

SHINING PALACE

By CHRISTINE WHITING PARMENTER

COPYRIGHT BY CHRISTINE WHITING PARMENTER - WNU SERVICE

SYNOPSIS

James Lambert tries in vain to dissuade his beautiful foster-daughter, Leonora, from marrying Don Mason, young "rolling stone." He tells her, "Unless a house is founded upon a rock, it will not survive." Leonora suspects the influence of her half-brother, Ned, always jealous of the girl since the day his father brought her home from the deathbed of her mother, abandoned by her Italian baritone lover. Don arrives in the midst of the argument, and Lambert realizes the frank understanding between the two. Sitting up late into the night, Lambert reviews the whole story, of Nora as a child, at boarding school, studying music abroad, meeting Don on the return trip. In the morning he delivers his ultimatum, to give Don a job with Ned for a year's show-down. When Nora suggests the possibility of running away with Don, Lambert threatens disinheritance. Don agrees to the job, but before a month is over, his nerves are jumpy, he cannot sleep at night, he is too tired to go out much with Nora. Nora soothes him with her music. Nora grows quieter, and broods over Don, complains to her father of Ned's spying on him, and decides that rather than see Don's spirit broken, she will run away. She urges her father to put an end to the futile experiment. James Lambert is obdurate and angry. Lambert tells her that if Don quits she will quit with him; that he will be through with her. He adds that if she tires of her bargain it will be useless to come to him for help. Later Don and Nora discuss the situation.

CHAPTER III—Continued

"For you, Nora! For you, of course, sweetheart. For me—Well, without you there would be nothing left, nothing at all. Don't cry, Nora. I've never made you cry before. It hurts me. Things will go better after this. I promise to buck up—take life more calmly—try to remember that nothing really matters if you don't despise me. The biggest part of the year is over now. We'll stick it out, as I said before. We must, you know."

Nora looked up, winking away the tears as she said gently: "We must try, of course. It would be so terrible to hurt Father. But it's the last small straw that breaks the camel's back, Don. Don't forget that."

CHAPTER IV

It seemed to Nora that things did go better for a time. Don appeared less tired. He even accompanied her to one or two informal parties with some show of enthusiasm; and was, according to their hostess, "a perfect life-saver" at a dinner given in honor of a renowned explorer, recently returned from the Arctic.

"The affair would have been a complete washout if your young man hadn't been here, Nora," she said with gratitude. "No one else present could talk intelligently with our lion on the subjects nearest his heart, you know."

That evening was something of a triumph to the girl. As she watched her lover conversing so easily and naturally with the guest of honor, comparing experiences, putting questions, answering others which the great man put to him, her eyes shone with happy pride. Even Ned, sitting across the table, was obviously impressed though he essayed to hide the fact. And Corinne, observing that others appeared to be listening with interest to "that queer boy Nora has taken up with," listened herself, and wondered if her ears deceived her when she heard the distinguished guest invite Don to dine with him next night.

"And can you tell me," she asked Ned petulantly as they rode toward home, "what a man like that can have in common with Don Mason?" Indeed, she had to repeat the question before her husband, who was deep in thought, roused himself to reply:

"Possibly he wants to book him for his next expedition."

Corinne brightened. "I wish to goodness he would! Don could never resist such an opportunity; and an absence of that sort would settle Nora! Did you see that Kemp Corless acted extremely struck with her tonight? They say he's worth ten million."

Ned shrugged. "I can't see our fastidious sister falling for a bald head and fifty years, my dear."

"She'd be a fool not to, with all that money into the bargain," Corinne retorted.

"Nora is a fool more ways than one," observed Ned with brotherly candor, "but she's perfectly aware that Dad'll never let her suffer from want of cash. And there's more to Don Mason than I supposed, Corinne. He's got uncommonly good manners, too. Did you notice?"

"Oh, yes, I noticed," broke in Corinne impatiently. "He simply monopolized the guest of honor, if you call that manners."

"It appeared to me," maintained her husband with honesty which would have astonished Leonora, "that the guest of honor was monopolizing Don!"

For a while there was silence, a thoughtful silence on the part of Corinne before she ventured: "I wonder if the man would dine with us if he understood that Don would be there."

Being not utterly blind to his wife's social ambitions, Ned threw her an ironic glance.

"Better not try, my dear," was his advice, "and save yourself a disappointment. I've heard he turns down almost everyone."

So things went better for a time. What Nora did not suspect was the heroic effort Don was making to conceal his unhappy state of mind. He was bitterly ashamed to have her know how let-down he really was—how intolerable the situation had become to him. Often he felt that could he talk freely—get the sense of rebellion at this way of living out of his system, it would ease the strain; but Nora was worried enough as it was, he argued. Why add to her troubles? Let her think, if she could, that he was at last becoming inured to this hectic existence which his fellow men regarded as the natural thing. Don felt that the fault was all his own. And to make things harder, spring was in the air and on the tree-tops—spring, which always played the devil with him!

Just the scent of a blossoming lilac stirred something in the very depths of his being—an almost irresistible desire to be away—it didn't matter where—just away. . . . And he was chained to a ledger, as securely chained as were those slaves in the old galleons.

To Don, filled with spring wanderlust, the long days seemed interminable, and the office little better than a prison cell. There came an evening when he could not go to Nora for fear she would suspect the terrible unrest that had possession of him. Instead he tramped for miles into the country, trying to find peace from the stars—the cool of evening—the wild, sweet scent of growing things.

It was late when he turned his steps toward town. Peace had eluded him. He could not find it. Reaching a bridge he paused to rest a moment, gazing down into the infinite blackness of moving water. Peace must be there, he mused. Peace and coolness; release from this ghastly treadmill that men called life. After all, did the cowards have the best of it? Or in that somewhere beyond did they look back regretfully, sorrowfully, wishing they'd played the game—wishing . . .

"Thinkin' about ending it all?" came a voice close at his side.

Don started guiltily, having been too lost in thought to hear approaching footsteps. Now the bright starlight showed him that a girl had spoken, her small, thin, pointed face looking up at him without fear, yet without boldness.

"Not seriously," he answered, as if there were nothing unusual in her question. "Is that what you were considering, this time of night?"

The girl shrugged, the cynical shrug of a bored flapper; an imitation, possibly, of some cheap actress of the screen.

"I tried it once," she confessed quite simply. "Honest I did; but a cop got in the way."

Don turned to look at her more closely, his interest rising.

"So you find life as desperate as that?" he questioned.

"Sometimes I do. Some days I don't care nothin' about livin'. Say!" she broke off suddenly, "have you got a girl—I mean a steady?"

He nodded, thinking how Nora would appreciate the appellation.

"But you ain't married. Anyone with half an eye could see it. You don't look tied."

"Don't I?" Don smiled at this description. "The truth is, I'm tied to a ledger—an immense and horrible black book chock full of figures that persist in dancing before my eyes when I want to sleep, and getting into the wrong columns day-times, just to be spiteful."

"You better be thankful they don't smell bad," the girl retorted. "I work in a dye house. Some days I can't hardly eat my lunch. How long you been goin' with your sweetie, anyhow?"

Don was beginning to enjoy himself. To be revealing his life history to an utter stranger, with no

thought of the conventions, brought back the days of easy vagabondage that had once been his. Besides, this encounter would be something to tell Nora—something amusing. He answered, dropping with ease into the vernacular of his companion, a habit which endeared him to chance acquaintances: "We've been going together more'n a year now, sister."

"And you ain't tired of her?" "Not so's you'd notice it!" grinned Don.

The girl drew in a breath which seemed, somehow, laden with discouragement.

"I bet she's got a lot o' swell clothes then, boy."

Not moving his head, Don turned his eyes a little. The moon had come from behind a bank of clouds, and he saw distinctly the much-washed, sleazy frock the girl was wearing. Even a patch under one arm was visible as she raised her elbows to the parapet, and, looking down into the dark water, repeated the statement she had just made: "I bet she's got a lot o' clothes."

Don said, a vision of Nora's silver slippers and gay chiffons rising before him: "I'll say she has! But



The office was little better than a prison cell.

believe me, girl, I'd think as much of her without 'em."

"A lot you would!" She laughed, a dreary, yet somehow brave attempt at mirth that hurt Don strangely.

"Maybe you think you would. Maybe you never seen her till she was all dolled up. I bet she don't work in no dye house anyway. What's her job?"

"She—" Don paused, then finished with sudden inspiration, "She plays—plays the piano, and—"

"The piano! Say, are you tryin' to kid me? The piano went out when the talkies come in, boy. Didn't you know that? I had a chum that could pound the ivories to beat the band. Played in a movie theater and dressed like she was Gloria Swanson. Why that girl had her nails fixed up in a beauty parlor every Saturday. Honest, I ain't kiddin'." (Don saw with pity the dyestained fingers clutching the rail.)

"And then the talkies come in and she lost her job. Tough luck, wasn't it? She worked in a bakery for a while after, but I guess she hated it most as much as I hate the dye house. I never see no one so crazy about playin' the piano. Used to play to herself nights after she come from work. But she lost her job again and had to sell the piano to pay room rent; and after that I guess she thought there was no use tryin' and . . ."

The girl's voice trailed off, her eyes seeking the water, and Don said: "What happened? What happened to her after that?"

"What would ha' happened to a girl like her?" Hopelessness deep as the water below them was in the answer. "She ain't respectable any more, that's all. My mother says she'll turn me out if ever she catches me talkin' to her again; but I ask you, honest, what could the girl do? Sometimes I donno as it pays to be respectable anyhow. I met Cora (she's the one I'm tellin' about) a day last winter when I was freezin', and b'lieve it or not, she was wearin' a fur coat!"

Don advised soberly: "I'd stay respectable just the same, sister, if I were you."

"And see my boy friend goin' with another girl because I ain't got a decent rag to wear when he takes me out?" she retorted furiously. "It ain't as if I could spend what I make on clothes, like some girls can. My old man don't work steady and I have to help my mother. Once last winter I saved ten dollars for a new dress. Thought it was safe under the newspaper in my bureau drawer; but—but my old man smelt it out and took it. Ain't that a dirty trick to play on yer own kid?"

"I'll say it was!" Don felt a consuming desire to lay violent hands on the "old man."

Stirred by a sudden, compelling impulse, he moved nearer, and grasping the girl's thin shoulders turned her about so that the moonlight fell on her bitter, upturned face.

"Look at me, girl," he said. "Are you on the level? Not kidding me? No, don't get mad" (as she shook his hands off roughly). "I'm going to help. Honest-to-goodness, I'm going to help you, kid."

For he had read the answer to his question in those indignant, angry, tear-stained eyes, and knew that the girl had talked so freely only because she was lonely to the point of heartbreak. He reached in a pocket, thankful that his eccentric landlady (who was once the unfortunate recipient of a forged check) insisted on receiving her monthly stipend in cold cash. Don had intended paying her that night. A roll of bills met his expectant fingers. After all, he was thinking, it didn't matter whether the fickle Joe of the girl's story was worthy of her or not. She loved him, poor child! She wanted to be beautiful—for him; and—thank God!—he could make her dream come true. His hand slid from the pocket, and lifting those dye-stained, work-worn young fingers, he closed them gently 'round the roll of greenbacks.

"That's yours, sister."

"Mine!" The girl stared down in stupefaction at the money, her breath coming in quick gasps. She said, her voice breaking on a shaky laugh: "Say!—who are you, anyhow John D., or—Santa Claus?"

Don grinned and answered: "I'm just a friend. You put that where your old man can't find it, and—"

"But—but you've savin' up to get married, ain't you?" she protested. "I can't take your whole roll this way—honest I can't. I ain't got a right to take any of it; but—but if you'd spare me five bucks maybe I'd get to save somethin' next week."

She extended the money as if to give it back to him, and Don, taking her hand in both of his, said gently: "No. It's yours, sister, every darn cent of it. My girl would want you to have it. See? She likes to look swell too, you know. She'll understand. Why, you poor kid! Don't cry. It's nothing—nothing at all to cry about . . ."

Don ceased, ducking his head against the blinding glare of headlights as a big car moved slowly across the bridge. Not until later did he recall the fact that as those powerful lights picked him out of the darkness, the car had wavered for a moment, almost stopped, before it went on into the night.

A week dragged by, one of those first hot weeks that sap the energy. Even Nora wilted, and wilting, thought compassionately of Don, sentenced to spend those enervating days in the correct attire of a business man. How, she asked herself, could he ever stick it out until October? And if he didn't . . .

She came in early one afternoon to find her father at home, minus his collar and seated by an electric fan. He said, smiling an apology: "It's so blamed hot down town I couldn't stand it. Don't think I've ever known it so warm this time of year. What do you say to getting into the country earlier than usual, my dear? You look—"

"Don't say how I look!" begged Nora, slumping down limply beside the fan. "I was hoping there was something wrong with the hall mirror! Such early heat is downright wicked, isn't it? I—I'm not going to the country, Father."

"What do you mean?"

In his amazement James was oblivious of a bead of perspiration that trickled persistently down his nose.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Wise and Otherwise

A woman used to be the one to have the last word, but now it's the traffic cop.

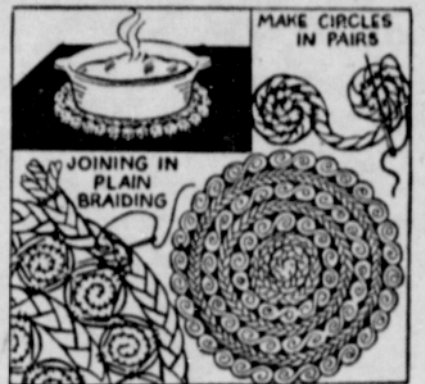
Hard work never killed anyone. But youth prefers something with a spice of danger in it.

Men are a bit like trees. When they cease to branch out they're liable to become fossils.

Many a plain woman has cooked her way into a man's heart, just as many a pretty one has cooked her way out again. Is the ship of marriage foundering on rock cake?

In view of the needless noise that already assails our ears, it's a good thing that rusty brains don't squeak.

Ideal Hot Dish Mats Made of Cable Cord



By RUTH WYETH SPEARS

THIS mat is made of white cotton cable cord such as you buy at the notion counter for corded seams and trimmings. The original mat from which this design was made of—no one of this generation would ever guess—what! Corset strings. These were once a common commodity along with collar boning, hat pins and side combs. There was quite a fad for making luncheon sets of them braided or arranged in various designs and sewn with fine stitches on the wrong side.

The design shown here is compact and, copied in rather heavy cord, makes an ideal hot dish mat. Follow the sketches for directions. Make the circles in pairs, as shown, using No. 40 cotton thread to sew them. Braid three cords together and then sew the braided strip around and around to make the center of the mat. Sew a row of the circles to the edge of this center part, then add another braided row, being careful to "ease in" the inside edge just enough to keep the mat flat. Continue adding alternate rows of circles and braiding until the mat is the size desired.

To join the ends of the braided rows, pull one end through the braiding to the wrong side of the mat; then trim the ends and sew them flat. It is not too early to begin thinking of Christmas gifts—and you will be wanting to make something a bit unusual for that next bazaar when it comes rolling around. Sewing Book 2, Embroidery, Gifts and Novelties, is full of new ideas all clearly illustrated with step-by-step pictures. Send for it today and give life a new interest by starting some fascinating piece of hand work. Enclose 25 cents and address Mrs. Spears, 210 S. Desplains St., Chicago, Ill.

NERVOUS?

Do you feel so nervous you want to scream? Are you cross and irritable? Do you scold those dearest to you?

If your nerves are on edge and you feel you need a good general system tonic, try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made especially for women.

For over 60 years one woman has told another how to go "smiling thru" with reliable Pinkham's Compound. It helps nature build up more physical resistance and thus helps calm quivering nerves and lessen discomforts from annoying symptoms which often accompany female functional disorders.

Why not give it a chance to help YOU? Over one million women have written in reporting wonderful benefits from Pinkham's Compound.

WNU—13

38—38

... It is the DOLLARS

... that circulate among ourselves, in our own community, that in the end build our schools and churches, pave our streets, lay our sidewalks, increase our farm values, attract more people to this section. Buying our merchandise in our local stores means keeping our dollars at home to work for all of us.