

DONNA of the BIG TOP

by BEULAH POYNTER

CHAPTER XLVI

DONNA heard the familiar voice almost before she saw who was talking. "Well, look who's here! I expect to see you."

She stared into Con David's bloodshot eyes. For some reason she was not surprised. Nothing surprised her now. Con's face had changed. His eyes were no longer blue, but a deep, dark color. His hair was black, and his teeth were black. He looked like a devil. She didn't know a man could be so vile! And you knew that I loved him. You knew—I'm going back to tell him the truth—all of it. He'll kill you for this!"

She sprang to her feet, but the lurch of the train flung her back into the chair.

"Wait a minute," Con said quickly. "You can't go back—not for some time, at least. There's no stop for 100 miles, and I wouldn't advise you to jump off the train. Another fall might not prove as fortunate as the last one. They might take you back in a box. Reason this out, Donna. I didn't tell him you were my wife. He jumped to that conclusion himself. Up to that time he thought that he was a deceived husband and I was your lover. That riled! Where would you be if you should go back? What good could it do you? In the first place, you haven't a chance of convincing him you're really his wife. He saw the certificate."

"But the date—?"

"Evidently he didn't look at it. He saw the names and that was enough. That and the fact that you came running when I called. Probably he's kidding himself that you loved him so much you were willing to commit a crime to marry him. That should set a lot better than believing that I was your lover."

"You'll give me that certificate," Donna said tensely, "and I'll prove to him that you lied."

"Oh, no, my dear. I won't give it to you! That's my most valuable asset at the moment—not only to prove I'm Amos Siddal's heir, but as a trump card to make you do what I want you to."

"And that is—?"

"Keep up the masquerade. Get the farm, divorce the farmer, and marry me."

She laughed scornfully. "I'd starve before I'd do that. And, if it's the last thing I ever do, I'll prevent you from getting what isn't yours."

"I've heard that before. So you're still strong for the husband, even if he did kick you out!"

"I'm so strong for him," she said, "that if he refuses to let me be his wife I'll be his servant. I love him more than anything in the world!"

"You'll get over that. I felt that way about you once, but I lived through it."

Fortunately there were no passengers within earshot. The conductor passed through the car and Donna beckoned to him to ask what would be the next stop. He told her and moved on. She picked up her traveling bag and moved to another seat. Con laughed, flipped the pages of his magazine and apparently lost all interest.

(To Be Continued)

Beeskeepers say the queen cells should be cut at regular intervals of seven days to prevent the hives from swarming.

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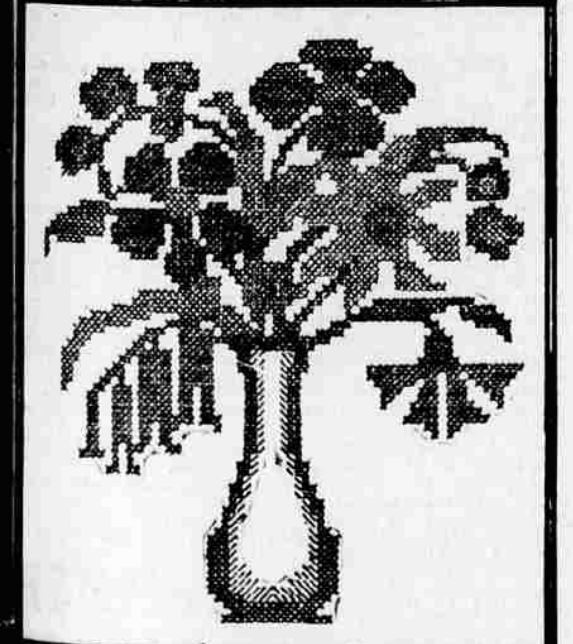
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