

OUR WEEKLY SERIAL STORY INSTALLMENT

CRUCIBLE

By
BEN AMES WILLIAMS

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CHAPTER IX—Continued
—20—

This harried man upon the stand was her husband, whom she loved. Mrs. Sentry saw his lips mumble, and felt her own breath short as his was short.

"Now, Mr. Sentry, I ask you to come to the period during which Miss Wines was in your employ. You remember when that was?"

"In July, I think. Perhaps late July or early August."

"She did some work for you personally?"

"She took my letters, on several occasions."

"Her work satisfactory?"

"She made many mistakes."

"But you kept her on?"

"For about two weeks, yes."

"Did you tell Miss Randall her work was unsatisfactory?"

"No. I knew she was temporary."

"You could have had Miss Randall find someone who was satisfactory, could you not?"

"It wasn't worth the trouble for so short a time."

"And you liked Miss Wines?"

"Not at all."

"Why not? She was pretty, young, pleasant, courteous, was she not?"

"I didn't dislike her. I thought nothing about her. She was—part of the office furniture, that's all."

"But—attractive?"

"I suppose so."

"You didn't notice?"

"No."

"Didn't notice that she was pretty?"

Mrs. Sentry sensed what was coming, perceived the trap prepared, wished to cry out in warning. But Arthur stumbled blindly on, into its very jaws. "No," he said.

"Come now, Mr. Sentry, any man must notice a pretty girl, unless there's something wrong with him."

"I don't."

"You don't notice such things, aren't interested in pretty women?"

"No."

The trap closed, the jaws snapped shut. "Then if you don't notice such things, Mr. Sentry, why did you take this mysterious Enid to New Jersey last August?"

She heard Arthur mumble something, shaken, speechless, perceiving too late the pit which his own words had dug for his unwary feet. Questions rained upon him; he answered helplessly.

And Mrs. Sentry wished to cry out comfort to him; to say: It is all right, Arthur!

"Now Mr. Sentry, have you told us, in general, all there is to tell about your various encounters with Miss Wines?"

"In general."

"You had no personal relations with her?"

"No."

"At any time?"

"My only conversation with her on personal matters was when she came to my office three weeks before—"

"Before you shot her?"

"Before her death."

"Ah, yes. I forgot, you do not like that phrase. But you did shoot her?"

"Yes, by accident."

"And arranged things in a way to suggest that someone else shot her?"

"Yes."

"Hoping the police would think someone else had shot her?"

Mrs. Sentry, watching Arthur, saw that he was strung to the breaking point, knew that in another moment his iron control would shatter. And then suddenly Falkran was on his feet, and he and Mr. Weldon were involved in some argument, meaningless to her, yet thrice welcome, since while they argued Arthur could fight back to some composure. She watched him, not listening to them; till suddenly the jury was filing out, and Arthur too, between his guards, his face haggard and drawn.

Mrs. Sentry and Phil did not hear

the rest of Mr. Sentry's cross-examination. District Attorney Flood sought them during the noon recess, to urge them to stay away from court that afternoon.

Phil and Linda walked for miles, at a swift striding gait, and at first he talked, bitterly reciting to her his father's testimony, as though it were a relief to twist the knife in the wound. She listened, not commenting, but her hand rested on his arm.

"I don't know why I—tell you all this," he said at last. "You can read it all in the papers. It was—awful!"

"I don't read the papers, Phil,"

him. But he said at last: "I know it, Lin. I've tried to pretend I didn't, but I do."

"I don't mean to—bother you about it, Phil," she said, and laughed a little. "I know you've too much else to do to love me very much just now. But that's why I'm sticking around so much. So that when you do find time—"

"I never can, Lin," he said in a low tone. "Never will. I'll never marry anyone, now."

"Never's a long time!"

"I know it."

"Let's wait and see."

"No, honestly," he urged.

Phil, understanding, led the way into his own room, and closed the

door behind them. "I'm pretty worried about Barbara," he confessed. "There doesn't seem to be anything the matter with her, and yet she doesn't get any better."

Dan said sympathetically: "She's punch-drunk; just as though she'd taken a right hook to the jaw. It's been tough on your mother and you, but it's a lot worse on her. She'll pull out of it, though!"

"I suppose so."

"What did he say?" Phil huskily.

"It was more the way he said and acted," Dan explained. "He heard a car stop in front of his house, crossed quickly to the door to look out. 'It's Falkran,' said. 'Let's go down. Come on!'"

And without waiting for sent, he opened the door. He descended together as Nellie and Falkran. The lawyer and reporter and said guardedly, "hullo, Dan."

Dan nodded. "Did Mr. B. you?" he asked crisply. "Talking Mrs. Sentry on the stand?"

"Yes," Falkran spoke politely. "But of course I cannot the newspapers to tell me to conduct a case."

"Oh, don't make speeches, I'm not the jury."

Mrs. Sentry said, from the room door: "Good evening, Falkran." He turned toward with that smile so confident, assuring, and took her hand.

Mrs. Sentry.

Phil and Dan followed him, remained standing by the door, the others sat down. And Mrs. try asked, "Well?"

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she replied. "And you need tell me nothing; but if it makes you feel better to talk, you can talk to me all you want."

"I couldn't have gone through it this far if I hadn't had you."

"I'm glad. I want it to be so."

"It must be tough on you, though."

"It isn't. It's sweet to think I'm helping."

"Mother's so darned brave!"

"Of course."

"But gosh, Linda, it's awful to hear him saying those things!" And he cried, "Why, I'd rather think he did it than believe the things he's saying about himself!" He was choking. "Lin, he's my father! Half of me is him!"

"No, Phil! No! You are all yourself." And Linda challenged, "If you did a rotten, mean thing, would you try to get out of it by blaming it on him?"

"Well, no, I guess not. I'd have to stand it myself."

"Then don't talk so!"

"But it makes me feel—rotten, to think that he has anything to do with me."

"Phil," she urged, "children are born because two people love each other. You were born because your father loved your mother and she loved him; and love is clean and fine and beautiful. Just remember that." And she said: "Besides, boys are always more like their mother, anyway, and your mother is grand! You ought to be so proud of her."

"She sure is!"

"Well, then," she cried, "you see?"

He grinned a little. "You're grand yourself, you know, Lin. Grand to me. I don't see why."

She looked up at him serenely. "Because I love you, Phil."

He walked for minutes without speaking, nor did she speak beside

him. But he said at last: "I know it, Lin. I've tried to pretend I didn't, but I do."

"I don't mean to—bother you about it, Phil," she said, and laughed a little. "I know you've too much else to do to love me very much just now. But that's why I'm sticking around so much. So that when you do find time—"

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"With All My Love for Always, Phil," She Whispered.

"Right," said Dan. Back at table, Phil told his mother Dan was coming.

"So is Mr. Falkran," she said. "He telephoned before you came home." She added steadily, "I am to go on the stand in the morning."

After dinner Phil went up to speak to Barbara, to tell her Dan was coming, to see her eyes brighten at that news. Yet he thought with a cold terror how weak and ill she seemed.

When Dan arrived he came up to join them, and touched Barbara's hand, smiling, his manner greatly reassuring; and he spoke in calm, undisturbed tones. She watched him hungrily, seemed stronger for his presence. But presently Dan said, too casually:

"Phil, I've never seen your room. What sort of quarters have you got?"

Phil, understanding, led the way into his own room, and closed the

"Where's your mother?"

"Downstairs. She's up."

"Is she going to let me on the stand?"

"Yes."

Dan spoke in a low

"Blast him!" He turned

Phil. "You've got to go

that, Phil," he said ear-

mustn't let her do it."

"He's told her she can-

ther." And he said sud-

I believe my father. I

an accident."

Dan lighted a cigar

across the room and

Not looking at Phil, he

tonight's paper?"

"Only the headlines."

"Well the less you

pers from now on, the

came close to Phil, touch-

er's arm. "Get your chin

he said gently.

Phil's lips were dry. He

painfully, and tried to

could not, and Dan said:

blame you for believing

the jury won't. He's done

Phil tried to shake his

deny. "Of course anyone

under a tough cross-ex-

Dan admitted. "And

plenty tough. He poured

your father couldn't take

Weldon snarled him all

gripped Phil's arm hard.

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Lecturer Advises College Students
When and How to Do Their Worries

A plea for "constructive worrying" was voiced recently by Dr. David Seabury, of New York, in a lecture at Union college, writes a Schenectady (N. Y.) United Press correspondent.

Ordinary worry, Doctor Seabury said, is caused by fear in control of the imagination. The way to avoid this habit, he advised, "is to seek the center of the problem, let the person control the thinking processes, and think straight."

Warning against resisting or resenting difficulties, Doctor Seabury advocated forcing the mind to digest one's problems, thereby starting constructive action to correct or accept the situation.

He maintained that a negative attitude allows fear to enter the mind with the subsequent result that the mind becomes unable to cope with the problem.

"With fear intoxication," he explained, "the brain is partly coagulated or unfit for thinking."

Also, he added, problems should be correctly judged and handled according to their importance.

To solve worrisome problems, Doctor Seabury urged "deliberation, discrimination, decision and determination" in coping with the difficulties.

He concluded his lecture by advising:

"Never worry in bed; never when depressed; never when you know enough facts to do something constructive; never do person's worrying; never about what someone else thinks should do; never worry when set a time limit on worry; never dump your worries on one else."

Human Hair for Wigs

Human hair, secured from heads of European peasants who make a regular business of used in wigmaking. In instances the money obtained from the sale of their hair goes to their dowries, and some of them have as many as eight wigs the course of their lives. The hair is taken from a three-inch strip in the back of the crown, the front and the side hair is used to conceal the shorn spot. The quality hair is Scandinavian, and silky. Italian and Spanish have a dark, wavy, lustrous texture; by the time one reaches China, the hair is almost of inferior quality.