

# "Daphne"

(Continued from page sixteen)

caution he tiptoed across the studio, eyes glued on the closed kitchen door, and laid his bundles on the cluttered library table. He was smiling, something a little sinister in his dark, mask-like countenance, as he tiptoed out again, avoiding the slippery rugs and fat leather cushions on the floor. With deliberate make he let the doorknob slip under his fingers. It made a grating, metallic sound. Then, very leisuredly, and still smiling, he made his way to the alcove near the fire-escape at the end of the hall. The thickly carpeted hallway made a not uncomfortable couch. Half reclining, half sitting, he leaned on one elbow and blew smoke rings while he waited for Crystal's caller to leave.

He was so comfortable, and the view of the lighted city from the hall window was so entrancing that he lay there, smoking and dreaming long after the stranger had departed, and he knew that Crystal was alone.

But finally the last cigarette was gone, and he was hungry. He stretched long and luxuriously. "Ho . . . hum!" He rubbed his thin, dark hair with grubby fingers. "Hoo . . . hum!" If he didn't move pretty soon he'd be asleep.

Crystal had kicked off her pumps and exchanged her tailcoat for a paint-daubed yellow smock when he entered, without the formality of knocking.

She jumped to her feet with a little cry, spilling the chocolates she had on her lap. "Avery! You scared me! I wish the heaven you'd quit wearing rubber heels. Now, look at my candy, all over the floor!"

He got down on his hands and knees and began to pick them up. "Little Jumpy tonight, aren't you?" He centers, in a favorite kind. The bird that brought them had some sense. I don't care for the glue fruit. I wish you'd tell him, sweetheart."

"I wish you wouldn't be so damn funny!"

"My brand of humor doesn't appeal, dearest!"

"No, it doesn't!" He could see the tears trembling on her eyelashes, and he pointed a nicotine-stained forefinger at her and laughed with his mouth full. "I knew you were nervous. What about?"

With an effort she controlled herself and went to the window—where she stood with her back to him, looking out.

"What's the matter?" he snickered, popping the last Brazil nut into his mouth.

"Oh, you know perfectly well what's the matter. Coming in and leaving that stuff on the table—when I followed her over to the window, hands in his pockets. "So that's it. Try to please a woman! Just try!"

"Avery I wish you'd talk sense once in a while. You know perfectly well that—that I had a friend in the kitchen. I heard you come in. It wasn't necessary to slam the door!"

"I didn't slam the door, dearest. It might have creaked a bit as I was painstakingly closing it. How was I to know you were entertaining? And do you always entertain in the kitchen? Must be one of those quaint country customs. I can't seem to remember you were raised on a farm."

"Eggs and French bread on the table. How does that look? What do you suppose he thought?" she exploded, shaking with the angry tears she was determined not to shed.

"What did he think?" Woodward snickered again. "That I was a good provider, my dear. Something, by the way, you have intimated that I am not. And then when I bring you a loaf of bread, and a dozen of the best eggs, hoping you will make me an omelette—"

## CHAPTER XXIX

"SHUT UP!" She had lost all control of her temper now. She flew at him, shaking and sobbing as in the old days she had flung at her mother. "Shut your mouth! Oh, I'm sick of you—sick of the way you treat me. I'm through—do you hear me? You are nothing but a dirty, low-down bum; that's all you are, living on me. You even bought the eggs with my money, you know you did! You did! Don't try to talk to me—I won't listen. You aren't worth Ralph McKevitt's little finger. What do you suppose he thought, seeing that stuff there on the table? I said it was there all the time, but do you think he believed me? Who would? What kind of a reputation do you think I'll have with you sticking around here all the time? People'll talk. I'll get put out, that's what I won't stand for. You get out of here. I don't want to look at you any more—I don't want—Paroxysms of sobs shook her; she was beating her breast, tearing at her short, curly hair; she wanted to wound him, to sting him out of his contemptuous calm; to goad him to a frenzy like her own.

He leaned against the wall, his lips parted, his sallow face death-like in its expressionless pallor. "Yes, I'm listening. Go on. Tell me some more about this—this angel that—" He licked his dry lips, and leered—"that loves art so much he pays—"

"That's just it!" she blazed, dashing the furious tears away. "He does love art, or he thinks I do—what's the difference? He's lending me the money—oh you needn't sneer, he's never had anything but a few kisses for it—he's crazy about me, the poor idiot, he thinks I'm a genius—he worships me—"

Woodward threw back his head and guffawed. "Fine. Go on—"

"I won't go on. I'm through. Through with you, anyhow. Thank God I came to in time. I mighta gone on making an idiot of myself if you hadn't shown me—get out, will you?—You scum! I'm off with you—I've got a real man—a man, do you hear? And he loves me—and he'll take care of me—"

He waited until her wild sobbing had ceased. Then he picked up his greasy black hat, and the



Ralph and Crystal Garroty!

bread and the eggs. "You won't be needing my poor presents now, and I—I am still hungry, your exhibition has in no way impaired my appetite!"

He bowed, with exaggerated gallantry, sweeping the floor with his limp, ragged hat. "Au revoir, dear heart. Or shall we say, farewell?"

"Get out! Get out of here!" "Shh—no so loud, the janitor will hear you, farewell, my kitten. I wish you well. What misfortune that it is I you love, and not this fine young man!"

"I'll show you," she panted when he had gone. "I'll prove how much I love you, you good-for-nothing!" Her voice was almost gone but she managed to whisper "Douglas 4829," her lips close to the telephone.

The operator, confused by her thick voice and broken breathing gave her the wrong number twice, but she pulled together and persisted. Finally a sleepy voice answered.

"Mr. McKevitt," she whispered hoarsely. "Get him quickly—it's important!"

And while a weary switch-board operator plugged in on McKevitt's apartment, a small kimona-ed figure was tapping softly on Flora McCardie's door, second floor back, in the Hinckle menage.

Flora sat bolt upright in bed and dropped the book she had been reading. "Well? Who is it?" Her big, hearty voice heartened the timid knocker. The door opened a crack, and Daphne's small white face appeared in the crack.

"I saw your light, Flora, and I couldn't sleep, so I wondered—"

Flora, hard-boiled Flora, who could read faces almost as easily as books and found them much more interesting, took one long look at the unhappy girl and held out her arms.

"You poor kid! Come tell Flora all about it!"

that Ralph is just one more to her—it isn't fair!"

Little by little the story came out. All of it. All the story of the unhappy days at home, and the dawning love, and the Paisley shawl that Crystal took, and meeting McKevitt who stood for everything worth while, everything she loved, and wanted, and could not live without.

"For God's sake!" And, "Can you beat that?" And, "If that isn't a tough break!" Flora murmured from time to time. She didn't say much, but her thin, hard face was strangely softened. Her big, warm hand clasped Daphne's small, cold one, and she had drawn the shivering girl into her bed, and thrown a sweater over her shoulders.

"That's love all right. And that is what usually happens when you do fall in love," she said finally. "So he's busy with the blonde. What the devil is she doing in San Francisco?"

"Maybe art school," Daphne suggested. "You see he—he went to art affairs, and she always wanted to come here and study art. It was one of the things they used to fight over at home, because her mother didn't want her to. Crystal has talent, really. She used to make beautiful place cards."

Flora snorted. "So did my maiden aunt. That's enough—I've got her number!"

Daphne pulled at the covers nervously. "You think I'm jealous. And I am. I don't want to be, but I can't help it. I keep thinking about them together, and it makes me sick all over—all churning inside. But it isn't that so much. Flora, I could get used to that, but it's because it's Crystal, and she'll just ruin his life like her mother did Father's. I know—and I can't bear it. If I thought she really loved him, and would make him happy, I'd . . . I'd just back out, and be glad, because I want him to have . . . the best—"

She broke down and cried then, and Flora's light blue eyes filled.

"Flora, they used to be sweethearts, so I guess they are still. I didn't know that she was here . . . Flora! I'm so unhappy!"

Flora nodded, thoughtfully. So that's it! The poor child thought she was the only woman in his life! And aloud she said, "I know. Come curl up on my bed. So the blonde is your stepister. That's a hell of a note. What's her name, same as yours?"

"Oh, no, hers is Garroty, Crystal Garroty. Father only married Mrs. Garroty a couple of years ago. Crystal was a young lady then. Oh, Flora, she's always been pretty, and had everything everything she ever wanted, and millions of boy friends. I know

and she grabbed a handkerchief from under her pillow, and dabbed at them angrily. "If we fool women aren't all alike? Catch a man caring about any girl's happiness. Selfish beast, every one of 'em. I hate 'em all—"

"Oh no, Flora—"

"I do—"

"Flora, if you ever loved anyone like I do him—"

"I did, damn it! That's why I'm blubbering with you! But I got over it, and you can too. Now you take my advice, and let him go, and look around for a better one. I never did think he was the right one for you, baby. He'd be a good catch for some slick one that could stand up for her rights, or didn't care too much about what he did in his spare time, but you are too soft for that. He'd just

break you heart, and forget you. I know his kind—"

(To Be Continued.)

## SALEM HEIGHTS TO OPEN NEW BUILDING

The first public opening of the Salem Heights Community club hall with its new additions and equipment will occur Friday night when they will sponsor the Aumsville high school glee club in concert. This will be a program of merit as this school has just recently won the cup for first place in the state glee club con-

test held at Forest Grove in class C. Mrs. J. N. England is director of the chorus and Mrs. Stephen Stone will be the accompanist.

In addition to the chorus a two reel comedy will be presented on the new motion picture machine recently purchased by the club.

It is said that the present stage is one of the best community hall stages in the county.

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## GUEST AT RECITAL

OREGON STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, May 9—Thelma Davis of Salem, sophomore optional in music, was a guest artist in the recital given by Euterpe, honorary fraternity in music for women, at the home of Paul Petri, professor of singing and director of choruses last night. Miss Davis has been heard several times over KOAC, radio station at the college.



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