

The Wall Flower

By MARION RUBINCAM

CONFESSION

Chapter 108

They lay for a few moments staring up through the boughs of the tree, before either of them spoke.

It was such a glorious day to lie still like this—and simply talk or be quiet as one wished. The real world spread out above and behind them, the hill dropped away steeply a little distance beyond them, so they could see through the trees, the tops of other trees down below, gray rock with greenish moss and lichen in splashes over them, a brown carpet of needles, gorgeous colors where a clump of oak trees grew, and grass still green in the sunny fields beyond.

Patches of sunlight mingled with their shadow, and gave warmth to the autumn air. At one side, a path led deeper and deeper into the trees; at the other, the pine log house met them—its white painted window shutters and fluttering curtains an odd contrast in so much rough natural scenery.

Gloria, for once, was perfectly relaxed and quiet. Pan thought how young she looked as she lay there, her extraordinarily long black lashes against her dead white skin, her large mouth soft, her cheeks filled out, most of those faint wrinkles vanished. Gloria looked up suddenly and smiled at the expression of motherly concern in her friend's eyes.

"What are you thinking of, lamb-kin?" she asked, using with Pan one of her pet names for Frankie.

"Of you—and myself. Wondering what I should ever have done if you hadn't literally picked me up and taken me away from Norris City."

she answered. "It was death—for me—to go on there. Yet I would have gone on. What would you have done, had you been in my place, as I was a year ago?"

"Gotten out—gone away. Made my own life independently, or starved, that mental freedom, even if it meant bodily starvation."

"Yes, but you have courage. Your sort—gets out, as you say. But mine—too timid even to talk to friends, too timid to think differently from other people, too much afraid of everything and everyone to say a word—what of that sort?"

"That sort," echoed Gloria, "is really two sorts. There's the girl who sits in a corner, who doesn't know what to do with her hands, or how to make friends, because she's just too stupid. That sort haven't feelings—one feels that even with opportunity they couldn't have gotten much from life."

"But your sort—the sensitive plants of the world, the girls with serious ideas, but too timid to express them, with real ability, but without the courage to try things—they're the problem. Eventually I think they find their way into a congenial life. Take you as a type—had you married a man much below you, as you know now Morton was, you would not have sunk to his level. You would have been unhappy, but kept your ideals. Eventually courage would have come—you would have broken away from a narrow life. You would have taken your husband along as a handicap. Fortunately, you were saved that by your not well meaning cousin, Gladys."

"Yes—but with Morton out of the question—if it hadn't been for you I would have stayed on and grown into a friendless, lonely old maid, and been 'queer' by the time I was 40. I've seen those 'queer' people so often. You saved me—so if I stand for a type, you're to stand for outside circumstances—and they don't always rescue people—circumstances, I mean," she added to make her point clear.

"If I hadn't come, some other opportunity would have come—once to every man, you know the proverb says. Or, if not, you would have been driven away by desperation—probably come off with your father to South America. It would have been a different fate, not so pleasant as this, perhaps, but happier than staying on at home as you were."

"You mean," said Pan, "that all of us—we people who are so afraid of life—and of ourselves—are helped out? So we needn't be so afraid?"

"Yes," said Gloria decidedly. "The good that's in people comes out. You say you were afraid— heaven knows you were too, when I first saw you—but I saw the good there and the opportunity. I was touched by your sweetness. I felt your charm—as I sent for you. If it hadn't been that, it would have been another person—another time. You needed only a slight chance. You've changed wonderfully."

"I?" Pan sat straight staring through the trees to the sunny fields beyond, her brown eyes seeing the past with understanding and the future with glad hope. "I'm a different person. I'm not afraid. I feel, as I told George, that I've a secure place in the world—at first with you but only as long as you needed me and you don't need me now. But now and always with him, because he needs me and always will. That's the highest form of love, for me—to be needed and to be able to give. And I have all that—and will always, for George will always love me. I know. I'm not afraid because I'm so happy."

Down the road, a motor horn set up a cheerful honking, and Pan knew George was on his way back. And Gloria thought of the boat's siren that would sound in a few days, when Santley, too, would be on his way back.

FINIS.

Laboratory Explosion Ends Scientist's Life

(U. P. Licensed Wire to The Bend Bulletin)
MARTINEZ, Cal., July 31.—Investigation was under way here today to determine the cause of the explosion which killed Charles Henry Schwartz, chemist, at his laboratories near here.

It was believed that Schwartz was

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working on secret formulas for the production of artificial silk from celluloid, as he already had developed several along this line. He was behind locked doors when the blast occurred last night and only a few minutes earlier had telephoned his wife he would be home soon. The body was found amid shattered chemical apparatus.

Schwartz was made defendant in a \$75,000 damage suit June 9 by Miss Elizabeth Adam, former school teacher and native of Geneva, Switzerland, who claimed the chemist had made love to her under promise of marriage, concealing that he already was married.

The chemist-inventor, an Austrian by birth and graduate of several European universities, asserted the suit was an attempt to damage his reputation, fostered by a group of Europeans who sought his discoveries.

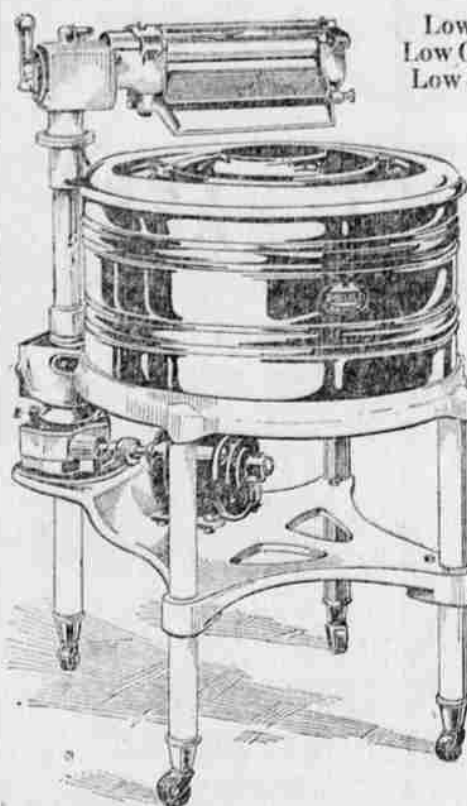
EXPLORERS TO BROADCAST

(U. P. Licensed Wire to The Bend Bulletin)
CHICAGO, July 31.—The first official test of broadcasting vocal and instrumental music from inside the

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Many an unmusical girl has a favorite "him."

Perhaps the most elaborate, and therefore the most perplexing, national flag is that of Tibet, because, apart from the main design which is curiously complex, the spaces in it are filled up with alternate triangles of red and blue.

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Allies in the Alleys

To Emerson is ascribed the saying that "light is the best policeman."

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