

Girl Unafraid

By
Blayds
Johnson

WHAT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE
Ardeith Carroll had charge of the
specialty shop owned by wealthy
Jeanette Parker. She meets Ken
Gleason, fiancé of Jeanette's sister,
Cecile, and they fall in love.
Their marriage is prevented by
Ken's mother's wish that he marry
Cecile. When Ken fails to keep at
appointment with Ardeith, Tom
Corbett takes her to dinner. They
meet Ken and Cecile.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ardeith was standing on the pavement
before the entrance of the
hotel when Ken's car pulled up.
Her heart leaped painfully at
their eyes met. No bright and
laughing charm about Ken today.
His face was pale, his mouth grim.
He opened the door of the car
and she got in without a word.

Sunday came over the city.
Church bells ringing near and far.
Children, self-conscious of their
best clothes, walking through the
sunshine to Sunday school. Stacks
of the morning papers in corner
stores. An air of solemnity well
being over the city. Bleakness only
in her heart.

"Well," Ken said finally in a
tight voice. "Through with me,
aren't you?"
She moved her hands slightly
but did not answer.

"He gave a worthless laugh.
"Don't blame you. It's the only
way out, I guess. Here's what
happened, whether you want to
hear it or not. Late yesterday, I
knew I was in touch with me.
He's an old friend, and he told
me that mother —" he gulped, "my
mother's in a bad way, Ardeith.
She — she's going. Just a matter
of time."

He suddenly stopped.
Ardeith found that her cold hand
had gone to cover his own on the
wheel. He did not seem to feel it
and after a moment she took it
back.

"Mother Love
"I can't believe it!" Sharp pro-
test in that which almost rose to
panic. For a moment he battled
silently, then resumed, more quietly,
"well . . . it's what comes to us
all, I guess. But to watch it — day
by day. No hope — the doctor
said. Of course she doesn't
know. She thinks it's something
else — that she's getting better —
but that time — that time I told
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starved herself and lived in that
cold, moldy room — that started
it. Ardeith. And when I remember
she did it for me — no I could live
in comfort — like a fool — God, I
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"No! No, Ken! You couldn't
help it. How could you know?"
She was watching him with eyes
gone wet. Ken stared straight
ahead. His profile was sharpened
with suffering, his eyes were
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An interval when only the hum
of the tires on the asphalt broke
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Ken's news had swept away Ar-
deith's resentment. She did not
wonder how Ken had come to be
at Tait's and dancing — Cecile and
the heartbreak of last night were
very far away and trivial in this
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Newspapers calling through the
sunshine. Salt wind tingling the
blood. Everything speaking of life
and motion, this bright autumn
morning. How could there be any
death?

With the inability of youth to
grasp the actuality she was moved
— horrified — yet not entirely
comprehending. Even the man
spoke as one who felt the spell
of sorrow yet missed its dark
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"You know — I can't realize it.
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He drew a deep breath. "She's
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and pretending she didn't like it —
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He suddenly stopped speaking.
After a long moment "Well,
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Dr. Knowles, she springs on me
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And I'd forgotten every last thing
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spoke as one who felt the spell
of sorrow yet missed its dark
meaning.

"You know — I can't realize it.
Ardeith. Oh — I know we all die —
but still my mother — I actually
know —"