CONTRACT WIFE

BY LOUISE HOLMES

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CHAPTER XI

Leaning back in the cab, Pats gave herself up to a few moments of rapturous thought. Don loved her. He had proved it without a shadow of doubt. But she must not allow his broken gallantry to go on. Turning over plans in her mind she decided upon the simplest. Somehow she would slip into her room without being seen. Then minus the brown wig and glasses, she would calmly, perhaps too calmly, walk in on Don and tell her story.

He might be angry; very likely he would. But when that was over, when he realized the truth—ah, then! Still thrilled to the strength of his arms, the tenderness of his touch as he wiped her tears away.

By means of the servants' elevator she stealthily gained the safety of her room. Quickly she crossed to the inner door and bent her head to listen. Evidently Don had lately come in. He was talking to Sims. He was sending away for a few days. Sims had order a bite from the cafe and leave the door on the latch while he helped pack. He was to notify him the minute Mrs. Monteray came in.

Pats threw her hat and coat on the bed. The sooner the better now. Swiftly she used cream, powder, rouge and lipstick, ran a comb through her spun gold hair and coaxed it into soft waves. The beat-ing of her heart smothered her, cold shivers prickled her arms. The next few moments meant so much, the be-ginning or the end of happiness. All at once she became rigid, listening. Voices in the living-room. Oh, why didn't she hurried? Must her inti-mate disclosures be made before the public eyes of the law? Then Don's voice, rough with irritation, broke above the mumur.

"Hello, Rosie." Pats relaxed. Rosie might not be welcome but—

"The door was unlatched so we walked in." Rosie returned with an undertone of nervous tension. "Meet my lawyer, Mr. Bradlovich."

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Instantly Pats scented trouble. Rosie with a lawyer. She leaned closer to the door. Every word came to her distinctly.

First Don, trying vainly to hide his impatience. "Very nice of you to drop but I'm in a deuce of a hurry. Another time perhaps."

Then the lawyer, suavely bland. "What I have to say is of the utmost importance—"

And Don, breaking in, "I'm not in-terested in what you have to say See your lawyer—go as far as you like—I'm sorry, excuse me—"

"Not so fast, my dear fellow—"

"You'd better hear what he has to say, Don," broke in Rosie with a triumphant sneer.

"I'll handle this, Miss Akers—if you don't mind," Mr. Bradlovich con-tinued in a dry tone. "I think you would wish to settle this matter person-ally, Mr. Monteray. Miss Akers has suffered a grave injustice at your hands—"

"Grave injustice, my eye." Don's voice was steely with exasperation. "We'll discuss Miss Akers' troubles at another timee."

"There is no better time than the present. Coming quickly to the point, Mr. Monteray, Miss Akers is about to bring suit against you."

"I shall be most glad to specify." The man's smug tone infuriated Pats, listening behind the door. "In the first place Miss Akers left a lucrative position in Hollywood to come to New York at your suggestion."

At this remark something clicked in Pats' brain. The letter from Rosie—the one she had read during her first week in Don's employ—where was that letter? She had put it in the bottom desk drawer and forgotten it. Had it ever been destroyed? She was certain it had not.

"And," Mr. Bradlovich was going on, "you kept her in this hotel, paid all her expenses—"

"Wait a minute—I loaned her money at various times—"

"I beg to differ with you, Mr. Monteray."

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Quickly Pats pinned the wig over her curls and snapped the glasses on her nose. No time for sallow make-up now. Her dress was dark and plain. It would have to do. The oc-cupants of the room started at her entrance.

"Patricia," Don said in a steely voice she hardly recognized, "you are just in time to witness a lowly at-tempt at shakedown."

"No such thing." Rosie threw in hotly. "You had me thrown out of—"

"Miss Akers—please," the lawyer interrupted. "Without warning, Mr. Monteray, you had my client thrown out of this hotel. She is still in re-hearsal, without friends or money. She has suffered indignities at your hands." At these remarks in her be-half smug triumph replaced the anger in Rosie's face. She assumed a drooping posture and smiled faintly.

Don glared at her. "An outrageous frame-up," he grated. "Tell this fel-low it's all a pack of lies. I got you a job—loaned you money—"

Rosie raised her chin and insolently displayed her graceful shoulders.

"It will be an ugly story, Mr. Mon-teray," put in the lawyer. "You can have hope to find a jury which will take your word against that of Miss Akers."

Don threw up his hands. "I have more important business tonight than wrangling with you." Jerking open a desk drawer he snatched out a check-book. "How much will you take to get out?"

Mr. Bradlovich rubbed his long nose thin with an equally long bony hand.

"Considering the circumstances I would say—twenty-five thousand—" Don roared. He cursed. But he wrote on his pen. "I haven't that much in the bank," he said wearily. "I'll give you a note."

"Don—" At the sound of Pats' voice Rosie and her attorney started and turned. They had not reckoned with the shadow against the wall. She took the pen from Don's hand. "Don't have a word. These people have no case against you."

Don looked up at her. "What do you mean?" he asked frowningly.

Pats turned to the lawyer. His leering smile stiffened.

Rosie said, "You keep out of this, Patricia." She was noticeably alarm-ed. But Pats didn't keep out of it.

"First of all," Pats stated convin-cingly, "I happen to have a letter written by you, Rosie, while you were still in Hollywood, in which you called Don a beast, 'a mean old beast' were the exact words, because he had ve-toed your suggestion that you come to New York. I think that takes care of charge number one. And Don did not pay your expenses while here except for the loans made in my pres-ence."

The lawyer had turned a faint green-ish color. He darted a furious glance at Rosie. Instantly she tried to jus-tify her position.

"I never wrote any such letter," she stormed. "Don begged me to come, he paid my hotel bills—"

"Oh, no he didn't," Pats insisted calmly. "I paid your outrageous bills as my cancelled check will prove. You were my guest, not Don's."

Don got to his feet. He moved toward the door. "And that will be about all," he said significantly. "This way out."

Mr. Bradlovich licked his dry lips. "I rather think we still have a case," he said. Obviously his slice of the damages was not to be relinquished without a struggle. "There are a few other aspects which I have not men-tioned. For instance, the unpleasant notoriety you caused my client by your attentions to her and your utter dis-regard of her feelings at the time of your marriage."

"Oh, Lord—" Don ran his fingers through his hair. This was the end. Pats held her breath as he stepped squarely in front of his accuser. His hands were clenched, his face livid.

"Get out before I throw you out," he thundered harshly.

The wiry Mr. Bradlovich stood his ground. "Don't try to bully me, Mr. Monteray—"

"Bully you?" Don went on savagely. "I'll punch your nose. Get out." Don's elbow drew back, the knuckles of his clenched fist showed white.

Mr. Bradlovich, playing for big stakes, made a last stand.

"Main force won't get you anywhere, my man," he sneered. "Miss Akers' word is as good as yours and she swears your intentions—"

Don had flared to a white heat. Pats saw his fist shoot out and meet the chin of Rosie's lawyer. Her blood sang, she wanted to shout en-couragement, she was exultant with the age-old savage pride of woman for her battling mate. Rosie backed away, for the moment stunned and speech-less.

It was a glancing blow as Bradlo-vich, possibly profiting from past en-counters, dodged. However it had enough force to topple him over back-ward. He bounced up like a rubber ball and made a rush for Don. They fought like wild men, Don furious with the injustice of it all, the lawyer rag-ing over the miscarriage of his plans.

Two chairs crashed to the floor, a lamp followed them. There was the sound of blows, of strangled breath-ing, of muttered imprecations. Then Don swung hard and his opponent slithered to the floor. As Don sprang to follow his advantage, Pats screamed.

"Sims—Sims—" She had seen un-quenchable hatred in her husband's eyes.

(To Be Concluded)

Escalators capable of handling 8000 persons an hour have been in-stalled in the Interior building of the U. S. federal government, the first government building to be equipped with escalators.

Stories in STAMPS

THE STRUGGLE OF YANG AND YIN.

FAR back in the history of Chi-nese civilization, the world was considered the battleground in the eternal struggle of the two major forces of life—male and female. It was not a conflict, but an effort to create a unity, a har-mony, between these forces.

Symbolizing this struggle, the Chinese drew two symmetrically curved figures, one black, the oth-er white, opposing each other within a circle. It is the "yin-yang" so well known and so uni-versal in Oriental design. Accord-ing to Chinese belief, every part of the world, both animate and inani-mate, is ruled by the yin-yang, the opposition of male and female, light and darkness, active and passive.

Out of this symbol, other mys-tic forms have risen—the squared maze pattern around Oriental rugs, similar designs for borders, and the swastika.

Early Chinese stamps includ-ed this symbol in their border designs, and many stamps of Korea have fea-tured the yin-yang. The sym-bol appears at the top of the stamp shown here.

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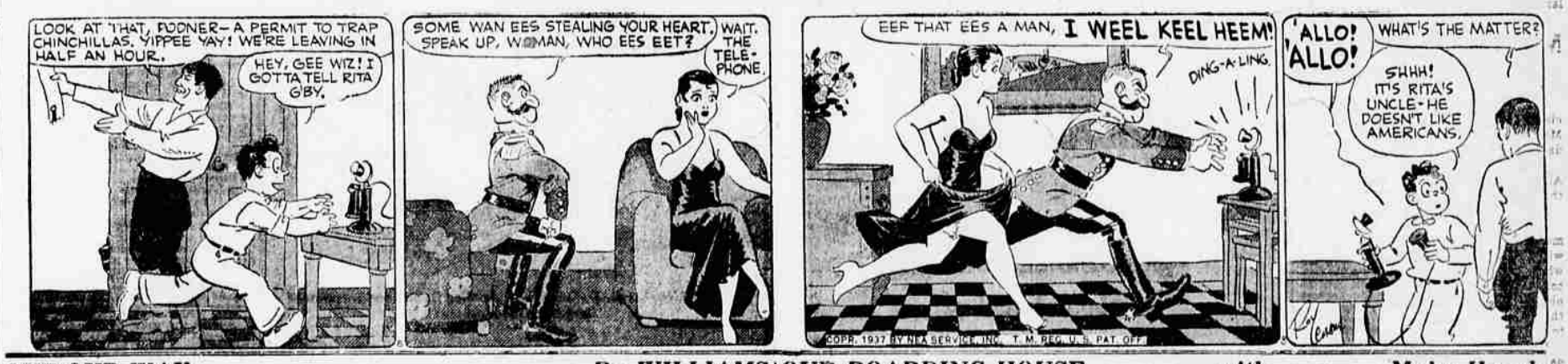

OUT OUR WAY — By WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE - - - - with - - - - Major Hoople