

OUR WEEKLY SERIAL STORY INSTALLMENT

CRUCIBLE

By
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CHAPTER XII—Continued

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Phil watched Barbara, flushed and happy, moving easily about the court; and he thought, astonished: Mother doesn't seem to mind! She seems glad!

He said guardedly, "You think so?"

"Of course! And Dan's a fine young man."

"Well—I like him," Phil agreed. She smiled a little, wisely.

"You're surprised at my—at the way I take it, aren't you, Phil?"

"Why, I know what you think of newspapers and reporters. And—I know you think marrying the right person is pretty important."

She nodded. "I've spoken my mind often enough, Phil," she asserted. "But I'm not at all sure my—mind was right. You remember, Phil, I—discovered something during your father's trial."

He looked at her and she said: "I realized that I loved him."

"Of course, mother."

"Not at all, Phil. There's no 'of course' about it." She said, half to herself: "I didn't love him when we were married. I lived down on the Cape, and his father had a cottage there. He was rather a splendid figure. I thought I was marrying well, marrying money and family and position. But almost at once after we were married I fell—passionately in love with him. Brides often do, you know. If their husbands are wise."

"And I loved him till seven weeks before Barbara was born," she said explicitly. "And I haven't loved him since, till—"

After a moment she said steadily, "Till I knew they would convict him and kill him, Phil."

He could not move or speak. He had only the vaguest understanding. He stammered something; and she said:

"It's curious, too, that there's no—desperation in my love for him now. At first the thought of what was to happen was terrible. And then it became unimportant. I have him now, and he has me; and no one, nothing, can separate us."

Phil said automatically, "Yes, mother!"

And she smiled like sun after rain. "So now nothing matters except that," she said. "But—I think when he is gone I shall join him pretty soon."

"Mother!"

"So I want Barbara to marry whom she loves," she said. "If it is Dan, it is Dan." She added, in a moment's weakness, "Only I shall need you both terribly for a little while."

"Gosh, mother—" He said that and no more; but suddenly he was afraid, thinking: She's lost weight lately. She looks—frail. Not tired. Strong—inside, but frail outside. He started to speak again, then saw her smile as the set ended and Dan and Barbara, laughing together, came toward them here. They went into the house, and Linda arrived, and Mrs. Sentry left the four young people alone downstairs. They had tea; and talked idly for a while, and Barbara was "more and more silent till Dan spoke to her."

"What's on your mind, Barb? Penny for your thoughts."

"I was thinking about Mac," she confessed. No one, for a moment, found anything to say; and she went on: "And about father. You all think he's guilty, don't you?"

She smiled a little, at their quick protestations. "All right, but I don't, you know," she said; and she confessed: "Oh, at first I did. I saw him come home that night, and I went into a sort of panic. We all did, I guess. I mean when he was arrested, and everything. We all lost our heads, believed all sorts of things."

"But I don't, now. I don't believe father would kill anybody! Not on purpose, anyway."

"Neither do I," Phil assured her, and she said:

"I don't see how the jury could think he did. But of course, I wasn't at the trial." And she asked directly: "What happened? Tell me about it."

Dan urged, "You'd better forget it, Barb."

But Phil said honestly: "Father admitted he killed her, Barbara. He said it was an accident, but the jury didn't believe him." And he urged: "But—there's no use talking about it. You'll just—get yourself sick again."

Barbara half smiled. "You're both awful cowards," she told them. "Like ostriches." And she appealed to Linda. "Lin, you tell me about it."

Linda shook her head. "I didn't even read the papers, most of the time, Barb. I just—stayed here with you, or stood by in case Phil wanted me."

Barbara nodded. "I know." She smiled in affectionate derision. "You and your Phil!" She appealed to Dan. "You were there in court every day," she remembered, and she began, persistently, to question him, and Dan perforce to answer, till little by little she drew from him the whole dark tale. Except that he did not speak of the uglier part of Mr. Sentry's testimony.

Barbara urged at last, "But Dan, if father did shoot her, and the revolver was touching her, he would have felt it, would he not?"

"He said he didn't feel anything."

"Then if he didn't, someone else shot her. She must have been already dead, before he got upstairs there."

Phil said unhappily: "Barb, father shot her all right. He said it was an accident, and—I think it was. I believe him; but the jury didn't, and they were the ones to decide. That's what juries are for."

"But suppose they found another bullet?" she argued. "Then every one would have to believe him!"

Phil caught Linda's eye. "Lin and I have already looked," he said. We went over the place with a fine-tooth comb; but we didn't find a thing."

And suddenly it was June. In May, July had seemed far away; but now it was just around the corner.

On the third of June, Mr. Falkran telephoned to ask whether he could see Phil and Mrs. Sentry that evening. Mrs. Sentry bade him come.

Mr. Hare had suggested to Phil long ago that a commutation might save Mr. Sentry's life. Phil had not mentioned the possibility to his mother; but when she told him, on his return from the office that day, that Mr. Falkran was coming in the evening, and wondered why, Phil remembered Mr. Hare's remark months before.

"I expect," he said, "he wants to discuss asking the Governor to commute the sentence to life imprisonment."

Her pupils dilated; her eyes widened. "Oh!" she murmured.

He reflected: "We don't want Barbara here when he comes. I'll ask Linda to—take her away somewhere, on some excuse." And at his mother's assenting nod he went to the telephone.

Linda was quick to do what he asked. So when at a little after eight Falkran rang the bell, Phil and his mother were alone; and Phil himself went to the door.

"During the trial, I did my full duty as I saw it," Falkran said. "I used every means I could discover to secure at least a disagreement. Regardless of a client's guilt or innocence, he is entitled to every legal protection. If his fate is in a jury's hands, then he has a right to expect that every possible means shall be used to create a doubt of his guilt in the jury's mind. I did all I could."

Mrs. Sentry nodded. "I know." She smiled. "I did all I could too, Mr. Falkran."

"Yes," he agreed. "We all did. Barring the possibility that higher courts might have found some error by the State, Mr. Sentry had every protection. But he didn't want to—appeal on technicalities. And the jury believed him guilty."

He hesitated, then went on: "Yet there are grounds for asking mercy for him too. Not a pardon. We cannot hope for that. But a commutation is possible. District Attorney Flood will not oppose it. Of course, he cannot support our petition; but he will stand neutral. Mr. Sentry's character, his long and honorable life, all count in his favor. And—"

The days were gone like the



"Read That, Old Man!" He Cried.

it is always possible that the tragedy might have been an accident, as Mr. Sentry testified."

Mrs. Sentry considered for a while, sitting very quietly; so that Phil came to her side and she held his hand while she faced the lawyer.

"What would we do?" she asked then. "What is the procedure?"

"I want you to understand," Falkran explained, "that Mr. Hare agrees with me that an appeal to the Governor is justified. Mr. Flood, as I said, will not oppose it; and I have consulted a number of Mr. Sentry's friends."

And he went on, "The first step would be to have a hearing before the Governor and Council; to present evidence as to Mr. Sentry's life and character, and to call attention to some points in the evidence at the trial—the possibility of accident."

"A public hearing?"

"Yes." He added quickly: "But you would not need to attend that. Only afterward, you would want to make a personal appeal to the Governor."

She passed her hand across her eyes. "When?" she asked, in a whisper.

He said thoughtfully: "I should first lay the groundwork. Perhaps in two or three weeks. Say the third week in June."

Mrs. Sentry rose, clinging for a moment to the arms of her chair, then standing erect. She caught Phil's arm, supporting herself so.

"Very well," she promised. "If you advise it, I will do it."

But when Falkran was gone—she had held fast to Phil, so that the lawyer went alone to the door—she said in a low tone, "Don't leave me, Phil."

"Of course not. I won't."

"I'm all right," she whispered, "as long as I have you and Barbara." She added, smiling weakly: "At least I think I am. But it will seem strange to me to beg!"

"Father wouldn't want you to, mother!"

"I think I shall be proud to do it," she replied.

They had another letter from Mary; this time from Paris, brief, defiant. She wrote:

Dear Mother:

This is just to keep you all in touch with my progressing career. Of course I have occasional news of you, viva voce and in the well-known public prints; but I haven't broken into the newspapers—yet.

I ran into Jimmy Endle the other day. He's not a bad chap unless you're married to him. Also Gus Loran is here. Mrs. Loran is treating herself to a Paris divorce. I seem to fascinate Gus. My fatal beauty, no doubt. But of course, Argentine, my pretty little beef baron—did I tell you we were married—is terribly jealous. Maybe he'll take me home and make me eat pampas and tangos and things. I don't even know whether you fry them or boil them. Having a fine time. Wish you were here.

Mrs. Sentry read the letter and handed it to Phil; and this time she did not protest when he threw it into the fire.

The days were gone like the

Barbara at the moment

stairs; but Mrs. Sentry

living-room and Phil

decision. He saw her

words, as though she

physical blow; but then

"Will you go with me?"

"Of course," he an-

turned to tell Falkran

While he was at the pho-

the doorbell ring, was

was there, heard Nellie

the door.

When he came again

er, Mrs. Sentry said:

want Barbara to go

need not even know. She

here. I will want to—

her, afterward."

Phil had time to nod

through the hall. "What

cried, and his eyes were

"Where's Barbara?" He

telegram from his pocket

into Phil's hands. "Read

man!" he cried. "I've

ing on it for two months,

that or something like it."

The message had been

saw, from Cleveland. It

aloud:

"Salary O. K. Start July

"W. E. Brown

He looked at Dan. "What

he asked.

"Plenty!" Dan told him

ly. "It's the city editor's

Swift-Towne paper in Cleve-

a salary to match. Enough

married on. Where's Barbara?"

"Barbara?" Mrs. Sentry

a whisper.

"Of course!" Dan hesitated

sorry, Mrs. Sentry. I don't

didn't know. I've been

weeks to land a job some-

I could take her away from

"Away?"

"We're going to be married

Sentry."

Mrs. Sentry seemed to

tle. She extended her hand

Phil, as though for suppo-

Motions of Moon Are Proved by Modern Theory Developed After Lunar Research

Six automatic computing machines as large as pianos, operating for two years in Columbia university's astronomical laboratories, have verified the modern theory of the motions of the moon, which was developed after lunar research and calculations by Prof. Ernest W. Brown, Yale university astronomer and mathematician.

Professor Brown's theory has enabled astronomers since 1923 to make accurate predictions of eclipses and calculate the position of the moon at any instant. The Yale scientist collaborated with Prof. Wallace J. Eckert of Columbia, who supervised the system of automatic astronomical computation, in proving the original findings.

The machines, according to Professor Eckert, showed that Newton's law of gravitation had been applied accurately in the lunar theory and that the mathematical tables of the moon's position and motion, published by Professor Brown more than 15 years ago and used since then by navigators throughout the world, were entirely correct.

Operation of the machines, perfected two years ago by Professor

Eckert for exclusive use to calculate astronomical work, is on the "punched card" method, first devised by Hollerith in compiling the States census of 1890. Here, sending mathematical figures punched into small cards, are fed into a tabulating machine at the rate of 7,000 to 8,000 cards per hour. The cards move from the machines to other machines to add, subtract, and multiply means of electrical contact, than 250,000 such cards were played in the lunar research. First 5,000 cards were handled from Professor Brown's data, the rest were perforated by machines.

Book Waits Fifty Years Started 50 years ago and recently, a book has been published in London. It is "Big Pull" by the author is eighty-year-old Roberts. He first planned started the work when he was ty, but found he did not enough about the subject. He has published 70 books.