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RUNAWAY JUNE

BY GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER AND LILLIAN CHESTER

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AT SHERRY'S
Runs Each Wednesday and Thursday

CHAPTER III.

FOR a moment June hesitated before the door of an employment agency next morning, and then she sharply beat down her reluctance. People who have made up their minds to be independent and to earn their own way in life must have no timidity. She turned the knob with sudden boldness and opened it; then she smiled at her own sensitiveness as she stood before a pleasant faced woman, in the corner of whose eyes, however, there was a veiled sharpness which June did not see.

A very pretty woman came in as June turned to go away, and with her was a little girl of great beauty. June hesitated as she heard the word "governess." The woman at the desk

smiled to June. The newcomer followed that smile and herself smiled at June. "The little girl had been studying June frankly out of round eyes.

"I like you," she said, with startling candor; then the employment agency woman laughed, and pretty Mrs. Wiles laughed. June dimpled.

"I like you, too," she acknowledged. The employment agency woman rose. "Mrs. Murdock is listed as a governess," she observed, and June winced at her new name. How queer this all seemed! "Perhaps you would like to have a little chat."

Mrs. Wiles and June Moore Warner Justin Day Murdock were both agreeable to that suggestion, particularly since little Dolly Wiles had appropriated June apparently for keeps. They sat in one of the cozy corners, and when June rose she was engaged. Mrs. Wiles was a most appealing woman.

All three were perfectly happy as they left the office and rode in Mrs. Wiles' victoria up Fifth avenue to one of those wide, clean streets which lead off from Central park.

A block and a half from the avenue they stopped before a new looking apartment house with an imposing entrance, and a hungry looking doorman bowed his regular bow, and a hungry looking elevator man shot them skyward.

A duplex apartment. June had never seen one before, and its utility was

a puzzle to her then, as it was for many a long day afterward.

After luncheon a nap for Dolly, and then a romp in the park. Roller skating. June's foot was nearly as small as Dolly's, and the child, after she had thoroughly exhausted herself, insisted that June try. It was a pretty little deceit which was put on Dolly. June strapped on the skates and was timid and helpless and altogether charming until Dolly had laughed herself weak; then June suddenly straightened up and skated away like the expert that she was, whereat Dolly was more pleased than ever, and a voice from the roadway, a suave and pleasant voice, called:

"Bravo!" Gilbert Blye! He was smiling. June was confused. She whisked off the skates.

"You seem to have all the accomplishments," went on Blye, stepping down from his luxurious limousine.



"Bravo! How do you do?"

"Hello, young lady!" He held out his hand to Dolly Wiles with a familiarity permissible to the very young and to the very old of femininity, and the child took it hesitantly, with a shy upward glance at June. Her big gray eyes widened, however, as they fell on the limousine. She dropped the hand and ran forward to the machine.

"What a lovely car!" she exclaimed, patting it on its smooth, swelling side. "Just the kind mother wants, but daddy says we can't afford it."

Blye laughed lightly. "Would you like a spin around the park in it," he suggested, "you and your playmate here?" And he bowed.

Dolly, jumping up and down, was already tugging at the door handle, and Blye, laughing, opened it for her. Dolly gave a cry of positive joy as she saw the rich interior, and she was among the soft cushions in an instant.

"You haven't much choice," said the low voice of Blye, and he held the door open for June.

"This once." And she looked him

squarely in the eye. He smiled.

June was thoughtful all through that delicious twenty minutes of riding. Blye—his dark face haunted her. Another face came to her—Ned! A great wave of homesickness swept over her.

They made their adieux rather hastily to Blye, for their time was a little more than up.

Just before dinner was called Mr. Wiles came home, and June happened into the library. It was Dolly's favorite storeroom for toys, books and everything else. Mrs. Wiles—he called her Woolzy—was sitting on the arm of her husband's chair, her arm around his neck and his chin in the palm of her hand. With the other hand she was twisting a lock of his hair over and over her finger, and she was most distinctly and obviously wheedling him for money! His voice was low and protesting with as much sternness as a man can use when he is being charmed into docility. Woolzy Wiles was locking the money in her little inland desk when June next saw her.

They were going out after dinner. There was some talk about ordering a car, and it needed but one word to give Dolly a start. The luxurious limousine of the black Vandyked man was the whole of her text. She rattled on and on and on about it, and as she talked the pretty face of Mrs. Wiles grew more and more distressed.

"Harry, dear," she said, "Dolly and I want a limousine! Please!" Dolly clapped her hands.

"After that limousine again," he gayly commented. "Not now, Woolzy. Business is too bad."

"I don't like business," she laughed. "It's a mean old thing, isn't it, Dolly? Harry, please!"

"Get thee behind me, Woolzy." The man still laughed, but he began to look very seriously at his charming wife. "You'd get anything out of a man." And his laugh was half vexed, altogether adoring.

Pretty Mrs. Wiles accepted that compliment prettily, but June, as she slipped out of the library unobserved, was hurt for the woman, for herself, for her kind, as her face betrayed. Here it was again—the endless, almost unvarying story of the woman dependent on the man's bounty and, in this case, getting all she could out of him.

Ned and his detectives on that day were down in the neighborhood of the Hotel Daniel scouring the district inch by inch, as it were, for some trace of the runaway bride, and wherever they went a small, fat nosed boy with one soiled newspaper under his arm sleuthed after them, slinking from tree to tree and from doorway to doorway.

Little Dolly Wiles awoke in the night to become aware of a light in the lower floor of the duplex apartment. Daddy! He was at work in the library, as he always was late at night here recently. Dolly felt herself privileged to say good night to daddy, so she slipped out and put on her bedroom slippers and her pretty little lounging robe and tripped downstairs.

June heard her go and dressed in like fashion. Harry Wiles had his books spread out before him and a pen behind his ear.

"Daddy, are you going to get mother a limousine?"

The man glanced over at his books and ran his hand across his brow. "Well, I promised mother tonight," he admitted, with reluctance, and his face grew grave.

"Goody!" The little girl clapped her hands.

"But will it be a nice big limousine?" "Not an extraordinarily big one. Just a proper sized limousine for little girls like you and mother. Oh, come in, Woolzy!"

Mrs. Wiles in a stunning uegiece stood in the library door.

"You want Dolly, of course," she said to June. "She's a born prowler, I think."

Dolly smacked her father a parting kiss.

"Daddy says it won't be a big limousine, mother, but it'll have silk tassels, and it will be a limousine anyhow. May we have a red headed chauffeur and a chow dog?"

"It depends on what color upholstery your mother selects," grinned her father as his pretty wife took Dolly's place on the arm of the chair.

"There's only one kind of upholstery in the Beaver cars," laughed Mrs. Wiles, pinching her husband's ear. "Really, Harry, I've been wondering if it isn't a waste of money to buy as cheap a limousine as that. I'd rather wait until you can afford one that will be more substantial."

"I know your tricks," commented her husband. "Really, Woolzy, I positively cannot afford an expensive car."

"Harry!" That wheedling tone echoed in June's ears as she skipped upstairs with Dolly, and she knew that the cheap little Beaver car would not stand in front of the Wiles' door.

It did not. A good car brought Mrs. Wiles home the very next day.

Mrs. Ned Warner had been made tremendously thoughtful by the affairs of the little Wiles family. There was something wrong in the custom which made this condition possible. What was it? The position of donor and recipient. Neither the man nor the woman was really to blame. It was custom. And June knew what Mrs. Wiles would not admit to herself, if she suspected it, that the man was being constantly wheedled beyond his means.

Mrs. Wiles affected even to herself that his constant resistance toward expenditure was the normal attitude of a man toward the domestic spending of money. It was the woman's business to get all she could and the man's to resist.

The crash came sooner than June had expected. On the next evening after the limousine had come home there

him, and showed him her little purse with a laugh.

"It's a shame that a pretty girl like you has to worry about money." And his coal black eyes gazed down at her glowingly.

He tried to detain her. Catching her gently by the arm, he tried to urge her into his car, using all the persuasiveness of his eyes and his smile and his suave courtesy, but she was obdurate.

Suddenly he jumped into his limousine and whirled away. He was at the employment agency before June reached it, and he had a cordial chat with the employment agency woman. He handed her an address and went away.

June was delighted when she secured an opening quickly and started out immediately for the place. For a moment June felt an intense dislike to the ugly looking house at the address given her and all that it might contain; then, laughing at her own fancies, she strode up the steps and rang the bell. The door swung open silently, but no one appeared. Wondering, June walked in, and the door slammed behind her.

Two minutes later Gilbert Blye walked up the steps, took a key from his pocket, inserted it into the lock and smiled.

(To be Continued.)

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