

Summer Sweethearts

By Mabel McElliot
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CHAPTER XXXIX



ET felt almost an impulse of... Perhaps he wasn't as smug... of himself as he seemed. Per-... was a chink in that selfish... She tried another tack.

He carried it off well. Not a hint of the resentment he must have felt.

Zoe Parker said briskly, "I envy you." She was curled up in a corner of Katharine's chaise longue, watching the packing. Ellen had brought piles of folded, freshly ironed silk things; there were stockings in neat rolls.

Katharine lifted heavy eyes. She did not speak. She moved these days almost as in a trance. Even the exciting fact that her father had agreed to the western trip did not surprise her. She was apathetic.

"You'll adore the west," Zoe said emphatically. "I did. I want to live there some day—have a dude ranch or something."

She would be on the train tonight, Katharine told herself. They'd be riding far away from here, leaving a memory of pain behind. She folded her jodhpur breeches and laid them in a drawer of the trunk. Zoe prattled on. She seemed, to the casual eye, entirely recovered from her long illness. Her rounded prettiness was not quite so exuberant now. But she was as pretty and nearly as gay as before.

"I saw John Kaye in town the other day," she said brightly. "He's such a darling. Why don't you sign him up before you go? If I were you I'd be afraid someone else would..."

"What on earth do you mean?" cried Katharine, struck.

"Don't be silly," Zoe advised. "You know perfectly well he's mad about you. Has been for ages."

Katharine shook her head. "Honestly, I haven't the faintest notion what you're talking about."

"I didn't know—anybody—could—be—so—dumb," said Zoe, punctuating the sentences with lites of bon bon.

"You're imagining things as usual, my child," Katharine cried. "John's a good friend. We've never got past the handshaking part, really."

She paused, flushed. Remembering that one kiss he'd given her. But it had been a brother's kiss.

Zoe was hanging over the window-sill now, peering down into the garden.

"Is that Mack Dargau out by the float?" she demanded. "Never mind, darling. I don't think it is. Some crazy fool's trying to break his neck doing the jack-knife... what was I saying?"

"Talking about John," Katharine said dryly. "If you kept talking like this it helped. You weren't able to think of the sick, feeling of despair you had, waking and sleeping..."

"Oh, yes. Well, if you don't want Dr. Kaye you're passing up something awfully good," Zoe said portentously.

"He never asked me, sir," she said.

"Oh, that!" Zoe dismissed the mere formality of a proposal with an airy wave of the hand. "You could get him to easily enough."

"Think so?"

"Yes, I do. And furthermore," Zoe mused, "I think he's one of the most fascinating men I ever met in all my life. He was so darned sweet to me when I was ill..."

They were both silent for a minute. John Kaye had saved her life; there was no least doubt of it. After a bit Zoe said briskly, "Well, that's that. And you're not having any?"

(To Be Continued)

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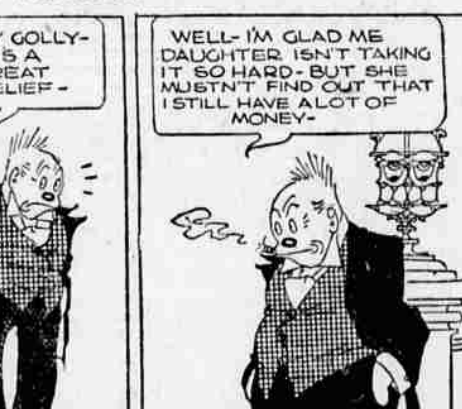
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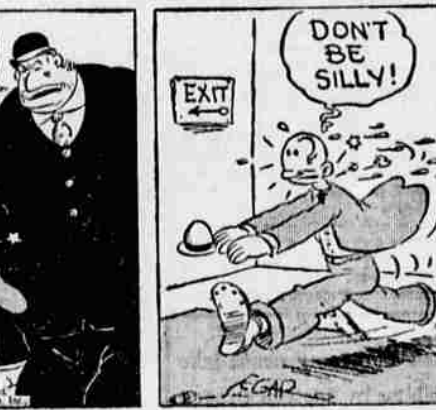
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