

Roberta Risks It

By MARGARET CAMERON

CHAPTER NINETEEN

"I don't think that would be quite fair, do you? Besides, he might be so worried that he'd tell father." Roberta's brow clouded.

"He can't tell him what he doesn't know, can he?" asked Piggy.

"He can say I made him promise to help me get Cecilia away—but I don't think he'd tell father that."

"Well, he didn't help you. He said you mustn't make a move on any account, and something about serious consequences. What did that mean?"

"I don't know," she admitted uneasily. "Unless father's got some hold on him. They used to be great friends. You see, I've been living abroad and haven't seen Cliff for a long time—it's a year and a half—so I'm not as well posted as I might be. Anyway, I think I ought to let him know I'm not lost."

"All right. Let him know." Piggy was as near being sullen as one of his cheerful nature could become. "Go and spill it all, if you want to. Just like a girl!"

"But—Peter!"

"Go ahead and give the whole thing away. I'll get out."

"Oh, la, la! What on earth's the matter with you?"

Piggy was quite sure that he knew what was the matter. She was going to mess up a perfectly corking sporting proposition with sentiment. She wanted to bring into the game again a fellow who had already backed down once and left her in a hole. Of all despicable creatures in the known world, the one he most hated was a quitter. Nixon was a quitter. Therefore he hated him. To his mind his reasoning was axiomatic in its clarity, but he did not voice it.

Instead, he sat dumbly poking into the pine needles with a twig, flushed and indignant, and after regarding him a moment in dismay, Roberta said softly:

"I never dreamed you'd feel that way about it. Why, Peter, I can't do this without you! You've been perfectly wonderful, and if anybody can get Cecilia away you can. I thought I ought to let Cliff know I hadn't been murdered, or kidnapped, or pushed down a crack somewhere and stepped on. But I won't if you don't want me to—if you think it would spoil anything."

"Sure it would. Spoil everything—every way," he grumbled. "In the first place, he doesn't want you to do this and he'd stop it if he could. In the second place, the fewer people who know where we are, the better. In the third place, he'd come chasing up here after you and queer the whole works by showing himself, or something. Besides, I'm not going to take any more chances than I have to of being identified with this business. We can do it by ourselves, but if you want to get him into it, all right. I'll get out."

"I don't want to. You're a lot better at this sort of thing than he'd be," she said frankly. "But so far you've done everything, and—"

"Your turn will come. Don't fret."

"All right. I won't any more. We're partners, Peter." She held out her hand and Piggy took it in a close grip, man-wise. They like the rest of her, it was a firm little hand, yet curiously soft. He liked the feeling of it, but it gave him again that queer warm shiver, and he dropped it precipitately. Turning away to cover his strange embarrassment, he caught sight of the parcel of crackers and cheese.

"Hungry?" he asked, picking it up.

"Peter! Did you bring something to eat? Oh, la, la! You are a wonder! I'm ravenous."

Peace established between them again, they contentedly munched their food. Evidently luncheon was in progress at Birchwood, also as no one was visible for some time. Eventually the door opened and a short, pudgy woman crossed the terrace, followed by Cecilia's listless figure.

"That's mother," said Roberta. Piggy surveyed the lady through the glass in silence, but to himself he said: "She certainly looks the part. Cushions and Claws, too. I shouldn't wonder." Cream for hers. Claws, too, I shouldn't wonder."

The two below, unconscious of observation, walked slowly towards a small orchard stretching along the hillside to the edge of the woodland.

"Out for exercise, I guess," he commented.

"And nagging," Roberta added. "Poor Cecilia!"

Presently the chauffeur was seen going toward the garage. Three dogs, who had been asleep

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behind their kennels, made a dash for him and, were jerked to a stop at the end of their chains, when they fell to barking. "Aha!" said Piggy. "There's the rest of the garrison. Turned loose at night, I suppose. Well—I like dogs, but there are times when they're superfluous. I wonder what that fellow's up to? Looks as if he was going to take out the car."

The chauffeur had opened the wide door of the garage, and a moment later he backed out Scott's heavy black automobile, turned, and drove down the private road toward the highway.

"Going for gas, I guess," Piggy said. "Listen."

Through the crisp, silent air came the hum of the engine as the car turned westward up a slight grade.

"Sure Mike! Come on," he commanded triumphantly.

"Where?"

"Wherever he's going. Keene, probably. They can't get away while he's gone. That just shows you that plans are no good. You never know what chance may offer."

"But I don't see—"

"Aw, wake up! I'll cultivate him while you shop. Us shofers stand together, lady. Maybe I'll find out something. Come on. Hustle!"

Piggy took the road to Keene at a lively clip, but Scott's man, after the manner of chauffeurs driving alone, had been equally expeditious and they did not overtake him. Entering the city at a more discreet speed, Mrs. Smith's car drew up before the most promising-looking dry-goods emporium facing the public square and Peter Brown sprang out to open the door of the tonneau. As she stepped to the curb, he saluted respectfully and remarked in an undertone:

"Now wrap the draperies of your grief about you and sit down for a pleasant time. It may take me half an hour or so to get around this guy."

(To Be Continued.)
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NEW BOOKS AT LIBRARY

"THE BEST STORIES OF 1925" PART OF COLLECTION

According to a report issued from the Salem Public Library a number of new books have been received there during the past few days. Among them may be found the following with the authors listed:

- "The Piper's Fee" by S. H. Adams, "Singing Winds" by Konrad Bercovici, "David Copperfield" by Charles Dickens, "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens, "The Private Life of Helen of Troy" by John Erskine, "Sea Lavender" by S. F. Gowling, "North of 36" by Emerson Hough, "The Galked the Wild" by Jack London, "The Right of Way" by Parker Gilbert, "The Inverted Pyramid" by E. W. Sinclair, "Gentle Julia" by Bopha Tarkington, "Pillars of the House" by C. M. Young, "He Rather Enjoyed It" by P. G. Wodehouse, "Getting Together" by Edna Geister, "The Best Stories of 1925" and "Representative Plays" by J. M. Barrie.

In addition to these two books for children were added. They are listed as follows: "Days of the Builders" by Louise Lamprey and Moon.

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The young people go away to seek their fortunes in distant cities. Marriage often separates children from their parents. Business ambitions carry members of families thousands of miles from home.

The exchange of photographs is a happy way of keeping alive and fresh one's mental picture of distant loved ones. It is a form of family "cement"—it keeps alive the most sacred sentiment and affection.

While parents spend their declining years in loneliness and isolation they not only long for the sight of their children, but hope also for a peep at their grandchildren as well.

Proud they are to possess photographs of "my son's baby" or "my daughter's baby."

In much the same way, the exchange of photographs binds together the friends one makes on life's highway—friends once so intimate that they shared in the intimacies of your family circle.

Greeting cards or gifts, sent at Christmas or on New Year's Day, help to keep alive such friendships. But your friends may themselves buy any gifts you may purchase for them—except your portrait.

For this reason, your photograph is the ideal gift to either relatives or close friends. Nothing else is so appropriate, so desirable, so eagerly received.

And when tragedy stalks in the family, when death comes, when members of the family are mysteriously missing, when photographic identification is required, photographs are exceedingly useful.

Newspapers demand photographs when you become prominent in social or club activities, when weddings occur.

Those who are growing old like to possess photographs of themselves as they appeared in the first flush of youth.

These are some of the points which portrait photographers wish brought to the attention of the public, particularly during "Photograph Week."

To postpone having one's portrait made is to make certain your future regret. The picture of yourself, as you are today, cannot be made tomorrow or next year. The picture which might have been made today is gone forever if it is not made today.

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