

**Saving the Ticket.**  
By Carl Williams.  
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"I suppose that all this seems very tiresome to you," said pretty Nelly Briggs as she slipped into a chair beside Carol. "It's not much like your swell parties in the city. They must be grand."

Carol smiled and nodded an absent-minded assent. She was beginning to hate the farce she was playing. Her health had sent her back to Broadwater, and her old associates in the little town had taken it for granted that because her few dresses were well tailored and her feminine knickknacks were better than those sold at the Boston store she had prospered mightily.

She had not told them that the dresses were last year's styles purchased at the bargain counter after infinite sacrifice and that the knickknacks which seemed so precious in Broadwater eyes were the odds and ends of remnant sales. She had permitted them to believe that her life was one round of gaiety and it was all that they in their wistful imaginings pictured.

She was beginning to hate herself for the act. At first it had been very pleasant to receive the homage of her associates, to read the nice things that were said about her in the Broadwater Bulletin and to speak grandly of "in town," but now she found that it had set her upon a pedestal apart from the rest, and she was minded to step down and mingle with the crowd.

Only two days remained of her vacation, and this dance had been arranged in her honor, marking the termination of a round of festivities. As the guest of honor Carol shared her dances impartially with all applicants, dividing a dance between three or four of the boys, but Nelly's remark had dampened her pleasure in her belle-ship.

It was not at all like the parties in the city. The town hall was no more dingy than the places at which were held the only dances she attended. More, it was clean and bright, and no



"We'll save it!" cried Seth jubilantly. Insistent calls of the waiter jarred the sensibilities and reminded the merry-makers that patronage of the bar was considered indispensable.

A piano and concert constituted the orchestra, and they were playing last year's selections. Carol smiled as she contrasted their playing with the fifteen piece bands at the summer parks near town, but the atmosphere was altogether different, and with a sigh she realized that in a few days she would be going back to the tawdry glitter of the city, where she was only one of the lookers on at the real events and where her own field was restricted to the people in her boarding house, the few congenial girls in the church club to which she belonged and the half dozen men in the office where she spent her days bent over

a typewriter.

Seth Morey came up to claim the first half of the next waifs, and as she placed her hand in his he said, as Nelly Briggs had done before him: "I suppose it all seems foolish to you. I guess you're used to men in dress suits and all that."

Carol thought of the men who danced with their hats on the back of their heads and only smiled in reply.

"I'm thinking of coming to the city next fall," continued Seth. "I guess I need a little polishing up."

"You're better off where you are," said Carol wearily. "If you'll take my advice you'll stay here."

"Of course we can't all be as clever as you and get ahead as fast," he said stiffly. "There's Tommy Madigan. I think he has the second chance at this dance."

Carol knew as well as Seth that Tommy was not next in turn, but she accepted the exchange and went whirling about the hall with him, while Seth sat in a corner growling upon the crowd of dancers and fiercely assured himself that he was foolish to imagine that a girl like Carol would care for a country fellow like himself after she had met so many smart men in the city.

Humblly he admitted the truth of her suggestion that he could not make progress in town, and he succeeded in becoming thoroughly miserable.

He was glad when the two piece orchestra struck up "Home, Sweet Home," and the girls hurried to the dressing room for their wraps. He waited at the door for Carol.

"May I walk home with you?" he asked as she came from the dressing room in her smart coat and furs.

"If-if you won't be cross again," assented Carol, slipping her arm through his. "You know very well," she added as they descended the stairs, "that Tommy Madigan was not next on my list, and yet you got angry because I urged you to stay here at home instead of trying your luck in town."

"I know I was foolish," he asserted, a little sadly. "I'd stand no chance with those city bred fellows. You always were clever and could get ahead."

"It isn't that," explained Carol. "I'm going to tell you all about it, Seth. It's all been a big mistake. Everybody up here supposes that I am doing so well that I can afford to come home for a rest without waiting for the summer vacation. That's not it at all."

"But you're here, and it's only April," he reminded her.

"I'm here," she went on, "because I broke down trying to live and dress myself and do everything on \$7 a week. I had to have nice clothes or I could not get a place. I had to put my money on my back instead of into my food. They have no use for a girl who does not convey the impression that the office is a prosperous one. I'm sick and tired of it all, and I loathe the idea of going back."

"You wouldn't care to stay on here," he declared incredulously. "You don't have half the fun. This was a big event tonight for us. Just contrast it with the times you have in town."

"I have; that's what makes me so miserable," she confessed. "In town I don't go to the great balls you read about unless it's to stand outside in the street and catch a glimpse of the rich people as they go in. My balls are in halls smaller than this town hall, and they're horrid. When I go to the theater, it's to climb to the top gallery to hang over the rail and see only a part of the stage."

"And you'd rather stay here in Broadwater?" he asked. "You'd rather live in this sleepy old town than in the city, with all the lights and life?"

Carol looked about her. An April rain that afternoon had left the air cool and sweet. The scent of moist earth and of growing things filled the air with fragrance, and the moon touched with kindly light the little huddle of houses gleaming white against the soft new green of the budding trees.

Then she thought of the city, with its noisome streets, the trenches smelling of gas pipes and sewers, of the reeking pavements and the harsh glare of the electric lights.

She contrasted the quiet of the night with the hurrying, jostling throng of humanity, men and women who never were rested, who thought only of themselves and had no time for others.

"You don't know—the city," she said, with a little sob in her voice. "It's a

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vampire, merciless and menacing. It sucks your lifeblood and throws you aside for fresh victims."

"Then why go back?" asked Seth quietly. "I haven't spoken before because I thought that you never would be content with Broadwater again, but if you want to stay, dear, can't you stay—as my wife?"

The glad light sprang to Carol's eyes, but the eternal feminine within her rose. It seemed too easy a surrender.

"I have the return half of my ticket," she objected. "I can't waste that."

"I'll get one, too," he suggested, "and we'll go together—on our honeymoon."

"I'd like to go back to the city—for a honeymoon," said Carol shyly. "It seems a shame—to waste the ticket."

"We'll save it!" cried Seth jubilantly. "I'm grateful to the city since it sent you back home—to me."

**Satisfied.**

"Please, sir," piped the tiny customer, whose head scarcely reached the counter. "father wants some oak varnish."

"How much does your father want, my little man?" asked the shopman.

"Father said you was to fill this," said the little fellow, handing over a half gallon can.

It was duly filled and handed over.

"Father will pay you on Saturday," said the recipient casually.

And then the face of the shopman grew dark.

"We don't give credit here," he said. "Gimme back the can!"

Meekly the little lad handed back the can, which was emptied and handed back to him, with a scowl.

"Thank you, sir," he said. "Father said you'd be sure to leave enough round the sides for him to finish the job he wants to do, and I think you 'ave, sir."—London Scraps.

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"Are you willing to tell me a little about your next important work?" asked the reporter.

The literary man clicked a pair of shears and patted the boy on the shoulder.

"We were just talking about it as you came up," he said. "Willie thinks I ought to do it with a bowl, but I think I can do it without. What would you advise? You see his mother has always cut it before, but she's away just now!"—Home Magazine.

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