

# Runaway June

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## EIGHTH EPISODE

### Her Husband's Enemies.

#### CHAPTER I.

THE beautiful runaway bride opened her eyes in dazed bewilderment, to find herself gazing up into the dark, handsome face of the black Vandyked man! She was in his arms! She felt another clasp about her—the man with the white mustache. Gilbert Biye gently released his hold of her, and the white mustached man turned to carry her up the hill. Her eyes closed again.

Gilbert Biye, freed of his beautiful burden, hurried to the embankment to where his luxurious limousine stood by the side of the broken rail. As he jumped into the driver's seat and put his foot on the clutch and his hand on the brake he glanced down at the scene of the accident. The taxi leaned against a sturdy tree, which had stopped it from a fatal tumble. Biye's chauffeur, the wide featured Scatt, was bringing up the unconscious driver of the taxi. The vivacious brunette and the heavy man with the thick lidded eyes were helping Mrs. Villard. That gentle faced woman had insisted upon walking, but she came with a painful limp, and her face was drawn and white. Biye started the car forward with a jerk, turned it dexterously in the narrow road and, jumping down, arranged the cushions with a swiftly certain hand.

When June again opened her eyes Biye was brushing back her soft brown hair from her pale forehead, but he was not holding her. She was in the luxurious limousine, with her head pillowed on the shoulder of the white mustached man, Orin Cunningham, and his arm was about her. She straightened as she became aware of that clasp, and Biye, his black eyes glowing down upon her, smiled reassuringly. The car started, and she turned to look at Mrs. Villard, who sat beside her with compressed lips. The injured taxi driver was up in front, supported by the heavy lidded man. The runaway closed her eyes again and sank back into the support which she so much detested.

Biye! How much he had been in her life since she had run away from Ned! And little did June know that Ned, through his detective, had obtained the number of the auto in which she had driven that day. The number was M697707.

Honorita Biye received a telephone message from Bill Wolf a few hours after the time of the auto accident.

"Your husband has gone to his club," he said huskily.

The wife drove hastily to the club entrance. She met Wolf, who pointed to the chauffeur Scatt, saying:

"There's your husband's driver."  
Honorita saw Scatt standing beside her husband's limousine.

"I'd like to make you a little present," said Honorita in sugared accents, and, fumbling in her pocket-book, she produced a bill.

Scatt turned to her with alacrity, and every line in his broad, low face widened.

"Now you'll tell me where Mr. Biye was this evening, won't you?" she wheedled.

The smile faded from Scatt's lines.

"Aren't you going to tell me?" And the voice rose another notch.

No answer.

"Give me back that money!" she screamed.

There were thirty-seven lights to be counted before the perspective merged in a blur. Scatt calmly inspected them all in deep absorption, but during the entire time that one narrow slit of an eye had a dancing gleam in it.

Honorita scowled back at the imposing entrance to the club. The doors stood wide open. Inside the resplendent vestibule were stiffly uniformed attendants. Beyond was a marble columned hall, and at the end of that, through an arched opening, was a paneled screen.

Suddenly Honorita dashed up the steps which no woman had ever trod and before any one could stop her had rounded the paneled screen and stood in the grill room, amid a wilderness of oaken tables, at nearly all of which sat men busy sending curling wreaths of incense toward the high gilded ceiling.

There were glasses before most of the men, and a dense and painful silence pervaded the place, although as Honorita had rushed through the hall she had heard the loud babble of animated conversation. The men in that club were turned to speechless clay at the sight of this flaming apparition.

"There you are!" she screamed, and as her gaze settled from its swift roving into a fixed direction one man came to life and rose—the black Vandyked Gilbert Biye. "There you are!" she screamed again, and she started to twist her way among the tables toward her long lost mate. "You will stay away from home, eh! You will run around with other women! You will!"

A door in the corner opened and closed, and Gilbert Biye was on the other side of it! A fat man laughed. Honorita Biye turned on them all and began to tell them just what she thought of their club. A half dozen attendants regained consciousness and crowded round her. One of them, indulging in soothing talk, accidentally laid his hand on her sleeve, and she left four red lines on his face. For the first time in his dignified history that club resounded with the shrill echoes of a confirmed scold. The chucking fat man achieved an inspiration. He came up and said confidentially:

"Your husband is slipping out of the basement."

When Honorita reached the imposing entrance she was just in time to see Scatt slamming the door of the luxurious limousine, and as that brilliantly lighted car sped down the street with Gilbert Biye remaining comfortably amid the soft cushions a peal of laughter filled the block.

Honorita sprang into her electric coupe and, turning on all the "juice," wheeled down the street in hot pursuit. But at last she gave up the chase and went home.

A nurse with pink cheeks awakened June in the morning, and as the patient opened her eyes the two pretty girls smiled their appreciation of each other.

"How are you this morning?" asked the nurse, preparing to put a thermometer between June's red lips.

"Perfectly well, thank you," laughed June, tossing her waving brown hair back from her shoulders as she raised up. "How is Mrs. Villard?"

"A slight sprain," explained the nurse brightly. "She will be able to go home in time for dinner this evening. My, but you folks had a lucky accident! You must lie down until the doctor comes."

"I'm going to get up," announced June.

"Against orders. My dear, you must stay in bed until Dr. Remert says you may get up."

"Is he the one with the funny red sideburns?" and June looked down over the plain, coarse white nightgown in which she had been put to bed.

"Where are my clothes?"

"You're not ready for them," and the pretty nurse smiled in triumph. "Come in!"

This last was in answer to a knock on the door, but before it could open June had hopped back into bed with one spring. She and the pretty nurse were laughing at each other in the sheer light heartedness of youth when the doctor with the funny red sideburns came in.

He was a jovial doctor, and a very nice doctor indeed. He felt June's pulse, and looked at her tongue, and prodded her a few times, and examined her bones, talking to her all the while as if she were a little girl about ten years old.

"Now I am going to get up," proclaimed June as soon as the doctor had gone away, and she swung her pink feet out of bed again. "Where are my clothes?"

"I'll get them for you," and the pretty nurse turned cheerfully to go.

"Oh, no; wait a minute!" June's big eyes were sparkling. "Please let me try on one of your uniforms."

The pretty nurse dimpled as she admired her pa-

grinned back at him. She was a woman of much experience.

"Of course you must not be talked to very long," she agreed. "And you should have a nurse with you to take care of you." She looked at June a moment; then her eyes twinkled. "I think I'll leave this one."

"Much obliged." And the man turned his cheerful grin to June, who sat down primly at the head of the bed.

The man sank back when the head nurse left and looked as feeble as he could. His nurse was smoothing the pillows when the door opened, and there came in a large, heavy jawed woman, with a long ostrich feather on her hat, half a dozen cheap rings on her fingers and two buttons hanging loosely on her coat, one by a single thread.

"Well, well, Joe!" she said in a heavy voice, and she stared at June. "Didn't I always tell you you'd get it?" She bent over and kissed her husband as a matter of propriety. "Hurt you much?"

"Something fierce!" huskily murmured Joe and half closed his eyes.

"Tough luck!" said the woman. "You wouldn't take out that accident insurance I wanted you to, and now I suppose I can starve."

"Oh, well, you ain't done it yet!" objected the man, his tone losing some of its feebleness. "I guess you can get along till I can get out of this. I give you every cent I ever make."

"I guess that's a lot!" And the woman sat down with a thump.

"Thirty dollars last week."

"And how much the week before?"

"Well, it was a rotten week." And the man turned his eyes toward June, who looked steadfastly out of the window. There being no help from that quarter, he proceeded in helping himself. "You got enough to run you for ten days. You know you have. Come on, Alice, be sociable."

"Oh, I can come on all right, and I can be sociable all right, but suppose you don't get out of here in ten days! Then what do I do? Starve, I guess! Say, how do you come to be in a private room?"

It in the man's mouth, put a hand at the back of his neck and gently forced him down.

"The time is up," she crisply told the woman. Her voice was low and soft, and the visitor puzzled afterward as to how it could be so effective without shouting. June went to the door and opened it, aware that the eyes of Joe were fixed on her in undying gratitude.

The woman looked doubtfully at her husband, but the figure at the door was so inflexible that she succumbed to discipline.

"Well, so long, Joe," she said. "See if you can't get your money for that drive by the time I come again." She waved a wifely hand at him and stalked out. She turned to June in the hall. "If the fellow that's putting up for this room will give Joe the money instead we'll be a lot better off."

June was so shocked at the cold callousness of this speech that she could only dumbly nod her head, and she walked down to the nurses' little desk at the end of the hall, leaving the woman to bid her way out alone. Joe, the chauffeur, lay, cheerfully grinning, with the thermometer in his mouth.

Again the everlasting problem—the man, the woman and the money! The runaway bride sat in the vacant chair at the little desk and pondered it all out. This person who nagged, who followed her husband even to the hospital to nag, and whose husband welcomed the hospital because it was a relief from nagging—this woman was the outcome of the custom by which the man, earning, possessed all, and the money he gave to his wife was as a gift. A selfish woman and one without delicacy, such as this nagger, made it her business to get all she could, and the pursuit had become a passion with her. She was like those beggars who continue to beg after they have become rich by it, begging from the force of habit and from the love of the art of making people give and from the sordid desire to possess. It was wrong, all wrong, somewhere! June shuddered as she remembered this wife going through her husband's pockets, and then she recalled her dream of herself standing before Ned as a piteous pauper, holding out her hand for alms. She had been right, she decided, as she had decided time and again. She had acted wisely in running away before she had committed herself to charity and before any barriers had been set between their love. She must earn her own way—

Mercy! June sprang from her chair and ran to

The voice stopped abruptly. Edwards, Cunningham, Tommy Thomas and Mrs. Villard were all listening intently. Mrs. Villard seemed troubled. Tommy Thomas, with devilry in her eyes, was laughing at Cunningham, who seemed uncomfortable. The round headed Edwards sat slowly nodding as he looked at Biye. Mrs. Villard reached quietly forward and turned the piece of paper on the bed face downward. She seemed even sad.

"Beg pardon," said the pretty nurse, noting the sudden silence, and, slipping in, she put her hand under the sheet and felt of Mrs. Villard's ankle. The entire group was motionless, and there was a strained tension in the room until the nurse went out. She saw Mrs. Villard reaching forward for the piece of paper as she closed the door, and as she walked away she heard Biye's smooth, even voice again.

When June came into Mrs. Villard's room the conversation again stopped abruptly, but the group moved immediately.

"Oh, see the pretty nurse!" hailed Cunningham and June glanced down in embarrassment.

In that moment of her downcast eyes Tommy Thomas and Mrs. Villard, Biye and Edwards, all glared at Cunningham. He flushed and walked nervously over to the window.

"Really the costume is quite becoming to you," he added in a tone he had never used to her before, one of extravagant respect.

"Indeed it is, dear," said Tommy Thomas. She slipped an arm around June's waist protectively, and Mrs. Villard glanced up at her companion with moist eyes.

"Well, we'll see you later," said T. J. Edwards, with a clumsy attempt at heartiness, and, rising, he bowed to the ladies. "If there's anything I can do let me know." His small eyes roved to June, but there was no patronizingly fatherly glance in them and no disposition to pat her on the shoulder.

June was puzzled. There seemed to be a distinct change in the attitude of all these people toward her. Yesterday they had pursued her with a mocking certainty in which there was an underlying insolence, but now they seemed to have lost that note of overfamiliarity, and she liked the change. Only Biye was the same. His black eyes glowed when they rested upon her, and he still wore his suave smile, though somehow he seemed more frank. June found herself suddenly liking this black Vandyked man. As she turned to smooth Mrs. Villard's pillows the three men exchanged glances, and the suavely smiling Gilbert Biye stroked his black Vandyke. They turned their eyes as by one accord to the beautiful runaway bride.

Ned Warner at the very moment in which Biye and his crowd had changed their tactics toward June was, after interminable red tape, securing the address of the owner of car No. M697707, and, that secured, he hurried out to the beautiful home of Mrs. Villard up the Hudson. He came to it by the lower road, and as he approached the house he saw Marie in the sloping hillside garden. He stepped in the shelter of the wall to consider. A few days ago his first impulse would have been to rush up to Marie and seize her and compel her to tell what she knew, but Marie had proved herself to be a slippery customer. She had denied knowing Ned on his first meeting with her after the runaway; she had denied knowing earnest and eager and black Aunt Debby when that faithful servant of June's mother had happened upon Marie in the market, and only yesterday Marie had run away from the entire family, taking June's collar, Bouncer, with her. There was little to be gained from Marie. If Ned were able to force himself in and search the house June would be hidden by some one or be helped to escape, as had happened yesterday at the Widow O'Keefe's and also at the Bond Securities building and everywhere else. So there was but one thing to do—to conceal himself about the grounds until June herself should appear. He adopted that course, and the weary hours dragged on, noon, afternoon, evening.

With the dusk the luxurious limousine of Gilbert Biye left the hospital, and in its brilliantly lighted comfort sat the precious June and Mrs. Villard, Tommy Thomas, Orin Cunningham and Gilbert Biye. Strange what a difference this day had made in June's feeling toward these people. They liked her. If their views of life were not her views she could keep her own. They seemed to have discovered that she meant to retain her ways of thinking and living, and it was so much savor since they had apparently acknowledged this. Now her work as companion to Mrs. Villard would be much more pleasant. They were chatting in gay comradeship as they drew near the Villard home.

Ned Warner as the shades of night drew in ventured into the Villard garden and nearer the house. As he crept up toward the back porch the door opened, and June's collar came bounding out for an evening run. Bouncer had no sooner hit the open than he gave a loud yelp and came tearing straight in Ned's direction. He jumped mad circles around Ned, leaped upon him, barking his loudest welcome, ran halfway up to the house, ran back to bark his joy at Ned again and started to bring Marie!

He had no need to go all the way. Marie had come out on the rear porch to see what was the matter with Mrs. June's pet, and the lights from the house glistened on her high cheek bones and her liberal supply of gams.

Ned had stepped back among the bushes with the hope of edging himself over to the wall before Marie could arrive. To his surprise, however, Marie, though she looked down in that direction, did not come. She called Bouncer, and together they went into the house. Ned took advantage of Marie's indifference and of Bouncer's confinement to slip closer and look in at the windows, front, side and rear. The lower floor was brightly illuminated, and the front porch light was lit, as if some one were expected. June! Some instinct told Ned that she was coming. He concealed himself behind the shrubbery near the porte-cochere and waited.

Suddenly he involuntarily tensed himself. Whose were approaching. Then a brilliantly lighted limousine sped into sight, and as it turned the curve Ned saw in it his beautiful runaway bride. Over her was bending the dark, handsome face of the black Vandyked Gilbert Biye, his eyes glowing and on his lips that despicable smile.

With an oath Ned stepped forward. At last his moment had arrived. Within another instant as Gilbert Biye helped June from the limousine Ned would have the scoundrel by the throat.

END OF CHAPTER I.



INSIDE WERE UNIFORMED ATTENDANTS



THE TAXI LEANED AGAINST A TREE



SHE WAS IN HIS ARMS



JUNE WAS IN A STIFF WHITE UNIFORM

tient. June would look "fetching" in nurse's clothing. There could be no question of that, but she shook her head.

"I'm afraid it wouldn't be permitted."

"Just to try it on," begged June. "Let's ask the head nurse."

It seemed a tremendously daring thing to do.

"I wouldn't risk it." And the pretty nurse puckered her brows. Suddenly her face cleared. It was as if the sun had popped out on a rainy day. "Yes, I can! Mrs. Wade is on duty this morning. For a minute I thought it was Miss Simmons."

Mrs. Wade was a smiling woman—smiling lips, smiling eyes, and it seemed as if her hair smiled—but she was dubious about the uniform.

"It would be a radical infraction of the rules," she declared, with an absurd attempt at severity, "but we'll ask Dr. Remert not to tell."

They all three laughed at that, and within a few minutes June was in a stiff white uniform, with a prim little cap on her head, and was walking sedately into Mrs. Villard's room. She paused on the threshold. Gilbert Biye was there! As he caught sight of her June saw the glow of admiration leap into his black eyes. She half turned to go in her embarrassment, but Mrs. Villard stopped her.

"Come here, you pretty thing!" she called, and as June shyly came to the bedside Mrs. Villard laughed, and Biye joined her.

Dr. Remert came in and expressed his profound astonishment at how grown-up June looked in a uniform and tweaked the pink ear lobe which peeped from beneath the trim little cap. The head nurse and the nurse with the pink cheeks and the phenomically thin nurse crowded in to admire June; then Dr. Remert scattered them, so that Mrs. Villard should have some rest before her next bandaging, and he took June with him for a round of the wards. He gave her a thermometer to carry, so she should look useful as well as ornamental.

She came back from that round of the wards rather thoughtfully. She had seen so much pain and sorrow and suffering, when children and wan mothers and wan men who should have been strong, and in the light of all their woes her own problem seemed foolish and insignificant.

In Mrs. Villard's room as June approached the door she heard voices, among them Orin Cunningham's. She turned away and went across the hall to the room where the injured chauffeur lay. He was in considerable pain, the pretty nurse said, but he lay there smiling, with great cheerfulness upon his roughly molded countenance.

"I guess I'll be laid up for a week or ten days," he stated, with a grin.

"That's a long time to be confined in a narrow little room," sympathized June.

The head nurse brought her bit of sunshine into the room.

"How are you feeling?" she asked.

"Bully!"

"Then you can probably stand a pleasant surprise," smiled Mrs. Wade. "You have a visitor."

"Oh!" The sunshine left the roughly molded face, but the grin was back in a minute. "Say, tell her the doctor says I ain't to be talked to long. And can't one of you nurses stay here to make it strong?"

His grin was so confiding that the head nurse

She looked at June and sniffed. "And with a private nurse!"

"The good sport that picked us up put me here." The woman surveyed the bare little room. There were no curtains at the windows, no upholstery, no softening graces of any kind on the white enameled fittings, but it had an immense superiority, the cause of which she could not fathom. It was absolutely clean, and she paid an unconscious tribute to that phenomenon.

"Why, it's better than I got it at home!" she complained. The man turned his head over and back again, but he said nothing.

"Say," the woman went on, "the fellow that spent the money for this room and the private nurse would have done better to let you go in the public ward and give you the money for your wife!"

June, at the window, moved impatiently.

"Nurse," said the man, "can you get me my pants?"

June opened the door of the tiny white enameled wardrobe in the corner and brought out the man's trousers, handing them down with the tips of her thumb and forefinger. The woman took them and deftly ran her hands into the pockets.

"Seven fifty-five," she reported and clicked the money into her purse. She hung the trousers in the wardrobe and shut the door. "That'll help a little. Did you get your pay for this drive?"

"Not yet, Alice." And his head rolled restlessly.

"Well, you tell me who it was, and I'll go after it!" She had turned from the wardrobe and was regarding a tray which stood on its folding stand by the wall. She lifted the spoon. "My God!" she exploded. "A hot-house peach! And you didn't eat it all at that! You know what I had for my breakfast? Coffee and sinners and hash! And here you are living on the fat of the land!"

"Looky here, Alice!" The man had raised up in bed, and there was a twitch of pain at the corners of his lips as he stretched out an oil blackened forefinger.

June whirled from the window with a snap of her big eyes. She still carried the thermometer which Dr. Remert had given her. Now she thrust

the room of the chauffeur with a sudden violent wrench of her conscience. Joe lay there quite cheerfully with the thermometer still in his mouth, and he grinned as well as he could after twenty minutes of this exercise. When June removed the thermometer that side of his face remained twisted and puckered for some time, and it ached, but he was perfectly happy. He could be alone for twenty-four hours!

#### CHAPTER II.

THERE was a consultation in Mrs. Villard's room. Tommy Thomas sat at the head of Mrs. Villard's bed. T. J. Edwards, the heavy man with the thick lidded eyes, sat on the other side in stolid silence. Cunningham leaned negligently on the foot of the bed. Before Mrs. Villard lay a picture of June clipped from a Brynport paper on the day of her marriage to Ned Warner. Tommy Thomas had just found it and had brought it with her. Cunningham picked up the picture and looked at it with twinkling eyes, smoothing his white mustache complacently. Gilbert Biye, sitting in the far corner of the window sill, with his Vandyke in his long, lean, white hand, suddenly rose and, walking over to Cunningham, took the picture from him and laid it on the bed.

The pretty nurse with the pink cheeks opened the door presently and heard these words in Biye's suave but forceful tones:

"The thing to do is to gain her confidence. There must be a complete change of method."