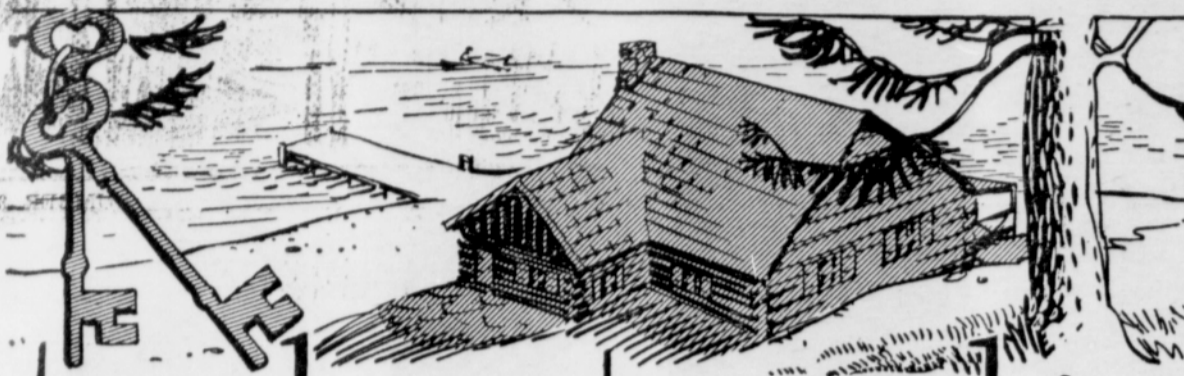


OUR WEEKLY SERIAL STORY INSTALLMENT



two keys to a cabin

BY LIDA LARRIMORE
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CHAPTER XIII—Continued

The door opened before Debby reached it. John stood there, smiling, his face glowing with cold above the collar of the bear skin coat, his hat in his hand.

"Hello—" he said. The smile faded as his eyes moved questioningly about the room. "What's the matter?" he asked hesitantly. "What's going on here?"

Debby conquered her sobs. Her head lifted.

"Gay wants to take me back to New York with her," she said, "and Mother won't let me go."

"So you threw a tantrum." Over Debby's head John's eyes flashed a question at Gay. She tried to smile reassuringly but his expression, concerned and apprehensive, told her that she had not succeeded.

"I think it is wiser for Debby to remain at home." Gay saw that Ann Houghton's eyes, lifted quickly to her son, were frightened, now, heard the shaken note in her voice.

"Wiser!" Debby's voice rose again to an hysterical pitch. She whirled from her mother to face John, standing grave and silent in the doorway. "You know why she won't let me go. You know that she doesn't approve of—"

"Go to your room, Debby." John's voice, cutting through her hysterical outburst, silenced Debby. She went past him out of the room, her head drooping again, her defiance crumpling beneath his stern, uncompromising expression. Sarah followed. The door closed.

CHAPTER XIV

"What is it, Mother?" John threw off his coat and walked to the hearth. "What started this? What is it all about?"

"I don't think we need to discuss it." Ann Houghton resumed her knitting. During the interval of silence which had followed the closing of the door, she had regained her composure. Her hands manipulated the amber needles steadily. Only the dull red flush that burned in her cheeks betrayed any inward agitation.

"I don't agree with you." John stood with his back to the fire, his glance turning from his mother to Gay, then back again to Ann Houghton. "I find Debby in hysterics, Sarah crying, you and Gay obviously distressed. I should like to know, if you please, exactly what has happened."

Gay's hands tightened on the back of the chair behind which she stood. "It was my fault," she said. "I invited Debby to go back to New York with me."

"And you don't want her to go?" John's eyes, grave and concerned, turned again from Gay to his mother.

"I don't think it advisable. Unfortunately, Debby had her heart set on it. She was rude to me and inconsiderate of Gay. I did think she'd outgrown tantrums."

"I should have consulted Mrs. Houghton before I spoke of it to Debby. I'm sorry. It didn't occur to me that any objection would be raised."

"Why do you object, Mother?" Ann Houghton regarded her son with a studied deliberation which chilled Gay's sympathy, aroused her antagonism. As deeply as memories of her own turbulent adolescence had moved her to sympathy for Debby, she had pitied John's mother, too. Now, watching her manner with

John, its effect upon him, pity crystallized into resentment. Debby's accusations had held a measure, at least, of truth. If she had not seen Ann Houghton's gesture in John's room this morning, if she had not had that revealing glimpse of the possessive passion which burned beneath her controlled and reasonable manner with her children, she might now be convinced that only wisdom motivated the decision she had made. But she had seen. She knew—"You know how difficult Debby has been," Ann Houghton replied, her eyes holding John's troubled glance. "This year, especially. She's just beginning to show a real interest in the courses she's taking at



John stood there, smiling.

the high school. I'm sure it would be unwise to allow her to make a break now."

"Perhaps you're right," John said doubtfully.

"I offered to have her tutored in the courses she's taking," Gay said, "or send her to a business school. It's quite probable that she might make more rapid progress with a tutor than in a class at the high school here."

She had not meant to give an impression of patronage. But that, she saw, was the effect of her words upon Ann Houghton, upon John.

"That's very generous, Gay," John's mother said, "but quite unnecessary."

John gave a short laugh. "You aren't going to assume full responsibility for all of us, are you?" he asked. "I think we can leave Debby's education to Mother."

"I wasn't thinking of Debby's education," she said lightly. "I thought she would enjoy a visit in New York and that I would enjoy having her there. My motives, as usual, I'm afraid, were almost entirely selfish."

John looked at her, then, questioningly, pleadingly. She smiled and his face cleared.

"She would enjoy it," he said. "I should like you to go with me, John," she repeated. "Debby is nervously excited. She'll probably need a sedative to put her to sleep. The doughnuts will wait, and Gay will excuse you for a few minutes, I'm sure."

The distance between them narrowed. Gay's spirits lifted. It was as though he had come to stand beside her and taken her hand in his.

"I don't feel that it would be wise, John," Ann Houghton said reasonably, quietly. "Debby is impressionable and immature. It would be mistaken kindness, if you'll permit me to express myself frankly, Gay, to give her, at this time, a taste of something she can't have permanently. I'm afraid she would be more discontented than ever when she returned."

"Good Lord, Mother." John's voice held a note of irritation. "Nobody wants to eat fruit cake for every meal, but it's pleasant once in a while."

Ann Houghton smiled faintly. "I think that sort of fruit cake, just now," she said, "would be very bad for Debby. With this notion she has of singing on a radio program or in some place of entertainment, I'm afraid that being in New York with Gay would turn her head completely."

"I shouldn't allow her to do anything of which you would disapprove, Mrs. Houghton."

"I don't question that, but your life is so different from our life here. I'm afraid that the contrast—"

"You know Debby is a chameleon, Mother. She adapts herself easily to any environment."

"That's just why I don't—" she broke off, glanced quickly at John, at Gay. "I'm not presuming to criticize your mode of living, Gay, but I'm convinced that for Debby, just at this time—if it were Sarah, that would be a different matter." She folded her knitting into the bag. "I shouldn't think you would want her for a visit after the scene you've just witnessed. I feel that she, that I, owe you an apology."

"No, please, Mrs. Houghton. She was terribly disappointed. It was my fault. I should have consulted you. It's all right. I understand how you feel, but I'm disappointed too."

John made a restless movement on the hearth. "Then it's settled, isn't it? Debby doesn't go back to New York with Gay. Now may we talk of something else? Food, for instance. I'm starved. Did Huldah make chocolate doughnuts? Come out to the kitchen with me, Gay."

Ann Houghton rose from her chair. "If you please, John, I'd like you to go to Debby with me."

"Oh, let her alone. You know how she is when she's had a tantrum. Don't play up to her and she'll get over it."

"I don't think she's well. She's not been herself these past few days."

"You'll turn her into a neurotic if you don't stop coddling her."

"Debby is sensitive in a way which I think I understand better than you."

John turned to Gay in smiling exasperation. "What was the use of my spending four years in medical school and two years interning when mother, by instinct, knows more than I do about my profession."

Again a faint chilling smile touched Ann Houghton's lips.

"I should like you to go with me, John," she repeated. "Debby is nervously excited. She'll probably need a sedative to put her to sleep. The doughnuts will wait, and Gay will excuse you for a few minutes, I'm sure."

"Certainly, Mrs. Houghton."

"Back in a minute, Gay." John's eyes were pleading. His smile was strained.

"Good-night, Gay."

"Good-night, Mrs. Houghton." John went out of the room with his mother. The door closed. Gay stood leaning against the back of the chair, staring into the fire.

Gay did not turn when the door opened. She remained seated in the chair beside the hearth, looking up at the painting above the mantel. "Were you asleep?" John asked, coming to the chair. "I'm sorry I've been so long."

"No, not asleep. I've been getting acquainted with the gentleman up there. It's your great-grandfather, isn't it?"

"Abner Houghton—yes." "You don't look like him. In an hour of intensive study I haven't been able to find a trace of resemblance."

"I'm sorry it's been an hour. I wanted to get back to you." He bent to lift her hands lying in her lap. "Come over here where we



"If you knew what Mother's life has been."

can be close together. I haven't kissed you for three days."

"Has it been only three days?" "Darling, have you been miserable?"

She drew her hands from his, sat looking down at them, silent.

"What is it? What are you thinking?"

"I want to go with you tomorrow."

"Into Portland? I meant to take you."

"And then on to New York—tomorrow."

"But Mary expects you to stay. And the kids. Nat made me promise to bring you."

"That's dear of them, but—"

"Look at me, Gay."

She raised her head. Seeing his grave and troubled face, she gave a little cry. He bent toward her. Her arms went around his neck. Their lips met and clung. Presently he drew away, straightened, took her hands to pull her up from the chair. "Did taking Debby to New York mean so much to you?"

"I should have enjoyed having her, but that isn't important."

"That act she pulled must have been unpleasant for you."

"It wasn't an act." She sat beside him on a sofa with a high back curled at one end like a snail. "Debby meant every word she said."

He looked searchingly into her eyes.

"Do you believe that, Gay?"

"Of course I believe it. I've been here for three days."

"Mother told me. I hadn't realized—"

"I don't want to discuss your mother, John."

"But you can't believe the things Debby said were true."

"They are true. I'm sorry if it offends you but you asked for it."

He drew a little away from her. "Mother is only thinking of what is best for Debby. She is emotional

and immature, and she has this notion about singing—"

"Why shouldn't she have a chance?"

"That isn't what Mother wants for Debby."

"What does she want for Debby?"

"She wants her to go to college." "So that Debby can spend the rest of her life being grateful to her?" Her voice softened. "Oh, I am sorry, John. I shouldn't have said that."

"You can say what you like to me, what you think, how you feel."

"No, I can't. When I do, we quarrel. Debby isn't important insofar as we are concerned. But your mother is. She doesn't want Debby to go to New York with me because she's afraid of me, of the things I can do for her. She wants to be everything to all of you."

"That's natural, isn't it?"

"Natural, perhaps, but selfish. Yes, selfish, John. Can't you see?"

"If you knew what Mother's life has been. Her every thought has been for us."

"It would have been better for her, for you, if she had to plan for us, Gay. There wasn't much money. You can't understand, I suppose."

"No, frankly, I can't."

"That's because you have the protection of wealth," he said stiffly.

"Oh, money! Because my grandfathers left a trust fund for me, we bicker and quarrel. You attach too much importance to what I have—"

"It isn't because you have it now," he said slowly, with measured deliberation. "It's because you've always had it. From the hour you were born every thought you've had, every move you've made, has been colored and shaped by the fact that both your grandfathers were wealthy men. Your mother—"

"How absurd we are!" She gave a short strained laugh. "In New York we quarreled because my mother did not display a properly maternal attitude. Now we quarrel because your mother is a model of maternal devotion. Oh, is it important, John?"

"We are each of us the product of our separate environments," he said carefully, thoughtfully. "You had nurses and governesses. You were sent to camps, to schools, to the sea-shore in summer, to dancing class. For your birthdays magicians were hired to entertain you and your guests. When you were sick there were nurses. Mother did everything for us. When we were sick, she couldn't afford to engage a trained nurse. There was no money for elaborate toys, amusement, entertaining. Mother made fun for us at home. She scrimped and saved to send me to college, to send Sarah. She managed it in ways you couldn't understand, hamburger instead of steak, never quite enough heat in the house, dried vegetables instead of fresh ones in winter, Sarah's dresses made over for Debby—"

"(TO BE CONTINUED)"

Many Non-Metal Parts Are Used in Automobile

Steel and iron are the basic materials of automobile construction but a surprising number of non-metallic substances enter also.

Rubber is the principal contributor to quiet, vibration-free riding, providing cushions between frame and body, bumpers to take the shock of slamming doors, windlances and gaskets to keep out drafts, cement to seal joints along the floor, pads to keep feet from skidding off the pedals, hose for radiator, heater and windshield wiper, mats for running boards and floor.

All told, a number of cars have as many as 250 rubber parts, and one of current manufacture has 335. Sixty pounds of rubber products apart from tires is not unusual in a car.

Next to rubber perhaps the most useful non-metallic ingredients are the plastics which serve many useful purposes of which some are conspicuously new, though really belonging to a family of products with which engineers have been long familiar. It was at least three decades ago that phenolic resinoids were taken up as substitutes for defective electrical insulation. Today, similar synthetic products are widely used also for steering wheel rims, control knobs, instrument panels and elsewhere.