

Prudence's Daughter

By ETHEL HUESTON

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WNU Service

"YOU WAIT!"

SYNOPSIS—PART ONE—At a merry party in the studio apartment of Carter Blake, New York, Jerry (Geraldine Harmer, Prudence's daughter, meets Duane Allerton, wealthy dilettante. He admires her tremendously, and she likes him. But Allerton gets a bit exhilarated, with unfortunate results. Jerry, resenting his assumption of familiarity, leaves the party abruptly. The story turns to Jerry's childhood and youth at her home in Des Moines, only child of a wealthy father, when she is twenty she feels the call of Art and asks her parents to let her go to New York for study. With some misgivings, they agree to her going. In New York Jerry makes her home with a Mrs. Delaney ("Mimi"), an actress, who, with Theresa, a painter, occupies the house. Jerry takes an immediate liking to Theresa, who is talented and eccentric, and the two become fast friends. Jerry now devotes herself to Theresa, who returns her liking. Jerry poses for Theresa's masterpiece, "The Ocean Rider." Allerton calls on Jerry. The girl refuses to see him. At a hotel dinner Jerry sees Duane and is conscious of his admiration, but refuses to change her attitude toward him.

CHAPTER V—Continued

When they arose to go, she turned and looked squarely in his direction. She could have answered the call of his sober eyes, gone softly to him, touched his hand.

"Are you ready?" she said to Mimi, drawing up the folds of her cloak as the amorous youth placed it about her shoulders.

Duane's eyes followed them as they passed out. Jerry would not turn her head, to look away from him, pretend she did not see him. She would have been ashamed of subterfuge. She looked at him frankly, and did not know him.

"Jerry, there's your friend," whispered Mimi. "Isn't he the best-looking thing you ever saw?"

She turned the effective lashes upon him brightly, and Duane nodded to her, and smiled. Jerry said nothing.

On the following morning Theresa went down to Jerry's room before the usual time for the daily breakfast tray. This was an occurrence of such infrequency that Jerry could not hide a flutter of flattered pleasure when she appeared in the doorway. But Theresa, even in her most formal moments, wasted no time in idle talk. She came for a purpose, and went with sturdy directness.

"See here, Jerry, I thought of something last night," she began briskly. "Are you sure you want to give up studying Art?"

"Absolutely sure."

"Sure you won't change your mind after a little, and begin again?"

"Absolutely sure."

"What are you going to do with the lessons? You paid a whole term in advance, didn't you? Are you going to get your money back?"

"I don't think I can. I'll just have to let it go."

"See here, Jerry, you shouldn't waste such an opportunity. Now, poor old McDowell needs the money; he teaches for his bread and butter, you know. But if you stop so soon, he may feel he has to make a partial refund anyhow. Why don't you transfer the lessons to some one who would like them, but can't afford them?"

"To whom, for instance? You have someone in mind, haven't you?"

Theresa admitted that she had, that she had just thought of it. The one she had in mind was Greta Val, an unprepossessing country girl, who had appeared suddenly from somewhere, and was earning a hard existence by serving as chambermaid at the old Griller studios on Ninth street. Jerry had seen her once when she went to one of the studios with Mimi for tea, and remembered her as a starchy, rigid young person, with whom one would more likely associate scrub buckets and brooms than delicate paints and brushes.

"Um, she's ugly," said Theresa. "But that kid's a genius, all the same. She knows nothing, has never had a lesson in her life—and God only knows what she came here for, without friends, without money. Oh, you know how people are, Jerry. They think if they can only squeeze into the Village they'll just naturally absorb Art with the air they breathe. Well, she doesn't do so badly, for all that. The fellows are all good to her, give her scraps of paint and canvas, and tell her little things that help her. Greta Val may be ugly, she may be green, but she's got it, Jerry, and it'll hold over some time, you mark my words."

Jerry was almost childishly pleased. "Oh, Theresa, get her quick! She can have all my things—the easel, the paint, everything! Get her right away, won't you? I'll feel so much better when it's all out of my sight."

And while Theresa went out to the telephone, Jerry, with her boyoant enthusiasm, set to work, pulling out boxes of paint and crayons, canvases, brushes and books, that all should be

in readiness for the girl who had this thing that Jerry herself had not.

She came at once, Greta Val, and Theresa took her down to Jerry—a slim, straight girl as she had vaguely remembered, with thin, unsmiling lips and wide, unsmiling eyes. Jerry caught her hand and drew her impulsively into the room.

"Are you Greta Val? Listen! I have paid for a term of lessons with Graves McDowell, and I don't want them, I don't want to study Art. But they are all paid for, and it is a shame to waste them, so I want you to take them in my place. And look! She ran quickly to the table, and flung a inclusive hand over the boxes and jars piled high. "I have all these things, canvases, brushes, paints, just going to waste, for I can't use them. So I want to get rid of them, I don't even like to have them about. And my easel—it nearly fell down on me in the tub last night and might have killed me—will you take it, and use it, and—and the lessons, and everything?"

"Are you making fun of me?" demanded Greta Val in a passionate, throaty, strangled voice.

"Oh, no, how can you think"—Jerry laughed, nervously—"how can you think of such a thing? I just want to get rid of it, it takes up such a lot of room, it makes me nervous to have it piled about and—"

"How dare you make fun of me!" Greta Val lifted a sharp, resentful hand and struck Jerry angrily across

the face, and then, with a cyclonic burst of tears, whirled about and ran from the room, the door reverberating loudly in her tempestuous wake.

Jerry stood as one petrified, a slender hand upraised and motionless, her face showing deathly white except for the splash of red where Greta's hand had struck. Her eyes were wide with horror, her lips parted in mute bewilderment, while Theresa flung herself upon the couch and screamed with helpless laughter.

CHAPTER VI

Jerry Adrift

For a long time Jerry stood, breathless, bewildered, in the center of her room, a rigid, lovely figure in her amazement, while Theresa rolled on the couch with choking laughter.

"D-did you see what—that creature—did to me?" she gasped at last.

"Oh, Jerry!" cried Theresa, struggling up to a sitting posture, wiping her eyes with the sleeve of her paint-stained smock. "Did I see it—I can see it now!" Theresa flung herself joyously among the cushions again.

"The insolent—impudent—"

"I'll bet you never got one like that before," interrupted Theresa. "The little spitfire! Were you ever slapped before, Jerry?"

Jerry shook her head; she was still awed, still breathless with the unexpectedness of it. "Never! I was never deliberately hurt—by anybody—in my life. Prudence doesn't do such things."

Theresa sobered suddenly. "It's a shame," she said sympathetically. "The poor kid! She was so happy she didn't know what—"

"Happy! Do you call that happiness! Well, if that's the way a genius feels happy, thank God I'm commonplace. I'm glad she was happy! If she had been a little peeved, she would doubtless have killed me outright!"

Jerry's eyes were flashing with resentment, her fine lips twitching. Tears came into her eyes.

"I—I thought she would be pleased," she stammered. "I thought she would like it."

Theresa reached for her hand, caressed it with unusual gentleness. "Don't take it that way, Jerry," she urged. "You don't understand. Think what a barren, bitter life the poor

little tramp leads. She was amazed beyond reason, she couldn't believe it—you're so bright and so joyous—of course she thought you were making fun. It was too good to be true. These things don't happen once in a lifetime. She'll be sick about this, you'll see. Why, she didn't know what she was doing, she's an awfully nice little thing—I hope you aren't going to hold it against her, and—"

"Oh, she can have the stuff, if that's what you mean. But keep her out of my sight! I never want to see her again! I hate her!"

Oh, very well, Theresa knew the temper of this kind of human flint with which they had to deal. She knew no kindly messenger could bridge the gap Greta had so dramatically created between herself and the one who wished to help her—that she would accept of no second-hand bounty after her stormy passion. No use to send a word of forgiveness, for Greta would not believe.

And so Theresa, knowing that Jerry herself must reach across the breach, stayed with her, petted her, coaxed her into yielding.

"Oh, very well, have it your own way, then," Jerry said at last. "I know I'm a weak-minded little dunce, and let you twist me around your little finger. Come on then. Let's go and find the wild little heathen, and tell her what we think of her."

Theresa promptly accepted the submission, knowing full well she could trust the end to Jerry's inherent sweetness, and the two girls set out together, at once, in search of Jerry's spiffire. She did not answer their ring at the Griller studios, and after persistent pressing on the button one of the artists on the second floor looked out from the window, and, recognizing Theresa, agreed to press his buzzer to give them admittance.

"Where is her room?"

"We want Greta Val," said Theresa.

"In the basement," he called cheerfully. "And dark as the denise, so watch your step as you go down. The door on the right, clear at the end."

Very gingerly they made their way, hand in hand, down the dark stairs, and through the dark basement corridor to the door at the end, on the right.

"Listen," Theresa whispered. "Didn't I tell you?"

The sound of passionate, strangled sobbing came out to them from behind the door. Theresa knocked smartly, but received no answer. She turned the knob, but the door was locked from within. She pounded heavily, incessantly, and presently the strangled sobbing ceased, and intense silence prevailed.

"Greta, come here and open this door," ordered Theresa.

"Go away," was the muffled rejoinder.

"Open the door, you little simpleton," said Theresa. "Right away. It is Theresa Brady."

"Go away, I tell you!"

"Greta, you ought to be ashamed of yourself! Now you come and open this door as fast as ever you can, or I'll hang it down!"

The sternness of her voice had its effect at last. Greta shuffled across the room and opened the door. A pitiful figure, she stood before them, her thin hair straggling about her face, her cheap blouse twisted and pulled awry, her unlovely face swollen with weeping and stained with tears. When she realized that it was Jerry who stood with Theresa in the dark hallway, she cried out faintly and covered her face with her hands. Theresa stood back, made way for Jerry. She had done her part. She knew that Jerry now could be given a free, loose rein. Jerry ran into the dingy basement room at once, and put both arms about the wretched, cowering figure.

"Don't cry," she said, "don't cry. I don't mind a bit, honestly I don't. We all do silly things when we're excited."

She pulled her softly across the room toward the cot, and sat beside her, holding her in her arms, calling her soft caressive names, "silly little goose," and "foolish child," while Theresa watched them soberly, her unfathomable eyes not on Greta, who by rights should have been the center of the scene, but on Jerry's tender, sorry face. After a little, when Greta lay quiet in her arm, except for an occasional racking shudder of her thin shoulders, Jerry explained:

"You see, I thought perhaps I could paint a little myself, but I can't really, and I don't want to be bothered. But it would be wicked to throw those lovely things away, and when Theresa told me about you I was so happy I could hardly wait to get hold of you. It was very stupid, the way I told you. I do things so quickly, all in a flash, on the spur of the moment, and I don't wonder you thought I was crazy. But I really do not want the things, and it will make me so happy if you will just take them off my hands, you know."

Greta did not speak, but pressed her thin, unlovely, fervent lips upon Jerry's fur-wrapped shoulder. A few minutes later, when Greta was straightened and washed and brushed, they returned, the three of them together, to Jerry's room, and joyously

carried down to the street the boxes, the easel, the blocks of canvas. Jerry called a taxi, and they drove away to Greta's room with her priceless treasures.

When Theresa and Jerry were turning at last to leave her alone with her riches, suddenly the power of speech returned. She caught Jerry's hand.

"Miss Harmer," she stammered, the words tripping each other up on her eager tongue, "the first picture I get hung at the academy—you shall have it—for nothing!"

The air with which she said it was triumphant, and Jerry thanked her sweetly. But when they were on the street alone she smiled about it.

Theresa turned upon her soberly. "Don't laugh. It may be years from now, but some day you'll get that picture. And one day, Jerry, you'll be proud and glad to remember you gave the poor little fool her first chance. You wait!"

The days passed slowly and Jerry did not find an avenue for the active expression of her personality she so ardently desired. She had no illusions in regard to herself, she was an ordinary, midwestern girl, very charming, very beautiful, but one who had not been drawn upon the knees of the gods. She could play nicely, sing very sweetly, but could do no more with music than amuse herself. Upon her college work she could obtain a certificate for teaching school, but she felt no such inclination. She might take a business course and become one of the countless alert-eyed, trim-clad business girls of the great city, girls who stirred her warmest admiration without creating in her a desire to become one of them. The grandeur of work, as work, did not impress her. She required a motive.

If her father had died suddenly Jerry would have swept courageously into his great motor factory in Iowa, studied it, struggled with it, learned to control it—a reason there for her effort. But with Jerrold himself in such shrewd and successful dominance of his own business, she saw no such occasion. And still she believed that somewhere, somehow, she must strike on a thing that would command her effort and hold her interest. In the meanwhile she devoted her time to catering sweetly to Theresa—Theresa, who was working with a more consuming passion than ever before, and with ever-increasing disregard for every natural safeguard of health.

When she went up to the studio at ten o'clock one morning with the breakfast tray for Theresa, she was surprised to find Mimi there before her. Mimi seldom intruded and was always curtly discouraged by Theresa when she did.

It was Mimi who spoke to Jerry first. "Come right in," she said. "We're having our daily battle, but you won't mind."

"Oh, please don't let me interfere with the war," said Jerry, laughing. "I'll run down and wait till the signing of the treaty."

"No, don't go," said Theresa gloomily. "She may cut it short if you stay. She's bothering me frightfully."

"Jerry, do something with her," pleaded Mimi. "She's a perfect fool. We're invited—both of us—to Atlantic City for the week-end, all expenses paid and everything, and she won't even talk about it."

"I don't want to go, and I can't go, and I won't go. What is there to say about it?" Theresa disposed of the subject brusquely.

"It would be lovely," said Jerry. "Perhaps it would do you good, Theresa, you look so tired."

Theresa said nothing.

"I'm getting sick of it," said Mimi quite furiously. "I need a little companionship, I tell you. If you don't stop being so stingy and so pigginish, Theresa, I'll get married, and then—"

"Oh, good Lord! Again!" Theresa burst into scornful laughter. "Jerry, witness this. I've stuck along here through the last two husbands, but I'm through. You get married again, Mimi, and I'm off. And that's final."

Mimi laughed lightly. "Oh, you can't tell, I might have good luck another time."

"Not you. You don't know how to pick them."

"Oh, I think I'll run on down—"

"You stay where you are," said Theresa.

"Don't go on my account," said Mimi. "I don't mind Theresa. She's just jealous."

Well, Jerry is adrift now, without occupation. Her dream dissolved. Will she go home—or marry Allerton?

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Current Wit and Humor



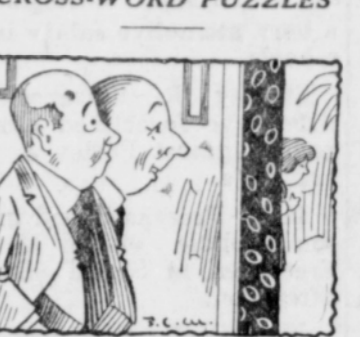
A LOVER OF NATURE

"What we need," said the loudly-dressed woman, "is to get closer to nature. We have too much artificiality. For my part I simply adore nature. That's why I got my husband to buy a country place."

"But you didn't go there last summer?"

"Oh, dear, no; certainly not. We won't be able to go there for two or three years yet. It will require all that time for the landscape gardener to get it in shape for us."

CROSS-WORD PUZZLES



"You say your wife is all the time making irritable remarks you can't understand?"

"Yes—regular cross-word puzzles I can't solve."

We, Too

"A fool and his dough are soon parted," said Marr.

"I wish it were so with the fool and his car."

Literally So

A young Serbian studying in England was asked to translate the following sentence from his native tongue into English: "He gave up his life on the battlefield."

With the help of a dictionary he produced the version: "He relinquished his vitality on the bellicose meadow."—Tit-Bits.

At That It's a Serious Accident

"Why so glum?"

"Just broke three ribs."

"Heavens! You'd better see a doctor!"

Doctor nothing. What I want to see is a man who will lend me enough to buy another umbrella. The ribs I broke were in one I had borrowed.

LOST WHEN THROWN



"Why is he losing ground so in public favor?"

"Isn't he always throwing mud?"

Shed a Tear for Alice

A very lonely lass is Alice Bleszer. She is a lemon and the boys won't squeeze her.

The Literal Fisherman

"Good morning, Mike. Doing a little fishing?"

"Yes, sir."

"And how are they biting this morning?"

"With their mouths, sir."

"No; I mean how are you pulling them out?"

"Head first, sir."

Tu Quoque

Golf Widow—My husband accused me of doing nothing but chase around to afternoon teas.

Friend—What did you say?

Golf Widow—I reminded him that that was how he spent his own afternoons, chasing from one tee to another.

A Carving Business

"That young woman with all those jewels carved out her own fortune."

"Nonsense. She's an ex-chorus girl. She didn't carve out her own fortune. She married a millionaire."

"Yes, but think how many other chorus girls she had to cut out to marry him."

Aid from Dad

Bedtime Story-Teller— and poor little Katherine Cat lost her whiskers. And what do you think she did?

Future Cow Editor—I know! She used her paw's—Williams Purple Cow.

Good Advice

Master—I feel tempted to give this class a Latin test.

Voice (from the back of the room)—Yield not to temptation!

Why Risk Neglect?

Are you lame and aching; weak and nervous? Do you suffer backache, sharp pains, disturbing bladder irregularities? This condition is often due to a slowing up of the kidneys. The kidneys, you know, are constantly filtering the blood. Once they fall behind in their work, poisons accumulate and undermine one's health. Serious troubles may follow. If you have reason to suspect faulty kidney elimination, try Doan's Pills. Doan's are a tested diuretic, recommended by thousands. Ask your neighbor!

A California Case

Mrs. M. E. Painter, 890 Wright Ave., Pasadena, California, says: "My back was lame and when I stooped, a sharp pain went across the small of it and I had to ease myself up gradually. Headaches and dizzy spells were common and I was nervous and irritable. Doan's Pills drove the trouble from me and the cure has lasted."

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Miss ELEANOR WILCOX
Newburgh, N. Y.

For FREE SAMPLE—write B. F. Allen Co., 417 Canal Street, New York Buy at your druggist in 25 and 50c boxes For biliousness, sick headaches and constipation take

Beecham's Pills

Tip for Campers
It is useful to campers to know that pills in which greasy water is thrown may be kept clean by rinsing them with a cupful of gasoline, which can be drawn from the automobile.

Piscatorial Notation
The objection to fishing on a creek bank is that comparatively so few of the bites you get come from the water.
—Baltimore Sun.

Quick Safe Relief CORNS
In one minute—or less—the pain ends. Dr. Scholl's Zino-pads is the safe, sure, healing treatment for corns. At drug and shoe stores.

Dr. Scholl's Zino-pads

Put one on—the pain is gone

Two Forms of Injustice
He often acts unjustly who does not do a certain thing; not only he who does a certain thing.—Marcus Antoninus.

At the Grocer's
Grocer—"What size cabbage head, sir?"
Nuwed—"About six and seven-eighths."

Confession
"Why do you ask for so much money every week, dear?"
"Oh, just to be sure to get a little."

Let us worship without seeing; let us be silent; let us abide in peace.—Fenelon.

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