

HOLDING A HUSBAND

Revelations of a Wife

CHAPTER 33

WHAT MADGE SAW IN HER FATHER'S FACE.

The house was dark save for the light in the front hall, when my father and I came home. And there was no sound to indicate that any one in the house was awake.

perience, where each member of the family was. Mother Graham, tired with her preparations for her journey, had, of course, taken Junior in her room, and both were long since sound asleep. Jim and Katie were at "the movies"; they are cinema fiends of the most virulent type, while Dicky was sure to be motoring somewhere either in the small car my father had given me, and which he now condescended to use occasionally, or in the big one, the ownership of which he shared with Alfred Durkee.

My father took out the pocket flashlight which is always with him, unlocked the door, and threw on the lower and upper hall lights from the switch by the door.

"after I look around a bit." I smiled with amused tenderness as I mounted the stairs. It is his nightly custom to make the rounds of the house and look to the fastenings of every door and window before he goes to his room. It is the only touch of fussiness in his character, and one can hardly dub it even that. His experiences in South America and elsewhere as a secret agent of his country's diplomatic service have made him watchful, suspicious, - cautious where a person used to ordinary pursuits would be careless.

As I listened to his footsteps receding toward the rear of the house there flashed into my mind a thought which for a moment made me grip tightly the balustrade of the stairs. Was it my fancy or was he being more thorough tonight than usual? His progress was certainly slower. Was perhaps the image of Grace Draper obsessing his mind as it had mine?

"Will You Help—"

I pulled myself together with a little contemptuous shake. If I didn't put a bridle rein upon my imagination, I told myself grimly, I should be seeing Grace Draper's evil beauty in every shadowy room or on every crowded street. I hastened to throw open my own room door and turn on the lights. Their brightness and the illumination of familiar furniture helped me to throw off the thought of the girl whom I so dreaded, and to make my simple preparations for my father's visit.

I hung my hat and coat in the closet, cleared my reading table of books and magazines, and drew two easy chairs before it. I had just thrown open the lid of the big "keepsake trunk", which had been my mother's, and which Mother Graham had futilely coveted to hold linens and blankets for our southern trip, when my father's low knock sounded on the door. I rose and admitted him, silently, knowing that if I had called permission to him to enter, Mother Graham would have heard and investigated, despite her oft reiterated declaration that she never heard anything after she once went to sleep.

His gaze went at once to the open trunk. I heard him catch his breath sharply, and he went toward it almost with the look of a sleep-walker upon his face, and stood looking down into its depths. I followed him across the room, and put my hand upon his arm.

A Tense Moment.
"Will you help me with these

things, father, dear?" I asked, indicating numerous tied packages of my own belongings which filled the top of the big receptacle. I felt it would be better for him to occupy his hands than to stand thus gazing down as if the thing below him were an open grave.

"Of course, child," he answered, coming back to himself with an evident start. And for the next few minutes we worked hurriedly, but methodically, transferring the bundles that filled the top of the big trunk to a temporary resting place upon the bed.

When the last layer had been removed I plucked from its place a big sheet of brown wrapping paper which had separated my own things from the little old haircloth trunk of my mother, which I always kept for safety in the bottom of the bigger one, and which she had packed for me with her mementoes in the days of her last illness.

As I did so I shot a furtive, frightened look at my father, for I knew that he must have many memories of this ancient box, little bigger than a suit case of today, which my mother prized so highly, and in which she always kept her most precious things.

For one tense moment he stood silent. Then with a swift movement he stooped, snatched the little trunk up in his arms as if it had been a living thing, and turned away from me toward the table.

But I had caught a glimpse of his face. It was that of one who sees a vision.

(To be continued)

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From May 26 to September 20, fares on the Oregon Electric Railway from Salem to Portland and return will be in effect as shown below:

\$2.45—Tickets on sale daily, return limit October 31, with stop-overs allowed at any point in either direction.

\$2.05—Week-end tickets on sale Friday, Saturday and Sunday, return limit Tuesday following. No stop-overs.

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- 5-lb. size. 2.50
- Festival Fancy Sugar Corn, 2 for. .35
- Palm Olive Soap, special Friday and Saturday. .06
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