

Rich and Reckless

By Mary Raymond
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CHAPTER 1

It was the end of the season. Molly, though, Molly told herself, feeling tired and rebellious, met her debut time was almost at hand. And what had it got her? A lot of orchids, petals only slightly faded by last night's wearing, met eyes. They had been placed on window ledge through habit. Rita, would wear them some place else when she stepped out after hours.

There would be more orchids for her, arriving in glittering cellulose covering from Wick. Or garlands from Brent. Or violets, from Hubert. Or roses, from Hubert who was so romantic, like his flowers. Hubert, Brent—and the others, other men were like lesser stars shining against the definite, aureole brightness of desirability represented by the quartet.

Hubert, Ross was wealthy, handsome and nice. Donald Livingston represented the inner circle of the "hundred," a small, hand-picked group that claimed top place socially. Right of heritage, boasting ancestral lines that stretched into the past, so dim it shouldn't have mattered in modern times. Yet somehow Tremendously. All the families would open their arms to Donald, correct, with his splendid town house that was rightfully in the of redecorating, and his country where he entertained frequently, giving up a pretense of a comfortable income. Donald had found it easy to retrench for some vague concern with stocks and bonds.

Hubert Wallace was just a debutant. This year he had picked Molly. Hubert was a good playboy, but perhaps after a time you would become tired of a life that was endless merry-go-round, and then you would you be?

"Golden girl!" She could hear Hubert's caressing voice, now. "Marry me, and you'll dine on strawberries and cream like the good little girl the sassy rhyme."

"No thanks," Molly had retorted. "You make me indigestion and you might make me fat. I'm not a little girl, and I'm too old for sassy rhymes."

Brent Stuart, who had been listening in on one of Hubert's numerous quite casual proposals, had queried, "What do you want, child? What kind of girl are you?"

"Don't know, to both your questions," Molly had replied. "I want to get out."

Thinking about Brent's nice matter-of-fact attitude for the moment the girl in her mind, a tumult started up these days by the sight of flowers and the small white cards with the scrawled messages. They raised interrogation marks, these small white



Molly laughed. That was the nice thing about Brent. He understood without being angry.

tion of their crowd was always polite and meaningless, when it wasn't brittle and stinging.

"Sometimes I'll be so bored and bitter that the claws will come out. I'll be like Sophy and Barbara and Donna," Molly thought.

You couldn't help feeling sorry for Donna, who had gone hither and yon, after an unsuccessful debut, but had finally attached Dad and his millions. Though perhaps marrying one of the richest men in the country (that was what the newspapers and income tax people said), hadn't been a bad compromise for missing romance.

The telephone again. Molly answered and felt a pleasant, reassuring feeling rushing over her. That couldn't mean anything more than devotion, since it lacked the strong, wind-in-your-ears sensation which any girl knew meant being in love!

"Hi, mutt! I'm coming out."

"I won't be taken for granted this way," Molly thought, suddenly mutinous. Aloud she replied sweetly, "No, you aren't. I'm feeling not so top, Brent. Cold and headache."

"Rebellion," declared Brent firmly. "I know the symptoms."

Molly laughed. That was the nice thing about Brent. He understood, without being angry.

"Is it a headache, cold and rebellion that will continue until evening?" Brent inquired pleasantly. "Because it occurs to me at the moment that I'm taking you to Peggy Carlyle's dance."

"Good memory," Molly answered. "Your name's on my date book, too. As a matter of fact, Brent, I've decided to skip Peggy's dance."

"You can't do that!" Brent exclaimed. "Besides being a date, it's a special kind of date. You know I always spend your birthdays with you."

"Just an old childish custom," Molly replied coolly. "Anyway, I didn't say I wouldn't spend my birthday with you. I'm counting on your skipping the dance with me."

"Oh, you are," Brent spoke slowly. "Naturally. You don't sound very enthusiastic."

"What's on your mind?"

"I'm planning to celebrate differently," Molly explained eagerly. "Frances Carter was telling me about that new night club near Bechland—the 'Red Poppy.' Frances said it was terrific."

"It is," Brent's voice came grimly over the phone. "No place for you to go."

"And why not?"

"You young idiot. That place is in danger of being raided any time. How would you like to wake up behind bars?"

"I wouldn't mind a bit. At least it would be a new experience."

"Well, I won't take you to a place like that."

"You won't?" There was a dangerous inflection in Molly's voice.

"No. Besides Peggy's party is one I can't miss. Perhaps it has slipped your memory that I'm doing the alternative of their crowd was always polite and meaningless, when it wasn't brittle and stinging.

"Business before pleasure, of course. I'm not going to the Carter's tonight. Why don't you ask Evelyn Lester to take my place? She dances—dances—and you."

"Am I to understand you don't?" Brent laughed.

Molly considered a moment. "I don't adore dances tonight, and I adore you only with qualifications."

"Be reasonable, Molly!"

"Hope you like the dance," Molly said.

Brent seemed brightly uncrushed. "See you soon."

Molly clicked the phone in place and sat considering its blank face with a slight frown on her own.

"So superior!" Molly said indignantly. "I don't like being called 'child' and 'mutt' and treated as though I haven't cut my baby teeth yet. If he won't take me, somebody else will. I'm being cheated. Kept housed up like—like an orchid."

On an impulse, she lifted the orchids and dropped them into a dainty, be-ribboned waste basket near her dressing table. Then she stooped and retrieved them. Rita adored orchids, even second-hand ones. She possessed a Latin capacity for emotion that Molly sometimes envied. Rita would step out with her young man and they would go places.

"And that," Molly decided, "is what I'm going to do tonight—go places!"

She came from her shower more golden than ever, eyes shining, and sparkling drops of water clinging to her burnished hair.

The third telephone call brought Wick's voice. "Lo! night owl."

A proper salutation that hinted Wick credited her with a degree of sophistication. Neither did Wick howl with amusement at the idea that she could be satisfied with social events.

"Skipping Peggy's dance?" he queried and added, "I'll skip it with you."

"Wick!" breathed Molly. "Would you? Take me to the Red Poppy?"

Wick hesitated only a moment. "Right-o," he agreed. "It isn't the sort of night club I'd pick for you, but it might be exciting. Is that what you'd like?"

"Like is the wrong word. I crave excitement. Doesn't anything ever happen except dances, receptions, teas and cocktail parties?"

"I have an idea plenty happens at the Red Poppy. As I said, it isn't the sort of place we'd generally go—"

"That's why we're going!" Molly cried. "Oh, Wick, this is going to be the nicest birthday I've ever had. I'm celebrating the end of my teens with a mature kind of adventure."

"Your birthday! I guess that calls for about 20 orchids," Wick teased. "No orchids tonight. This must be different. Is this place so very terrible?" Molly's eager voice urged him on.

"Wait and see!"

Wick, Molly decided, as she went about dressing, was an understanding person. Much more understanding than Brent with his tenacious memory for birthdays.

A big package came late that afternoon, bringing Brent's gift.

Molly gasped, frowned, and then laughed. The idiot! He must have spent the whole day assembling this ridiculous home-made marionette theatre. The setting for the tiny actors was a lurid drape, with bizarre colors and tiny, absurd pictures on the wall which carried out a very wicked atmosphere. The small puppets, themselves, were perfectly cast.

One, when manipulated properly with a string, lurched toward a couple sitting at a table, and dangled a dreadful looking miniature knife. Another miniature gentleman never could be made to stand on his legs, but toppled and staggered in the most inebriated manner.

Molly regarded one of the tiny actors with suspicious eyes. A golden-haired puppet staring out at the scene with wide, excited eyes. "Might as well be tagged 'Molly,'" she thought.

"Stay home, child, and amuse yourself with this small edition of night life," read Brent's card.

"Child!" Molly's soft, red lips closed firmly. "That's exactly what he thinks I am."

She put Brent's gift back in the big box and closed the top. After a moment, she took the miniature theatre out again and soon was deeply engrossed in making the tiny actors perform.

"But if he thinks for a moment I'm going to spend my birthday pulling strings, he's mistaken."

Another package followed within an hour. "Wanted to spend your birthday with you," Brent had written on the card. "Since I can't, I'm sending a proxy." The package disclosed a photograph—Brent, of course.

"Of all the conceited idiots," Molly breathed. "I suppose he thinks I'll put this on my dressing table where I'll have to look at it every time I powder my nose. Well, I won't!"

A third package arrived at 7. A beautifully bound and rare first edition. "Just to make up for those two terrible gifts, and also to carry you through a lonesome evening," Molly read.

"So he thinks!" Molly said to herself, dusting powder on her face, and this time carefully avoiding Brent's steady gray eyes, looking out at her from the dressing table.

Brent was a dear and the book was a gem. But she mustn't forget how stubborn and unyielding he had been. It was going to be fun tonight.

It was going to be even more fun tomorrow to tell that obstinate would-be-protector about it. How she had not only seen wicked night life, but had rubbed elbows with it.

Wick had said: "Wait and see!" Well, she was waiting!

(To Be Continued)

ANNIVERSARY SET FOR M. E. CHURCH

MONROE, Aug. 20.—(Special)—The Monroe Methodist Episcopal church members are planning a silver jubilee celebrating the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the church on November 23. Mrs. S. H. Harte was recently elected treasurer in the place of Mrs. M. O. Mack.

Mrs. Edwin David entertained the Monroe Bridge club Tuesday afternoon in her home. Mrs. Dave Foreman and Mrs. Russell Stewart were guests. Mrs. Floyd Ennis drew \$500 prize. The guests included: Mrs. Foreman, Mrs. Ralph Hibbs, Mrs. L. S. Jackson, Mrs. Harry Cartwright, Mrs. Wayne Reid, Mrs. Floyd Ennis, Mrs. Ralph McGee, Mrs. Ben Howard, Mrs. Chester Under, Mrs. George Utterback, Mrs. H. Carpenter and Mrs. Russell Stewart.

Go to Convention

Mrs. Harry Cartwright and Mrs. Ralph Hibbs attended the American convention in Roseburg last week. Mr. and Mrs. Dave Foreman, Mr. and Mrs. John Yun, Mrs. J. H. Carpenter and Mrs. Lancaster were among Monroe people attending the drum corps convention Thursday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Reid and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hibbs and Mrs. George Utterback and son of Roseburg went to Enslake on a fishing trip leaving Thursday and returning Sunday.

From Hood River

Mr. and Mrs. David Fate and daughter, Ruth, of Hood River and Mr. and Mrs. Noel Baker over the weekend. They all drove up to George Plott's at Monmouth Sunday. Mr. and Mrs. Gifford and grand-daughter of Aberdeen visited Mrs. Gifford's brother, John Pierson, last week.

Mrs. M. O. Mack attended the funeral of her uncle in Rainier, Sunday.

VARIED NEWS OF WENDLING GIVEN

WENDLING, Aug. 20.—(Special).—Mr. and Mrs. Wolfe Allen and Ed-win Earle and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hoeft and Charles, Jr., are spending the week at the coast.

Coral Davis, who has been visiting at the Donald Stenberg home has returned to her home in Portland.

Miss Adelia Wojniak, who is working in Portland, spent the week-end at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. Wojniak.

Mr. and Mrs. Roger B. Hall and children left Sunday for Crescent City, Cal.

Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Hale of San Francisco and Mr. and Mrs. William Berry of Junction City were week-end guests at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Boice Cook. Mr. and Mrs. Cook and their guests drove to the summit on Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Tidd and Mrs. Frances Van Horn of Vancouver, B. C. drove to Portland Saturday where Mrs. Van Horn stayed.

Wolfe Allen, Lyle Starke and Ole Bunch spent the week-end at Mink lake, fishing.

To Visit Relatives

Mr. and Mrs. Bert Johnson left on Tuesday for Tacoma, Wash., to visit relatives.

Mr. and Mrs. Guy Page and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wicks left Tuesday to spend the rest of the week at Taylor Run.

Bud Ireland drove to Mt. Hood and Bonville dam over the week-end.

Mrs. Edward Cox and Colleen and Joan returned home Saturday after spending several days at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clive Taylor of Springfield.

Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Chandler are spending the week at the coast.

Mrs. Beryl Crow gave a party Monday for her son, Billy, on his fifth birthday. Those enjoying the afternoon were Marjorie Chaffee, Joan Cox, Arthur Coffey, Beverly Ann Peterson, Ellen Laurensen, Nadine Abell, Delores and Marjorie Raines Larry and Phyllis Estes, Dorothy and Helen Kincaid, Audrey Keeler and Teresa Kykendall. Mrs. Ole Bunch and Mrs. Boice Cook assisted Mrs. Crow.

Club Event Postponed

Due to the mill being shut down

WESTFIR ITEMS

WESTFIR, Aug. 20.—(Special).—Garnet Rowland, manager of the local Four-L baseball team and Fred Swanson accompanied the players to Hazel Green park near Salem where a joint Four-L picnic was held, Sunday. Those making the trip were Norman Richey, Dorman Ellis, Wayne Smith, J. L. Fisher, Lloyd Stanley, Ray Stanley, Carl Stevenson, Harold Stevenson, Chuck Randall and Mr. Rowland and Mr. Swanson. The Westfir Four-L team won against the Valets team by a score of 14 to 0, winning a prize of \$5 for the team. Lloyd Stanley won the first prize consisting of \$2 for his high jump of 5 feet 7 1/2 inches.

Mrs. Howard King and daughter, Mary Flora, left Thursday to join Mr. King, who is employed at Valdez, Alaska. Their boat left Seattle Sunday morning. They were accompanied as far as Seattle by Mrs. T. A. King, who returned home Tuesday having spent some time with relatives and friends.

Among those attending the American Legion convention in Roseburg were Mrs. Frank Davis, Mr. and Mrs. L. F. Larwood, A. F. Gerimonte and Mr. and Mrs. A. Peterson.

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