

THE GIRL SPY

By Andree Hope

Illustrated by Dorothy Dalin.



MY NAME is Anne Forsyth. I am 35 years of age, and my only brother, Philip Forsyth, whose house I share, is somewhat older. Few brothers and sisters have lived

together in more perfect sympathy, love and friendship than Phil and I.

I cannot presume to say that I have been all to him, but he has been all to me for many a year, and when the great blow fell upon me that shattered the sweetest hope of my life, he alone knew the agony of my suffering; he alone was my support and my comfort during these weary hours of anguish.

I repeat, therefore, that he is everything to me in the world. Whatever of romance is left to me is centered in him, but, alas, my love for him, great as it is, is a jealous love, and for some time past I have seen a cloud, at first but a little cloud no greater than a man's hand, looming upon the horizon of our happiness, and I know it will arise and grow until it will cover and darken the beacon of my life.

Phil is confidential traveler to a great Russian mercantile house, that of Ranson, Grant & Ranson, and so important is the firm, and so various the transactions in which it is engaged, that besides the ostensible branches of trade that its business embraces matters that may be considered of public magnitude occasionally pass through its hands.

Unimpeachable in its integrity, trustworthy in every respect, secret negotiations, it is whispered, between mighty powers are not infrequently intrusted to the respected house of Ranson, Grant & Ranson.

My brother, therefore, has just cause for pride in the position he holds in connection with such a firm, and I am proud for him.

Not that he ever gives me information respecting any important subject confided to him; in fact, he rarely mentions it to me.

We never speak but of those matters of trade of which all the world may be cognizant, but long years of intimacy have rendered me as well acquainted with his thoughts as if they were my own.

Yet now, alas! a cloud is rising up to dim the brightness, to mar the sweetness of this perfect confidence, this perfect intimacy.

The pretty baby face of Minnie Grant, the little daughter of the managing partner of the firm, is coming between me and the one delight of my life.

She was a sweet, joyous creature, a child in thought as in years, simple, fresh and loving. For years also I had played with her as a toy, and have petted her as a "wee thing" to love and spoil, but now this childish creature is carelessly and thoughtlessly taking from me my one joy.

Often now will my grave brother desert my side. Often now he listens with but scant attention to the books he once so loved me to read aloud to him.

Sometimes he will jump up and leave me hastily, with but faint apology, in order to have only a momentary glimpse of the wayward little fairy who has bewitched his life.

School myself as I will, I oftentimes turn away with fierce indignation in my soul, until recalled to my better nature by Phil's pained and pitying glance. Then as I hang over him in deep repentance, and pass my hand tenderly over the hair already whitening from the labor and anxiety endured for my sake, I try to atone for my folly and my selfishness by leading him to talk fondly of her who has already taken from me the kingdom where once I reigned supreme.

Ah, me! how complicated for good and evil, and how full of sorrow are our poor, weak, human hearts. How hard it is for one good thought to find a place there,

until that place has been softened and hope, and this hope he cherished, though it was only a glimmer, a mere speck so to speak, at the end of a long vista of years.

I have already mentioned that Phil is not only a traveler, but that he is one of Doubtless matters of importance were

Extra Announcement!

THREE weeks from today our Sunday Fiction Magazine will publish the first installment of Edgar Rice Burroughs' great novel, "The Eternal Lover," a romance of prehistoric times, when the cave man wooed and won. Mr. Burroughs has the biggest following of any American writer today. "The Eternal Lover" is one of his strongest stories. You will surely want to read how Nu, the son of Nu, appeared out of the dim past and claimed the beautiful Victoria Custer as his mate, and how the cave man led her into the jungle after he had rescued her from the Arabs. It is a wonderful story. Don't miss it! Remember, we begin "The Eternal Lover" three weeks from today in the

Sunday Fiction Magazine

the confidential travelers of the great firm.

His journeys are usually hurried, often long and fatiguing, and when such is likely to be the case he has occasionally taken me with him.

Strong of body, strong of heart, far from being a trouble, I have at such times had the sweet consciousness of being both a help and a comfort to him, especially as, though far, far cleverer than I am, he has not my vigor of constitution, and is at times bodily unfit for the fatigue that such journeys must entail.

Russia was in general his destination. With him I have been to St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Nijni, Odessa, and even to those remote provinces of the vast Russian empire that form the savage district of Siberia.

Once his duties called him to the dread regions of eternal snow, far within the arctic circle, and here in dismal villages, laboring in noxious mines, surrounded by barbarous and semi-human tribes, we found some of those unhappy exiles who, once noble and illustrious, but now nameless and degraded, are expiating their follies or their crimes in this distant land of awful solitude and terrific desolation.

Compared with such expeditions, trips to South America and Australia were as nothing. I have been to all our colonies, and have also accompanied my brother to China and Japan. With reason, therefore, I consider myself an experienced traveler.

Our mother, a Russian by birth, the daughter of the Russian consul at Dantzig, had clung tenaciously to her nationality and her language. Our father had been for many years agent to Ranson & Co. at Hamburg, Frankfurt and Leghorn (in which cities our early childhood was passed), and it was in consideration of his faithful services, and from regret at his untimely death, that Phil had been early employed by the firm, and had gradually risen both in trust and emoluments until he had attained the position he now occupied.

Still, important as that position was, and good as was the salary attached to it, Philip was no suitable match for the heiress of so rich a man as Mr. Grant. True, could he but be a partner, he might

intrusted to him, but young Mr. Ranson, the junior partner, always traveled himself on occasions of the gravest import, and as he manifested no intention of resigning his functions, and as the firm had never intimated a desire to increase the number of partners, poor Phil's prospect of advancement was but shadowy.

One day—I shall never forget that day—it was early in the autumn, but the weather, far from having that crisp, fresh brightness we usually enjoy in England during this portion of the year, was as cruel and dismal as if it were the depth of winter.

A cold, dense fog wrapped the town in its chill embrace, only lifting occasionally when the keen, biting wind came tearing down the streets. Who has not had an unpleasant experience of such a wind?—one that nips all life from delicate flowers, that rends half-dead leaves from shivering branches, and, penetrating every wrap, smites feeble lungs with deadly force, destroying flowers, leaves and human beings alike with its cruel sharpness.

For more than a week when night came this wind had fallen, but then fell a drenching rain, pouring down for hours, until the earth steamed with damp, cold moisture, and heavy clouds replaced the fog, hanging low, dark and lowering, suggestive of snow on distant mountain tops, and bringing thus early all the raw misery of a long and gloomy winter.

Phil was late—very late. I had stirred the fire into many a brilliant blaze. The shaded lamp was on his reading table, his favorite book was ready for him. The pleasant tea, with the steaming kettle, and the delicate, crisp toast had long been waiting his arrival.

Twice I had sent all away, that no bitterness, even of tea, should be found in his cheerful home, but yet I waited and waited and listened in vain.

Such unwonted delay in one so regular, so methodical as Phil was indeed disquieting. And at length anxiety was overcoming reason and I was making up my mind to go or send to the great house of business, an intrusion of which I had never yet been guilty, when I heard the latchkey turn, an eager, energetic step crossed the little hall, and in another moment Philip was in the room.

Philip, with such happy radiance on

his face that even I, who knew so well every mood of his kind heart, every expression of his honest gray eyes, was transfixed for a moment with astonishment at the transformation of his whole appearance.

"Anne, congratulate me," he said, giving me a hearty kiss, as he pulled off his damp great coat; "the chance I have so longed for, longed for with such sickening hopelessness, is mine at last. Let me but succeed in this, and then, my darling—" He turned away, but I heard the half-sob that seemed to choke his utterance.

"Communications of vital importance," he continued, turning to me again, "must without delay be taken to Berlin, Moscow and Odessa. George Ranson has already started for Sydney, no telegram can bring him back for weeks, and the papers must leave tomorrow night. Neither telegram nor ordinary messenger can suffice. To one most trustworthy alone can the papers, or rather the communications, be confided, and I, Anne, am chosen to be so trusted. I feel, I know how important is the duty, how great the charge."

Joy illumined his countenance. In his excitement he walked rapidly up and down the room, pushing hurriedly aside any chair or table that impeded his agitated steps.

I looked at him with amazement. Never had I seen him so moved, so unlike himself, in such strange exultation.

"You will take me with you?" I said hastily. "I will be ready," I added, slipping my hand lovingly under his arm, and joining in his walk. "In such wonderfully cold, stormy weather, and with such a long journey before you, I can be useful."

He stopped short and looked at me anxiously.

"No, my dearest," he said with that decision in his tone from which I knew there was no appeal. "No, I cannot take you. I must go alone. After Moscow my destination must depend on circumstances. There may be difficulties for more than one person to make his way, and besides," he added reflectively, after a moment's pause, "it might cause suspicion; two are the numbers suspected."

"Suspected, difficulties?" cried I in sudden alarm. "What are they that I may not share them?"

"Now, Anne, do not be foolish," said my brother quietly, smiling the while at my unwonted impetuosity.

"Do not you, my wise, sensible, discreet Anne, begin to foresee difficulties at the proudest moment of my life, as the speechmakers say. But, my dearest, if you would kindly help me by seeing at once to my traps, I should be most grateful, for I have a thousand things to do tomorrow, and I have been already so hurried today that I confess I am strangely tired, and, in fact, am for the moment fairly dead beat."

Even as he spoke the color faded from his cheeks, his very lips became of an ashen pallor, he clutched feebly at the table near which he was standing, and, ere I could save him, fell back upon the sofa in a dead faint.

In an agony of terror I summoned help, for never before had he been thus overcome. However, the faintness, though so sudden and distressing, did not last long. By unfastening his necktie and chafing his cold hands and temples with brandy, he revived, and was better before the doctor, who had been hastily sent for, could arrive.

Phil raised himself from the sofa as Dr. Elliott entered the room and made a miserable attempt at a laugh as he shook him by the hand.

"A little overfatigue, doctor; that's all. I've been doing too much work on too little food. But you must patch me up for a journey tomorrow night. I must be off on my travels by the 8 o'clock train."

"All right," said Dr. Elliott. "I'll get ready a little composing draught for you to take at once, and the sooner you're in