



REMEMBER

Yes, dear boys, brave and true your brave deeds are not forgotten. They are remembered on this another Memorial Day, and we trust will be forever.

The Roseburg National Bank
Roseburg, Ore.

Daughters of Midas

by Anne Austin

THIS HAS HAPPENED

Billy Wells, Nyda Lomax and Winnie Shelton are selected by T. Q. Curtis from his department store, to come to his home for one year as his wards because he wants to help them further certain worthy ambitions. Billy is the only one of the three that is sincere. She wants to become a concert violinist. The other two like to enjoy T. Q.'s generosity.

Billy is infatuated with Dal Romaine, nephew of Mrs. Meadows, the hostess. She fears Dal is "playing" both her and Winnie Shelton and when the two are absent from the city over the same weekend, her suspicions are strengthened.

In spite of this infatuation, Billy tenderly remembers Clay Curtis, son of her benefactor, who has disinherited himself and is living with the Wells family in a poor part of town, working in a factory by day and writing music at night.

The girls, unknown to T. Q., learn that he intends to adopt one of them when the year is over and to gain his affection, a series of intrigues follow which mysteriously involve not only the three girls, but Mrs. Meadows, Eddie Banning (Nyda's chauffer-sweetheart of other days), and Dal Romaine. Billy loses interest in her violin. She has a breakdown and leaves for a month, during which time she feels she has recovered from Romaine's spell. The night of her return, however, at a country club dance, she falls again under his strange, fascinating powers. While waiting on a balcony for her partner, Billy sees a scuffle between Romaine, who is strolling with Nyda, and Eddie Banning. When Billy later asks Romaine about it, he tells her that Banning has put himself and "somebody else" in his power.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XLII.
Although Billy had felt those last days in Crescent Lake that she was entirely well and equal to anything, she was surprised to find, after her return to Colfax, that her nerves had merely been rested, not cured. She was glad to stay in her room until almost noon each morning, having her breakfast in bed, brought by the adoring Viola, who also served up the gossip of the household.

On Thursday, a little less than a week after Billy's return, Viola relayed a message to her from Nyda.

"Miss Nyda she say will you do her a favor, Miss Billy, and play with them brats in the kindergarten room this afternoon. There's four of them now, Miss Billy, and Miss Nyda sure do hate to be bothered with them kids. She say she got a 'portant engagement' this afternoon, else she wouldn't ask you."

"Four of them?" Billy asked interestedly. "I thought there were only two—Mrs. Moore's little grandson, Tommy, and the cook's little girl, Beatrice."

"Sure, Mr. Curtis got two more kids for her to teach kindergarten stuff to," Viola chuckled. "Stasslety kids, them new ones it and that Miss Nyda cottoned to 'em something comical, but now she plum tired of the whole shootin'-match."

Billy laughed. "Tell Nyda I shall be glad to help her out this afternoon, though I don't know the least thing about kindergarten work."

When Viola had left, Billy lay back in the bed and reflected disgustedly on herself, Nyda and Winnie. What a fine trio of frauds they all were! Winnie had pretended that she wanted to become a private secretary—and the very sight of a dictionary gave her a headache. Nyda had stated, on the questionnaire, and in that lying letter of hers on "What I would do with a hundred thousand dollars," that the ambition which burned in her heart was to become a kindergarten teacher and social worker among the children of the poor.

Well, she was getting her fill of it now, Billy told herself grimly. Since old T. Q. had fixed up a model kindergarten in his home she had been saddled with the care of two children for two days a week, when all her pleasure-loving nature cried out against this sacrifice of even four hours a week to the work she had professed to love with all her heart. And now T. Q. had added to her burdens by increasing the number of her charges to four. Billy wondered who these children were, "Society" children, Viola had said.

Poor Nyda! She did not dare rebel openly. Her strongest hold on T. Q. her only "edge" on the other two girls, was her professed love of children. Her choice of a profession had touched T. Q. profoundly, had endeared the tall, handsome, black-haired, dark-eyed girl to him as nothing else could have done. So Nyda had to play her part, no matter how much she hated the role she had chosen, if she expected to win in the strange contest to become T. Q. Curtis' adopted daughter.

Winnie, Billy reflected soberly, was playing her cards more skillfully than Nyda. Nyda was selfish, hard, concerned only with her own pleasure, and pleasure with Nyda meant the adulation of men, but she was not vicious, not really an accomplished schemer. Left undisturbed in her natural environment, as queen of the cosmetics department in the big Curtis Store, and as the acknowledged "vamp" of that city within a city, she would have continued to be happy in her

way, and would eventually have married Eddie Banning or someone like him. No, there was no real evil in Nyda, or there had not been until T. Q. Curtis, unknown to himself, had dangled a fortune before her dazzled eyes. But Winnie—Billy's hands clenched at the very thought of Winnie Shelton—Winnie was a shallow, lying, scheming, cleverly cruel, unscrupulous little beast, who would stop at nothing to get what she wanted. And now since she had become T. Q.'s "ward," she wanted two things with all the energy of her mean nature—she wanted to win out in the contest to become T. Q.'s daughter and heiress, and she wanted Dal Romaine.

She was marvelously cunning in her campaign to win T. Q.'s heart. Although it must have liked her very well, she was spending at least three evenings a week at home, working prettily and with many gestures of efficiency and bustle, at T. Q.'s desk, taking his dictation, obligingly slowing up to her lack of speed with shorthand notes, transcribing his letters on a shiny new typewriter that he had bought her, bending anxiously, and tearfully, over him as he made corrections on the ludicrously jumbled letters, which Billy, who was sure was never mailed.

Oh, it was sickening, sickening, Billy groaned, and turned her face into her pillow. And she, Billy Wells, who had so prided herself on her sincere ambition to become a great violinist, who had leaned over backward with a sturdy, peasant sort of independence—she was just as bad as either of those other two. What had she really done to justify her existence in T. Q.'s home, as his ward, there to prepare herself for her career?

She had neglected her violin until now she was ashamed to pick it up. She had squandered the money which should have gone for violin lessons on clothes, bought for the sole purpose of catching and holding Dal Romaine's eyes. She remembered with a guilty shudder that she had not given her mother a cent this last month. And she had promised to give her a hundred and fifty a month! What had happened to her? Here she lay, when it was almost noon, cooing her body in a luxurious bed. Lazy, idle. After all, wasn't she exactly like Winnie Shelton?

Fired by the fury which she had worked up against herself, Billy hurried down to the music room to practice on her violin. Of course she still loved music! She tried to recapture the thrill with which she had once lifted the beloved instrument to her chin, but it could not be done. Her mind was buzzing with a hundred problems, schemes and perplexities. When she broke a string, in her angry impatience to conquer her mood, she was almost glad. Then she reminded herself that the tonic had said that she must not practice again for many weeks, do no serious work on her violin for months.

But of course that was absurd. She would just rest a few days longer, then set herself seriously to work on her music. A cold fear of what the end of the year would bring to her shivered along her overwrought nerves.

She had a lunch-hour engagement with Dal for one o'clock. She was to meet him at the Marquette Hotel, for he did not like to antagonize T. Q. Curtis more than was necessary, and T. Q. had made it unmistakably clear that he did not like Romaine.

When she was seated opposite Dal at a table for two in the most secluded corner of the dining room of Colfax's most "exclusive" hotel, she searched his eyes hungrily for assurances against the swarm of doubts and fears that tortured her when she was away from him.

"Dal," she asked suddenly, "please don't be angry with me, but tell me—do you see Winnie Shelton often, meet her, as you do me?"

Dal's eyes narrowed so that she could not possibly read the expression in them. But his thin, perfectly cut lips parted in that flashing smile which she knew so well.

"What a suspicious infant it is!" he teased her tenderly. "Of course I see Winnie occasionally. I had tea with her twice while you were in Crescent Lake, took her to dinner once with another couple, and we played golf once at the Country Club. My engagements with Nyda Lomax total about the same. Don't torture yourself with jealousy, dear heart. I never ask you for an accounting as to your own engagements, and unless we are to give our secret away, both of us must be seen with other people. Oh, pardon!"

He spoke with calm courtesy to the waiter who had come to stand patiently, with order pad and poised pencil at his side. "What shall it be, dear?"

But she did not care what she ate. It was food and drink to her to sit opposite him, to hear his low, caressing voice, to watch the quick grace of his satin-smooth brown hands as they flashed about the table.

"Oh, dear, I must hurry!" she remembered resentfully at two o'clock. "I have to take Nyda's work with the children this afternoon. By the way, Dal, will you let me ask you just one more question?"

He nodded, smiling at her indulgently, but his eyes were narrowed, watchful.

"When you said the other night that Eddie Banning had put himself in your power, and someone else, too, at the same time, did you mean—Nyda?"

He nodded, still smiling with faint amusement. "But how, Dal, how?" she persisted, excitement rising swiftly to her cheeks. "What has Eddie Banning to do with Nyda Lomax—now? They used to be engaged, but why should he attack you, why should Nyda see him in her room at midnight?" Oh! she cried, ashamed. "I didn't mean to say that. You will forget that I said that, Dal, won't you? But what did you mean, Dal? Can't you tell me? After all, we're engaged to

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be married, dear. Can't you take me into your confidence?"

"Maybe I didn't mean anything," he teased her, reaching for his wallet to pay the check. "But—just for your own peace of mind—you haven't a thing in the world to fear from Nyda—Lomax." His voice

hesitated curiously between the two parts of the name, but Billy was too absorbed in wondering what he meant by his other strange words to notice that faint, significant hesitation.

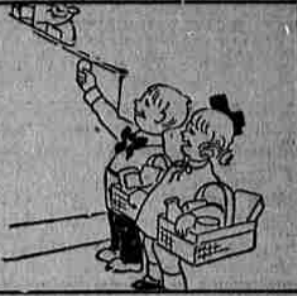
(To be continued.)

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