believe you didn't undercut me on purpose. But you've come into a man's game when you tackle a man's business, Honesty. And once we're out on the banks, we'll fight as fishermen fight."

"I never thought of fishing as a battle," said Honesty.

"Everything in this life is a battle," Garth said. "A battle to succeed, a battle for—the girl you love. Remember that, Honesty, when we're at sea."

Slowly he turned and walked off.

Honesty went on her way down to the wharf, reading her letter from Jonathan as she went:

Darling:

Keep an eye peeled on the horizon for me. I'm stationed not so far away and the cutter I'm on goes through waters we've sailed together many a time. So I may come bobbing into port almost any minute for a brief hello, and all the kisses my heart remembers from your sweetest lips.

Honesty read that part over and over, and when she reached the wharf and couldn't read it any more she slipped it into her sweater pocket next her heart.

The wharf was teeming with life. It was a good wharf, running far enough out into deep water so the *Laughing Girl* could tie up. There she lay, riding the smooth water of the harbor, and with every boy in town running on her decks and climbing up her shrouds, obeying the shouted orders of Cap'n Obadiah who stood, legs sprad-

dled, on the main deck, happier than he had been in ten years.

Honesty swung over the wharf onto the deck and went up to him.

"Hi, Skipper," she said. "All going well?"

Captain Obadiah turned. His eyes were dancing like sunlit water.

"We're gettin' shipshape fast," he said. "Are yer female fisher folk be-ginnin' to back down yet?"

"Back down!" said Honesty indignantly. "We're rarin' to go."

Cap'n Obadiah's eyes sobered a bit and he took a step toward her so she could hear his lowered voice.

"Lookee here," he murmured. "Are you sure them women ain't goin' off half-cocked, an' when they see a submarine snout comin' toward 'em they won't have high hysterics? 'Cause submarines is out there, ye know."

"I know," said Honesty. "The Coast Guard is out there too. And Jonathan. Yes"—her eyes met Captain Obadiah's squarely—"we've thought of all that. We decided if girls could ferry bombers, and girls could drive ambulances and trucks, some of them under fire the way the girls in England have done—well, why couldn't we face the possibility of submarines?"

An expression was born in Captain Obadiah's blue eyes which was the kind one sea captain offers another. But all he said was, "Humph! Kinda got it all figgered out, ain't ye?" and turned to stamp back up the deck, yelling to the boys in the shrouds.

Jonathan came home that night. Honesty was eating supper when he saw him open the gate in the picket fence and start up the walk. She never knew how she reached him. She had no memory of leaving the table, no memory of running out the door and down the walk. She only knew she was in his arms, the new roughness of his uniform against her face. Then his lips were on hers, deeply, warmly, with that dear tender comfort she remembered so well.

"Jonathan!" she whispered. "Oh, Jonathan!"

"We put in at Portsmouth for the night," he said, "and they gave me twelve hours. I hitch-hiked down here and I can stay till ten o'clock."

"Darling!" she breathed. The thought

of three hours and a half of heaven seemed more than she could bear.

She took him back to the supper table and they all listened, rapt, while he talked. Then Aunt Martha chased them out.

"We'll do the dishes," she said. "You two go walk in the orchard. Toby and I used to walk in the orchard."

Honesty and Jonathan laughed into each other's eyes and went out. It was down by the stone wall near the east pasture that she told him how wonderfully everything was going with the *Laughing Girl*.

"We're sailing Monday," she said, "and—"

"We!" said Jonathan. "What do you mean, we?"

"Why," said Honesty, "I wrote you all about it. I told you Captain Obadiah was willing to take out the *Laughing Girl* and you wrote me back and gave permission. You—"

"Certainly I gave permission," said Jonathan. "Captain Obadiah can take my ship out. But I still don't see—"

So Honesty told him, about the girls, about how they all felt, about her own high fire of enthusiasm.

"Don't you see, Jonathan," she ended, "how much we can help? And food is so important with the war. We can do this. I know we can. Other girls—"

"Other girls aren't walking into this kind of danger," said Jonathan. "The letter you wrote about, it must be waiting for me back in Boston. When you said Obadiah wanted the ship— Well, I never dreamed he was going to take out a crew of girls. But I can stop you now, Honesty. I've got to. You don't know what it's like out there, the danger you run. You—"

"I do know the danger," said Honesty. "But somebody's got to go out and fish, Jonathan."

JONATHAN'S eyes were shadowed, his voice grave. "If you want to help the war, do something else. There's plenty—" His voice broke suddenly. Honesty heard the swift catch of his breath. She turned. Garth Holker was coming through the orchard toward them.

"Garth!" said Honesty, and felt a swift surge of warm blood up her throat and across her cheeks. It made her so

furious at herself that she flushed more deeply.

And Jonathan saw her flaming face. "Honesty!" he said. "Why—"

"Hello, folks!"

Garth's voice was cheery and warm with friendliness, but underneath there was mockery. Honesty felt a touch of quick alarm. What was he going to do?

"I don't want to interrupt you two," Garth said gaily. "I heard you were here only for a few hours, Jonathan. But I just stopped by to tell Honesty I have a crew. I went down to Boston and was lucky. The captain of a ship due to sail tomorrow had just got notice from his draft board, so I took over his crew. So"—he looked at Honesty as if to confirm an understanding between them—"we'll sail almost together, after all." His eyes turned to Jonathan. "I suppose Honesty's told you," he said casually, "that we're all there is to the Jason fleet this year. But working together as we are, Jason's reputation won't suffer! Well—so long." He waved a gay hand. "I only stopped by to give you the good news, Honesty. See you later." And he was gone.

"Well, of all—" Honesty said, then she saw Jonathan's face. Saw his white lips and the muscles of his jaw working under the tanned skin. "Jonathan! You don't—"

"So that's why you're so enthusiastic about this fishing scheme," he said. "I begin to see."

"You don't begin to see at all!" Honesty took his arm in both her hands and hugged it to her. "Jonathan, don't be an idiot. He's simply trying to make trouble—can't you see that? So that—so that . . . Well, if you and I should break up—"

"He can move in," said Jonathan. "Is that it?"

"Well—" said Honesty.

Jonathan's eyes burned down into hers. "Has he bothered you since I've been away? Has he told you he'd like to move in?"

"Oh, Jonathan!" She hugged his arm closer. "No matter what he's said it doesn't matter. I love you and—"

"Then he has told you he cares about you," Jonathan pursued relentlessly. "And you must have encouraged him or he wouldn't have been so darn sure of himself just now." He turned on her

suddenly, almost fiercely. "Have you encouraged him?" he said. "Have you, Honesty?"

"No!" said Honesty. "Of course not. I—"

And then, in the face of his demanding eyes her own eyes wavered. Because the memory of Garth's kiss swept over her, and the way she had felt when he kissed her.

Jonathan turned away abruptly. He rose to his feet.

"Well," he said, "I guess that's that, Honesty. Without words, you've given me a pretty good answer."

And before she could move he had gone away, striding through the trees, his head furiously high, his shoulders looking like rock.

In a second she was after him, calling his name, running and stumbling. She reached him as he passed the well.

"Jonathan!" She whirled in front of him, making him stop. "Don't be crazy, darling!" She was half crying, tears in her voice, tears gathering in her eyes. "I love you, Jonathan! I don't love anybody else. I couldn't. It's always been you. Oh, Jonathan, don't do this! You've got to believe me."

HE STARED down at her a second, his jaw stiff, his eyes hard. Then, suddenly, he melted. His arms went around her and his face was buried deep in her hair.

"Honesty"—his voice was ragged—"oh, Honesty, tell me again you love me."

She told him, over and over, and presently both forgot Garth and forgot they had quarreled about him.

But just as he said good-night, Jonathan spoke of the fishing again.

"Don't go, Honesty," he said. "Promise me you won't go out into the open sea."

"But I must," said Honesty. "All the plans are made. The girls are depending on me. There's nothing else I can do."

Jonathan's eyes darkened. "And Garth—"

"Garth has nothing to do with it," Honesty cut in quickly. "Oh, Jonathan, don't let's quarrel about that again! And please understand why I must sail with Captain Obadiah and the girls. How could I back out now? It's my own idea. There's nothing else for me to do."

"You don't know what it's like out there," said Jonathan. "I do. And it's no place for a girl."

"Perhaps not," said Honesty, "but it's too late for me to do anything else now."

Jonathan looked at her and she saw the thought of Garth in his eyes. But all he said was:

"You're sure you still love me?"

"Very sure," said Honesty, and lifted her lips for his good-by kiss.

CHAPTER V

ATTACK IN THE RAIN

FULLY stocked and completely equipped, the *Laughing Girl* sailed the following Monday morning. The tide was running free, the sunshine was a blanket of young spring gold, the sky was a curving loveliness of blue with scudding puffs of white cloud, and the breeze was fair, with the *Laughing Girl* flying before it like a great white bird.

The whole town turned out to see them off. All the old sea captains, their rheumy eyes dwelling wistfully on Captain Obadiah, were there, and the older women, wishing they were young again so they could go. The children were there, romping.

Honesty stood on deck, leaning on the aft rail, and watched it all. Uncle Toby and Aunt Martha were there, and her three young cousins—and Garth Holker.

Honesty saw Garth move through the crowd, his eyes searching for her. Finding her, his grin broke wide. The same alarm touched her that she'd known before. He looked so assured, so mockingly gay. What was he up to now?

She found out. He came swinging down the wharf and over to the ship. He gave a leap and landed on the deck beside her.

"Have you any idea," he said conversationally, "how beautiful you are?"

"What did you mean," she demanded, "by making Jonathan believe the other night that you and I were in a sort of partnership together?"

"Did he think that?" Garth grinned happily. "I hoped he would."

Honesty was suddenly angry. Angrier than she had ever been before.

"You're trying, deliberately, to break things up between Jonathan and me!" she blazed at him. "And I hate you for it. I loathe you! I—"

"Do you?" said Garth. "Do you loathe me, Honesty?"

And as he came close to her that electric excitement touched her again. She felt her heart patter and small sparkles of quicksilver ran through her veins. She stepped back. He started to take a step toward her, then stopped. She saw his eyes widen a little, and she turned.

Ruby Peebles, stood on the deck near them, her yellow hair blowing in the breeze, her pale blue eyes switching from Garth to Honesty and back again. She didn't say a word. And still without a word, she turned and walked back up the deck.

"Is she sailing with you?" Garth said.

Honesty said, "Yes," and let it go at that.

Up in the bow a voice ordered the anchor up and the ropes hauled in.

"I'm not letting you go like this, Honesty," Garth said. "I'm kissing you good-by."

"You are not!" said Honesty. "Why, all the village is on the wharf!"

"Then all the village will know you're mine," said Garth.

"No!" said Honesty sharply.

She backed away again, but she was against the rail now and he followed her. His arms were strong, reaching for her, and then they were around her, close, and his lips were as she remembered them, gentle at first, then demanding. The same electric excitement she had felt before was like the ringing of a gong in her veins. She couldn't fight, she could hardly think, she could only stand there, helpless in the strength of his arms.

THEN he let her go. She stood paralyzed a second, then she opened her mouth to cry her rage at him. She never spoke. She just stood motionless, frozen, her eyes wide. Garth, startled, turned to see what she saw.

Jonathan stood on the wharf. Jonathan, his face white, his eyes dark, and his fists tight in clenched balls at his sides.

"Jonathan!" Honesty called. "Jonathan!"

But she might have saved her breath.

Jonathan had turned and was striding swiftly up the wharf, up the road, and on into the village.

Garth just looked first at her, then at the vanishing figure of Jonathan, and the triumph in his eyes was like a crimson banner. Then he swung himself over the rail and was gone. . . .

The *Laughing Girl* picked up speed as if after these last years under oil, she took again to her sails with high delight. She skimmed the seas gloriously, swooping around Store's Point and on out to the open sea.

For a time, Honesty was too busy to think. But in the middle of the afternoon, with the weather holding fine and all sails filled with a good steady wind, there came a breathing space, and the instant her mind was freed from the tasks at hand it flew back to the wharf and that last glimpse of Jonathan's shoulders moving toward the village.

Jonathan! What was he thinking? What was he feeling? What was there for him to think and feel? Hadn't he seen her in Garth's arms? Hadn't he seen Garth there, in full view of every eye in the village, kissing her good-by? And if he asked in the village, what would they tell him? That she and Garth had been seen talking that morning outside the blacksmith shop. Probably that she and Garth had been seen talking together on the beach road. That she and Garth—

"Oh, he won't believe it!" she thought furiously. "He *can't* believe it! He can't think, when I love him so much—"

But how did Jonathan know she loved him so much? As a matter of fact—the ugly thought reared up like a snake—how could she be sure herself any more? Hadn't she responded to those kisses of Garth's? Hadn't she felt that strange, tumultuous confusion when he was around? Would she have felt all that if she had really loved Jonathan as she was so sure she did?

A terrible doubt washed over her, making her sick.

"Oh, Jonathan—Jonathan!" she moaned. "If I could only see you for a second. If I could just look at you, hear your voice!"

That might clear this confusion. But there was nothing she could do now. She was on her way to the banks, fishing. Jonathan was probably back on his

Coast Guard cutter.

She looked at the far heaving waves of the Atlantic, empty save for the flying wings of the *Laughing Girl*, and tears blurred her eyes till sea and sky and distant horizon became one fog of blue.

Two nights later came their first storm. Honesty was waked by the roll and pitch of the ship, the groan of her timbers and the shrieking whistle of wind in her rigging. Before she quite realized what she was doing she was out of her bunk and shoving her socked feet into her boots.

She found Captain Obadiah standing behind the girl who was doing the trick at the wheel.

"I had to come up to keep an eye on things," he muttered to Honesty. "Nobody but a fool woulda thought of giving over a good ship to a bunch o' women."

"Well," said Honesty, "she's doing all right, isn't she? I never saw a man hold a ship better. And in this storm—"

"Yeah, she's all right. But lookit how she does it."

The girl was lying across the wheel, throwing her whole weight on it, holding it steady against wind and wave and the slashing needles of rain that were almost sleet.

"I can't see," said Honesty, "that it makes much difference how a wheel is held, so long as it's held."

"That's a woman for ye," grumbled Cap'n Obadiah. "No sense nor logic."

HE TURNED back, still grumbling, and Honesty followed him.

The decks were black and slippery with rain, the running lights made jeweled flashes of emerald and ruby against the night and the storm, and the golden glow rising from the skylight of the cabin looked cozy as an open fire.

Captain Obadiah was on ahead, a dark figure in oilskins and heavy boots. Honesty was hurrying a little to catch up with him when she heard the sound. A step, a little stumble, the roll of a loose block. Someone was behind her. She turned. No, she had been mistaken. The deck was darkly, shiningly empty. Honesty turned back.

Ahead of her Captain Obadiah reached the cabin door, opened it, called good-night and went inside. Honesty

started on to her own quarters.

Behind her the footstep came again, and again the sound of someone stumbling and the roll of a heavy block. This time the block caught Honesty in her ankle, threw her off balance. She flayed her arms, trying to regain her footing. Her hands touched something soft, and she grabbed at it.

She heard a gasp, a small scream, then she felt hands on her shoulders shoving her down, rolling her over. Over and over. The sound of waves came louder in her ears. The edge of the deck was close, with the Atlantic just below.

Honesty screamed. She heard it with surprise—then her head hit something hard. The black night became blacker, and she sank into bottomless nothingness. . . .

She opened her eyes to the warm golden glow in Cap'n Obadiah's cabin. Cap'n Obadiah was holding a small glass of brandy to her lips. A few girls and a couple of boys were crowded into the small room behind him.

"What—" Honesty said, and then she remembered. A cold lump tightened in her chest. "I almost went overboard, didn't I?"

Cap'n Obadiah nodded. His eyes looked frightened but his smile was there, under his beard.

"Ye almost did, lassie," he said. "If 'twan't that I heard ye scream, and if 'twan't that I thought I heard somethin' above the storm kinda bumpin' the deck . . . Well, it brought me out again an' there ye was kinda tangled in the scuppers with the waves washin' up sorta hungry after ye. What happened—do ye mind?"

Honesty's mind snapped back. She remembered everything. But for some reason, with the cabin crowded as it was, she thought it might be better not to tell everything.

"I must have slipped, I guess," she said. "And in the wind and the rain, with the deck slippery—"

"Uh-huh," said Captain Obadiah, "just a case of a female who can't hold her footin'." He looked at her, his eyes sharp, then he said, over his shoulder. "Clear out, the lot of ye. I'll turn my cabin into sick bay and keep her here the rest of the night. One o' you gals get her undressed and wrapped in blankets.

It's nigh daybreak now. By the time she gets warm it'll be sunup."

Honesty relaxed while the girls undressed her, and it was when she tucked her hand under her cheek to be more comfortable that she realized it was clenched in a fist. She must have relaxed it as she fainted, then clenched it again. As if it held something precious.

That thought amused her and she uncurled her fingers slowly, looking at them. Then she looked closer. With her other hand she untwined the hair twisted and snarled in her fingers and looked at it closely. Quite a wad of hair it was, bunched and matted, and, after a second, Honesty again closed her fist around it. Then she closed her eyes and went to sleep. . . .

The sun was shining full through the cabin window when she opened her eyes. Though it was still an early sun, rising and bright gold. All sign of the storm had vanished and the *Laughing Girl* was spreading her white wings over a perfect sea. Honesty dressed in the dry clothes she found. Apparently they had been dried beside the galley stove, and brought up to her. Then she went out on deck.

Captain Obadiah was just coming down from the wheelhouse.

"We'll be at the grounds in an hour," he said. "Get your gals, if they ain't too squeamish, to baitin' hooks. The tubs o' trawl is down below along with the her-ring to bait 'em with. Can ye do it?"

"Certainly we can do it," said Honesty. "Didn't we sign up on this trip as fishermen?"

"Signin' an' doin' is two different things," mumbled the old man, and Honesty heard him still mumbling as she went back down the deck.

She passed Cap'n Obadiah's order along, then went into the galley for breakfast before she joined the girls to do her share of baiting.

CHAPTER VI

OFF TO THE FISHING BANKS

BY TEN the tubs of trawl were ready—and by ten the *Laughing Girl* was anchored at the fishing grounds.

Captain Obadiah was chuckling like Santa Claus, tramping up and down the deck, his eyes sparkling and joyous.

"Look at it!" he would shout to whoever would listen. "Look at that empty sea! We got here first, by Jupiter! The prize belongs to us!"

"Not till we get back with full pens," said Honesty when she heard him. "The prize isn't given until—"

"Get back with full pens?" roared Cap'n Obadiah. "O' course, we'll get back first with full pens! We'll have them pens full to bursting in two weeks, us first at the grounds like this. That thousand-dollar prize is as good as in our pockets. Now shake a leg an' man them dories. Did ye pack 'em at dawn with bread an' meat an' them jugs o' tea like I told you to?"

They had. The dories were packed and ready. The boys began to lift the first ones out from their nests.

Honesty suddenly felt a surge of excitement. The moment had come for which she had been waiting. This moment, when the dories would swing out and down, when the girls would drop over the sides and take their places at the oars. Big girls, husky girls, girls born and reared in the ways of the sea. Two girls to a dory and one of them in each boat who had laid trawl before. Not this heavy deep-sea trawl but lighter stuff that still worked on the same principle.

"I've doled ye out a good husky dory mate," said Cap'n Obadiah to Honesty. "I've give ye that Peebles gal. Some ways she ain't too smart but she's husky as a bull seal. If ye can manage th' oars—"

"I can manage the trawl, too," said Honesty, "as well as Ruby Peebles. Maybe I don't look husky, but I'm kind of tough even if I'm little."

Captain Obadiah snorted. "Tough! Ye don't know what the word means. Wait till you get out there, holdin' the dory against them waves, an' payin' out that heavy trawl. Didja get it all baited?"

Honesty waved her hand toward the filled and baited tubs, each with the words *Laughing Girl* painted on the sides above the dory number.

"We're all set," she said.

Then it was her turn to swing the red buoy over the side and pay out the line

until it floated, bobbing and bowing, on the water. Ruby had climbed into the dory and Honesty climbed after her, picking up the oars a moment later as they splashed into the water.

She had rowed dories, heavy and cumbersome as they are, ever since she had been a little girl. She had rowed them around coves and across the harbor, but she had never rowed them over seventy fathoms of water, on her way to do a man's job of deep-sea fishing. Suddenly a shot of fear was mixed with her excitement and she had to think quickly of all the other girls, all over the world, doing men's work with a courage and strength that had to be the strength of men, before she could force back the stab of fear and bend to the oars.

The sea was as calm and flat as oil, with only the deep surging roll that was more like the rise and fall of breathing than like the restlessness of water. Behind the dory, bobbing along in the wake, was the little black keg buoy with the Number 1 flag whipping in the breeze. And athwart sat Ruby Peebles, her yellow hair tied in a blue handkerchief and her pale eyes watching the sea that ran, in a line of white foam, past the dory side.

RUBY PEEBLES at sea, with lip-stick still thick on her lips and her eyebrows swooping up in a darkly penciled line.

Honesty kept her eyes fast on the buoy. Once she looked off toward the *Laughing Girl*, sailing away to stand by a little later and let down the next dory. The *Laughing Girl* sailing away. Honesty and Ruby Peebles alone in that huge flat expanse of blue water under the bowl of blue sky.

"We may as well drop the buoy anchor overside, Ruby," Honesty said finally. "I'll row more slowly and you can begin to pay out the trawl. The heaving stick's on top of the tub."

Ruby leaned forward to pick up the anchor and the breeze whipped out her yellow hair. Honesty looked at it. A thick swath of yellow hair batting across Ruby's eyes.

Honesty felt her throat go tight, her mouth go dry. A shaking began inside her and the tips of her fingers felt capped with ice. Of course, she had known all along. Ever since she had

seen that wad of hair gripped in her own fingers the night before. And now she almost said to Ruby:

"You tried to push me overboard last night. Why?"

She didn't say the words, of course. She just sat there looking at that swatch of yellow hair blowing across Ruby's pale blue eyes. Then, her hands steady, she shipped the oars and leaned toward the tub of trawl.

She lifted up the heaving stick and handed it to Ruby, then began to row slowly again as Ruby shoved the stick under the first loop of line, lifted it up, with its gangings and baited hooks hung at intervals, and dropped it over the side. Then, with the heaving stick, Ruby lifted up the next loop of coiled trawl.

Honesty said nothing during the whole operation. Her fear had left her. She had driven it out by sheer force of will, though occasionally her eyes couldn't help wandering over toward the horizon where the *Laughing Girl* still banked and filled, letting down her dories with their fishermen. It was a long way off, and should anything happen there would be no one to hear her scream as there had been the night before.

At last the final ganging with its heavy baited hook dropped over the side and Ruby dabbled her hands in the water and wiped them on her overalls.

"Shall we have some lunch?" said Honesty, and reached for the package of bread and meat and cheese, and the jug of tea.

"Thanks," said Ruby.

The two girls ate, as they had worked, in silence. But as Honesty finished the last crumb of her sandwich Ruby spoke.

"Look," she said. "Everything'll be all right if you'll just leave Garth alone."

Honesty stared. "Garth?" she said. "Garth!" At the sound of his name all the confusion and misery she had been fighting for days flowed through her. "Garth!" she raged. "I wish I'd never seen him. He's broken up everything between Jonathan and me. He's—"

"If he's done that," said Ruby, leaning forward, "you must love him. If you didn't, he couldn't have."

"No!" said Honesty. "No! I don't love him."

But Ruby kept on looking at her, her

pale eyes without expression. Then slowly she shook her head.

"I think you love Garth," she said, "and I know he's crazy about you. And"—her voice went low, choked—"I'm crazy about him. I'm so crazy about him"—she hesitated, then plunged on—"I'm so crazy about him I'd commit murder, I guess, to get him. Oh, you don't know what it is to love a man the way I love Garth! He's the whole world to me. And to stand there and see him look at you, to see him kiss you, to— to hear him tell you how much he loves you . . . Do you wonder I—"

She broke off suddenly, her hand whipped up to her mouth and above the fingers her eyes, startled, frightened, stared at Honesty.

HONESTY knew what it was Ruby had almost said, but she didn't want Ruby to know she knew. Ruby had almost said, "Do you wonder I nearly pushed you off the ship last night?"

No, it wasn't yet time for Ruby to know that Honesty knew that. Perhaps it never would be time.

"I didn't know you loved Garth like that," Honesty said, and suddenly she felt sorry for Ruby, breaking her heart, beating her emotions out over a man who didn't care. "Please believe I'm not doing anything to take Garth away from you," she said gently. "I'm in love with Jonathan. I'm going to marry Jonathan."

But the words didn't sound convincing. Honesty couldn't make them convincing. Partly because of the confusing milling around within her, partly because she couldn't help thinking that Jonathan, with his Puritan background, his deep feeling that a good girl was *good*—would Jonathan still want to marry her after seeing Garth kiss her as he had?

"Maybe you think you're going to marry Jonathan," Ruby said, doubt edging her voice. "But men like Garth . . . Have you ever known any men like Garth very well? They get what they want."

"Well," said Honesty, "Garth won't get me. So let's forget it, shall we?" And she wished, frantically, that she could.

Ruby looked at her and for a second Honesty thought she was going to smile.

Then her eyes went over Honesty's shoulder and into their pale blue flared such a fire of hate that Honesty, startled, turned to see what she saw.

Halfway over toward the horizon the *Laughing Girl* had tacked about and was setting her course toward them. There was nothing else to see over the entire expanse of ocean. Just the *Laughing Girl*, the open sea and the sky.

"Do you hate our ship—that much?" Honesty said, half to herself.

"That much?" Ruby flamed. "I hate it more! If you hadn't brought her out here, if you hadn't been the first on the banks, Garth would have won the prize. He was all ready to sail, when all the boys he was depending on for crew went with you. And if he'd won the prize, and got the money, he'd have married me. I got him to promise that once—before he got so crazy about you. And if you'd stayed out of this, he'd have done it. I know he would have!"

Ruby's pale eyes were filled with fire and they glared at Honesty desperately.

"Now do you see?" she said. "Now do you see?"

"Yes," said Honesty slowly, "now I see. I really—see."

That night, back on the *Laughing Girl* again, with a fine first day's catch stowed in the pens, Honesty went to the cabin and cornered Cap'n Obadiah. She sat down in a chair across the table from him and watched while he stuffed his corn-cob pipe full of tobacco. He tamped it down, lighted it, and pulled until the blue smoke rose in great puffs. Then he took it out of his mouth and, cupping the bowl in his hand, sparkled his blue eyes at Honesty across the table from him.

"Spit it out," he said. "When a gal's got somethin' on her mind ain't nothin' a man c'n do but listen to her."

So Honesty told him what was on her mind. She told him about the hair she had found in her fingers and how she remembered grabbing at something soft as she stumbled on the slippery deck. She told him all that Ruby had said, about hating the *Laughing Girl* and why she hated her.

I THINK, Cap'n Obadiah," Honesty ended, "she'd scuttle the ship if she could, and know she'll do whatever she can to keep us from getting back before

Garth does. I think she figures even now Garth could get the prize if something happened to prevent our getting our pens full as fast as we think we can do it."

"I ain't so int'rested in what you think," said Cap'n Obadiah. "Pussenly, I don't give a hoot. That Ruby Peebles allus was sort of looney. I've said so before, and this foolishness bears me out. G'wan, child—g'wan to bed an' forget it. She ain't gonna do nothin'. She's just a crazy gal with a mouthful of talk. So run along. If you was a man I'd offer ye a snicker of rum. But bein' as yer a weak an' futile female—"

"You might offer me a Pepsi-Cola," said Honesty. "I saw some in your chest just now."

She let him pour the Pepsi-Cola out and she sipped it slowly. She tried to pretend she was taking the old man's advice and forgetting about Ruby. But she couldn't forget her, and she wished Cap'n Obadiah wouldn't. Finally, when she said good-night, she broached the subject again.

"About Ruby—" she began. But the old man would have none of it.

"Forget it," he said. "That's what I said an' that's what I meant. I'll send ye out with another gal tomorrer an' you just don't bother your head about that looney trick again."

"All right," said Honesty politely, but neither her head nor her heart would let her forget it.

She was troubled and, down in her bunk at last, she tossed and turned, unable to sleep, unable to do anything but live through again that feeling of hands pushing her along the slippery deck, and the look in Ruby's pale, shallow eyes when she had said the things she had out there in the boat.

Tossing and turning on her bunk. Would sleep never come? Her mind churned and circled. She lived again through that moment on the slippery deck, and through her talk with Ruby in the boat. The girl was pathetic, loving Garth as she did. But that very sincerity and loyalty to Garth made her dangerous. She mustn't forget that, Honesty told herself. She mustn't allow herself to be swayed by any too great sympathy.

Her loyalty, after all, belonged first to the girls on board, the girls she had

talked into coming. She thought of Lucy. Lucy's whole family would be supported by Lucy's share of the catch. And Priscilla Snow's father, waiting for the *Laughing Girl* to come into port with full pens so his life could be saved by the specialist.

Sleepless, Honesty kept thinking of this, and more. Lucy and Priscilla were only typical. There wasn't a girl aboard who didn't need the money she would earn. There was Hattie Adams whose two brothers had joined the Navy and whose father, right afterward, had died. There was Millie Hopkins. . . .

Honesty tossed again. Her thoughts broke and scattered.

Suddenly, across the soft sounds of wave and wind, had come a voice, a far hail, and the answering hail of the boy on night watch.

CHAPTER VII

SHIPS THAT MEET IN THE NIGHT

JUST as she had the night before when the storm had waked her, Honesty swung her feet over the side of the bunk and shoved them into her boots. Five minutes later she was on deck, standing beside Cap'n Obadiah and watching the clean break of a Coast Guard cutter through the moonlit water.

The moon was at the full, making the Atlantic a broad, slowly heaving ocean of silver, and the long slim cutter was like a dark knife cleaving it.

Honesty stood still watching—and then her heart was turning over, her breath was strangled, and her knees and wrists were gone to water.

The voice, hailing again from the cutter! Jonathan's voice! Jonathan standing there in the bow.

Honesty closed her eyes and when the shock passed she found herself leaning far over the rail crying:

"Jonathan! Jonathan!"

And at the same time, beside her, Captain Obadiah called through his megaphone:

"Hail, Coast Guard. *Laughing Girl* from out Jason Harbor."

"The *Laughing*—" It seemed to Hon-

esty she could hear Jonathan's breath catch, as he realized it. Then, low and firm his shout came again. "The *Laughing Girl*! Hail, the *Laughing Girl*!"

The cutter circled, cleaving the water in a wide sweep, and the next instant she was close alongside and in the bright moonlight Honesty could see the gold braid of her officers' uniforms shining—except that Honesty wasn't looking at officers, Honesty was looking at Jonathan. A tall dark figure, with no gold braid, nothing but a seaman's dark blue uniform—but he was Jonathan, and how could she ever have doubted for a moment that she loved him?

"Jonathan!" she called, and then her heart twisted at the white, stark look that swept over his face as he lifted his eyes and saw her.

"Honesty!"

Just her name—but all the grief, all the reproof, all the things he had been feeling were there in it.

She leaned farther so that, with the cutter so near, their faces were not too far apart.

"Jonathan, can't I talk to you?" she pleaded. "Jonathan, you must understand! Garth didn't kiss me because I wanted him to. I didn't know he was going to. He just grabbed me and did it. Can't you understand? Can't you know?"

It all poured out of her in a rush—all the words that suddenly welled up in her heart, all the words that were such a sure deep comfort to her, that stilled this confusion that had been rioting within her.

But Jonathan continued to stare at her. Jonathan's face continued to be white and stiff.

"Garth had kissed you before, hadn't he?" he said coldly, and something about his words made her know they had been in his mind a long time. "That wasn't the first time."

Honesty moved, and felt as if he had slapped her.

"Jonathan, please!" she said.

"You can't love two men, Honesty," Jonathan said. "Not if I'm one of the two. And you're not the girl to let a man kiss her unless she cares. So what am I to think?"

She stood there at the rail, her face draining as white as his. She didn't know what to say, for she knew the con-

fusion that beat at Jonathan now was the same confusion she had been fighting for days.

What was he to think? What was she to think? Her heart loved Jonathan, yet when Garth was near, when his voice held a certain note, when his hands touched her—

"Jonathan!" she said wildly. "I love you! Really, I do. I'm sure—"

BUT she was not sure. He heard the doubt in her voice and she herself heard it. So that she let her words trail and couldn't force the rest of the sentence through her dry throat.

"It's all right, Honesty," Jonathan said. "I'm through the worst of it, I guess. And if there's anything I can do, ever—if you should need me—"

"Don't, Jonathan." She was almost crying, almost there were sobs in her voice. "You—you make it sound so final. Like—"

"Well," said Jonathan, "it is final, isn't it? I mean, I'm not playing a game, Honesty. I love you. I want you to marry me. And if you're not sure—"

"But I am sure," said Honesty desperately. "I—"

"Not while you let other men kiss you," said Jonathan. "If you'd really loved me you'd never have done that."

"But Garth—" began Honesty, and stopped.

She couldn't, in real truth, lay the blame on Garth. She remembered too well the vibrant effect he had had on her. She knew too well she had returned that kiss. She could say nothing. All she could do was stand still, her white face turned toward the cutter as the officers returned from their parley with Captain Obadiah.

The cutter slid off a little after that and Captain Obadiah came back to stand beside Honesty again at the rail. Together they watched in silence as the long slim Coast Guard ship slid through the water, farther and farther away, leaving an ever-widening stretch of tossing moonlit water between them.

Finally Cap'n Obadiah said:

"Did ye hear what that commander man said to me? Do ye know why they hove to alongside us like that?"

"No," said Honesty heavily. "No, I didn't hear anything."

Cap'n Obadiah said nothing for a

minute. He pulled his pipe from one pocket, took a small canvas bag of tobacco from another, and jerked the yellow string on it with his teeth. He shook the tobacco into the bowl, and finally he spoke.

"Come into the cabin, lass," he muttered. "I've not made up my mind what to do yet. Come along."

She followed him into the yellow lamplight and sat down in a red plush upholstered chair toward which he jerked his head. Cap'n Obadiah didn't sit. He tramped slowly up and down. Finally he stopped in front of her.

"Do ye mind the question I put to ye, a couple days back?" he asked. "The question ye told me ye'd given thought to?"

"About the danger of submarines?" said Honesty, and as she said the word she felt a sharp chill tiptoe up her spine.

Captain Obadiah nodded. "That was the business of the cutter," he said.

"They've got wind of a pack somewhere in these waters. They're runnin' it down. They wanted to know if we'd seen hide or hair of it."

"No!" said Honesty.

"I told 'em not yet," said Captain Obadiah, "but I added there was allus another day."

His voice sounded grim as if, once he laid eyes on an alien periscope, he would punch it down with his bare hands. Honesty felt her lips twitch, though this was no time for smiling. Tomorrow, out in the dory, with the *Laughing Girl* no more than a far sail near the horizon, she certainly wouldn't feel like smiling.

"I can't figger out whether to tell yer females an' scare 'em to death," Captain Obadiah said, "or whether to put back to port an' say nothin' to 'em till the whole mess is safe on land."

"Put back to port!" said Honesty. "Put back to port with fish pens practically empty? Are you crazy?"

"Nope," said Cap'n Obadiah. "Ain't crazy. Just got a mess o' women on board an' don't know what to do with 'em. I knowed when I put out with a shipload like this I'd come to no good end. I knowed—"

"Well," snapped Honesty, "you may have 'knowed' a lot, but if you **think** we'll let you put back to port before our pens are filled you don't know much! Have you forgotten how much depends

on our success? If we take back twenty-five thousand pounds of fish—as we can if we stick it out and fill our pens—we get the prize, and the people get food. Of course, we'll stick it out! What do you think we are? Sissies?"

CAP'N OBADIAH stared at her blankly. Slowly the blankness gave way to warmth, to admiration, to a twinkle.

"By Jupiter," he said slowly, "and I'll bet you think you mean it, too."

"Of course, I mean it!" said Honesty. "Do you want me to tell the girls what you've told me and have them take a vote on it?"

"Well—" said Cap'n Obadiah. "Well—"

So Honesty did just that after breakfast the next morning. The long deal tables were lined with girls, ready in sweaters and oilskins to take to the dories. Coffee steamed in thick white cups in front of them, thick slices of bread were piled high on big plates, fish balls made brown mounds on platters.

Honesty got up and banged on a drinking glass for order. The girls stopped eating and their faces, turned toward her, made splashes of paleness in the shadows. Honesty told them about the cutter and its errand. She described in detail the danger of remaining in these waters. She told them that Captain Obadiah was ready to put back to port to return them to safety, because he didn't want the responsibility of keeping a "mess of females" in such a dangerous situation.

"I told him," ended Honesty, "that I'd put it up to you. He'll do with the *Laughing Girl* just as you tell him to do. We're going to put it to vote. Do we stick by the job and fill the pens and sail back for the prize? Or do we go home now—because we're afraid of the enemy?"

"Stick by it!" yelled a voice instantly, and just as instantly every throat in the room took up the cry.

Every throat but one. Ruby Peebles sat at the foot of one of the tables and said nothing, though her pale eyes narrowed a little.

It was the middle of that morning when they sighted another ship. Sailing in she was, as they had sailed, though she was not dependent on her sails. Un-

derneath her decks there was an engine and oil. Cap'n Obadiah knew this because he knew who she was. Honesty knew, too. She had seen that vessel sail in and out of the harbor of Jason too many times not to recognize it. Garth Holker's *Smile Pretty* had joined them at the grounds.

Captain Obadiah laid down his glasses and turned to Honesty.

"There she is," he said. "A couple of days late, but maybe he thinks he can work faster'n we can and get his pens full first an' get the prize, after all. Humph! Maybe we'll have to hustle more'n we intended. Maybe—"

He went off then, muttering, and Honesty was left to keep her eyes on those distant sails, and think of Ruby and the narrow look in her eyes.

She turned to find Ruby looking at her, her eyes not narrow now but wide and friendly, and with a flame of excitement burning in their depths.

"Have you seen her?" she asked. "Over there to the southwest? Did you suppose, if he's as near as that, that I'll see him?"

"I don't know," said Honesty. "I hope so, Ruby—if that's what you want."

"Want!" said Ruby. "*Want!* I feel as if I'd give my life to see him. Just to see him, even if he won't speak to me. Even if he's still crazy about you. That's how much I love him."

She whispered the last two words and suddenly Honesty, looking at her wide eyes, with tears so close behind them, and the small quiver on the scarlet lips, was sorry for her. She felt the same surge of sympathy she had felt before in the dory. Impulsively she held out her hand.

"You'll probably see him, one way or another," she comforted. "And if you love him that much, Ruby, I certainly hope you get him. If—if there's anything I can ever do to help you, I will."

RUBY smiled. It warmed her blankly pretty face and put a little depth into her eyes.

"Thanks," she said. "I wish—I sort of wish we could go out in the same dory again. I mean—well, I can talk to you about Garth and you understand how I feel. Nobody else does and— Well, I guess what I'm trying to say is I'd like for us to be friends. If you don't mind."

"Of course, I don't mind," said Honesty instantly. "And I'll speak to Captain Obadiah about our going out together if you like."

She remembered, then, the decision she had made not to let her sympathies for Ruby influence her. But going out this way with Ruby would be a fine idea from both angles, wouldn't it? She could keep friendly with Ruby, which was important, and at the same time hold a watchful eye on her and try to find out, if such a thing were possible, just what was in the girl's mind.

So it happened that, two days later, Ruby and Honesty were together, hauling in their trawl at sunset, when they discovered their hooks had been robbed.

Honesty pulled in the first empty hooks and thought it must be a poor catch and a poor day. But she remembered how the water had looked that morning—the lovely rippling green that was a sign to all good fishermen that halibut in plenty were feeding in the grounds.

No, it hadn't been a poor day for fishing. It was that someone, something, had reached their hooks before Honesty had.

She looked up at Ruby, the sixth empty hook in her hand.

"Sharks?" she said. "Swordfish? What do you think?"

Ruby's eyes were veiled a little and the corners of her lips looked as if she were trying not to smile.

"I don't know," she said demurely. "What do *you* think?"

A bell rang in Honesty's mind. Without realizing what she was doing, she turned and her eyes swept the horizon looking for sails. She found them. The *Laughing Girl* off to the westward, the *Smile Pretty* down farther toward the south.

There were other sails, too, scattered here and there. In the last thirty-six hours the fleet had really begun to collect. Not many—so few, in fact, that Captain Obadiah, looking at them, had shaken his head, talking of the old days.

Besides; thought Honesty, glancing at them now, they didn't matter. Somehow, that small smile of Ruby's made her feel that nothing mattered but the *Smile Pretty* hovering off there to the southwest. And yet, why would Garth steal their fish? Garth who was in love

with her, Honesty, and who was doing everything he could to prove it. Certainly he wouldn't.

CHAPTER VIII

FISH PIRACY

WHEN Honesty got back to the *Laughing Girl* she went straight to Captain Obadiah.

"Look," she said. "How easy would it be for a dory from another ship to row over and rob our trawls? I mean, a small boat's pretty well hidden by waves and if we weren't suspecting it and looking for it . . . It could be done, couldn't it?"

Captain Obadiah looked at her, his eyes losing their twinkle and turning to blue-edged knives.

"What're ye drivin' at, lass?" he said. "Make yer meanin' clear."

"I will," said Honesty, and told him about the empty hooks.

The old man's eyes went icy cold, his face went lobster red, and a vein began to bulge along his temple.

"It's that Garth," he said. "Th' old—" He went on talking but in the middle of his remarks Honesty covered her ears.

"Your mother," she said, "should have brought you up not to cuss."

Cap'n Obadiah paid no attention to her.

"If I ever catch that blitherin' curmudgeon touching our lines I'll hook him in one of 'em with my own hands and tie a sinker to his neck. The old—"

He was off again and Honesty, hearing the cook's bell from the galley, went below for supper and left him stewing in his own rage.

She found the supper table in a ferment. All the girls had had the same experience Ruby and Honesty had had. The day's catch was almost a total loss. The air was a thick buzz of wonderment and conjecture. Honesty said nothing. Neither did Ruby. But Honesty was sure they were both thinking the same thing—that if Garth robbed their lines two more days like this he would be able to go back with full pens before they could. And win the prize.

Honesty's lips grew tight. She still

couldn't believe it was Garth, but Ruby still had the small smile of triumph on her lips.

It was while they were eating their dessert of stewed apples and ginger-snaps that they felt the ship tack and lean into a wide circle. The girls looked their surprise.

"Changing course?" they said to Honesty.

Honesty shrugged. She had an idea what was happening and when she went up on deck again she found she was right. The *Laughing Girl* had tacked

dark figures began to cluster on the deck, shadowed now, with only the tops of the masts silvered by the rising moon.

"I'm hailing Captain Holker," called Cap'n Obadiah. "I want to have a word with the master of yer ship."

A tall figure detached itself from the group and came walking leisurely to the rail.

"Ahoy, Cap'n Obadiah," called Garth. "How's the fishing?"

"Don't ask me that," shouted Obadiah. "If ye're as smart as I think ye



"So You Think I'm a Spoiled, Selfish Brat, Too!"

TAFFY LANSING, society's darling, hurled the words at newspaper reporter Kendall Judson contemptuously. Taffy was fed up with it all. . . .

TO THE fanfare of wide publicity, she had been scheduled to pin a medal on a wounded war hero at a local hospital—but she overslept and never got around to it. After that something happened to Taffy Lansing. She saw things in a new light. Perhaps the way Kendall Judson looked at her had something to do with it. . . .

NEXT THING she knew, Taffy was enrolled in the WACS! The spoiled, selfish brat was now a GIRL IN KHAKI in the thrilling romantic novel of that name by Peggy Gaddis which is an epic of women in service that you will long remember! This is one of the finest, most appealing novels that Peggy Gaddis has ever written. A novel for every American girl's "MUST" reading list!

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

until the sails of Garth's ship were right across her bow and she was heading for the *Smile Pretty* with all sails set.

She came within hailing distance just as dark definitely fell over the ocean and as the moon showed its first silver haze on the horizon. Cap'n Obadiah, up at the wheel, hailed her himself, his old voice going out clear and strong over the waters.

"Ahoy, *Smile Pretty!*" he called. "*Laughing Girl* coming alongside for communication. Ahoy—*Smile—Pretty!*"

There was an answering hail and

are, ye c'n find it out for yerself. I'm just here to give warnin'! My trawls was robbed today. Maybe, for all I know, yours was, too, an' I'm come, as one fisherman to another, to issue friendly warnin'."

GARTH leaned over the rail. You could see the dark hulk of his shoulders and the silhouette of his cap shoved back on his head. Then the first wash of moonlight came over the rim of the ocean and showed his grin, the flash of his white teeth in his dark face.

"Friendly warning," he said. "Well—thanks. I'll sure keep an eye out for

anyone who'd be apt to steal our fish. Because we've no intention of anyone getting the best of us on this trip. Nothing's going to keep us from getting back to harbor first with full pens, and you may as well know that now."

"Humph!" snorted Cap'n Obadiah, and his temper snapped. "Any fool c'n get back first if they steal all the caught fish they can find!"

Garth stared for a second at the old man. You could see the whites of his eyes go wide, and then you could see the flash of his teeth. This time he laughed right out loud, a long peal of merriment that rang out into the still night.

"So you think I'm the thief!" he said. "Well, prove it. That's all I've got to say—prove it." He threw back his head and laughed again, and clearly those on the *Laughing Girl* could hear Garth's crew chuckling with him.

Captain Obadiah gave orders to tack again and return, and when Honesty found him tramping the deck he was madder than he had been before. She laid a hand on his arm.

"Don't get so upset," she said. "It's not worth it. I don't think he's the one stealing—"

"You don't think!" roared the captain. "O' course, he's the one stealing. An' if I catch him at it—"

"You said that before," said Honesty. "Besides—it just occurred to me—are you sure the prize will be given this year? I mean, with the war and not so many fishermen—"

"Not so many fishermen is just our luck," mumbled the captain. "That prize ain't got nothin' to do with war nor no war. That prize was given by old Silas Winthrop while he was alive and when he died he left some kind of money in a bank, so it goes on. That prize is given spite o' everything, an' that lyin', schemin' son of a bantam rooster ain't goin' to get it away from me if I have to board his ship and put him in chains."

"Tch, tch!" said Honesty. "You talk like an old pirate."

But she was nearly as upset by all this as he was. It would be a fine thing to sail into Jason Harbor and be the first, of all the fishermen in the dozen towns eligible for the prize, to come in. A fine thing, a flying glorious feather in her cap, to bring her girls in ahead of any man, even though men were few

and far between this year.

It was Honesty's trick at the wheel and she stood there, holding the great thing easily, for there was no sea running and only enough wind to fill the sails gently. She was thinking about it all when she saw the slim, dark thing in the water running across the band of bright moonlight ahead of the bow.

For an empty second she couldn't think what it was. A huge water snake so far from land? A limb of a tree bent up in that grotesque fashion? And then, in a burst, she knew! She lashed the wheel and ran to the captain's cabin.

"A submarine!" she panted. "Off the port bow. It's circling. It's not attacking. It's—"

But she was talking to empty air. Cap'n Obadiah was on deck, glasses in hand, calling to the lookout, asking if he, up there in the crow's nest, had seen the same thing Honesty had seen. He hadn't. No one had seen it.

Now, Honesty couldn't see it. The moonlight lay in a pale wash over the water and there was nothing else in sight. She stared, and empty ocean, the slow waves, moonlit-tipped and dark in the trough shadows, was all she could see. Nothing else, anywhere. Had she imagined that dark, evil-looking eye jutting up out of the water? Perhaps she had, though she knew she hadn't.

SHE found, a little later, that she could not sleep. Every time she turned from the open deck to the hatch leading to her bunk she turned back again. The thought of being cooped up below, of lying in her bunk wide-eyed, listening, wondering, remembering the look of that dark eye skimming the sea—no, she would stay on deck if she had to stay there all night. She would stay out in the open where, if anything happened, she would at least have the wind in her face and the wide free sky overhead.

It was cold. The wind had veered from west, to northwest, to north, and it was coming down icy and sharp with the smell of icebergs clear on it. Honesty huddled down in the lee of a coil of rope, the collar of her reefer pulled high around her ears, her wool cap pulled low and each of her hands bundled into the opposite sleeve.

She must have slept this way, for she

woke to the sound of oars being lifted carefully out of the water, allowed to drip a moment, then slid carefully back in again. Honesty sat still, listening. Then, noiselessly, she straightened from behind her coil of rope. Straightened and stood up, peering out and around to see where these sounds came from.

She could see nothing but, as she looked, a dory nosed its way around the stern of the *Laughing Girl* and came slipping up her port side.

Honesty lost no time. She went to the rail and called firmly:

"Who goes there?"

Her voice rang clearly in the night and immediately there was a stir of movement, from the helm, where one of the boys held the ship on her course, from the watch who was high in the bow, from the cabin where Cap'n Obadiah always slept with one eye open and both ears cocked.

The cabin door was flung back, releasing a gold band of light across the deck, the watch came scampering down—and the dory vanished. The moon had been dropping lower in the sky and the shadows were deeper, the moonlight paler than earlier in the evening. The dory, cutting suddenly off at right angles from the ship, was quickly lost in the ocean's heaving, shifting shadows.

"What was it?" Captain Obadiah appeared in the stream of light from the cabin, pulling on his coat, still working his feet into his boots. "What's the shoutin' for? Oh—that you, Honesty?" he peered at her in the gloom.

"Yes," said Honesty. "I did the shoutin'. A dory was out there. I couldn't see the men rowing her, but I heard the oars and when I looked she was coming around the stern of the *Laughing Girl*."

"Humph," said Captain Obadiah and, leaning over the rail, peered out over the sea. "Ain't nothin' in sight," he muttered. "Not 'nless my eyes ain't what they used to be."

Honesty said nothing. She felt foolish. The second time in one evening that she had seen things no one else saw. The second time she had raised an alarm, roused Captain Obadiah, and had nothing to show for it.

"You sure you feel all right?" Captain Obadiah said. "You sure you ain't got no fever?"

"You mean," said Honesty, "am I sure I'm not seeing things? Yes, I'm sure. And if you don't believe me—"

"Oh, I b'lieve you," muttered the old man. "I ain't callin' ye no liar. It's just all part an' parcel of what happens when a man's fool enough to tie hisself up to a mess o' high hysterical females."

"I'm not hysterical," began Honesty, and stopped. Why bother to say so? She couldn't prove it. She had better keep quiet, go below, and try to get some sleep.

"I'll walk ye around the deck once," said Captain Obadiah grudgingly. "Mebbe it'll do ye good an' calm them nerves o' yourn. Come along." He took her arm and they set off. "What was ye doin' on deck anyhow," he wanted to know.

HONESTY didn't tell him. "I had a headache," she murmured, "and came up for some fresh air."

"Humph," said the old man, and Honesty knew he didn't believe her. But she knew, too, that he couldn't guess the truth because he had not credited her story about sighting the U-boat periscope earlier.

It was as they swung around the stern toward the starboard deck that they saw, against the last pale light of the dropping moon, the far silhouette of a ship. She had sails, though she wasn't under them, her masts and spars standing naked against that circle of moon. She was moving away from them rapidly, which meant engine power along with her canvas. The same thought occurred to both Honesty and Captain Obadiah. Captain Obadiah put it into words.

"If that ain't the *Smile Pretty*, I'll eat her," he said, and added thoughtfully, "maybe you did see that dory after all. But what in tunket was he doing over here?"

Honesty didn't know, but for some reason her thoughts went instantly to Ruby, and with an instinct she didn't bother to analyze she turned and went below immediately. She worked her way aft until she came to the row of bunks where Ruby slept. And there was Ruby, her almost colorless lashes making pale shadows on her cheeks, and her chest rising and falling with the deep slow

breaths of one in the deepest of slumbers.

Yet, as Honesty turned away, she knew Ruby was not asleep, and she had a strong hunch that Ruby had had something to do with the visit of that dory from Garth's ship.

Honesty went back up on deck. The very thought of sleep, of lying still in her bunk staring with wide eyes into the darkness, made her a little sick. Beside it was nearly dawn. The wind had that fresh, sweet, clear smell that comes with the new day and the sky, low in the east, was washed with faint pearl. Perhaps it was only false dawn, but even so the real dawn could not be far away.

CHAPTER IX

UNWANTED VISITORS

HONESTY went back to her old stand at the rail. She stood there a long time, while the false dawn faded to a deeper darkness than ever the night had held. And that, thought Honesty, was like her life at this moment. Black, dark and bewildering.

She thought of Jonathan, and the thought was like an ache, heavy in her heart. She thought of Garth—and suddenly she could understand why Ruby loved the man so much. Garth had such strength, such power, he had such a way of sweeping everything before him. But Garth—and the more she thought of it, the more sure she was—was not the one robbing their lines. Garth, trying to win her love as he was, would not do a thing like that.

At last her eyes grew heavy. A little sleep, an hour's nap, seemed a possible thing now and she turned to go below. She never took the second step. The corner of her eye, as she turned away, had registered a movement in the sea that stopped her dead. She didn't move her body again, but she turned her head until she could see it clearly.

The same black snout she had seen earlier in the night but now, as she looked, more—much more.

The thing rose swiftly, once it started. The periscope clear, the conning tower

up, the oval ring of deck. Honesty heard her own voice, loud and clear.

"U-boat on the port side! U-boat sighted to port!"

With the sound of her voice was the call of the watch, the cry of the girl at the wheel. The cabin door flew open and, as once before that night, Captain Obadiah appeared, stamping into his boots, shrugging his shoulders into his reefer as he came.

The U-boat was up, in full view on the dark heaving waters. Men were emerging on her deck, and she was moving so that less and less of the black Atlantic showed between her and the *Laughing Girl*.

Then a voice, deep and guttural, called out in English:

"We will not attack. We come as friends, to talk."

Beside her Honesty heard Cap'n Obadiah's grunt. She knew what he was thinking. She had heard the stories, too, of ships like theirs being boarded under one pretext or another, and time bombs being placed. Then one, two, or three hours later a roar, a burst of flame, and sometimes one or two escaped to bring back the tale. Sometimes the ship was never heard from again.

Once more Captain Obadiah grunted. And under his breath Honesty heard his words.

"Females!" he muttered. "I mighta knowed. Can't risk nothin' with females on board. Can't open fire with what guns I got on account o' how s'long there's any hope to escape fight I gotta keep these dratted gals out of it."

"You're not going to—" Honesty said, and couldn't finish because, suddenly, her throat felt like rock and her mouth was filled with cotton.

"Steady, gal," Cap'n Obadiah said, and the voice of the U-boat commander came again across the narrowing expanse of water.

"You will speak with us, yes? We will come aboard to talk?"

"No," said Captain Obadiah. "If ye got anythin' to say, say it from yer own decks."

There was a small silence. Honesty heard the waves and the wind in the rigging and the terrible thud of her own heart. Then the commander's voice came again.

"It is unfortunate," he said, "but it is necessary the talk be private. We come on your decks or . . . We will not waste the time in talk."

FOR the third time Honesty heard Cap'n Obadiah's grunt. And his mutter:

"As if I could take a chance like that, with this mess o' gals on board!" Aloud he called, "Have your way, then," and moved down the deck to receive his guests.

A few minutes later they were on board. Three officers. Tall, heavily-built men, two with their faces shadowed in beard, the third with a drooping heavy mustache that shone blond in lantern light.

"Whatever your business we can do our talkin' here," Captain Obadiah said.

The commander, one of the men with a beard, said:

"We will discuss our affairs in your cabin. If you will lead the way?"

Honesty saw Captain Obadiah stiffen. She saw the movement all three officers made simultaneously. She heard the grunt Obadiah gave. Then, without another word, he turned, opened the door of his cabin and the yellow lamplight swallowed them all. Honesty was left alone on the dark deck.

The whole thing had happened with surprisingly little noise or disturbance. No one on the *Laughing Girl* had waked, no one except Honesty, the lookout, and the girl at the wheel was aware that anything was wrong. Neither of the other two could leave their posts so Honesty was left alone with her thoughts and her fears and her wonderments. With all this churning around inside of her she couldn't keep still. She moved, restlessly, up and down. She stared, fascinated, at the window of the cabin behind which she could barely hear the low rumble of voices. Finally she moved away.

The night was again fading and the first gray light of real dawn was beginning to creep over the world. Honesty slipped around to the starboard side to see the east and the promise of the rising sun. But as she rounded the stern, and the sea off the starboard side came into view it was neither the sky nor the ocean itself that she noticed.

Nothing else filled her eyes, in that moment, but the long slim lines of the Coast Guard cutter cruising silently a mile out to sea. And for that first minute, seeing it, it wasn't the U-boat she thought of—it was Jonathan. Jonathan was out there, if that were Jonathan's ship, and perhaps she might see him. Then she remembered. Jonathan didn't want to see her. Jonathan, who was so sure she cared for Garth.

For a small second Honesty stood there, biting her lips. Then her mind clicked into action. She turned and vanished down the nearest hatch.

Three minutes later she was back on deck with an electric torch in her hand. She flashed it fast, three times. It was then she began to pray.

"Let them see it!" she murmured, over and over. "Let somebody be looking this way. Let them see it. Please—please let them see it!"

One—two—three. One—two—three. Over and over.

They saw it. The answering flash came back, and Honesty's heart seemed to fly right out of her body. Then, swiftly, she sent the message, knowing a surge of gratitude for all the hours she had spent as a child flashing messages across the dune and cliffs for fun. Now all the old skill came back to her as she flashed:

U-boat on port side. Commander and officers on board.

She waited then, for a second, to see if they wanted a repeat. But all they flashed was the one word, "Coming," and that was enough. Honesty leaned against the rail, watching the slowly graying water and the approaching cutter slice its way through it. A sense of satisfaction touched her.

THERE had been no way for the U-boat, tied on the port side, to see any part of her flash, shown off at starboard. There was no way now for them to know the cutter was coming. She turned slowly from the rail and moved back around the deck the way she had come. As she rounded the stern loud voices caught her like a blow and the next instant strong arms grabbed her and a guttural voice shouted unintelligible words.

She was rushed down the deck, the

door of the cabin was yanked open, she was thrust inside and the door slammed behind her. She heard the key click in the lock, and then she saw Cap'n Obadiah's eyes staring into hers. He was bound and gagged, lashed to a chair, and above the white gag and his beard his blue eyes were darting fire.

Honesty's fingers twitched and pulled at the gag and, as it dropped, she whirled back to the door to pound it with her fists.

It was opened almost instantly by a girl whose eyes were filled with excitement.

"What's happened?" she cried. "I woke up and heard a lot of yelling—"

Honesty paid her no attention. She shoved past her and leaped for the rail.

The U-boat had gone. The sea was empty and turning gray and yet lighter gray in the light of the coming dawn.

Honesty stood still, staring, and behind her Captain Obadiah mumbled, through swollen lips.

"Do you know why they tied me up? Because I wouldn't play a game with my ship they wanted me to play. If I'd been willin' to do it. . . . Holy hoptoads! Looka that!"

Honesty whirled, stared, and knew a great surge of exultation. The cutter had arrived, knifing through the water and passing the *Laughing Girl* as if she wasn't there because, up ahead, in the now clear light of dawn, the U-boat was again visible, her conning tower and half her deck out of water.

The cutter tore down on her, guns ready. The new day was ripped apart by flame and shell. Too late the submarine tried to submerge completely. Too late. The guns of the cutter raked her, she tilted, for one instant her bow rose clear out of the water, for one instant it was outlined, black against the rose and gold of the rising sun. Then it was gone. Down beneath the waves. Down—and down—and down.

Honesty watched in still horror, her cold hands clutching the rail, her eyes pressed wide. Then she heard Captain Obadiah's long breath released.

"It's a grand country we live in," he said, "that can show fighters like that."

Honesty said nothing. She was thinking of Jonathan. Was he aboard that cutter? Had Jonathan had a part in sending this U-boat down? She strained

her eyes through the pearly mist of early morning, as the cutter sliced its way toward them. And then, suddenly, her heart was stopped, a chill was washing over her.

Someone on the cutter had been wounded. Someone was being lifted from the deck onto a stretcher. Suppose it were Jonathan! Suppose he had been killed!

She leaned over the rail, and the cutter slid alongside. The stretcher bearers were just going through a doorway. Yellow light poured out, for the short minute the door was open, and Honesty saw the man's face. It was Jonathan. She cried out, calling his name again and then again.

ONE of the guardsmen came to the rail.

"You know him?" he said.

"Of course I know him!" cried Honesty. "I'm going to marry him! Oh, can't I see him for a minute? Can't I—"

"Sorry," said the guardsman. "It's against rules. But I can take a message."

"I want to see him," said Honesty. "I've got to see him!"

She didn't dare send a message. Jonathan might still doubt her. He might send her a message back telling her so. No, she had to see him.

The commander came on board to speak to Captain Obadiah. Honesty drew a deep breath and went up to him.

"The man who is wounded," she said. "Please—can't I see him? I. . . . Oh, it's so necessary and—"

The commander looked at her. His eyes were gray-blue under shaggy brows. His mouth was the mouth of a man accustomed to issuing orders.

"There are rules against such irregularities," he said. "I am sorry."

Honesty bit her lips. The need, at that moment, to see Jonathan was so great it was like a sickness. She had to see him! She knew, then, that all this doubt and confusion bothering her was less than nothing. Garth was less than nothing. The intoxication that had held her, for those moments in his arms, had been of no more importance than the shock you get when you touch a live wire.

At last, clearly, she could understand

it all. And she had to tell Jonathan. She must tell him. He mustn't, for another second, be kept in this miserable doubt.

"You don't know," he told the commander, "how important it is that I see him. Why, when I was signaling for you—"

"You?" said the commander. "It was you who sent the signal?"

"Yes," said Honesty. "Yes, I—"

The commander held out his hand. "That, my dear young lady," he said, "puts quite another light on it. I shall, with great pleasure, offer you a permit to go aboard the cutter to see—" The officer's eyes twinkled. "Your brother?"

"No," said Honesty. "No, he's the man I'm going to marry." And the words, she knew, were a prayer.

The guardsman who was still on deck showed her below. Jonathan was lying on a bunk, in a small cabin, and when she came in he opened his eyes.

"Jonathan!" she whispered.

He saw then who it was. His lips tightened a little. Pain flashed into his eyes and was gone again.

"Hello, Honesty," he said.

She came into the cabin quickly, reaching his side in a little rush.

"I had to come, Jonathan," she said, "and the commander gave me permission. I—I wanted you to know I was sure."

"Sure?" said Jonathan, and his voice was the voice of a man moving on thin ice. "Sure of what?"

"That I love you," whispered Honesty. "I—I really was sure all the time but you confused me so, doubting me, that I—I almost began to doubt myself."

Jonathan lay for so long, held in silence and with his eyes closed, that Honesty began to be afraid he'd fainted.

"Darling!" she said. "Darling, are you all right?"

He opened his eyes then and she saw the look in them. Cool and quiet, controlled, and as far away from her as the stars.

"You needn't have bothered to go to all this trouble, Honesty," he said. "I'm not badly enough hurt to need such a fine gesture of sympathy. It was fine of you, but I'm all right without it."

She stared a second, trying to make sense out of his words.

"Jonathan!" she stammered. "You think I came just to offer you sympathy? You think I'm telling you I love you just because you're wounded and I'm sorry for you? But—but—"

Jonathan moved his head wearily. "Don't bother," he said, and his voice was inexpressibly tired. "I know you mean well but . . . Please, Honesty, I'll talk about it some other time, if you like, but just now—"

It was a dismissal. Honesty could take it no other way. She backed out of the cabin slowly, her eyes on Jonathan's face. He never opened his eyes. She leaned against the wall of the dark companionway for a minute till she could control the sobs that shook her.

She got back to the *Laughing Girl*—and a whirl of excitement. The Coast Guardsmen had come on board, at Captain Obadiah's request, and they had found a time bomb down in the hold.

"I knowed blame well it was there!" shouted Cap'n Obadiah. "I knowed they put it there when they tied me up in my cabin. Blast their timbers!"

Honesty didn't stay to hear any more. She went wearily down to her bunk, and lay all the rest of the time until breakfast with her eyes wide and burning, fastened on the ceiling above her head.

But she couldn't spend much time either worrying about Jonathan's wounds or her own broken heart. The fish continued to be stolen from the hooks and, if it wasn't stopped soon, all possible chance of winning the prize would be lost. The girls were getting frantic and begging Honesty to do something about it.

Finally she thought of a way she might discover who the thief was. Nearly everyone suspected Garth, but Honesty still couldn't believe he'd do it. However, she would set her little trap and find out.

CHAPTER X

A THIEF FOR LOVE'S SAKE

PUTTING her belief to the test, Honesty didn't take Ruby with her that day—she took Lucy. Because, if the thief should be Garth, Ruby was not the

girl to have sharing Honesty's boat. She explained her idea to Lucy while they were munching their sandwiches after their trawls had been sunk.

"Your plan sounds all right," said Lucy, nodding her neat brown braided head. "And I don't see why it wouldn't work. If Garth is pulling in these lines before you get back to them—certainly if he's anywhere around and sees an empty dory bobbing around helpless, he's going to investigate. And if you can prove he's in these waters, where he's no business to be . . . Yes, it really ought to work."

So the two girls shipped the oars and lay down in the bottom of the dory.

It was a safe enough thing to do, since the more weight there is in the bottom of a dory the steadier the dory travels. And the sea was calm, with only the great ground swells heaving it slowly up and down, so there was no chance of their getting caught and swamped in the trough of a wave. They lay there comfortably, talking in murmurs, and watching the high white clouds sail on their ocean of blue.

But when the hail came they stopped talking. It came again and again. They didn't answer and, when Honesty winked, they both closed their eyes. They didn't open them when they heard the splash of oars, they didn't open them when they could sense another boat near, but when they heard voices calling, alarmed, they sat up.

"My goodness!" said Honesty, rubbing her eyes. "I must have fallen asleep. I . . . Oh!"

She broke off suddenly, a little surprised, a little doubtful. Garth wasn't in the other boat, twenty feet away and laden with fish. The two men in the boat were men Honesty had never seen.

"We rowed over thinkin' mebbe your boat was empty," one of the men said. "Thinkin' mebbe you was drowned or somethin'."

"If we'd drowned," Honesty said, looking at his narrow eyes and slashed mouth, "you could take our fish with a clearer conscience. Is that it?"

The man's eyes shifted. "Your fish?" he said. "I ain't stealin'—"

Just then a wave brought his boat up, heavily laden as it was, clearer of the water. Honesty saw the name painted on it.

"Oh, so you are from the *Smile Pretty* after all," she said. "I thought so."

"Now look here, Miss," the man said, "I told you I wa'n't—"

A hail interrupted him. A hail and the sound of a motor that had, till that second, been blown back by the wind. It was close and the next instant the motor was silenced and the hail came again.

"Garth!" said Honesty, and watched his face as he took in the situation—the men in his own dory, the dory laden with fish, when Garth's own trawls were sunk a league away.

"What's all this?" Garth said, scowling. "What's the trouble?"

"Plenty of trouble," said Honesty. "Your men are stealing our fish."

"My men!" said Garth. Then he turned on them, his eyes narrowed, his face black. "Didn't I tell you to stick to your own lines? Didn't I tell you if I caught you disobeying me I'd cut your share of the catch?"

THE men looked at the fish in their boats, they looked at Garth. One of them muttered under his breath.

"Garth—" Honesty said.

Garth's eyes swung to hers and met them fairly.

"Honesty I don't know anything about this," he said. "And if you have any more trouble let me know."

"I will," said Honesty, and picked up her oars.

They didn't have far to row. The *Laughing Girl* was on her way, as she always was at this time, to pick them up with their catch.

Honesty told Captain Obadiah about Garth's men as soon as she was swung up in her dory and could reach the deck. Captain Obadiah growled in a fine fury behind his beard.

"Ye say ye saw them with yer own eyes? Saw them with their boat filled with your fish?"

"Filled to the point of sinking," said Honesty, and added, "Garth made them transfer every fish into our boat."

Captain Obadiah snorted. "What does that prove?" he wanted to know. "That the squid's smart, or innocent?"

"I don't know," said Honesty. "I—don't—know."

Two days later, though, she knew she had to find out. The lines were still be-

ing robbed, and even if Garth were innocent, she was sure his men were doing it. She went to Cap'n Obadiah and said so.

"I don't see why we can't do something about it," she told him. "We've a right to protect our property at sea, haven't we? And the minute fish are caught on our lines they become our property, don't they? So why—"

"Why!" roared Captain Obadiah. "She stands there, the witless woman, and asks me why! Me, loaded to the gun's with females! Me, with not an able-bodied man walkin' my decks—an' she asks me why I don't pick a fight with a born fighter who's crewed his ship from the Boston waterfront. Think, you idiot! Use your noodle and think why."

Honesty was silenced. She stood in front of him with not a word to say.

Later that same night, though, she had plenty to say. They had, by this time, been out at the grounds, a good ten days. The *Smile Pretty* had been out eight days. She had been stealing the greater part of the *Laughing Girl's* catch for nearly a week. According to all calculations the *Smile Pretty's* pens ought to be about full. In another day or two she should be ready to sail back to Jason—for the prize.

The *Smile Pretty* was. She told them about it that night. She had the nerve and the cast-iron impudence to flash good-by and good luck to them. Her pens were full. She was sailing for Boston in the morning.

Captain Obadiah came thumping down the deck, fit to be tied.

"Behind bars I'd put 'em if I could get 'em!" he roared. "I know as well as I know my name half the fish in them pens is ours."

"But if Garth doesn't know his men are stealing—" Honesty began, but the old man interrupted her.

"Know? Know? Sure he knows, the squid. And if that blame Coast Guard cutter would show up like I sent for 'em to—"

"You sent for the Coast Guard?" Honesty's heart turned. The cutter, with Jonathan on board.

CAPTAIN OBADIAH turned heavily away. "Yeah, I sent for 'em," he muttered. "Sent for 'em as well as a

body can with no radio an' nothin' but a word o' mouth message. I told Sam Parsons when he went by with his *Sea Gull* two days ago that if he picked up the cutter anywheres to tell 'em to come by." He grunted. "Maybe all of another week before we see 'em, if they're off fightin' fights somewheres else."

"Hmm," said Honesty, and didn't say more because the mere mention of the Coast Guard had brought Jonathan to her with aching vividness.

Perhaps if he were well enough by now she could talk to him again and convince him. But no, she couldn't. She could never, she realized suddenly, say anything more. If Jonathan didn't believe her now—

She turned away quickly so no one could see the tears coming. If only things were different so she could look forward to Jonathan's coming with the Coast Guard! But the Coast Guard wasn't anywhere in sight, anyway, and the *Smile Pretty* was sailing for Boston in the morning.

As things were, there was no one but Honesty herself—Honesty herself! Her thoughts broke as the idea exploded. Hadn't Garth said if there was more trouble for her to tell him and he would stop it? Hadn't he told her that day in the dory. . . .

She turned quickly from Captain Obadiah and walked up the deck.

Honesty went up where she could be alone. Far up in the bow where coils of ropes and the big anchors made a kind of cubby-hole. Behind all this she curled up, feeling under her the high lift as the ship met the slow heave of the sea, and knowing the sweet cool feel of the salt wind against her cheeks.

Nobody could find her here and she could think what to do.

She was still there, a long time later, when, by the calls of the watch, she knew it was nearly midnight. Everyone on the ship would be asleep by this time and Captain Obadiah, not seeing her again, would figure she had gone below to sleep too. Well, she hadn't. Nor was she likely to.

She slipped back down the deck from the bow, keeping to the shadows. The moon was rising later each night so now the east was just beginning to show silver, and the entire deck was still deep in darkness. That was how it happened

she nearly bumped into someone standing in the waist of the ship before she realized anyone was there. Then, startled, she took one step back into deeper shadow and stood still before she was seen herself.

The next moment she recognized the girl who was standing there. It was Ruby Peebles. Ruby, with a dark lantern in her hand, carefully flashing a message out to sea.

Honesty waited there, watching Ruby. She couldn't read the message for the dark side of the lantern was toward her, nor could she see Ruby's face clearly. She just recognized the silhouette of her figure in the darkness and the familiar motions of her hands and head.

After that waiting moment, Honesty stepped forward.

"Ruby," she said, low. "Ruby!"

Ruby jumped and swung around. The lantern dropped from her hand and rolled a little on the deck. Honesty stooped and picked it up.

"So that's how Garth has known so well where we lay!" she said. "You've been signaling him during the night, so he wouldn't lose us."

"I told you I love him enough to do anything for him," Ruby said sullenly. "And"—she spoke a little louder with a kind of bitter triumph—"he's still going to marry me if he gets the prize. So why wouldn't I help him?"

"Even to the point of committing a theft for him?" said Honesty. "Because, helping him like this, you're as much a thief as he is."

"I don't care," said Ruby. "I'd do more than steal if he asked me to."

HONESTY stood silent, touched, as she had been twice before, by the utter depth of Ruby's love. Love like this, sweeping, complete and strong, you have to have respect for. No matter what its object was, no matter how unworthy or hopeless or insane you felt it to be it was love, and as such it was precious.

But Honesty couldn't afford to be sympathetic with Ruby now. She had decided, up there in the bow, just where her duty lay, and Ruby was no part of it. Ruby loved Garth. Ruby, whatever happened, must take care of herself. Honesty must look out for the girls on the ship. For Lucy and Priscilla Snow,

for all the others to whom she had made glowing promises, and who, without her blazing enthusiasm, would never have been here at all. She, Honesty, was alone responsible. Somehow or other she must see it through.

"You'd better go below now and get some sleep," she said to Ruby, her voice gentle, but firm.

"Are you going to report finding me doing this to Cap'n Obadiah?" Ruby said, frightened.

"I don't know," said Honesty. "I'll . . . I don't know."

"If you do I'll jump overboard," Ruby said. "I'm not going to be put in chains in the brig. I'm not going to have all the girls laughing at me for loving Garth as much as this. They've always laughed at me for it and I'm not going to—"

"Be quiet," said Honesty, "and go on down to bed." Then, as Ruby turned away, she had another thought. "That was what Garth came over here for that other night! He came over to talk to you, to get you to send him these signals. He—"

"It was the only way to get word to me," she said. "He came over and he whistled like a curlew. It was a signal we'd had before and I'd have heard it even if I'd been dead. So I came on deck and there he was." She added softly. "He—kissed me that night."

Then she turned again and slipped away into the shadows. Honesty heard the hatch open and close and knew she was again alone on deck.

She lost no time, and she thanked her luck that Ruby, in her excitement at being discovered, had forgotten the dark lantern that still hung by its brass ring from Honesty's fingers.

Honesty swung it up into her hands, stepped to the rail and began to flash her message.

Honesty calling Garth. Honesty calling Garth.

Then she waited. In seconds she saw the quick short light of an answering signal and instantly she continued her message.

Send boat for me. Wish to discuss personal matter.

That was all. She figured it was enough. She stood there by the rail,

holding tight to it with hands gone cold, and wondered what was going to happen next.

In a surprisingly short time she heard, muffled by distance, the sound of an outboard motor. Then silence. Then the quiet, regular dip of oars.

CHAPTER XI

MIDNIGHT MEETING

IN ONLY a short time, Honesty could distinguish the dory itself, dimly seen by the thin light of the tilted, waning moon. A man was on a thwart, another at the oars. She could see the oarsman ship them back in the rowlocks and wait. She knew they were both listening.

She said one whispered word. "Here." And waited.

They heard her. Instantly the oars were slid into the water again and there was the small sound of dripping as they were lifted up and down. Then she could see Garth's face lifted, clear in the pale light. And she knew he could see her face above the rail.

"Garth," she said, "will you come on board? I'd like to talk. I mean you told me to report to you if anything—"

"Don't rouse the ship, Honesty," he said, his voice low. "Don't start anything. Come along over to the *Smile Pretty* where we can talk freely." She saw the flash of his grin in the gloom and heard his faint chuckle. "Nothing will happen to you," he promised her.

She had a small moment of hesitancy, but too much lay in the balance for her to hesitate for long. With the whole success of the trip to consider, and everything it meant to the girls—

"All right," she said, and tossed over-side the rope ladder she lifted from its hook.

As she raised her eyes again from this job it was to look straight into the eyes of Ruby Peebles.

"I'm going with you," said Ruby calmly, "and if you say one word against it, I'll rouse the ship."

"You—" began Garth.

"Be quiet," said Honesty.

She didn't want the ship roused. She

didn't want anyone, certainly not Captain Obadiah to know what she was doing. There would be a lot of argument, and Garth might be angered. She could manage this situation with Garth on her side as he was now, but if he got mad—

"All right," she said to Ruby, "come along if you like, but don't make a racket."

"I won't," said Ruby, "unless you make me."

Honesty slipped over the rail and down the rope ladder to the dory. She had to stand hanging on the last rung for an interminable time while the dory rose and fell, swinging and shifting on the restless ocean. Then the right kind of a rise came, Garth's arms gripped her, and she was safe in the dory.

"Now get me," said Ruby, "or I'll yell."

Garth got her, yanking her down roughly and grumbling:

"Why on earth *you* had to come—"

"I'm not going to have you sail back to Boston without me," Ruby said. "I'm leaving this ship for good and coming with you. We can be married in Boston."

Garth didn't answer her. He put the girls side by side in the stern, went back to his thwart and the oarsman picked up the oars. Once safely out of earshot, they started the outboard motor and in an amazingly short time the weathered sides of the *Smile Pretty* rose sheer above their heads from the water. Ladders were swung to their hands. Honesty scrambled up and felt the wide deckboards of Garth's ship underneath her feet.

"This way," he said and led her to the door of his cabin.

IT WAS comfortable inside, as almost all captain's cabins are comfortable. Deep, plush easy chairs, brought from home, a large round oak table with the lamp swinging above it. A few books, a few magazines, Garth's bunk neatly made up as a seaman's bunk should be. "Sit down," he said, and took off his cap.

Honesty sat down, watching him. Ruby stood by the door, watching him too. He paid no attention to her at all, pouring out drinks, offering one to Honesty. Honesty shook her head.

"I don't drink anything stronger than Pepsi-Cola," she said.

Garth grinned at her. "No such thing on this ship." Then he held his glass up to her. "Here's to us," he said.

Honesty heard the quick pull of Ruby's breath. Garth heard it too.

"Go along, Ruby," he said, without turning. "We want to talk."

"I—" began Ruby.

"I said go along," snapped Garth. "Didn't you hear me?"

"Yes," said Ruby.

She opened the door, slipped through it, and closed it behind her. But just before the door closed, Honesty caught a glimpse of Ruby's eyes. Bright, glittering, filled with a hatred that was as slashing as knives, they stared into Honesty's, stared just that instant and they were gone. And Honesty thought, "That was the way she hated me that night she tried to push me overboard. I wonder what she'll do now? I'm sure I can manage Garth. But Ruby?"

"Now she's gone," Garth said. "Now we can talk." His eyes met hers measuringly. "Just what's on your mind, Honesty?"

She smiled at him. "It's the fish, Garth," she said. "You told me to come to you if we had more trouble, and we've had more. Each day the catch is half gone—sometimes more than half. And—and you're sailing for Boston in the morning. It . . . I should think you could see how it looks to us."

Garth looked at her a long moment. Then, slowly, he leaned across the table toward her.

"Look, Honesty," he said. "Let's be frank with each other. I love you—you know that. And I can make you love me. I think we both know that."

"No," said Honesty. "No—I love Jonathan. I—"

"Love Jonathan!" he scoffed. "You tell me you love Jonathan after the way you kissed me good-by? Jonathan will never—"

"Whatever Jonathan does," said Honesty, "I like. And anyway"—she moved her shoulders—"that's not to the point. I came over here to ask you to stop your men from stealing our fish and to please return whatever they've taken. It seems to me—"

She stopped. Garth was laughing at her.

"Child," he said, "do you really think it's as simple as that? Don't you realize I got you over here for a purpose? Can't you see—"

"A purpose!" said Honesty. "But you didn't get me here. I came voluntarily."

"Oh, no you didn't." He was still laughing quietly. "I set a trap. I knew it would work, that you'd come over to talk to me. The fish, and getting your girls back in jig-time, was just that important to you. And now that you're here, you'll only leave as my wife."

"You're crazy!" said Honesty, and stood up.

"Sit down," said Garth.

Honesty continued to stand.

"All right, then," he said. "Stand if you want to, but it's not going to get you off the ship one second sooner than if you sat down and were comfortable."

HONESTY said nothing, but she began to think fast.

"I've tried every way I know," Garth said. "You won't listen to me. You won't give me a chance to get to first base. So I'm trying this. You might"—he looked at her hard—"be darn glad I'm kidnaping you only to marry you."

"Oh," said Honesty, "might I?"

"Now will you sit down?" said Garth. "You see you might as well. You're going to be here a long time."

Honesty sat down slowly. Not because she wanted to. Not because Garth had told her to. But simply because her knees were suddenly too weak to bear her weight any longer.

"It appears that I made a great mistake in trusting you," she said, forcing her voice to be steady, forcing her fingers to stay relaxed in her lap. "Captain Obadiah doesn't. He knows you, evidently. But I did trust you, Garth. Trusted you in spite of what everyone said. I thought . . . Well, I thought if you cared for me at all and when you found out how much it meant to me to get the *Laughing Girl* back to port in good time with her pens full, I—well, I really did think we could come to an understanding about it. That's why I came."

"Oh," said Garth, "it was, was it?" He picked up his glass, drained it, and set it down. "Well," he said quietly, wiping his lips, "it would seem you were wrong. As you say, Captain Obadiah:

knows me better than you do—or did.”

Honesty sat still. She had played all her cards, and she had lost. She had been so sure that if she only could talk to Garth that he would be generous. She had been so sure—and yet, what else could she have done? Stayed safe on the *Laughing Girl* and felt, all the rest of her life, that she had let the girls down? They trusted her, and if she had not acted as she had they would have been sure she was afraid to prove that trust.

She couldn't have done that. Even now, sitting in Garth's cabin, with Garth's eyes watching her over the rim of his glass, she knew she'd had to come. Under the same circumstances she would have to do the same thing again. Everyone, always, had to gamble with their courage. That's what courage was. If you won you were a hero. If you lost—

Honesty shrugged faintly and Garth said: “Does that mean you're giving in?”

“I'll never give in,” Honesty said. “Not if it means marrying you.”

“Oh, yes you will,” Garth said, and reached for her. “You—”

But he got no farther. There came the sound of heavy boots on the deck outside and, with no knock, the door was burst open. Officers stood in the doorway. Alien officers, in alien uniforms, though Honesty recognized them. She had seen such uniforms the night the officers from the U-boat had boarded the *Laughing Girl*.

Honesty felt the same clutch of terror now that she had felt then. But through her flash of terror, she realized that Garth showed no surprise. It was almost as if he had expected these men, though he had not expected them to be angry. They stood there, three of them, their faces scarlet, the veins in their necks bulging like ropes.

“What—” said Garth, and got slowly to his feet.

ONE of the men took a step forward. “Swine!” he snarled. “You take our money, you promise you will lend your ship for our purposes, and now you and this girl—”

Anger choked him. He sputtered. He broke forth in a torrent of guttural words.

Honesty, her eyes wide, looked from

one to the other. Garth! Had Garth taken money from these men? Had Garth promised them the use of his ship? For what? Was Garth—a traitor?

Honesty stood up slowly. She had to do something. She couldn't sit still.

“What's this girl got to do with it?” Garth said. “She's from another ship. She—”

“We know all about her,” the heavy, accented voice plowed through the words. “We were told who she was. Another girl out there”—he jerked his head—“told us it was she who signaled your Coast Guard one night last week. The Coast Guard came. One of our U-boats was sunk. We do not like girls who do things like that.”

“And you,” another officer added, “are making love to her. As we came into this room you were taking her into your arms.”

“You don't understand,” said Garth. “It's just that I—” His voice trailed. He moved his tongue across dry lips.

The officers came into the cabin. They closed the door. They advanced slowly on Garth who stood there, his eyes narrowed, watching them.

Then, for an instant, his eyes went past them to Honesty. A trapped look flashed into them. In that moment he realized the spot he was in. If he convinced the officers that he hadn't betrayed them he was, at the same time, convincing Honesty he was a traitor. If he escaped with his life from the Germans, he would have to face the authorities of the United States.

All this Honesty saw in his eyes in that second he stared at her. Then his look went back to the officers. And his words showed what he had decided to do.

“I haven't doublecrossed you,” he said. “I made promises to you in good faith. I'll lend you my vessel. I ask no questions about the use you put her to. I won't need to ask questions when you pay me the rest of my money. I won't even need to go back home. I'll get a ship, somewhere, for South America and, so far as the United States Government's concerned—I'm dead.”

His eyes whipped across defiantly to Honesty's eyes. She knew, now, why he had wanted to trap her on his ship. His plan had been to buy two tickets for

South America; not one. She moved her eyes away. This was not the time to bother about things like that. There were other and more important things.

The officers were clustered now around the table where Garth had been sitting. Their eyes, their attention was all on him. Honesty moved slightly. No one noticed her. She took a step. Not a head turned. She took three steps, one after the other, and reached the door. The officers were leaning on the table now, their voices eager, pleased. Garth was smiling.

Honesty opened the door and slipped out.

The deck outside was blind dark after the golden lamplight of the cabin and for a second Honesty stood still getting her bearings and waiting for her eyes to become adjusted to the gloom.

It was in that minute that she knew she was not alone. Someone was standing near her. She could feel a presence, hear the soft whisper of breathing.

"Ruby?" she said quietly.

"What do you want?" said Ruby.

HONESTY didn't want anything. She simply wanted to know who was there, and she had found out.

"Garth is in danger, there in the cabin," she said, thinking as she talked. "If there's any way of signaling—I mean anything better than flashing a light—" She kept on thinking out loud. "Are there any rockets on board?"

"Yes," said Ruby, "in a chest. There. Behind you." Then, suddenly she became suspicious. "How do I know Garth's in danger?" Her tone was tight. "How do I know—" She broke off, grabbed Honesty's arms. "How *can* he be in danger. Those officers in there—" She stopped again.

"Don't be afraid of talking, Ruby," Honesty said. "I know the whole set-up. Garth was going to lease this ship to those officers, but he's changed his mind. And they're mad about it. They're going to set a time bomb and go off and leave us here, the way they tried to do with the *Laughing Girl*. That is, they are if we don't do something about it fast. . . . Help me open this chest and get the rockets out."

Ruby helped her, but she said, "The crew of the U-boat'll see the rocket, and then what will happen? The U-boat's

tied up on the other side of this ship."

Honesty had thought of that. She was ready with a plan, but she wasn't ready to tell Ruby about it.

"I think I can manage," she said. "Give me the rockets. Now you wait here and watch the cabin."

That would give Ruby something to do and take her mind off watching Honesty.

The scheme worked. Ruby turned back toward the cabin, to keep her eyes on the spot where Garth was. Honesty slipped away into the darkness.

CHAPTER XII

LOVE COMES HOME

SKIRTING the deck until she came to the spot where, not an hour before she had climbed aboard, Honesty peered anxiously into the dark water. Then she relaxed in relief. The dory was still tied below. The rope ladder still swung above it. Evidently Garth had not told his crew that he was keeping her on board and they had left the dory ready for the return trip to the *Laughing Girl*.

Honesty swung over the rail, groped with her foot for the rung of the rope ladder, found it, and started on her trip down.

It was a nerve-racking, perilous business, and nothing but the terrible importance of the thing to be done could have induced Honesty to attempt it. The rope ladder swung with each movement of the ship, the dory below lifted and fell with each motion of the water. If Honesty missed her footing, or if, in a sudden clutch to save herself she dropped the rockets—

She did neither. She reached the last rung of the ladder and, as she had so often done climbing down the wharf at home, waited until the waves lifted the dory to their right position. Then she dropped, and the next moment was crawling over the thwart and reaching for the oars. Silently loosening the painter, she shoved off.

She rowed for some time, then following the tactics Garth had used before, when she was out of earshot of the

Smile Pretty she started the motor. The dory began to make good time. Honesty, though, didn't need to go far. Just far enough so that the officers and crew of the U-boat would not connect the flares with the *Smile Pretty*. Of course, even at a distance such flares might scare them off. That was a gamble, like her gamble with Garth, but she had to take it.

She finally decided the time had come. She sent up one rocket, and another, and another. Then she crouched in the dory, her head down, until the flares had died in the sky and the sea was again dark. When she lifted her head it was to see, as the dory rose on the lift of a wave, the dark slim outlines of a cutter slashing toward her.

She couldn't believe it. The dory had sunk again in the trough and, with water all around her, she could see nothing. Then the dory rose, and the dark shape was still there, its phosphorescent wake shining out in great wings.

Honesty stood up in the dory and yelled. Her voice carried clear, but she knew it couldn't be heard above the sound of engines on the boat and the sound of the sea around her. Yet distinctly she could see the cutter alter its course and bear down more directly on her.

Pulling her breath in almost to bursting she yelled again. And heard the answering hail. After that the cutter circled, sending out the long finger of its searchlight for her. Finding her, the craft bore down. Five minutes more and strong arms were lifting her, broad shoulders bending above her.

"Honesty!" cried Jonathan's voice. "*Honesty!*" Fear was in the cry, and alarm. "What on earth—alone—out here!"

Honesty's first thought was, "What a miracle!" Then she knew it was no miracle. The men aboard the cutter must have received Captain Obadiah's message. They must be on their way to the *Laughing Girl*. Or perhaps, knowing that U-boats had been in these waters, they were coming back to check up. But now there was no time to ask questions or explain.

"There's a U-boat tied to the *Smile Pretty*, and Garth Holker is selling out to them!" she said, her voice breathless with haste. "Please hurry!"

Then, abruptly, her knees gave way. She swayed, and black nothingness engulfed her. . . .

HONESTY opened her eyes to a deafening roar, to bursts of flame that made the night crimson. Dazed, she struggled to her feet. She was still on the deck of the cutter. She must have fainted just before the cutter went into action, for the men had apparently laid her down, and had rushed to man the guns.

She stood for an endless minute, staring about her. Men moved past her and near her, moved with quick, sure, practised movements, and every movement told. She had never seen such discipline. Such swift positive action.

Then, rapidly, she saw more. Dark shapes out on the water, half submerged. U-boats. A nest of them. One—two—three! She couldn't be sure. She could only see the stabbing flame from the guns, and the terrible effect of the depth bombs.

She stood there not moving, knowing the best thing she could do was keep out of the way. And the fight went on.

Honesty lost track of time. Hours—minutes—it might have almost been days she stood there. Except that the sky was still dark, the stars still serene, when at last the guns were still, and the ocean empty of U-boats.

It was then that she saw a tall shadow come down the deck swaying a little, and heard Jonathan's voice.

"Honesty!" he called. "Honesty!"

"Here," said Honesty, waiting to see what he would do.

He came toward her and just stood there, in the gloom, his face a pale smear.

"Jonathan," she said. "Your wound the other night. Are you all right?"

He laughed shortly. "I'm on my feet. Any man's all right when he can walk." Then he added, "It wasn't much."

"Wasn't it?" she said inanely, and wondered what you talked about when all you wanted to say was, "I love you—I love you—I love you!" And you knew the man wouldn't believe you.

"You said—something—about Garth," Jonathan said, as if the words were being pulled out of him.

"Garth?" said Honesty, and then, in a rush, remembered. "Oh, my goodness!

Garth! Go get him—you've got to! I mean, I guess it's because of Garth you fell into all these U-boats. I guess . . . Oh, go get him and I'll tell you about it afterward!"

Jonathan strode off up the deck and in a minute returned with the commander.

"Tell him about it," he said. "I didn't begin to get it straight."

Honesty told him—not everything, but enough to make him order the engines slowed until she could explain the approximate position of Garth's ship. She could figure it pretty closely since the commander knew where they had picked her up, and she was able to tell about how far and in what general direction she had rowed from the *Smile Pretty*. The cutter swung to her change of course.

The commander walked down the deck to the spot where Honesty was still standing in silence beside Jonathan.

"You've done a good job tonight," he said. "It seems to me you're the kind of stuff the Spars need. Ever thought about it?"

Honesty caught her breath. To join the Spars! To work shoulder to shoulder with Jonathan. And then she remembered. Jonathan probably wouldn't want her in the same outfit with him. Jonathan didn't believe her, or trust her, any more. But she had to answer the commander.

"No, I've never thought of it," she said, still a little breathlessly. "Though, I will now. I mean, after the fishing season's over, I will. It seems to me now . . . Oh, food is so important! It's so necessary that we do all we can to feed everybody—the Army and Navy and the folks at home, and the whole world!"

"You're right there, young lady," said the commander. "And I think you're doing your share. But after you've done this bit, think about the Spars, won't you?" And he walked on, a square rugged figure in the gloom.

RIGHT after that they picked up the *Smile Pretty*, and thirty yards away, riding the waves side by side, was the familiar silhouette of the *Laughing Girl*.

Honesty's breath caught in a near sob. She hadn't known until then how

worried she had been about her own ship. Had they discovered her absence? Was Captain Obadiah frantic with anxiety?

Ten minutes later her questions were answered. She was taken with the boarding party aboard the *Smile Pretty*.

"It's not usual," Jonathan had told her. "No woman has ever before done a thing like this. But if Garth is to be accused and put under arrest—" His eyes seemed to watch her.

"Of course, I'll go," said Honesty, and felt a swift rush of excitement run through her.

They hailed the *Smile Pretty* and went aboard right after. Honesty's feet were just touching the deck when Garth's cabin door opened—and in the bright yellow oblong stood Captain Obadiah!

"Darling!" screamed Honesty, and ran to him.

"Jupiter!" gasped the old man. "Jupiter!" And then, "*Honesty!*"

"Don't!" gasped Honesty. "Don't break my ribs."

"But where did ye come from? Where had ye got to?" The old voice was shaking, the old eyes suspiciously liquid. "The boy on watch said he saw ye go overside. He said he heard a dory and after that a motor. So I sez, 'It's that lyin' fish-stealer,' I sez. 'That bloomin' female ijit must have gone, or been took. An' if he touches a hair of her head,' I sez, 'I'll have his hide before I'm an hour older.' So we sailed the old girl over here an' I've been . . . I guess maybe I've been half killin' the squid to make him tell me where ye were."

"Oh!" said Honesty. "Oh!" And she pushed past him into the cabin.

Captain Obadiah apparently had not exaggerated. Garth, slumped at the table, looked considerably battered.

"I didn't know," said Captain Obadiah, "that I could do so much in a pinch. But every time I think about you, and that mebber he had ye stowed away somewhere in the ship—well, strength seemed to come to me an' I give him some more."

"But didn't he—" said Honesty. "Didn't he—"

"Sure, he did," said Cap'n Obadiah. "He fit back right smart at first. After that I got in my licks first."

Garth looked up out of the slit of his

one good eye. Then the slit widened, as much as a black and swollen eye can widen. He got slowly to his feet. He swayed.

"The Coast Guard," he said, and gulped.

The commander came into the cabin.

"This the man?" he said to Honesty. She nodded. "Will you please," asked the commander, "repeat the conversation you have already told me?"

Honesty repeated it, watching the color drain from Garth's face, watching his lips go white and his eyes go wild with the terror that was washing over him.

"I don't know what they wanted the

came aboard on the starboard and they must have gone off to port."

"I see," said the commander. He was trying to reconstruct the sequence of events. "They probably observed the flares and came to investigate after they left here, hoping to sink whoever might be in trouble. As a matter of fact"—he smiled thinly—"I presume they hoped to sink us."

"Fat chance!" muttered Cap'n Obadiah.

THE commander had turned back to Garth. His voice cracked sternly.

"I arrest you—" he began.

But he got no farther. Garth lunged,

***"Give Me a Break, Kid! If You Don't
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Smile Pretty for," said Honesty. "I only know—"

"The purpose is obvious," said the commander. "The enemy has been having increasing difficulty in establishing bases for their U-boats. Many of their bases we have destroyed, more we have captured and converted to our own uses. They have become desperate. So desperate that they have actually contacted many of the fishing boats hoping to buy them out—as they succeeded doing with this man here."

"Yeah," said Captain Obadiah, "they tried to do it with me, too. I punched 'em," he added dreamily, "in the nose. I'd have punched these gazabos, too, if I hadn't just missed 'em."

"They weren't on board when you arrived?" said the commander.

"Nope," said Captain Obadiah. "I

beating with his fists, battering with his shoulders. So suddenly, so unexpectedly, had he moved that, for that first instant, the men were caught off guard. And in that first instant Garth was through the door, across the deck and over the rail.

"Get him!" yelled Cap'n Obadiah. "Get him!"

But Honesty had no time to think of Garth. For with his plunge another figure had leaped from the deck shadows and reached the rail.

"Hold her!" cried Honesty. "Hold her, Jonathan!"

Jonathan, from somewhere, was there. He grabbed Ruby in his arms and held her, struggling.

"They'll get him," the commander said. "Don't worry. They'll put him right on the cutter and run him back to Boston—and prison."

"I didn't know he was like this!" Ruby sobbed heartbreakingly, her voice rising in hysterics. "I didn't know! Oh, let me die! I want to die! I didn't know—"

Honesty went to her, held her, spoke gently, and gradually the girl quieted. "I love him, anyhow, Honesty," she said finally, still sobbing. "Is that awful? And there's good in him. I know there's good in him. I—I couldn't love him so if there wasn't. Could I?"

"No," said Honesty. And then, to her surprise she added. "Don't worry about my telling about the part you played with stealing the fish, Ruby. I won't tell. I think—when a girl loves a man as much as you love Garth—well, I think a lot will be forgiven her."

She lifted her eyes and they met Jonathan's. Jonathan was looking at her as if a new dawn were rising.

"Maybe I've been a fool, Honesty," he said, "but I didn't believe you, really, till I heard you accuse Garth and hand him over to justice. I knew you'd never do that if you loved him."

"Jonathan!" said Honesty. "Oh, Jonathan!"

"I s'pose," said Cap'n Obadiah, "that there ain't no law ag'in our transferrin' all our stolen fish from these pens to our'n, is there?"

"There's no law," said the commander, "against your taking every fish you can find in the pens and doing what you please with it. I think, from what I've observed, you've honorably won the cargo of the *Smile Pretty*."

"Oh, boy!" said Captain Obadiah. "Oh—boy!"

But Honesty, apparently, heard nothing of all this, because Jonathan was kissing her as if he'd never stop.

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Tony laughed gaily as he called to Cathy

Love Plastics

By SYBIL ALLEN

Cathy Richards tried to make him jealous, but Marine Lieutenant Tony Mathews had the situation well in hand—and heart!

CATHY waved from the float before the Richards' bungalow. Then she pretended to be busy with the killy cart while the launch from the mainland deposited Lt. Tony Mathews at the float next door.

Tony hated a fuss. He wouldn't want

everyone crowding around asking questions about Guadalcanal the moment he was home. He'd always resented any toeing in on his private world—it was his and he lived as he pleased.

Reckless, daring living through all the summers Cathy had spent next door

to him. Midget auto racing. Speed boats. Flying. Things had to be fast for Tony. He was a natural for the Marines, when the war came.

Cathy had known he'd come through. He was too far-sighted to be ambushed. Look how he had avoided matrimony!

She didn't know how he had done it, what with the sophisticated girls he brought to the bungalow for parties. But she knew how he had done it with her. . . .

Cathy had been seventeen, three summers ago, a blundering fool because of the warm tingle she got whenever she was with Tony.

"Tony," she had said, resting beside him on the sandbar across the inlet after a swim. "Tony . . . what do you think about love?"

He had laughed abruptly. "I'm not thinking about it."

She'd flushed at his laughter. "But, Tony, you must have thought about it sometimes."

"It's a trap," he'd said. "A trap to hold a man down." Then he'd turned to squint his dark eyes down at her. "I'll find out about it from other girls, Cathy, not you. It might spoil what we have."

He hadn't meant that, she'd thought. He'd meant little Cathy Richards was too tame. She had challenged him.

"What do we have, Tony?"

"We're pals." He had grinned, pulled her to her feet. "I'll race you back!"

PALS. They were still pals. There hadn't been a shred of romance in his few letters this year.

Cathy pushed the killy cart into the water with an unnecessary splash. Pals. It wasn't nearly enough when she ached to skim the stairs to the boardwalk between the bungalows, ached to throw herself in his arms and tell him of the lonely hours.

A hubbub of voices drifted down as Tony's parents greeted him. Cathy straightened, a slim, lovely figure in white pique shorts and a red halter, pushing back a tawny bob with sun-baked hands. She could go up now without being too obvious about it.

She climbed the stairs slowly, her throat tightening with a nameless ache. Tony was handsome in the two-toned blue, the smart military cap. He gave it all a *savoir faire* with his lean figure

and that trick of swinging his shoulders ever so little.

"Cathy!"

He met her halfway across the boardwalk, hugged her, and held her off while his mahogany-tanned face blurred before her.

"You still have those four freckles across your nose."

"Oh, Tony . . ." She laughed because she was afraid she'd cry.

"Frecklepuss!"

He hadn't changed. The war hadn't touched him really. She swallowed.

"They don't show at night," she said hesitantly.

"It's a date. I want to see!"

Cathy gasped. "Do you mean tonight?"

"Sure. Fourteen days isn't much. I told some of my buddies to meet me at the club. I thought you might help me manage a picnic for them on the sandbar tomorrow."

Cathy stiffened. She should have known Tony wouldn't give his first night strictly to her. He wanted her to manage the picnic for him. He never gave her more than the crumbs, she thought. Hostessing his picnic . . . Besides that, she'd have the odd moments tucked between bigger and better dates. A morning swim across the inlet, an odd afternoon, a chatty hour before dinner. And then he'd be gone with another brotherly hug!

"Is it a date, Frecklepuss?"

She nodded because she didn't have the moral strength to refuse.

Tony grinned and left her, a flash of two-toned blue and white. And Cathy went quickly to the glider on the veranda because it hurt to watch him go.

Cathy wore white organdy that evening. The dress emphasized the honey tones of her skin, falling away from her slim shoulders in a soft décolleté.

"I won't let him do it," she promised the vision in the mirror. "I won't take the crumbs."

It was perfect—at first. Standing proudly by at Shep's Bay Yacht Club while Tony's old friends shook his hand. Dancing close to him when he whisked her away from someone who wanted to talk about Guadalcanal.

Tony danced as well as he did everything else. Living in the moment, enjoying it to the full. He smiled down at

her, applauding for an encore when the music faded.

"You're right, Frecklepuss, they don't show at night."

Cathy leaned provocatively back from him as the rhythmic beat of the orchestra began again.

"There aren't any priorities on glamor," she challenged. "Couldn't you say I'm lovely tonight?"

Tony laughed and they were back in their old camaraderie.

"Other men say it," she added impulsively.

"I wouldn't take those 4-Fs too seriously, Cathy."

It was maddening to have him so far removed from jealous pangs over her. Tony whirled her to the far end of the floor and back, improvising on the Lindy.

Then Cathy caught a glimpse of Vincent DeMott coming into the clubhouse. Vinny was always at the club between divorces, though his boat was in the hands of the Coast Guard for the duration.

VINNY DEMOTT isn't a 4F," she said. "He manages his defense plant. Besides, he made a day nursery for his Ocean Avenue home!"

"Mmmm . . . A loyal defender for Vinny DeMott. Step carefully, Frecklepuss. He'll pack you off to Reno with a broken heart like he did the others. Though, frankly, I'd say you aren't his type."

This infuriated Cathy to silence. Tony meant she was too tame for Vinny, just as she was too tame for him. And it was true, she thought, the soft line of her mouth tightening involuntarily. There was nothing between Vinny and her except a few drives down to the dock when he happened to be going her way.

Cathy helped at the DeMott nursery three shifts a week. That, and her hours as a nurse's aide, filled in the summer months until the school where she secretaried for the faculty opened in the fall.

Tony took her back to their table.

"Scotch and soda, Cathy?" My buddies should be along any minute now."

She nodded abstractedly. She just had to prove to Tony she wasn't a drip.

A singer interrupted her musings and she saw a lovely girl in a flood of light

on the dais before the orchestra. The girl was beautiful, with her sleek figure and jet hair tipping her shoulders. Her pert face filled with mischief as she sang. It was a risqué song.

Cathy saw the interest in Tony's face change to pleasure. He hitched his chair for a better view.

"She's really good," he said when she had finished.

"Who is she?"

"Renee Rouge. I've seen her before."

He was putting it mildly. Renee Rouge lifted a small hand, interrupting the opening strains of her next number. She stepped forward on the dais, her dark eyes on Tony.

"I will sing this one for Lieutenant Tony Mathews of the United States Marine Corps who is here with us tonight."

There was a round of applause and Cathy smiled as Tony flushed under his tan. But the smile froze. Renee Rouge was singing "My Man," and she was not only singing it for Tony, she was singing it to him.

The girl came over to their table immediately afterward.

"Tony Mathews! I haven't been so glad to see anyone in a long time!"

Tony took both her hands in his.

"I'm glad to see you, Renee. You're looking lovelier than ever. Will you stay and have a drink with us?" He presented Cathy, and Renee slipped into a chair.

"Forgive me," the girl said to Cathy, "but it's so long since I've seen Tony." She turned her full attention to him. "It was Chicago, wasn't it? You came to the Club Nite. We danced. Remember? I sang 'My Man' for you then." The words tumbled out with a fascinated lilt. She laughed a light crescendo.

Cathy gritted her teeth as the reminiscing went on:

"Of course, I remember, Renee. That was before the world started spinning on Hitler's axis instead of its own."

Renee laughed and Cathy felt herself shrinking into the background, until she could bear it no longer.

"Excuse me," she said getting up. "I want to powder my nose."

Renee turned quickly. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to intrude."

"You haven't," Tony said. "Cathy and I are old friends. As a matter of

fact she's hostessing a picnic for me tomorrow. Would you like to join us?"

"But of course, Tony!"

Cathy pinned on a smile. "I'm glad you're free to come, Renee." Then she hurried away to the powder room, not daring to stay another moment for fear of losing her temper.

FRECKLEPUSS. Old friends. That was all Tony had for her, while Renee was looking lovelier than ever. . . . A sick wave of jealousy swept over her.

It wasn't only for Renee, she thought. It was for all the girls he had made love to. He *had* made love to Renee. She didn't know how she knew, but she knew.

Her nails dug into the soft palms of her hands. She had to do something to make Tony see her as someone more important than the girl next door. In the catch of a breath Cathy knew what to do—she had to ask Vinny DeMott along for the picnic tomorrow.

When she came back to the clubroom she winced at the sight of Tony dancing with Renee. The girl's pert face was lifted to his in animated conversation.

"I hate him," Cathy thought, and knew she only hated what he could do to her. The beat of her heart was smothered with the hurt that whipped up to her throat, contracting it with pain.

She turned away and saw Vinny DeMott at a side table.

"Why, Vinny! How nice to see you!"

"Hello, Cathy." He stood up, scraping his chair along the floor. "Would you like something to drink?"

There wasn't enough enthusiasm in the offer. Cathy widened her smile.

"I'd rather dance, Vinny. Mind?"

"Are you punishing Tony?"

It amazed her that his bored, tired eyes saw so much. But she couldn't let him know. Vinny was too egotistical to fall in line that way. She laughed, surprised at the merriment she managed to put into it.

"I've always wanted to dance with you, Vinny."

He raised a quizzical left eyebrow.

"Hasn't your Mama ever warned you away from Vinny DeMott?"

"Warnings against a man always make him more fascinating," she bantered.

The boredom suddenly left his face.

"Quiet rivers run deep, Cathy, or so they say. However did I overlook you?"

He drew her onto the floor, into his arms, and smiled down at her. He was an excellent dancer. Smooth was the word for Vinny DeMott, Cathy decided, and she silenced a quiver of fear. Maybe she was swimming in deep waters and was heading for trouble, but if Tony saw Vinny interested in her it would surely make him jealous.

Vinny danced her past Tony with deft, sure steps. She leaned back in his arms to flash her eyes up at him.

"You're a marvelous dancer! I'm breathless but I love it!"

"You're lovely, breathless. In fact, Cathy, I'm beginning to think I've been wasting time."

She slipped her hand into his when the dance was over.

"Why don't you join our table, Vinny. That is, if you aren't expecting anyone."

"Would you be disappointed if I refused?"

A reckless excitement stirred in her veins when she caught Tony looking her way.

"Terribly disappointed, Vinny."

Cathy believed she was making progress the next day when she saw Tony watching her and Vinny with a puzzled frown. The wealthy thirty-five-year-old business tycoon who married and divorced his wives so easily never left her side.

"Am I doing all right, Tony?" she asked, pretending to mean, was she managing the lunch to his satisfaction.

He nodded briefly. "You're doing fine, Cathy."

It was strange to miss the nickname she detested. Tony hadn't used it once all day. Her heart leaped. It could only mean she was outgrowing it.

SHE left Vinny, challenging Tony for a race to the raft. She flashed her warm smile when he finished a yard ahead.

"Vinny's awfully nice, Tony, isn't he?"

He shook the spray from his dark head.

"I guess he is if a girl happens to want diamonds and orchids and a divorce decree."

Her heart seemed to stop. Tony wouldn't care if Vinny did cast the matrimonial net her way.

"It's nice to be eligible!" she retorted.

She swam back to the shore, the recklessness growing. It reached dizzying heights when she looked out to the raft where Renee had joined Tony. The pretty singer in a vivid scarlet swim suit was bent over him, laughing. She rested her face on his for an instant, leaped to her feet to stand poised on the edge of the raft before she disappeared into the bay. Tony followed.

Cathy could feel the tears very near the surface. Tony hadn't followed *her*! She turned to Vinny.

"What did you say, Vinny?"

"Let's ditch the crowd as soon as we can."

"Sure, Vinny, where will we go? A night-club?"

She was eager to get away, to forget Tony and Renee altogether. She wanted to be gay, blot out all thought of the man who could splinter her heart to fragments because he didn't care.

Vinny said the day was a complete success when he brought her back from New York that night. He didn't seem to know what an effort it was for her. Nor did he guess the lips she gave him for a brief good-night kiss meant nothing more than that.

Cathy saw little of Tony the next week. The nursery and the hours at the hospital filled her days. Vinny filled the nights.

He rushed her as only he could. The theater. The clubs. Dinners and supper snacks in fascinating places. Cathy grew bone weary for rest, but she wanted Tony to miss her when she wasn't around for those odd moments, or to hostess his parties.

Cathy saw he was doing all right without her the night Vinny brought her back to the float and the gaiety of a party in the Mathews' bungalow reached her ears.

Vinny asked the boatman to stop back for him. The launch had other passengers for the bungalows farther along the inlet. He went with Cathy to the glider on the veranda, drew her down beside him.

It was a romantic setting. The music of the tide slapping the float. A full moon lighting the bay across to the

sandbar, with its dunes a fantastic stretch of silver shadows. But Cathy felt no response to the man beside her. She could only remember that Tony was giving her the go-by as she had never dreamed he would.

"I didn't want the crumbs," she thought, "and now I have nothing at all." Tony did not deign to notice that Vinny found her attractive. He was ignoring her completely. He might have left word with her mother about the party tonight.

Presently Vinny said, "The launch is coming back. How about dinner at my apartment tomorrow night?"

She didn't want to go—she wished she had never started this thing with Vinny. She had felt nothing all the hours she had spent with him, but only, ever, this disquieting emptiness in her heart.

She opened her mouth to refuse but at that precise moment Tony and Renee came from the bungalow next door and walked to the dock. They stood at the veranda rail overlooking the water. Tony's arm was thrown carelessly around Renee's shoulders and Cathy felt a flame of pain sear her heart.

ALL right, Vinny, you can pick me up at the nursery. I'll be through at seven."

She was afraid Vinny might be angry if she refused, and she didn't want him to leave angry tonight of all nights. She wanted to walk with him to the float where Tony could see them together, saying good-night. Maybe the sight of her in Vinny's arms would reach him as the sight of Renee with him always reached her.

He *did* see them. Tony called out to her when the launch got under way and Vinny was out of ear-shot.

"Are you sure the last divorce was legal, Cathy?"

She flushed in the darkness when Renee's light crescendo of laughter reached her. Tony was asking her if she were sure she knew her way around and it flashed across her mind that Tony might have guessed she was only baiting him.

"I'll ask to see the papers tomorrow night when I go to his apartment for dinner," she said.

But Cathy knew she would not go to

Vinny's apartment for a *tete-a-tete* dinner. She had been antagonized into saying she would go. Antagonized into flaunting the invitation in Tony's face. Now she knew Tony's reaction to Vinny's attentions. He was merely amused.

She was blunt when Vinny picked her up at the nursery the next night.

"I'm sorry, Vinny. I've changed my mind. It's a woman's prerogative," she told him, trying to sound light.

He looked at her for a long moment.

"Maybe I've rushed you, Cathy."

She was relieved that he wasn't angry.

"I'm glad you don't mind, Vinny. I guess I did lead you on."

He smiled. "You mean you knew I intended to ask you to marry me tonight. You mean you want me to know you wouldn't marry Vinny DeMott." He said it slowly, a little sadly.

"I . . . I don't think I'll ever marry anyone, Vinny."

"It's Tony, isn't it, Cathy?"

She nodded because she couldn't speak with the tears so close.

He took her cold hands in his, and she had never thought Vinny DeMott was capable of what he said next:

"I don't know if I'm in love with you, Cathy. I've grown a lot of scar tissue around this heart of mine that keeps me from feeling too deeply. You see, I was in love once, a long time ago, I couldn't have the girl I wanted but I've been shopping for substitutes ever since."

She felt let under the wire. Shep's Bay had wondered about him.

"Thanks for telling me, Vinny."

He lifted her chin with his hand and laughed.

"Well," he said, "let's not be morbid about it. I've celebrated a lot of things in my life. Now I'm going to celebrate my first refusal. Cathy! We're going to say good-by and good luck with champagne!"

Cathy reached home a little after midnight with Vinny's orchids pinned to the lapel of her linen jacket. Vinny did not ride in the launch with her. He left her at the dock, and never had Cathy liked him so well.

She looked down at the bay waters from the float, thinking of him. Vinny shopped for substitutes because a girl had broken his heart. And she won-

dered if Tony's actions ran a parallel. Did Tony choose gay, carefree girls because he still believed love was a trap to hold a man down? Was he filling the void with substitutes?

CATHY gasped. If this were true, she was working in the wrong direction by flaunting Vinny's attentions! It would have been far better to mark time.

She went slowly up the steps to the veranda, stopped, startled at the lighted tip of a cigarette across the walk, a lean silhouette in a wicker chair.

"You're early," Tony said.

"So are you." She wondered if he had deliberately waited up to taunt her.

He came over. "Did you have a good time?"

"Lovely!" she said firmly. Let him think what he liked, she decided. She wouldn't tell him she and Vinny were through. She wouldn't tell him anything. It was too late to go back to the beginning.

He laughed. "Little Cathy Richards! I wasn't sure you'd fall in line. But you did!"

There was something very funny about it all to Tony. He laughed again and Cathy turned away. There was a hollowness in his laughter that soiled her. She wished she could wash it away. . . .

There were shadows under Cathy's eyes the next morning. Tony's laughter had stayed with her the night through, haunting, tearing at her heart. Until she understood the hollowness. Tony's respect might have led to love if she had been patient, and now she had lost it.

Tony *was* using substitutes for love. It was what he'd meant when he said she had fallen in line. But he didn't like her for it. She had tried too hard for Tony's love and lost him with the trying. She had blundered at seventeen, she was blundering still. Tony would never marry Renee or any of the Renees in his life. They were love plastics and Tony knew their worth.

She tried to reason that it was better this way. She couldn't compromise with life where Tony was concerned. It was better to have nothing than a taunting friendship refusing to bud into anything more.

Cathy went down to the nursery very

early, anxious to lose herself in work. There were only five days of Tony's furlough left. It would be easier afterward.

She read to the children, and despite her empty heart, laughed when one of the little boys interrupted the story of the Three Bears with a piping, "But there wasn't any cream or sugar on the porridge because on account of rationing!"

He was a darling, she thought, delicately featured, with an unruly mop of dark hair. Tony must have looked like that. She gritted her teeth, kept read-

Having Robert was a wonderful diversion. Cathy found she could forget herself keeping him amused. She did not think of Tony until the child was tucked in bed. And then only to remember she would not see him. Tony always had a big date for Saturday—tomorrow she would be off to the sandbar before he was awake.

She kept her mind focused on Robert, planning the day ahead.

THE child was completely fascinated with the rowboat the next morning, with the lunch, the umbrella, the folding

My Sailor Lad



*My sailor lad has come to town,
I'm happy as can be,
With eyes of blue, and heart so true,
My sailor lad's with me!*

*My sailor lad is just a gob,
But he's so trim and smart,
That here on shore, I've made him more—
The captain of my heart!*

—HELEN ARDSLEY.

ing, but Robert climbed into her lap and she did not tell him to get down.

Cathy was glad she had let him stay there when news came from the defense plant that Robert's mother had been rushed to the hospital with acute appendicitis.

"I'll take him home with me for the week-end," she offered. It was Saturday, the nursery would be closed tomorrow. The child's father was a soldier at Fort Benning, and the nearest relatives were in Syracuse. Robert went along with her, enjoying the adventure of riding in the launch to the bungalow.

"I'll take you over to the sandbar tomorrow," she said, feeling his confidence in the way his hand stayed in hers.

table and back rests. Cathy chose a spot behind the dunes where they weren't likely to be disturbed if anyone came to the sandbar. Robert was all the company she wanted today.

But scarcely an hour later, a shadow fell across the fort she was building for Robert in the sand. A long, lean shadow.

"Cathy!"

It was Tony, his bathing trunks wet from the swim across the inlet. Obviously, he had not known she was there. He was looking from her to the child, back again, his face a study of emotion she could not understand.

The color drained from her face. She was too startled to speak. Robert sensed something wrong, perhaps Cathy's sudden tension.

"Is—is he a bad man?" he whimpered.

Cathy patted the tousled head. "He's a Marine, Robert."

He shook his head, disbelieving. "Where's his uniform?"

Tony smiled, knelt beside him.

"I *am* a marine," he said earnestly. "I'm not working at it now but I'm going back to finish my job."

Robert beamed. "My Mother is in the hospital. Cathy is going to keep me until my uncle comes from Syracuse. And maybe my Daddy will come home from the Army. Cathy is nice, isn't she, Mr. Marine?"

Cathy thought Tony would laugh. Tony always laughed. But he didn't now. He was searching her face and she realized he had not answered Robert's question.

She flushed because she could not read behind the gravity of his face, and his laughter of last night rang in her ears.

She burst out, "I wasn't going to tell you but in case you're thinking I'm not fit to have the child for a few days, I'll tell you I didn't go to Vinny's apartment last night."

Tony sat down then.

"Last night isn't important, Cathy," he said with a deep seriousness. "But today—this moment is. This is the moment I'll look back on and regret as long as I live if I don't make it count." He went on slowly, groping for words. "Something happened to me when I came over the dunes and saw you here like this. My whole plan of living crumbled away."

She stared at him. Tony's new earnestness, the deep sincerity in his voice. This was a new Tony sitting beside her in the sand. A dearer Tony than she had ever known, and she wondered if a man could be two people—the man he tries to be and the man he really is underneath.

This Tony seemed to be emerging from beneath the old recklessness and daring for the first time.

"I love you, Cathy," he said simply. "Perhaps I've loved you for a long time but I didn't know it until now. Perhaps I didn't want to love you, or anyone else. A man who treasures his freedom as I always have, doesn't fall in love easily. He's afraid it might check him—until it

grows big enough and he knows nothing will ever be more important than the girl he loves."

He bent close. "Cathy, if Vinny doesn't mean too much to you, will you let me try to make up the time I've lost?"

She found her voice under the turbulent pounding of her heart.

"Vinny . . ."

"I'll make you forget him. I'll make you forget his kisses. . . ."

He crushed her to him and her mouth trembled under his. She felt her eyes fill with tears. Tony's kiss was sweeter than she had ever dreamed it would be. If she had gone on with Vinny, she would never have known this quicksilver radiance.

SHE blessed Robert standing there round-eyed and solemn when Tony released her. Reverting to the simple code of forgetting herself for another, had brought Tony to her.

"Cathy! You're crying. Don't you . . . can't you . . ."

"I do love you, Tony. Only I can't understand it happening like this when last night you laughed so cruelly."

His arm tightened around her shoulders.

"Last night," he explained, "I felt free of whatever claim you might have taken on my heart through the years. I knew I could always push you out of my mind because you fell in line with Renee and the others.

"But when I saw the homey picture you made here with Robert, I knew I had to have you here, waiting for me after the mess is over. It's what we're fighting for, Cathy. Those we love, and the future generation. The preservation of the American home. It's my heritage and I've been denying it too long. Can't I make you see?"

She nodded. "I do see, Tony. I'm glad you see . . ."

Robert was growing impatient. "Aren't you going to kiss her again, Mr. Marine?"

"You bet I am! I'm going to kiss her all the way to Frisco if she'll marry me and go back with me as far as she can."

Cathy's eyes were shining with happiness. "The girl says 'yes', Mr. Marine. She's been waiting to say 'yes' for a long time!"



ALICE TISDALE HOBART

Keep the Flame Burning!

By ALICE TISDALE HOBART

Author of "The Cup and the Sword" and Other Famous Books

TO THOSE Americans who have lived outside their own country, home-coming is a poignantly arresting thing. I was one such and it seemed to me upon my return I had stepped into the garden of the Lord.

The crops in the valleys and on the plains were so abundant, the roads were so smooth and so far reaching, and in the cities and towns men, women and especially children were so safe and so free.

Safety and freedom to me, then, seemed like rocks which could not be blasted from

the soil of America. But I know, now, they are flames which must be tended every moment of our lives. Like the fires in our pioneer fathers' log cabins they must never be allowed to go out.

To that tending some give their lives, and some the ones they love best. Some of us are only permitted to give money. It is not possible that we should fail to give and let the flame go out!

Our government has asked us to buy bonds. Then let us buy and buy again.

A WAR BOND MESSAGE FOR ALL AMERICANS



"I don't think I can stay here if you go," Eunice faltered

Don't Break My Heart

By SUSAN CARROLL

Euny Baker distrusts love—and she can't forget her suspicions when the right man comes along!

THEY walked out in the moonlight on Euny Baker's last night home. They walked hand in hand and they made, as the townspeople said, "a handsome couple."

Tom Curran was tall, dark and engaging. He was considered a prize catch in Monroe. Eunice was little and fair, with softly waving corn-silk hair.

They took the road that slipped out back of Monroe. Euny Baker loved that old dirt road, its grass-grown ruts, its trees leaning overhead, even the elderberry bushes and wild grape vines which plucked at their sleeves as though urging them to stay.

They found a grassy bank in Ben Blue's orchard and sat down with their backs against a twisted old apple tree, smelling the fragrance of ripening fruit in the night.

Tom Curran put his arms around her and Euny lifted her face to his. His lips touched hers, softly at first, then harder and stronger until her pulses began to race and she felt that swift leaping of excitement rush through her body. It was grand, it was wonderful—for Tom Curran, the heart-breaker, the despair of Monroe's girls was hers! She could tell it in the grip of his arms, in the eager searching of his lips, in the fast,

heavy pounding of his heart, so close to hers.

Tom held her tight and asked softly:

"Euny, do you *have* to go away?"

"Don't, Tom," she said shakily. "I'm getting cold feet now and if you start on me, I—I'll just never get to Washington."

"Is that bad?"

"I can't make thirty-four dollars a week in Monroe," she said practically. "And we need money, Mother and I."

"I know, darling," he said swiftly. "And I can't ask you to marry me because the draft board says my number comes up in thirty days, and fifty dollars a month isn't much for a wife to live on. Is it, Euny?"

She put her shining head against his neck.

"Don't worry about me, Tom," she whispered. "Everything's going to be all right."

He kissed her smooth forehead and her closed eyes and the tip of her nose.

"Promise me you won't forget me in Washington," he breathed. "Promise you won't break my heart."

"I promise," Euny answered, and lifted eager lips for his kiss.

SO Eunice Baker went to Washington. All the way down she saw Tom Curran's profile as it had been limned against the stars in Berf Blue's orchard. And she heard his voice whispering, "Promise you won't break my heart." She hugged the remembrance to herself.

Union Station overawed her when she got off the train. It was a kaleidoscope of uniforms—Army, Navy, Marines, WACS, WAVES, SPARS, lady Marines. And so many distinguished-looking men that Euny wondered how many Senators and Cabinet Ministers she was brushing elbows with.

The War Housing Administration found her a room for six dollars a week, which was high by Monroe's standards but dirt cheap for Washington. Monday morning, bright and early, she reported to the new War Department Building just south of the Mall, to begin her new job.

She went through the whirl of fingerprinting, filling out forms and being photographed for her badge. Then she was presented to her new boss.

He was big and shaggy-haired and

young, with the silver bars of a first lieutenant on the shoulders of his trim uniform. He held out his hand while an amazingly gentle smile lighted up his strong, craggy features.

"Miss Baker? I'm Lieutenant Woods. Welcome to Washington."

He held Euny's hand while he ran his eyes over her approvingly.

"The nicest thing about Washington these days," he said, beaming, "is all the pretty girls who come here. They brighten up the place!"

It was on the tip of her tongue to say "Smoothie!" but she remembered in time that he was her boss.

"If you'll show me where I'm supposed to work—" she suggested.

"Oh, yes!"

But for all that, Euny found that Lieutenant Woods was a hard worker. He kept her on the jump all day. Yet he was never brusque, always polite, unfailingly gentle and charming.

"He's nice," she thought, and knew that a less considerate boss would have meant homesickness. As it was, Euny was too busy and thrilled to be homesick.

The uniforms, the new war slang, the grim professional way in which preparations went on to win the war exhilarated her. She felt the vast strength, the grim resolve of the whole country poured into the big stone building of the War Department. And she knew a brand new strength and faith in her country's destiny.

So the weeks slipped away. Euny made friends with the girls in the office, and Sundays she roamed the city, loving its odd mingling of modern architecture with the quaint old houses that dated back to George Washington's administration.

If only Tom could have been there! But Tom was preparing to enter the Army, too busy even to write often.

At the end of her first month in Washington, Euny awoke suddenly to the realization that she hadn't heard from him in two weeks. Had she fallen so in love with Washington that she was forgetting Tom? But why hadn't he written about his plans, the Army?

On her way to work this Saturday morning, she stopped and claimed her copy of the *Monroe Gazette*, which the newsdealer ordered especially for her.

When she was aboard a trolley she opened the paper, and Washington and her new life faded away.

EUNICE was looking at a picture of Tom on the front page. His arm was around a smiling, pretty girl. The headline read:

CURRAN ENTERS ARMY AND
MATRIMONY

Under it was a subhead:

Cupid Beats Uncle Sam by Ten Minutes

Euny's dazed eyes skipped over the lines of the story:

Just before his induction into the Army, Monroe's popular young bachelor, Tom Curran, was married to Miss Virginia Gilmore of Mills Road in a climax of a whirlwind war courtship. The happy couple—

Euny folded the paper quietly and kept folding it until it was a tight wad. At her stop she got out mechanically and saw no one as she marched straight to her desk and sat down tensely, staring straight ahead.

All she could see was Tom Curran's smiling face, all she could hear was his voice whispering, "Promise you won't break my heart, Euny."

"Yes, promise!" she said to herself savagely. "Promise I won't break *his* heart. Oh, the liar—the *liar!*" It hurt more than she had dreamed anything could hurt. "What a fool I've been! I promised him—and all the time he must have been laughing at me, planning what he'd do as soon as I was gone. Ran straight to that Virginia Gilmore——"

She turned swiftly.

"What?" she said aloud, breaking through her fog.

"I said," repeated Lieutenant Wood, knitting his brows at her, "is anything wrong? You look——"

"I'm all right," she said hastily. "Sorry." She stripped off her gloves. "Ready for work."

"Well, if you're sure," he said doubtfully.

She assured him more shortly than she meant, that she was all right, and so in his cheerful manner he piled the work on. It was the best thing that could have happened to her. In the rush and pressure of work there was no time for stark grief and self-pity.

At one o'clock Lieutenant Woods stood before her desk again.

"You look terrible," he declared. "And so, regardless of argument, I am taking you out to lunch. You are going to relax in my cheerful company until those lines around your mouth go away."

Euny started to protest. But Phillip Woods did not even listen. She gave up, still protesting feebly.

They had lunch in a restaurant where the linen was snowy white, the silver heavy and solid, the walls softly colored, and where music floated unobtrusively.

"Eat," said Lieutenant Woods. "Afterward you can tell me or not what is bothering you."

"Nothing's bothering me that isn't my own fault," she said.

He nodded wisely. "All right. Eat your lunch!"

She ate what she could. Wood talked.

"There's no reason why we can't be friends when that office door shuts behind us," he said. "In there I'll have to be Lieutenant Woods and you Miss Baker. But with a whole Saturday afternoon before us, wouldn't it be better to be just Phillip and Eunice?"

"Why not?" she said.

She was wondering where Tom Curran was now, whether he and Virginia Gilmore were still on their honeymoon or he on his way to camp.

"I beg your pardon?" she said, starting.

"I said finish your ice-cream," Phillip Woods said sternly. "We must be up and doing."

From the restaurant they walked across the green lawns of the Mall toward Washington Monument.

"Been up there yet?" Woods asked her.

"No."

"Shame on you."

THEY rode to the top and stepped out into the eight-windowed room in the heaven-pointing needle's point. A sharp wind came in, fresh from the hills of Virginia. Washington lay spread below them like a giant relief map. Eunice saw the whole vast-flung machinery of government, the shining white monuments to Jefferson and Lincoln, the placid, winding Potomac, the White House and the noble dome of the Capitol atop its hill.

"You'll never see anything more the heart and soul of your country," Phillip Woods said in her ear.

"It's glorious!" she breathed.

They walked past the reflecting pools and stood in reverence before the majestic, seated sculpture of Lincoln. They watched small boys sailing boats in the reflecting pool, and gazed across at the huge new Pentagon Building in Virginia, just across the river.

"I feel as if I've just gone back through our country's whole history," Euny enthused.

"That's the way you're supposed to feel," said Woods. He glanced at his watch. "Would it surprise you to know that it's time for dinner? And maybe a spot of dancing?"

"Good heavens, Lieutenant—"

"Phillip!"

"Phillip," she said obediently. "You've been wonderful, and I appreciate it more than I can say. But I'm all right now, truly I am."

"Have I done something for you?" he said. "Then now you can do something for me. Have dinner with me."

"I'm sorry, Phillip," Eunice said quickly. "It's been lovely, but I have things to do. Thank you very much."

He was taken aback by the sudden drop in temperature. But he bowed.

"I'm more disappointed than I can say. I'll take you home."

"Please don't bother. Just put me on the car."

Afterward she told herself she was pretty awful, treating him that way when he had been so nice. But she'd had a warning—watch out for that charm. The way to avoid trouble was to keep him at arm's length.

The trouble was that it was hard to keep Phillip Woods at arm's length. In the office he was all business. But evenings and week-ends he rushed her. And now that she had a grip on herself, she went.

"I'm asbestos-lined," she told herself. "Nothing can touch me now."

So some of the thrill she might have felt in visiting places like the famed Mayflower Hotel for dinner and dancing was lost in her absorption over keeping her resolve unyielding. She was so busy being cool and remote that she had little time for anything else.

Curiously enough, she had little time

for brooding over Tom Curran either. There was a scar on her heart now, and her sole concern was to see that there would never be another.

The one spot that could make her relax was the broad marble floor of the Lincoln monument where the great President sat eternally in the muted glow of the spotlights. She went there often, to gaze across the long stretch of the Mall toward the shining dome of the Capitol. It was here that Phillip Woods came to look for her when he did not find her at home.

"I've got something to tell you, Euny."

"Yes?"

"You're going to have a new boss the first of the month. I've been granted active service."

"You're going away?"

"The first of the month."

SHE turned it over in her mind slowly, visualizing Washington without him. He had been a part of the city since she had arrived and so he was as much part of her life there as the monument itself.

"I—I don't think I can stay here if you go," she faltered.

Lieutenant Woods' face lighted up.

"Euny, do you mean that?" With one giant stride he had caught her in his arms. "Euny darling, you've been so distant I haven't dared to say this before. But now— Darling, I love you! I've been crazy about you from the very first day. Euny—"

He ran out of words and so started to kiss her.

Eunice was confused, all mixed up inside. She didn't know what to do.

"Darling," he said. "Darling little iceberg. Eunice, I don't know where they're sending me yet. Will you wait? Promise me you'll wait, Eunice. Promise you won't break my heart."

Her lips froze on his. The same words! And the same charm! Another Tom Curran! Coming to her with a story about going away, knowing she would be touched, would be easy prey!

With arms suddenly strong she pushed him away.

"I've heard that before, Lieutenant Woods," she said, her eyes glinting. "I wish you luck in your new assignment. Good-by."

She ran down the marble steps, deaf to his calling. She had been a fool once, but not again!

Eunice wrote out a resignation and put it in the mail. She was back in Monroe by morning.

Her mother was startled at her return, but waited for Eunice to tell her why she had come home.

Tom Curran was gone. His new wife had gone home to live with her mother.

Only Eunice was different. She kept seeing the long straight avenues of Washington, the shining marble buildings, the waving flags, the green of parks, trees, lawns. And in spite of the highest barricade she could erect, she saw Phillip Woods' tall craggy figure and the gentle charm of his smile.

With nightfall she walked out on the dirt road. She went past the wild grape vines and elderberry bushes to the orchard and settled herself on the grassy bank. The stars blinked through the leaves.

Euny clenched her fist and pounded it into her palm.

"Once is enough!" she said tensely.

"Only for some things," Phillip Woods said, as he loomed over her.

"Phillip! How did you get here?"

"Your mother, Miss Baker, is a woman of great discernment. She gave

me pretty explicit directions."

"Phillip, you shouldn't have come!"

"I think you owe me an apology and—"

"I do, and I'm sorry—"

"I'm not interested in apologies!" he roared. "I was going to ask you to marry me when you ran out like that! Can't you live on a lieutenant's allowances?"

"Marry you?"

"Certainly, Dopey," he snapped. "What did you think I was talking about?"

IN A flash he was kneeling at her side, his arms around her.

"Oh, Phillip, I'm such a fool!" she wailed. "Just because you were charming and nice I thought you were like someone else who—"

"I know, darling," he said gently.

"My mother's been talking out of turn again!" Euny cried indignantly.

"Now, Baby, your mother told me a little and I saw the paper. So what? Who cares? Euny, will you marry me before I go away—marry me quickly?"

She put her arms around his neck.

"I love to hear you say it," she sighed. "Ask me again."

He asked her again. And his answer came in two soft lips pressed warmly to his own.

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**HEY-- NO
ROUGH STUFF!**

**NOT ME!
I SHAVE WITH
STAR BLADES!**



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ARMY NURSE FIRST WOMAN TO WIN SOLDIER'S MEDAL

THE heroism of Second Lieutenant Edith E. Greenwood of North Dartmouth, Massachusetts, in saving her patients from a hospital fire has won her the first award of the Soldier's Medal ever made to a woman. The decoration, instituted in 1926, is given for heroism not involving actual conflict with the enemy.

The fire broke out in the early morning in a station hospital at Yuma, Arizona, when a kitchen stove exploded. Lieutenant Greenwood gave the alarm and, with a ward attendant, tried to extinguish the flames. Finding that impossible, she removed all her patients to safety with the soldier's help.

LAND ARMY PIONEERS

THE first enrollee in the Women's Land Army in South Carolina was Miss Selma Lisenby of Chesterfield County. The next two were the Deese sisters, Mollie and Katie, also of Chesterfield.

Miss Lisenby's father runs a three horse farm. Both her brothers are now in the Army, so she is pitching in. According to Mr. Lisenby, his daughter, doing the work of both sons, has helped him to produce the best and cleanest crop his farm has ever known.

The Deese sisters, whose parents are invalids and whose older brother has gone to war, have helped their seventeen-year-old younger brother to produce a successful crop working before and after school and during vacation.

A STITCH IN TIME

YES, the old adage that a stitch in time saves nine is still good. This has been brought home as hundreds of thousands of women have gone into war jobs.

According to the Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, unless extra stitches had been added in time to a safety apron worn by certain women workers, the lost stitches would have been required in human flesh and hundreds of lives might have been lost. Demonstrating one practical application of

the campaign against carelessness—the "7th Column"—is the safety apron as it is made today. So that girls may carry a micrometer and rule to prevent it from falling from their pocket when they bend over, the bottom part of the pocket must be a flap. This flap is similar to a laboratory coat pocket. However, this flap is a hazard, since it might easily catch in machines.

To eliminate grave and possibly fatal accidents, the pocket is chain-stitched to the apron. Thus, if the pocket does catch in machinery, the whole thing rips off and does not cause the worker to be pulled into the machine.

GIRL "ESCORTS" IN SERVICE AT CESSNA AIRCRAFT PLANT

NEATLY uniformed girl "escorts" have been put into service at the Cessna Aircraft Company to meet official visitors and guide them through the plant. Army regulations necessitate such a service, and the girls have been given these jobs in view of the man-power shortage.

DIRECT TRANSFUSION

FIVE young Yugoslav nurses serving with the guerrilla bands engaged against Axis occupation forces around Kurpanj were not daunted when their supply of blood plasma ran low. As most of the wounded were fast reaching a state of collapse through shock, the nurses came to a swift decision.

Already two of them had given their own blood, and to risk giving more under the stress of battle was to risk becoming casualties themselves. The only alternative lay in obtaining blood from the enemy. So, leaving two nurses in charge of the temporary field hospital, the three remaining women crawled for more than a mile through mud and prickly weeds.

When they reached the rear of an advanced Axis gun position, they attacked and surprised the enemy into a quick surrender. With three live Nazis, they made their way back as they had come and, within five hours of setting out, had drawn seven pints of German blood to aid the Yugoslav wounded.

YOUNG PATRIOT

I WANTED my first job to be patriotic," says Anne Levinder, who operates a power machine for sewing powder bags at the New River Ordnance Plant. "That's why I didn't go into bookkeeping, although I'd studied it in high school and had a job waiting at home in Salem, Virginia." Anne, who is 21, travels a distance of 108 miles a day to get to and from her war job.

NO JOB SHORTAGE FOR IRENE

IRENE PIVONCE of Saline County, rural school teacher and member of the Nebraska Land Army, is certainly battling with a will on the home front. Her brother is in the service and her father is not able to do heavy outdoor work. So Irene has dug in and not only continues to teach school but is managing the family's 240-acre farm as well.

Last fall, she was able to drill 65 acres of wheat in her off hours. This spring, by working evenings until 9 p. m., she planted 20 acres of oats and prepared the ground for and planted 90 acres of corn. Now, having gone over the corn once and tended to the small grain harvesting, she is handling the heavy harvest.

She can and does repair and service her tractor herself, works from 12 to 16 hours daily. When she isn't busy on her own family's farm, she can usually be found helping out a neighbor with his problems.

NURSE IN MARATHON MERCY HOP

SECOND LIEUTENANT ELEANOR WHALEN of Chicago, an Army nurse, didn't let the fact that she was not a regular flight nurse stop her when an emergency demanding plane travel arose. Not long ago, when a Negro soldier suffered a broken neck, a sergeant caught a malignant disease and an officer was badly wounded at her station in Northwest India, all of them demanding

evacuation to the United States, she didn't stop to count 'em or weigh 'em.

The trip from Karachi to the Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D. C., is a little matter of 13,000 miles. But Lieutenant Whalen made it in five days by air without folding up. Furthermore, she brought her patients back in good shape.

GIRLS TAKE OVER STRONG- MAN JOB AT BOEING

AT THE Seattle plant of the Boeing Aircraft Company, one of the unusual jobs taken over by women is that of warehousing, heretofore regarded as strictly a job for muscle men. Stacking and storing heavy boxes and parcels once was done by teams of two husky men with a mechanical car loader. Now there are not enough machines to keep up with the work. This lack, however, does not dismay the ladies.

Girls somewhat above average size and strength are on the job. They form something like the old-fashioned bucket brigade and toss the boxes up into ten-high piles. Boeing is now on the prowl for more warehouse ladies.

WOWS ERIE ANNIVERSARY

ERIE WOMEN'S ORDNANCE WORKERS had a big moment recently at the celebration of the Proving Ground's 25th birthday. Reporters were on hand from New York City, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and other major cities to see the girls demonstrate test-firing of artillery soon to be used on our fighting fronts.

In zero weather and blazing heat, these EPG women handle everything from the 20-mm. gun to the 240-mm. howitzer. The girls take to the 37-mm. anti-tank gun the way they take to knitting needles. As effortlessly as trained soldiers they can send out a stream of 2-pound AP pellets over a 5,000-yard range. They take great pride in their job and "score" their "hits."



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"What kind of a game is this, anyway?" Biff was shouting

Return Engagement

By TUGAR DE PASS

*Nancy's pride almost got the better of her until
the man she loved put her in her place!*

DARLING, you've made me so happy," Hal whispered. "I was desperately afraid you were going to say no." His dark cheek pressed against the moonbeam brightness of Nancy's hair.

Over his shoulder, Nancy stared fixedly at the snowflakes swirling against the window pane. Butterflies, she

thought, little white butterflies. Annapolis would be like a giant, lacy valentine tomorrow—

A little shiver ran through her taut body. It was no good, trying not to think about it. The fact remained that she had just promised to marry Hal Randal. Slowly, she raised her gray eyes to meet his triumphant brown ones.

"Hal, it's not fair, really it's not—you know I don't love you—"

He stopped her with a quick kiss.

"Now, Nancy, you know we've been over that so many times. If I'm satisfied, why should you worry?"

"But I can't help worrying," Nancy cried. "How can I be sure you'll go on being satisfied after we're married? You say I'll learn to love you, but I don't know, Hal, I don't know!"

With a low, exultant laugh, he held her off, his eyes flickering approvingly over the ruby velvet gown which clung so enchantingly to the slim curves of her figure.

"Little goose, adorable little goose," he said softly. "Don't you know that marrying you is the one thing I've dreamed about this whole past year? Even if you never learn to love me, I'll still be the happiest man in the world." He paused for a moment, smiling, then added gaily, "And now let's hurry on to that dance and find your dad. I want to tell him the good news."

"Yes, dad will be pleased," Nancy murmured, as he turned to pick up her white velvet wrap from the chair where she had placed it.

HAL had come to live with them two years ago when Captain Ross decided to write a book on naval strategy and needed a secretary. Nancy knew that her father would be glad to see her married to Hal Randal, glad to believe that at last she had forgotten Biff Jarvis.

Biff had walked out of this very room and out of her life almost a year ago now. But would she ever really forget him, Nancy wondered dully as she slipped her arms into the wrap Hal was holding. Her eyes were drawn, as they had been so many times this past year, to a spot a little to the right of the chintz-covered sofa, the spot where Biff had stood that last night.

Almost she could see him, so tall and straight in his ensign's uniform, dark red hair gleaming with the sheen of old polished mahogany, blue eyes flashing with the anger she had provoked. It had been such a stupid quarrel—just because Biff had danced almost as often with Rita as he had with her! Why, Rita Raeforth was her best friend and a great pal of Biff's.

Even while the hot words were flying

thick and fast, Nancy hadn't taken the quarrel seriously. Actually, she had been thinking that quarrels were rather nice; it was always so much fun making up afterwards. It wasn't the first time she and Biff had quarrelled and she had never imagined that it would be the last.

And when she learned the next morning that Biff had been ordered back to duty, and gone without a word to her, she hadn't worried. He would write, of course. But the weeks and the months went by and he didn't, and Nancy's pride—that pride that had caused so many of their quarrels—refused to let her make the first move.

How thankful she was to be for that pride, for it wasn't long before she discovered that Biff was writing to Rita.

Walking unannounced into Rita's room one morning, Nancy recognized his handwriting on the letter she was reading. Rita had laughed and said it was only a friendly note.

"Nothing like the ones he writes *you*, my pet," she said, slipping the letter beneath her pillow.

Nancy almost told her then that Biff hadn't written her at all, but instead she said quite lightly,

"You're behind the times, darling, Biff and I aren't that way about each other any more."

It was after that that she started going out with Hal, and when Rita tried to talk to her about Biff she always managed to change the subject.

"Why talk about the past when the present is so fascinating?" she would laugh, letting her eyes follow Hal adoringly.

Hal! . . .

With a little start Nancy came back to the present and turned abruptly to find his dark eyes fixed intently on her face. She had an uneasy feeling that he knew exactly where her mind had been wandering.

"Goodness!" she laughed. "I was day-dreaming. Why didn't you wake me up?"

"I believe this is the proper way to wake a sleeping beauty," he chuckled, pulling her into his arms and pressing his lips down hard on hers. And because she was feeling guilty for thinking of Biff at such a time, Nancy forced herself to respond to that kiss.

"You do like me a little, don't you, Nancy?" Hal whispered happily.

"Oh, of course, of course I do!" Nancy cried. "You're so sweet to me, Hal."

I will forget Biff, I will! she told herself firmly. I'll do my best to make Hal happy, and perhaps I may even find a little happiness for myself.

BUT half an hour later, when she and Hal walked into the gaily festooned dance hall, she knew that, at least for tonight, she would never be able to forget Biff. For he was there! Wearing a lieutenant's uniform now, and dancing with Rita, of course, his head bent intimately close to her gleaming black hair, his blue eyes laughing down at her.

Nancy's heart began to behave wildly, and she could only stand numb and shaken, gazing after that aching familiar figure. He had glanced once in her direction and looked away again as though he didn't even recognize her!

"I—I think I'll freshen up a bit," she told Hal hastily and fled for the powder room.

"You're a fool, a double-deckered, triple-threat little fool," she said to her white-faced reflection. "Where's your pride, that good old navy pride? You go straight back out there and show him! Prove to him that he doesn't mean a thing to you any more, that you've forgotten him completely, just as he has you."

And ten minutes later she marched out of the powder room, red mouth smiling, silver-gilt head held arrogantly high, and if her gray eyes were a little too wide and bright, that wasn't surprising, was it? A girl was supposed to be excited when she had just become engaged.

"I located the captain in the card-room," Hal told her as he led her out onto the dance floor. "He's so engrossed in the strategy of a poker game that I didn't have the heart to drag him away, even to tell him the good news."

"Then let's tell someone else!" Nancy exclaimed wildly. "It's much too nice a piece of news to keep to ourselves." And perhaps when we've made it public I'll really begin to believe it myself, she added silently.

"Darling," Hal murmured, his arms tightening about her and his cheek resting for a moment against her hair. "I'm so glad you feel that way about it. I want to shout it from the housetops myself. But whom shall we tell first?"

Nancy glanced around the room crowded with familiar faces; she had grown up in Annapolis so she knew practically everyone here tonight.

"I know!" she said brightly. "When this dance ends, we'll tell the couple who happens to be standing closest to us."

"Even if they are perfect strangers?" Hal laughed.

"Even—" Nancy began, but broke off abruptly as the music crashed to a close. And then her breath caught in her throat, for there, standing so close that her elbow brushed against his sleeve, were Rita and Biff.

Hal, tucking her arm through his, was already saying gaily,

"Maybe you two don't know it, but you've drawn the lucky number tonight!"

"Lucky number?" Rita stared coolly at him, raising her brows a little. Abruptly Nancy remembered that neither Rita nor Biff had ever liked Hal. Why, oh, why had she ever suggested such a foolish thing!

"Lucky is right," Hal laughed. "You and Jarvis are the first to hear the wonderful, amazing, miraculous news—Nancy has promised to marry me!"

There was a brief, tense silence; Rita flicked a glance at Biff, then back to Nancy and Hal.

"Well, congratulations," she said. "But why are Biff and I chosen for this honor?"

As Hal explained, Nancy looked up slowly to Biff's face. He was staring at her with utter contempt in his eyes.

ABRUPTLY, anger welled up within her. He had no right to look at her like that!

"Aren't *you* going to congratulate us, Biff?" she asked sweetly, but her eyes were flashing gray sparks.

Biff's set lips twisted into a scornful smile.

"Of course," he answered coolly, and as the music started up again, "But I'd like to do it in style. Shall we switch partners for this dance, Randal, so I can tell the little lady *just* how lucky she is?"

And before either Hal or Nancy could object, he had caught Nancy's free hand and pulled her almost roughly into his arms. With a brief, frantic glance over her shoulder, Nancy saw that Hal's face

had turned a dark, angry red. But Rita had already slipped into his arms, and without making a scene, there was nothing he could do about the situation.

And why should he do anything? Nancy reminded herself bitterly. I mean nothing to Biff and he means nothing to me; there's absolutely no reason why he shouldn't dance with me.

But only a fraction of a moment had passed before she knew that at least a part of that thought was utterly false. The feel of Biff's arms about her was almost more than she could bear, the light pressure of his hand on her bare back seemed to sear her flesh, so acutely conscious was she of his touch.

Frantically she sought for some light-hearted remark to relieve the tension. The gold bars on his shoulder caught her eye.

"I believe you're due for some congratulations yourself, Biff," she murmured, and was amazed that her voice could be so light and casual when her heart was pounding so madly. "I see you got your promotion."

He gave a short, harsh laugh. "Yeah, I'm a full-fledged lieutenant now, but it didn't turn out to mean quite as much as I once thought it would." Then, abruptly, in the same taut voice he added, "Listen, Nancy, you can't marry Hal Randal."

Nancy's eyes flew wide. "I believe it's my privilege to marry whom I please," she said, each word icy. "And I can't imagine what business it is of yours!"

"You're quite right," he answered shortly. "It's not my business, but I hate to see you throwing yourself away on a man like Hal. Just because we were once in love with each other and— and aren't any more, doesn't mean that I don't care what happens to you." His arms tightened a little as he added in a softer voice, "I'd like to know that you were happy, Nancy."

So it's your conscience that's bothering you, Nancy thought furiously. She tilted her head and smiled straight up into his face.

"It's very sweet of you to take such an interest in me, Biff," she said, "but you can set your mind at rest—I am happy, and I'm going to be happier still when Hal and I are married. We're very much in love with each other."

There! That ought to show him that

he needn't feel sorry for her, that ought to prove that she wasn't marrying Hal just because *he* had walked out on her. And just to tie it up tight, she added.

"That quarrel of ours was certainly a lucky break for me, Biff. If it hadn't been for that I might never have realized that it was really Hal I loved all along."

"I had no idea I was disrupting the course of true love," Biff answered lightly, but his eyes were narrow slits of blue anger. "I hope you've forgiven me for being so dense."

"You couldn't possibly know—I didn't know myself until after you had gone," Nancy murmured, almost praying that the dance would end. She simply couldn't keep this up much longer!

"I guess I ought to feel flattered," Biff remarked. "I must have been quite a guy in those days, to black out the handsome Hal."

"Why do you dislike him so?" Nancy demanded desperately.

"It's not a matter of liking or disliking," Biff told her slowly, not meeting her eyes. "It's just that I've known Hal for a long time—he was in my class at the academy, you know—and, well—" He broke off with a little shrug. Then, gruffly, "Skip it!"

"As you pointed out a moment ago," he went on, "the whole thing is none of my business, and as long as you're sure you love Hal, that's all that matters." His eyes flicked to hers and held them in a tense gaze. "You *are* sure, Nancy?" he whispered urgently.

NANCY was devoutly thankful that the music came to a stop at just that moment, and Biff was forced to release her; looking straight into his eyes like that she knew she could never have lied. In spite of herself she would have blurted out the truth.

Before he could repeat the question she exclaimed gaily,

"Oh, there's Hal and Rita, just over there. Let's join them, shall we?" And she began making her way through the crowd, leaving Biff to follow behind her.

A moment later she felt a frantic impulse to laugh when she saw the worried, searching look Hal gave Biff as they walked up. He probably thinks Biff's been making love to me, she thought ruefully.

Hal knew, of course, that she and Biff had been in love a year ago, but she had been very careful to give him the same impression she gave everyone else, that she herself had broken off the affair before Biff went away. He couldn't know that Biff had not written her, even once.

Suddenly she realized that Rita had asked her a question and they were all waiting for her answer.

"Oh, I'm sorry," she gasped in confusion, "—the noise—I didn't hear what you said, Rita."

"I said this calls for a real celebration," Rita repeated, after an oddly searching glance at Nancy. "How about the four of us going over to my place for scrambled eggs after the dance?"

"I call that a swell idea," Hal agreed heartily. "Can't think of any nicer way to celebrate, can you, Nancy?"

Nancy forced herself to answer lightly.

"It will be grand fun, thanks, Rita."

But she didn't know how she could go through with it. So many times in the past she and Biff had ended an evening in the Raeforth's big kitchen, with Rita and an intimate group of friends. She looked desperately at Hal, wondering if she might not yet refuse, but he seemed so pleased that she could not bring herself to do it.

Hal had spent only two years at the academy, and that was more than five years ago. When he came back to Annapolis to take the job as her father's secretary Nancy knew he'd been hurt when he wasn't included in the gay social life of the town. Lately, because of her she supposed, he had been invited most places, but never before to one of Rita's select little parties.

The world was a fairy-land of white and silver when, hours later, Hal brought his roadster to a stop before Rita's home. Rita and Biff were already climbing out of Biff's car parked just ahead. Hal had turned on the parking lights but even that pale glow was enough for Nancy to see clearly the little scene which was taking place. Like a knife stab, pain shot through her heart as she saw Biff tilt Rita's chin and kiss her.

Rita's husky laugh rang out on the still night air.

"You impatient wretch!" she exclaimed softly. "Can't you even wait until we're alone?"

He's so much in love with her that he doesn't care who knows it, Nancy thought dully as Hal opened the door and helped her out of the car.

"I don't believe I can wait either," Hal chuckled, and before Nancy could say a word his arms were around her, his lips against hers.

"Break it up, you two," Rita called gaily. "I'm starving!" And she caught Biff's hand and ran up the walk to the house.

"And I'm freezing," Nancy gasped. Hal would have kissed her again but she broke away and ran after the others.

Hal overtook her at the steps and did kiss her again, but this time she put her arms around his neck and kissed him back, hard, for Biff was struggling with a laughing Rita and saying, "Hold still, you vixen, so I can show 'em a kiss what is a kiss!"

WHEN they tramped into the big, cheery kitchen a little later Nancy had to hold her breath to keep the sobs back. If Hal kissed her again or if Bill kissed Rita she would simply scream, she told herself, and they could think she was having hysterics or something.

And it didn't help matters to hear Biff calling Rita "darling" and "sweet-heart" and "precious" every other word, nor for him to act as though he couldn't bear her out of his sight.

When Rita went into the pantry for bacon, Biff followed her; when she went into the dining room for silver, Biff was right behind her. Nancy banged the frying pan on the stove as hard as she could to shut out the sound of the little scuffle she heard taking place out there.

Hal, standing beside her, laughed and bent to kiss the back of her neck.

"I believe you're angry with me," he teased.

"Because you kissed me? Don't be silly!" Nancy almost snapped. "You have a perfect right to kiss me whenever and wherever you like." Then she turned to him contritely. "Oh, Hal, I'm sorry—I—guess I'm just a little tired. We should have gone straight home from the dance instead of coming here. Let's go now, Hal—Rita and Biff won't even miss us."

"But we can't do that, it would be rude," Hal frowned.

Nancy scarcely heard him, for a sud-

den, amazing thought had just occurred to her.

"Hal, let's get married right away—tonight! Let's elope!"

Hal stared at her incredulously, then abruptly his hands were gripping her shoulders.

"Do you mean that, Nancy? I've been so afraid that you might change your mind before we could be married!"

"Of course I won't change my mind," Nancy told him impatiently. "But I think it would be fun to elope—so—so romantic." And once I'm actually married to you I can make my crazy heart behave, I know I can, she added to herself.

"Then we'll do it!" Hal's face was blazing with a triumphant excitement. "And we'll ask Biff and Rita to go along with us as witnesses."

"Yes!" Nancy nodded. If she could go through a marriage ceremony with Biff standing there watching her, surely she could face anything that might come afterwards.

She swung around as the dining room door opened and Biff and Rita came in with their arms around each other.

"You two have drawn the lucky number again," Nancy told them, in a high, gay voice. "Hal and I are eloping tonight, and we want you to come along as witnesses."

Rita gave a little gasp and the forks she was carrying clattered to the tiled floor.

"Heavens!" she exclaimed, bending quickly to pick them up. "Announcing your engagement and getting married all in the same night! Aren't you rushing things a little, Nancy?"

"Of course I'm not—I think it's just thrilling," Nancy said, but to save her life she couldn't keep her eyes from going desperately to Biff's face.

Biff wasn't looking at her though. He was staring straight at Hal.

"If Nancy loves you this much," he said to him, "I'm beginning to wonder if I could possibly have been mistaken, Randal."

"I told you, you were at the time," Hal answered easily. "How about proving you've buried the hatchet by coming along tonight?"

Biff turned away, lighting a cigarette. "Sorry," he murmured. "I'm afraid I can't oblige—duty calls. I'm taking the six o'clock plane for Norfolk."

Nancy's heart sank; she realized suddenly that the whole point of this mad thing she had suggested was to prove something or other to Biff, and if he wasn't even going to be there—

And then Rita was saying, her arm in Biff's smiling up at him,

"You'll have to count me out, too . . . You see, I'm flying with Biff."

RITA was going with Biff! That could mean only one thing.

Nancy swallowed the treacherous lump in her throat and forced a smile to her stiff lips as she turned to Hal.

"It seems we'll have to take our witnesses where we find them, darling. And if we're going to get married before morning, we'd better get started, hadn't we?" She threw a bright glance at Rita and said, "You'll forgive us for running out on the scrambled eggs—honestly, I couldn't swallow a bite, I'm so deliriously happy."

"I'll forgive you for running out on the eggs, but—"

"I think we'd better skip the eats, too, Rita," Biff broke in, giving her a sharp warning glance. "This most interesting discussion has taken quite some time; it's past four-thirty now and I have to pack before I meet you at the airport."

"Well, don't let us delay you any longer," Nancy told him stiffly. "Come along, Hal, let's get started."

Half an hour later she was tiptoeing down the stairs of her own home. She had changed the ruby velvet frock for a trim little navy blue suit with absurdly large brass buttons, a cocky, blue felt hat was tilted rakishly over one eye and she was wishing desperately that she could pull it down over both eyes.

How much longer she could hold back the tears, she didn't know. But I'm doing the best thing, I know I am, she told herself for the hundredth time.

At the foot of the stairs she hesitated, glancing at the closed door of the study. Hal had told her he wanted to leave things in order for her father, and she could hear him now moving about within the room. Well, she would wait in the living room across the hall until he had finished.

But one glance through the open door and she turned away with a little shudder. She couldn't wait *there*; the place was filled with memories of hours spent

with Biff. She walked quickly to the study, not wanting to be alone for another moment.

Hal was bent over the open fireplace, poking at a charred mass of papers when she opened the door.

"Playing at ambassador?" Nancy asked, trying to strike a light note.

He swung around, startled; evidently he had not heard the door open.

"Ambassador?" he repeated sharply.

Nancy gestured toward the burned papers.

"You looked as though you were burning the secret documents before taking flight," she laughed.

The startled expression faded from Hal's face.

"Oh!" he laughed back. "No, it's nothing so romantic as that. Just some old—er—papers that were cluttering up the desk." Then crossing swiftly to her side, "All ready? I've finished everything here."

Suddenly Nancy wasn't ready at all; perversely she wanted desperately to put off the moment of departure a little longer.

"Let's have a drink before we go, a drink to our future happiness," she suggested brightly.

"Swell idea," Hal agreed. "I'll go fix them." He cast a swift glance toward the fireplace and added, "Wouldn't you rather come into the living room? The fire's almost out in here."

"No," Nancy said quickly. "I'll wait in here. But hurry, Hal, it is awfully cold."

But Hal didn't hurry. He left the room slowly, almost reluctantly, Nancy thought absently. She dropped into the low wing chair close beside the dying fire and leaned forward to hold her hands to the few remaining embers.

THE corner of an envelope protruding from behind the wood basket on the hearth caught her eye, and she reached down idly to pick it up. It must have fallen there when Hal tossed the other papers into the fire. Probably just an advertisement or a circular of some kind—

And then, as she glanced at it, her whole figure stiffened and her hand began to shake so that she could scarcely hold it. It was addressed to *her*, and in Biff's sprawling handwriting! And the postmark was February the twen-

tieth a year ago, just a little more than a week after Biff had gone away.

Biff had written to her! That was all she could think for a moment, as, somehow, she managed to draw the folded sheet of paper from the envelope. All this time his letter had lain there, mixed up in the old ones Hal had burned tonight—

And then, as her eyes flew across the words, she began to feel almost sick with shock and incredulity—this wasn't Biff's first and only letter, it was his *fourth*.

She read,

My Dearest:

Are you bored getting so many letters from me—four lengthy epistles in one week? I hope not, for I've enjoyed so writing them, telling you over and over again how much I love you. Every time we quarrel I think I love you a little more, you're so cute when you pretend to be angry, funny-face. Let's make it a rule to quarrel at least once a week after we're married, shall we?

Sorry, I'll have to cut this one short; it's eight bells and I'm on duty. Just wanted to remind you once more that I love you, sweet. It's been such a long, lonesome week for we've been moving about so much that your letters haven't caught up with me yet, I'm expecting to find a whole batch of them waiting for me in Boston tomorrow.

Goodnight and sweet dreams,

Biff.

Her letters! Those letters that she had never written. If only she had written just one! If only she hadn't let a stupid thing like pride stand in her way.

Her tortured eyes went to the charred mass of papers in the fireplace. It was so clear what had happened. Hal had intercepted Biff's letters, he had been burning them tonight—that was why he had looked so startled when she came into the room! Oh, it had been quite simple for him to do it; one of his regular duties was to separate the mail, leaving hers on the hall table and taking her father's into the study. But why, why had he done such a despicable thing?

And now it was too late ever to repair the wrong he had done her, too late to go to Biff and tell him what had happened. Biff, his letters unanswered and quite probably hearing through mutual friends that she was going everywhere with Hal, had naturally assumed that she no longer loved him. And it wasn't surprising that he had fallen in love

with Rita. They had always liked each other.

Too late? Suddenly Nancy was on her feet. The clock on the mantel had just struck the half-hour—five-thirty! If she hurried it was barely possible that she could get to the airport before the plane took off. She *had* to see Biff once more, had to tell him that she hadn't simply ignored his letters. Even though he was in love with Rita now, she wanted him to know the truth—

She was running now, snatching her coat from a chair in the hall. She could hear the rattle of ice cubes in the kitchen and breathed a silent prayer for the length of time it took to loosen them.

Down the front walk to Hal's roadster. Had he left the key in it? Her breath came out in a sharp sigh of relief as her fumbling fingers found it. A moment later she was driving madly, recklessly along the slippery road.

When she slithered to a stop at the airport she didn't even wait to switch off the engine; almost before the car stopped she was out and running frantically across the field toward the huge silver plane. The big propellers were turning and people were already climbing aboard. In the dim light of the dawn, her eyes sought wildly for a tall familiar figure.

"Biff! Biff!" she screamed in the face of the wind.

HE COULDN'T possibly have heard her, but by some miracle he must have caught sight of her, for there he was, hurrying to meet her. Rita, too, almost running to keep up with his long-legged stride.

"Nancy! What on earth—" A sharp gust of wind drowned the rest of his words, but Nancy thought she had sensed impatience and annoyance.

Oh, this was madness! How had she ever imagined she could say the things she wanted to say with Rita here with Biff, Rita who was her friend and had only fallen in love with Biff after she herself had renounced all claim on him?

"I—I just thought I'd like to say good-by," she stammered miserably as they came up to her.

"Well, for heaven's sake!" Rita exclaimed. Then suddenly her dark eyes were searching Nancy's face. "Where's

Hal?" she demanded. "I thought you two would be on your way to get married by now."

Nancy's chin came up.

"I'm not going to marry Hal, ever," she said. At least she could tell Biff that much; he hadn't wanted her to marry Hal so maybe it might make him feel a little more friendly toward her to know that she had changed her mind. She needn't tell him *why*.

"But why?" Biff asked sharply. "You said you loved him—"

His eyes were boring into hers, and without meaning to at all, Nancy heard herself saying.

"I *never* loved him. It was just—just that I waited and waited and never heard from you and I knew you were writing to Rita and so—"

"What do you mean, you never heard from me?" Biff broke in, his hands gripping her shoulders, shaking her. "You know perfectly well I wrote to you. It was *I* who never heard from *you*." He was almost shouting now, his eyes blazing down in hers. "What kind of a game is this anyway?"

"It's no kind of a game!" Nancy shouted back at him. "I didn't get your letters because Hal took them—I caught him burning them tonight. But you needn't let it worry you: I have no intention of trying to come between—" suddenly she choked. She and Biff were at it again, quarreling, but this time it wasn't fun, because they'd never have a chance to make up. In a few minutes Biff and Rita would be on the plane together. . . .

"Well, I hope you realize now that I wasn't mistaken about the fellow," Biff growled, shaking her again. "He was always a cheat. He was thrown out of the academy because he was suspected of copying another fellow's exam paper—mine to be exact. It was all kept quiet because they couldn't prove anything, but the board took my word instead of his and he's hated me ever since."

Just then a steward with an armful of luggage hurried past.

"Plane takes off in five minutes," he called. "You folks better get aboard."

"Oh!" Nancy choked, twisting herself loose from Biff's grasp and throwing her arms around Rita. "I do hope you're going to be very happy." Over her shoulder she said to Biff, even man-

aging to smile. "I just wanted you to know about the letters. You and Rita—"

She broke off abruptly as Rita burst into a peal of laughter.

"Goose!" Rita gasped. "Biff and I aren't in love! I persuaded him to put on that act tonight in hopes that the green-eyed monster might make you come to your senses. I never believed you really loved Hal Randal, though I couldn't imagine what had happened to you. If you had only *told* me you hadn't heard from Biff, I could have straightened everything out."

"But—but he was writing to you—"

"Hoping I could put in a word for him with you, and I must say I did my darnedest. But that pride of yours kept rearing its head and I couldn't get to first base. I wasn't convinced until tonight, though—"

YOU'D better run for that plane, Rita," Biff broke in. "Your grandmother will be worried if you don't turn up in Richmond tomorrow."

"Grandmother!" Nancy gasped.

"Blessings on you, my children," Rita called gaily and sped for the plane.

"She—she wasn't going with you?"

Nancy stammered, raising wide eyes to Biff. She felt as though she were on a merry-go-round going double time. Things were happening so fast she couldn't seem to make sense out of them.

"In words of one syllable," Biff laughed, "she's going to visit her grandmother in Richmond!"

The plane's motors roared. Nancy suddenly came out of her daze.

"Oh, Biff, hurry, hurry!" she cried. "You're going to miss it, and you said that you had to be back on duty tomorrow."

Biff shook his head, still laughing.

"I just said that because I couldn't bear to stick around after you told us you were actually going to marry Hal tonight. Matter of fact, I've got a week's leave."

Nancy never knew exactly what happened then, but the result was very satisfactory. For Biff's arms were holding her close and his lips were pressed hard against hers in a breathtaking kiss. Her heart began to pound and she scarcely heard the roar of the plane as it took off.

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Finally when the sound of the motor faded away into the distance Biff raised his head and whispered against her cheek:

"You haven't told me that you still love me, but you do, don't you, little Nancy?"

"Always and forever," Nancy whispered back, knowing now, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that he felt the same way about her.

"I'm darn glad I got my promotion," Biff sighed. "Now that I've got you, too!"



HAVE you met your Fall silhouette? Now is the time to get in trim for Fall clothes. You are shopping for them, I know. Give your new ensemble a fair chance—bulges and that extra pound are taboo if you wish to step out gayly into the fashion limelight.

Before you don that super Fall outfit, get in front of your mirror and give yourself a thorough once-over. Start at the top of your head and decide if, first, your hair is in good condition—or if it is streaked from the sun and dry from exposure. If it is, get to work on it immediately with oil shampoos and vigorous sessions of brushings.

Is your skin smooth and soft—or does that, too, show the drying effects of the sun? If it isn't perfect, determine to make it so by getting more sleep, creaming it well, keeping it immaculately clean and changing your diet to include more milk, fresh fruit and lots of liquids. You'll be amazed at the results!

Handy Hints

Would your hands and nails pass inspection over the dinner table—or have you let your victory garden, bandage rolling, etc., get the upper hand? If your nails are split and the cuticle ragged, give them the oil treatment.

First, file them all to the same length and then scrub them well. Now wrap little bits of cotton soaked in oil around the ends of your fingers and let them set there for a while. Take a nap and relax while this is going on.

Now scrub again and push the cuticle back gently with a towel. Rub hand cream into the knuckles and fingers. Two or three treatments like this should make your hands soft and well groomed again.

How Do You Stand?

Is your posture good enough to show off that new dress well? Do you keep your chin tucked in, your chest out, your tummy flat and your hips in their proper place? Unless you can answer "yes" to all these, you're not being fair to your new clothes—or yourself.

Have you put on any extra weight? With ice cream sodas and Summer sundaes, it is

only too easy! If you have, promise yourself not to wear that new outfit until you have exercised off or dieted off all the excess weight and lumps. Be stern with yourself.

It's Patriotic to Conserve!

Now that you have decided what you have to do about yourself, go through your closet carefully and decide which of your last year's things you can count on for this season. Don't think you have to do a whole new wardrobe. Spend some time going over your things carefully, pressing some, sewing new collars on others, fixing hems and buttons and all the other gadgety items that take time. It's patriotic to conserve!

And remember, this year, it's smart to look efficient, brisk and well scrubbed as to face. But also remember your duty as the gal-back-home and be feminine and soft in your off-duty hours.

The Slim Silhouette

Since Uncle Sam has gone into the fashion business, the Fall styles will feature the slim silhouette. And there can't be any back talk about his orders to conserve fabrics. The new legal line of our dresses is a straight and narrow one, and to keep our ladyish curves well inside this line is going to take some doing.

Everybody knows how good a narrow, narrow line can look since Mme. Chiang Kai-shek made the rounds of our cities. And you can't deny that she looks beauteous in her pencil-line dresses. And I hear tell that our gals love that long and narrow look. There

will be the sheath dress, the chemise dress and that "slip of a dress" for evening wear.

There will be a widening of the shoulder line to balance up the narrow parts. There will be lots of softening details so you won't look too severe and hard. You'll have extras, like peplums, flounces, jabots and drapery.



There will be the soft flattery of furs and hats to help along.

Teen agers will get first whack at the pretty checks for Autumn. You will see checks done in wools and mixtures—fresh blue and white, green, red and yellow with white—and with that very young look.

And the big timer in the millinery world is the newest edition of the beret—it's a giant size that comes tumbling over the forehead.

Be a Pin-up Gal

Look pretty, please, if you're planning to have your picture taken. That man of yours would like one for his special "pin-up." More than anything, you'll want to look your very best—natural, but just the tiniest bit glamorous.

No doubt, too, you're a little vague about the make-up you should wear. You've heard that certain tricks of the trade conceal faults, and others bring out your best points—and you want to know about them. Here they are:

The camera has a tendency to eat up the natural vividness of your face—and at the same time has a nasty little way of focusing attention on little complexion flaws which the naked eye overlooks. So your photographic make-up must do two things: it must bring out your good features and must cover up the small blemishes and fine lines.

Use a much darker foundation than you ordinarily wear to avoid that washed-out look.

Either a cake foundation or cream base. Use dark powder over it generously. Take your time drawing the outline of your lips with a lip brush—a hair-line's difference will completely change the expression of your face. Check with the photographer before deciding on your lipstick shade. Dark red lipstick shows up black on some kinds of film and gives you a hard look, while the same lipstick appears natural on another kind of film.

Even if you don't use eye make-up you should for a photograph. Eye shadow is a "must." Use it heavily nearest the lashes and fade it up towards the brows and out towards the temples. Use a sharply pointed eyebrow pencil to fill in the blank patches of your brows, first brushing the hairs up and out. Avoid a hard, heavy extended line. Mascara is applied with the side of the brush to avoid "beading" the lashes. A line drawn (eyebrow pencil) across the upper lid of your eyes, close to the eyelashes and slightly extended out at the corners will add depth to your eyes, make them appear larger.

Do not use rouge except as a shadow. A faint tracing of it on too prominent features minimizes them in the final picture. Darker foundation, too, will make such features less noticeable.

Relax while you pose . . . forget everything . . . just think of HIM!

Hallowe'en Party

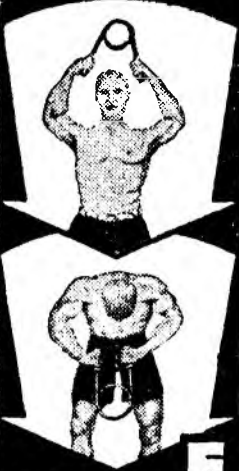
Hallowe'en used to be fun when you were just a little girl and the boy next door came over to duck for apples. Remember? But the boy next door is in the Army now, or the Navy, or the Marine Corps!

Why not have a Hallowe'en party for the servicemen stationed nearest your home? For each of them is a "boy next door" to someone. Make it a gala evening for those boys in training. Ask some of your neighbors to help with the party. And be sure to include an armful of pretty girls. Then all you will need for a good Hallowe'en party are the traditional games, some jack-o'-lanterns and good food.

There are all the well-known games like bobbing for apples, spin-the-bottle and blind-man's buff. But have you ever tried to bite an apple hung on a string when your hands are held behind your back and there's a partner biting from the other side?

Play spin the bottle with variations. Draw a large wheel on a piece of heavy cardboard

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and tack securely to the floor. Write short fortunes in the various sections of the wheel. Each player spins the bottle in the center of the wheel—and if it stops with its neck pointing to "you'll marry a red-headed woman with a ferocious temper"—that's fate!

The Sultan's Favorite

Another game is "The Sultan's Favorite." Have all the girls go into an adjoining room with a curtain completely covering the doorway. The curtain should have two holes, cut just large enough and close enough together for a pair of eyes to look through.

The lights should be turned off and a pair of candles (or for safety's sake, a flashlight) lighted on the boys' side of the curtain and placed close enough to the peepholes to light up the eyes that look through.

This game may be played in two ways. Tallies can be kept, each boy identifying the eyes in the order in which they appear and writing the name of the girl he thinks to be their owner. A prize is given to the boy who correctly matches the greatest number of eyes to the correct owner. Or, each boy, as he sees the eyes, may call out if he believes them to belong to his partner for the evening. In case of error, the boy who claims a pair of eyes belonging to someone else's girl must continue through the evening with his new "Sultan's Favorite."

If you have a fireplace, you might like an old, old game which is still as enchanting as it was in our grandfather's day. A boy and girl each take a chestnut and put these to roast side by side on the coals. The actions of the chestnuts predict the course of their love! If one hisses and sputters, it indicates a bad temper on the part of the owner of that chestnut.

If one or both pop away from each other, the couple will be parted. But if the two chestnuts roast tranquilly side by side, the couple will live long and happily together.

After everyone is "played out" serve your refreshments:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Chicken and Olive Sandwiches | |
| Chocolate Doughnuts | |
| Red Apples | Oranges Nuts |
| | Coffee |

After supper, let the ghost stories begin! Of course, all good ghost stories are told in the dark. Leave one jack-o'-lantern lighted or rely on the glow from the fire.

Dress for Winter

This year dress for winter! If you shiver at the thought of fuel shortages, take comfort from the fact that it can make a healthful girl out of you. Doctors point out that a

coolish room is less hospitable to germs, and it exposes you to less violent temperature changes when you go outdoors.

But the less heat you have indoors, the more protection your clothing must supply. If you think winter undies must make you look like a well-plumped pillow, you're all wrong. War-styled knitwear in woolen mixtures adds no more bulk than skin-fitting tights do to a circus-rider's figure. Skin-fitting tights describe the panties that keep you snug from the waist to just below the knees.

You can wear these with vests, or, if you prefer, you can go in for all-in-one undies. If you're the kind that doesn't thaw out all winter, you can top undies with a slim-making knit petticoat and wear it instead of a flimsier piece.

Best warmers for top layers of clothing are woolen or part woolen suits and dresses. When you need to add warmth to suit, have a woolen blouse that you can slip into. Pull a sweater on over your woolen dress when the thermostat drops or hearth fires turn to ash.

For pre-bedtime padding about, have a woolen housecoat and some fur or felt-lined slipper. For sleeping, switch from flimsies to flannels.

If you are an air-raid warden who may have to fall out at the shriek of a siren, sleep in flannel pajamas or snug ski-styled union suits—over which you can pull on your out-you-go slacks.

Filmy hosiery, which never pretended to keep legs warm, can be worn over sheer, flesh-colored inner-stockings, which needn't make the legs look thicker, or can be replaced—and this year with no sacrifice of smartness—by thicker lises, woolen-knits and nylon fleece. These thicker and warmer stockings are all set to defend the reputation of the world's loveliest legs.

Even in sheerer stockings, you can have your pretties and your comfort, too, thanks to thicker, more warmly reinforced feet. For outright comfort, you can always depend on woolen socks worn over sheer stockings, to keep your two feet as warm as toast.

Those Small Repairs

Perhaps the man of the family is with the troops or up to his eyes in defense work—and you hate to tackle those small repairs. You keep putting them off until suddenly one day your conscience nudges you, you roll up your sleeves and go to work.

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[Turn page]

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sandpaper smooth and finish with paint or wax to match the surrounding surface.

For doors and drawers that stick, wait for good dry weather and then rub paraffin or one of the special preparations sold for just that purpose on the points that stick.

Graphite is the cure for a stiff lock; you can buy a tube of it at the hardware store. Oil makes the lock gummy and even stiffer.

To mend broken furniture, clean off all old glue with hot water, soaking wood no



more than necessary. When dry, sandpaper the surfaces to be glued. Apply cabinet maker's glue to both surfaces; fit together solidly, wiping off excess glue. Tie up mended joint with a first-aid's tourniquet twist and leave until glue is well set.

Don't let your door squeak in pain. All they need is a drop or two of oil applied to the pins in the hinges.

What to Send Service Men

Until Johnny comes marching home again, his folks and friends will be sending him things. And it's a safe bet that he gets a lot of things he can't use, doesn't need and would like to swap for something else.

First of all the boys want the most economical things you can send—letters, frequent and fat. What else to send? Here's a clue from a serviceman. "The woods are full of fudge and cookies. Send us cigarettes, tooth paste, socks and soap."

Here, in order of votes, are the most desirable things to send: Cigarettes, money, toilet and shaving articles, candy, books, articles of clothing and stationery.

If you're dead-set on something to eat, whip up this fruit cake which should reach him in time for the holidays:

Warm together 1½ cups molasses, 1 cup butter or margarine. Add 1 cup peach jam, 1 cup finely chopped

butternuts or walnuts, ½ cup each caudied orange and lemon peel, and 3 cups seedless raisins which have been cut up. Sift together 5 cups all-purpose flour, a teaspoon each cinnamon and grated nutmeg, ½ teaspoon each allspice and ground cloves. Mix together 1 cup thin applesauce, ½ cup quince or other jelly and two well-beaten eggs. Add the sifted dry ingredients alternately with the applesauce mixture. When all ingredients are combined, blend together very thoroughly. Bake in a greased, paper-lined pan in slow oven 275 degrees Fahrenheit, for 1½ to 2 hours. Put pan of hot water in oven to keep crust from becoming too hard, and if cake seems to be baking too fast cover with brown paper. When done, remove from pan, cool, sprinkle with a little sherry wine. Wrap securely in waxed paper before packing.

When you do send stuff to that man of yours remember that all articles should be packed in substantial boxes or containers, and be covered with strong wrappers. Furthermore, as each parcel is subject to censorship, you can save time on its delivery by wrapping it so the contents can be readily inspected.

Fur Coat Facts

So you're buying a fur coat! Next to red flannel underwear, a good investment in this fuel-rationed winter may be—for you—a fur coat. What with more walking and more waiting on street corners for buses and trolleys, and the need to save on wool, a bunny wrap is a sensible idea. Of course, you won't buy one unless you really need a coat and can afford the fur kind.

Buying a fur coat is a long-term investment, not to be made on impulse, especially these days when wise buying is a patriotic duty. Remember that dealers are not permitted to misrepresent and the label on your coat should be a true statements of its type of fur. Be sure you don't throw away your money on a shoddy garment.

To judge the quality of a fur coat, ask to see the same kind of fur in several price ranges. Good furs are bright and lustrous; low-grade furs are apt to be dull and lifeless in appearance. Fur should be especially thick at important friction points—the edges, cuffs, sleeves, pockets, back of the neck and bottom of the coat.

Be sure the coat fits properly. Fur coats should be loose and roomy, and should hang from the shoulders. A well-fitted coat never feels bulky or heavy. Make sure there is no strain on the fur across the back, under the arms, or in the sleeves. This is especially important in coats made of weak furs or small pelts.

In general, remember that short, flat, or medium-haired furs are most flattering to short figures, while medium, high or very high haired furs look best on tall figures.

Take care of your coat, once it is yours. Don't drop it on chairs, or drape it on radiators, or throw it around. Furs are delicate.

(Continued on page 89)

To People who want to write but can't get started

Do you have that constant urge to write but the fear that a beginner hasn't a chance? Then listen to what the editor of Liberty said on this subject:

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Back the attack with War Bonds

This space contributed to the Third War Loan Campaign by

THE PUBLISHER OF THIS MAGAZINE

YOUR HOPE CHEST

(Continued from page 87)

Hang them in wide, well-padded hangers and keep them in your coolest closet. Heat may dry out some of the oils of the leather. It's a good idea to shake out a fur coat before hanging it up, and after removing it from a hanger. The fur will remain fluffy.

Never dry a wet coat on a radiator. Comb it lightly with the flow of the fur, then brush it in the same direction. Shake the coat, then hang it in a cool room, where air circulates freely.

Try not to wear out one part of your coat quicker than the rest of it by carrying packages, books, or handbags under the arm, sliding in and out of seats, and wearing collars high and close to the neck. A scarf is a good protection for a fur collar. When sitting down, always unfasten a fur coat and shrug it loose at the shoulders.

Strong sunlight isn't good for furs; it may fade them and dry out the oils.

Date Etiquette

When you're out on a date—night-clubbing for instance—you must behave. So, lady, refrain from chattering with another man on the telephone while your date is forced to listen. It's not his idea of fun. After all, he only pays the check!

Shouting across tables and waving madly to friends across the room dubs you as loud! So even if you're the popular "glamour gal," please behave.

Necking in public is particularly offensive. Thumbs down on it. It's cheapening.

Don't comb your hair in public.

Watch Your Hemline

Your hemline can tell a lot about you. First of all, if it's short, it either shows that you have attractive underpinnings or that your legs would be better covered a little more. Secondly, it tells whether you are a tidy person. Cover up the rest of a gal and you need see no more than her hemline to tell how she looks all over.

Haven't you observed a hemline that sags and dips so as to spoil a woman's whole appearance? Ten to one, she's careless about other things, too.

Men may hesitate to remark that a woman's hemline is not even all around, but they rarely hesitate to say something about a petticoat showing. It's a phobia with them. They are embarrassed to walk in public with a woman whose petticoat is peeping below the hemline.

[Turn page]

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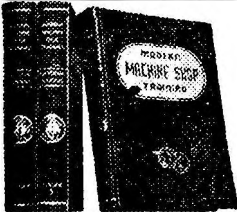
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To get back to the hemline that should be worn. Don't follow too accurately what the fashion trends say about skirts being worn so many inches from the floor. Skirt lengths change from year to year. But we urge you to wear the length that is most becoming to you.

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Winter Sports Make-up

The winter sportswoman knows that a great deal of make-up is not appropriate for active sports, but the beauty-minded one remembers that using cosmetics too sparingly on cold, blustery days is pretty bad for the skin.

In other words, she makes sure that her make-up for skiing and skating is lightly applied to give the skin a natural, fresh look, but at the same time heavy enough to provide a little protection against wintry winds.

Before getting into your ski togs, cleanse your face and throat with cream. If your skin is quite dry, apply a layer of night cream, pat it in for a few seconds and remove with soft tissues.

Dry your lips, put on lipstick, remembering not to moisten your lips, and give the color at least five minutes to set before blotting with cleansing tissue. To prevent chapping you can put on a second layer of lipstick over the first. A colorless pomade instead of lipstick can be used for the second coat.

You wouldn't dream of wearing eye make-up with sports clothes. But you will find that a fine film of plain white vaseline will give your eyelids that dewy look and protect them from icy blasts.

Use hand lotion immediately before going out. And as soon as you're back from your jaunt, wash your hands in luke-warm (not hot) water, massage cream into them, wash them again and apply hand lotion once more. This simple treatment takes little time but it will keep your hands soft and smooth all winter.

Grooming Secrets from Hollywood

When Ida Lupino is in need of a face "re-fresher," she soaks a cotton pad in cold water, squeezes out the excess liquid, dips the pad in skin lotion and works it over the face. She removes the cream excess before dipping another pad in water, squeezing it partly dry, then patting on more skin lotion. All with the promise of being able to meet your enemy

or date with a face you don't have to hide under a veil.

Alice Faye says you can't be weary or bodily sick and manifest enough vibrant charm to attract anyone. You have to be loaded down with vitality and energy. She recommends a trimness of appearance to accompany this radiance and says there must be smooth, slender figure beauty. The art of proper make-up, the correct and subtle use of perfumes and a color sense are the finishing touches.

Betty Grable is a girl who goes all out for cleanliness of the most meticulous kind—of person, of dress, of such accessories as hankies, gloves, inside of pocketbooks. Looks it too, doesn't she?

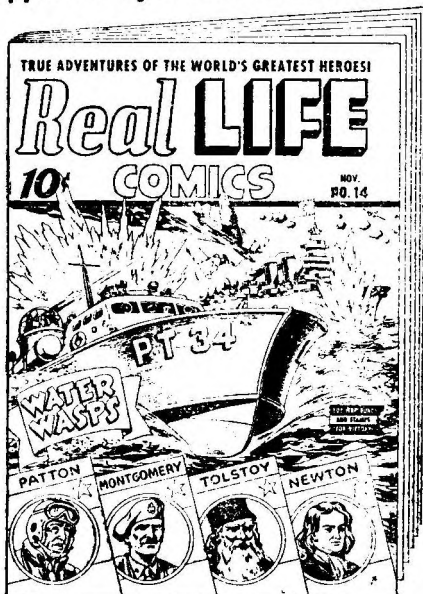
The lovely blonde Annabella says to avoid the depressing effects of having a husband off in the service, one should share her loneliness with another war widow. These companionships are most helpful.

Gorgeous Maureen O'Hara thinks some people come by great eye beauty naturally and others have to attain it with persistent care. A good tip to remember.

A Word of Advice

Don't get careless about writing and mailing those letters to the man in service. Fill them with the brightest and gayest news from the home front. It's a way of keeping up your own courage as well as his.

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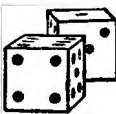
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LOVE NUMEROLOGY

(Continued from page 12)

The November-Number 11 girl has a more even track to travel. It isn't so hard for her to make up her mind, and she doesn't expect others to do her favors. All she wants is a chance to show what she can do. She has a double power of independence and self confidence, her danger being *over-confident* and impulsive action when discretion is the better part of valor.

The November girl is a pretty frank speaker and lets the chips fall where they may.

She loves in the same way and sometimes becomes too possessive and jealous when there is any opposition.

One cannot take love for granted, nor can any girl make a man love her. Love demands coaxing, not forcing.

Of course, there is much reason why a November girl can feel sure of her lover.

She is bright, energetic, emotional and generous. Her spontaneity attracts men and she can handle herself well in any kind of situation.

She is quick on the trigger of wit and can put one in his place when he steps out of it. She is not a clinging vine. She is rather a rose with thorns. But she is loyal and not a complainer. For that reason she makes a wonderful mate. Nothing keeps her down. A husband is glad to come home to her because he knows he will not be nagged. He may be criticized at times, but he is appreciated and loved, and his comfort is his wife's first consideration.

The Possessive Attitude

Only when the November girl becomes dictatorial does she find trouble. And she cannot expect a man to give her all of his time. It was this possessive attitude which made for heartache with Julia Margus, a girl of November. She failed to understand the heart of the man she loved.

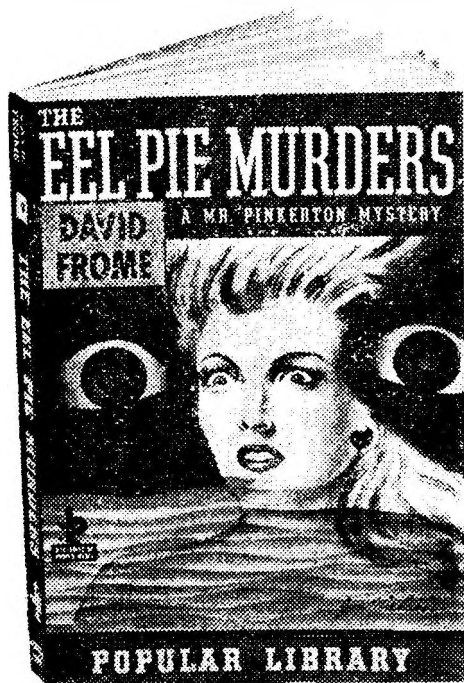
Julia was very proud of Tom Goodwin, the foreman of a lumber camp near her home. He was a handsome fellow and manly and powerfully built. She loved him for his kind character. Once she had seen him beat up a man who had been abusing a horse.

But one thing distressed her—Tom would never dress up and show his real handsomeness. Sometimes he had come to her parties dressed like a lumber-jack although always clean. She longed to see him in a dress-suit. She knew how the other girls would

(Continued on page 94)

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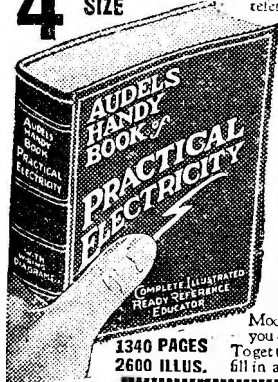
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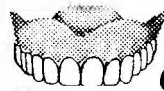
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LOVE NUMEROLOGY

(Continued from page 92)

look at him in envy.

She would get so mad when he would say: "if people don't like me as I am why should I dress up like a dude to please them?"

It became almost a mania with Julia. She loved him, but she knew she couldn't be happy if at times he wouldn't be a well-dressed gentleman. She looked forward to entertaining friends in her home when married, and if she always had to apologize for her husband's appearance, it would soon break down her respect for him.

So she decided to make a gentleman out of him or stop going with him. And the opportunity for the great test soon came. There was to be a formal charity affair at the local hotel. She would not let Tom refuse to go because he hated to dress up. She would force him to take her, or break with him.

And with such determination she put it up to Tom bluntly. "Oh, Julia," he said, "if you only know how I hate to dress up like a monkey. I'm a lumberjack."

Julia snapped back. "You are just a stubborn fool, Tom Goodwin. If you loved me you would want to make me happy. If you don't come to that ball dressed like a gentleman, then you needn't come to see me again. That's final."

"All right," said Tom, "have it your own way. But you'd better go with someone else. Good night—princess."

How She Loved Him!

When the afternoon of the ball drew on, Julia was unhappy. She hadn't heard a word from him. She had been hoping he would call her and give in. Well—she might as well know it now than too late.

But how she loved him! Even if he came to the ball in lumberjack clothes, she knew she would fall in his arms. Then she stomped her foot, and tried to make herself believe that gentlemen are born, not made. Maybe it would be better to look for a man of her dreams—a real Prince Charming, who knew how to dress.

So she went to the ball, asking her brother to escort her. At least she would try and have a good time with one of the gentlemen there. She knew that Tom would not come now.

She was right. He wasn't there. Several people asked about him but she made up some logical excuse and danced with those who asked her. One man seemed to attract her. He said he had known Tom Goodwin

in college, but Julia made him change the subject.

Later in the evening, Julia was talking to this man, when suddenly she got the shock of her life. There was Tom Goodwin standing near her—he was smiling sheepishly. But oh, how handsome he was in his full-dress suit! She was right—he was an Apollo. Her first impulse was to rush to him—but then she trembled—maybe he had brought another girl just to hurt her!

Before she made up her mind what to do or say, the man beside her jumped up: "Why Tom Goodwin—you old fox—and in full dress—and you swore you would never wear a dress suit again!"

"Hello Julia," was all he said. "Hello, Tom," she answered falteringly. Then she realized what the friend had said, and she turned to the man and asked:

"What did you mean—Tom swearing never to wear a dress suit again?"

"Why, didn't he tell you?" smiled the friend. Tom tried to stop him, but Julia made him reveal the secret. "It's this way, Miss Margus," he said, "In college Tom was a model. He used to model clothes at an exclusive shop. He was the handsomest man in college. But he got tired of being called a collar-ad, and swore when he left college he'd never wear a dress suit again. And only love would make him put one on now, I'm sure. Who's the girl, Tom?"

Julia didn't have long to wonder; for with that, Tom took her arm: "Let's dance, sweetheart—I guess I was a hot-headed fool—but love is the master—will you give me a chance to prove it?"

Julia fell into his arms with joy. Now he was hers for life—but still she felt remorseful for not understanding him and getting his story from him herself. So she said:

"I'm the one to ask forgiveness, Tom. I realized before I came tonight, that I could love you in overalls."

"Are you sure, Pet?"

"Yes—sure," and she kissed his cheek—"and you knew it too—didn't you?"

"Yes—but just one promise—don't make me wear this monkey suit too often."

"I promise . . . In fact, I'd be afraid of losing you."

But the strength of his embrace assured her that all was well, now that they understood each other.

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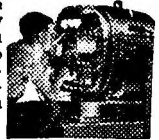
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Dear Sylvion:
What are the main qualities of a Number 3 man?
HELEN FAIRCHILD.

Dear Miss Fairchild: You will not have to worry about your Number 3 man refusing to wear a full dress suit. He is a man who believes in conventional forms. He likes nice things and neat girls.

Dear Sylvion:
I have three 2's in my Numbergraph. What kind of work should I follow?
RICHARD ROCKMER.

Dear Mr. Rockmer: You would succeed in intelligence work or diplomatic service. Also police work.

Dear Sylvion:
I am not a pretty girl. How can I attract a man? I was born March 4, 1925.
MARY L.

Dear Miss L.: You have the subtle power of Number 7—the mystery number. Your appeal must be one of silent mystery—keep the man guessing as though you had some great secret.
SYLVION.

Love Numerology Department
Care of POPULAR LOVE
10 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y.

I am sending for my authentic FREE NUMEROLOGY READING and NUMBERGRAPH, containing a full analysis and my personal triangle and birth number. I am enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Name

Address

Date of Birth
Month Day Year

My opinion of this issue of POPULAR LOVE is:

.....

..... 11-43

SPECIAL FREE OFFER!
Clip, Sign and Mail in This Coupon Today!
Foreign readers are required to send International Reply Coupons or American Stamps.



LOST

*Where'll I eat?
Where'll I Sleep?
Where's my girl?*

Last week on KP I kept thinking,
"When I get to New York on my fur-
lough, that'll be the day!"

So here I am, only I don't know my
way around any more'n the Man From
Mars. Can't even find my girl in this
whale of a station.

Tell me: what's a guy to do?

Listen, soldier, sailor, marine! We'll
find a room for you, a good place to eat.

We'll even help you find your girl,
who's probably hovering around this
minute, looking for you.

That's what the Travelers Aid is here
for—at the booth with the kindly light
—to help you out!

TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY



FREE ▶ 123 service men's lounges headed
by those in Grand Central and
Penn Stations, New York, 2,000
booths to help the troubled traveler, service
man or civilian, friendly service for those who
find themselves stranded, all this and more,
without charge, is rendered throughout the
country daily by the Travelers Aid Society.

This space is a contribution to the all-out war
effort by the publisher of this magazine.

★FOR PAMPHLET "T" SHOWING HANDSOME STYLES AND SHAPES WRITE: WM. DEMUTH & CO., NEW YORK

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Fistula, Rectal Abscess, Piles or other rectal and colon troubles are a fruitful source for associated chronic ailments and undermine health. Learn the facts. 122-page book on these ailments and latest treatment sent **FREE**. Address a card or letter to the McCleary Clinic, 1197 Elms Blvd., Excelsior Springs, Mo.

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OR MELODY WRITERS.

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(4) of my popular songs alone sold over a **HALF MILLION** phonograph records, led by **VICTOR!** Seeing is believing. Write me **NOW!**
RAY HIBBELER, C-47, 2157 N. Avers Avenue, Chicago

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Helps Flush Kidneys

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All of us can't be geniuses. But any ordinarily talented mortal can be a success—and that's more than some geniuses are.

Now, as in Æsop's time, the race doesn't always go to the one who potentially is the swiftest. The *trained* man has no trouble in passing the genius who hasn't improved his talents.

In war and peace, in every technical and business field, the *trained* man is worth a dozen untrained ones, no matter how gifted.

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Name..... Age..... Address.....

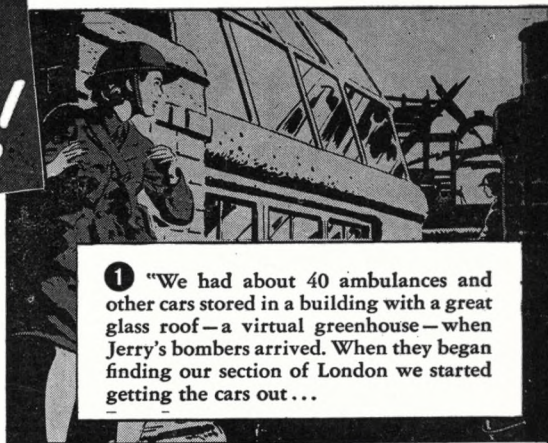
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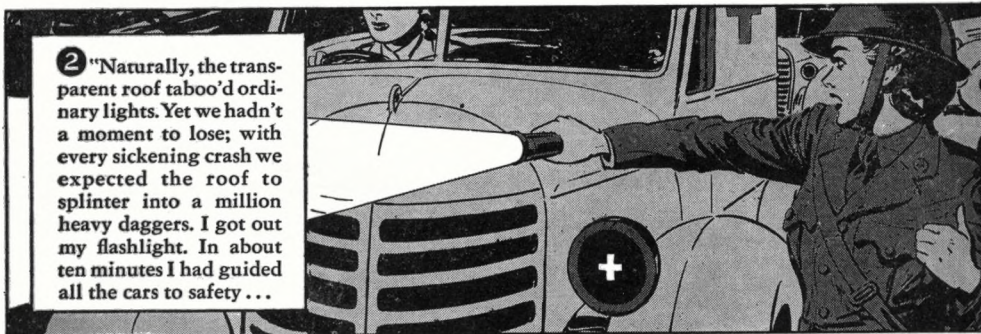
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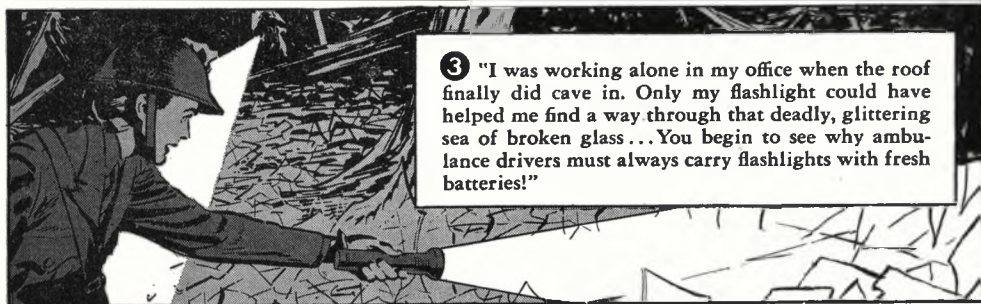
(The exciting experience of Margaret Bridges, of the London Auxiliary Ambulance service, during one of London's heaviest raids. Pretty, attractive 30-year-old Miss Bridges is part English, part American. She volunteered for the ambulance service, reporting for duty just three days before war was declared.)



① "We had about 40 ambulances and other cars stored in a building with a great glass roof—a virtual greenhouse—when Jerry's bombers arrived. When they began finding our section of London we started getting the cars out..."



② "Naturally, the transparent roof taboo'd ordinary lights. Yet we hadn't a moment to lose; with every sickening crash we expected the roof to splinter into a million heavy daggers. I got out my flashlight. In about ten minutes I had guided all the cars to safety..."



③ "I was working alone in my office when the roof finally did cave in. Only my flashlight could have helped me find a way through that deadly, glittering sea of broken glass... You begin to see why ambulance drivers must always carry flashlights with fresh batteries!"

Your dealer may have no "Eveready" flashlight batteries. If so, please don't blame him—the entire supply is currently going to the armed forces and those war industries with the highest priority ratings.

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