

ONE MAN'S LOVE

By Emily Calvin Blake

Illustrated by R. Tandler



AND that's Dr. Heyworth's story as I knew it," the oldest nurse finished.

I was silent, wrestling with the conviction that a great surgeon had no right because of a personal disappointment to lay down his arms. True, he had taken a promising young interne and taught him all he could, but he couldn't give over his own genius.

"I thought you admired Dr. Heyworth," the oldest nurse said, a little sharply. She was piqued at my silence, for her tale had been dramatic.

"I do admire him," I said; "I've found him tiresomely conventional, but I've always admired his skill. Still, I think he was weak."

"Weak. No," she cried. "He knew the force of the subconscious, its power of thrusting forth bitter memories at unexpected moments. He was a rare surgeon under whose touch came lives. He couldn't take the chance of a hair's-breadth deviation."

"Few men are so torn by love," I said.

She nodded. "Few. But the same passions that made him a genius in his profession made him a genius in love. It was in him to give every bit of himself."

"He forgave her a great deal."

"She was always perfect to him, always blameless. Traditionally, he hated the man. To him he was the sinner, the one who undoubtedly had set ruses and snares for Daphne's innocent feet."

"You wish he might have married her," I accused.

"Yes, though I thought her unworthy of him. For his splendid career thrown away was criminal waste. He wouldn't have been happy with her, but unhappiness in his marriage wouldn't have put his great fear into him; fear of a possible unsteady second in a crisis."

Well, I, too, thought Daphne unworthy of so great a love. * * * But this is the story the nurse told me. I am telling it, because, remarkably, I was to know the end as well as the beginning of this strange tale; not strange perhaps in its essence but in its effect upon a man's nature.

Fifteen years ago the oldest nurse was finishing her last year at the Lake Point Hospital, when a young woman was brought in hurriedly. Her case was more than serious, it was regarded as hopeless. And she was young—about 22—and had always been strong. It was the growth overnight of an insidious malady, up till that time always deemed fatal.

The oldest nurse was put on the case. Many great surgeons came to see the patient, but not one thought it advisable to take the great risk of a major operation. Young Dr. Heyworth, at that time not 30, had just returned from Europe, where he had made a stir by his successful operations. The girl's mother went to him and begged him to see her daughter.

Well, he operated. The oldest nurse was present, one of the fortunate observers of his skill, his pioneering bravery. It was an exhibition rare in surgery, and all present were awed—that's just the word. The girl's life was saved.

She remained in the hospital for three months, always under the doctor's close surveillance. When at last he said she might be taken home, the nurse went with her. She then had the interest of watching a love story develop beneath her eyes.

The young surgeon loved his patient with all his strength, and his love lifted her to a dangerously fragile pedestal. The atmosphere he created for her was too rarified. He gave to her all the attributes of a superbeing.

The girl was a faintly bit of flesh with changeable eyes, soft, full lips and faint

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color in her cheeks; with hair the tint of gold and luxuriant, and at this convalescent time usually hanging in two braids down her back.

She loved him, but it was a love that sprang not from her soul but from her imagination. Oh, she yearned for him and believed in him, but her emotion was not deep-rooted in something basic, unchangeable as was his.

He loved her with all his being. She

break. She needed his strength to keep her up; needed his presence and his magnetism that her love might shine reflected in his. At the mother's urgent pleadings the oldest nurse postponed her departure.

Then the other man came.

His name was Jack Dormer. He came from the West, bearing letters of introduction. He was asked to dinner. On that occasion Daphne wore blue chiffon over white. Her hair was dressed low and she looked very sweet and young.

All during the dinner the guest kept his eyes on the girl. It was attraction at first sight for him. He had fire and strength, none the less heroic that these qualities seemed to spring only from physical perfection.

After that first time he appeared at Daphne's home often. At that time he had an inherited fortune, that later he lost, and was free to come and go as he pleased.

From the beginning he meant to win Daphne, no doubt of that. He believed in rights born out of primitive force; to

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loved him because he loved her, and by his very ardors drew her to him; then because she was romantic and loved love for its thrills.

One morning he sanctified the day by giving his love word expression. The oldest nurse had left them alone, and returning in half an hour with the usual egg nog she saw the vows had been exchanged. There was a glow about the girl, Daphne. She was bathed in his light. Truly, it was a great hour for both, but the onlooker trembled for them in their extravagances.

Well, it was but a week after the betrothal that the doctor was asked to go to Germany to lecture before some congress on his famous operation. It was an honor he could not well refuse. And so he accepted. He wanted Daphne to marry him at once, but a hurried wedding was not to her liking.

But after he had gone she went about in a spirit of lassitude that nothing could

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He regarded her as quite human. He built into her no fine ideals, for how could he, having none of his own. And Daphne relaxed. She became her real flirtatious little self. She was like a small kitten putting out a cheeky paw to scratch a great lion. And he waited.

At this critical period a letter arrived from Dr. Heyworth telling of a fresh honor awaiting him. He had been invited to lecture before a conclave of

noted surgeons in Vienna. His homecoming would be delayed another month; but he was growing famous, his pictures filled the newspapers.

Daphne was aggrieved, hurt. He might have put his desire to be with her first. She preferred him to any laurels, she said, if gaining them meant continued absence.

Daphne, you see, could take little for granted. When a letter came from Europe she went about happily, a little grave stillness upon her for several days, till the effect of the letter wore away. Then she would turn for amusement to Jack Dormer. He overlooked her withdrawals from him. He was patient for a man whose mind had little to do with his controls; very patient.

WHETHER continued patience would have won for him in the end is not to be told, but a stirring and extraordinary incident did play well its part for him.

An autumn night came; a night to be cherished for what of cold and wind would surely come. Daphne and her mother, Jack Dormer and the oldest nurse were out on the piazza. The night was bright with moonlight. Daphne sat on a low chair close to her mother. Jack Dormer lounged on the top step leading into the garden and kept his ardent eyes ever upon the one he coveted.

A family servant came out of the house, an elderly man. "Here is a glass of water," he said to Daphne's mother, whose mother he had served.

In a little surprise, since she had not asked for it, she took the water. As she put the glass to her lips the man grew instantly alert. He uttered a weird sound, then a cry: "You thought to poison me, but I turned the tables." His voice told of the snapping of all mental control.

Jack Dormer sprang for the man. They came together in terrific impact. The servant, a whirlwind, employed all his weapons, teeth, feet, nails, to scratch and deface. Dormer was magnificent, cool, clever, a very master.

All was quickly over. But when the nurse cauterized Jack Dormer's wounds and bandaged them, Daphne stood by, hero-worship in her eyes.

And he made splendid use of her mood for canonizing him. He knew he had taken on value for her, and he struck while the iron was hot.

The next afternoon two telegrams came. The first was to Daphne's mother telling of Dormer's hasty marriage to Daphne. The second to Daphne from Dr. Heyworth saying he was on his way home, unexpectedly.

The doctor came springing up the front steps a week later and rang the bell till it pealed through the old house in half-peevish protest. Daphne's mother told weepingly a few moments later of her daughter's marriage. * * * He said little, just straightened his shoulders under the blow.

"Can't you do something, doctor?" asked the mother. "The marriage is wrong, all wrong, an impulse on Daphne's part."

"A marriage is a marriage," he replied. "It should not under any conditions be disturbed." The oldest nurse had known his inflexibility; his attitude was quite in keeping with all she knew of him.

I have told you the result of Daphne's unfaithfulness on Dr. Heyworth's life. And you may imagine that after hearing his story I felt an additional interest in him. I was always quick to make my arrangements when he asked me to nurse a case for him. He was uncommunicative, sometimes taciturn, though always just, and as I've told you, exceedingly strait-laced. There was no warmth in his face, only you got the impression that there had been fires burned out. His eyes, gray and arctic,