

BY ETHEL HUESTON



PRUDENCE'S DAUGHTER

"A PRESENT"

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 trader. 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 misgiving, 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. Jerry becomes convinced she has not the ability to become an artist and gives her expensive painting equipment to an almost penniless girl student, Greta Val, who cannot understand her generosity.

CHAPTER VI—Continued

"Jealous! Not a bit of it. I'm just tired of supporting husbands, that's all."

"Well, the last two were—a little—uh—"

"I should say they were. One stole half the furniture to hock for booze, and the other made love to everybody in the house—including me—so you know he was 'crazy'—and neither one of them earned a cent during their—uh—incubency, as you might say. Well, suppose you go on down now, Mimi, you make me wild. I want to work."

"Isn't she polite, Jerry? I don't see how you can stand her. It makes me furious, just to look at her."

Mimi trailed out, in a fine hauteur, and closed the door upon the two girls.

"If you ever get married, Jerry," Theresa said, "don't let Mimi have anything to do with picking him out. She has the rottenest luck with husbands."

Jerry professed her entire disinclination for a husband of any picking. But her eyes were cloudy.

A few nights later she saw Duane Allerton again. It was a studio dinner at Almee Giorian's. While the other four of the little party played bridge, Jerry and Leonid Korae, one of the new school of Russian actors, with whom New York abounds, washed and dried the dishes, and then turned on the phonograph, and tagedoed gayly about the table in the center of the room where the others were playing. Leonid was obviously enchanted, Jerry gay and not deterring. He held her close in his arms, drawing her ardently closer at frequent intervals. Jerry laughed, thrust a bare white elbow between them, crooking it impudently almost in his very face, holding him a little away. Leonid kissed her arm. Jerry was looking up, directly into his eyes, teasing, laughing, as they danced slowly about.

He shifted his arm suddenly, crushing her elbow away, holding her so close that she was obliged to tilt back her head to avoid his face touching hers.

"I shall bite your chin if you do that again," she warned him merrily.

That was when she saw Duane, who had come in quietly and was standing in the shadow of a towering highboy in the corner. Jerry strove in vain to throw off the chill of depression, to smile with the same assiduous warmth upon Leonid. She could not.

The others at the table, quarreling fiercely over a hand, did not even stop to welcome Duane when he joined them. When Jerry and Leonid paused to hear the argument Duane hurriedly vounded the phonograph and asked her to dance. Jerry shook her head.

"No, thanks. Not now. I'm tired." She even smiled a little, to deceive the others in the room.

Duane turned his back upon them, fuming her to withdraw from them a little and stand alone with him.

"Will you—after a little when you are rested?" She shook her head again, smiling, got looking at him. "I fancy I shall be tired all evening," she said. "You are more beautiful than ever Jerry."



table, but he retained her one instant longer. "Then you really prefer the violent Russian method to my more plebeian style?"

"Yes, very much."

They abandoned bridge, then, and played penny ante, the seven of them, gambling furiously for pennies. Jerry was very quiet, her hands like ice, but she kept a steady eye upon her cards, and after two hours was a winner by 42 cents. She said she knew it was playing a wicked poker to win and leave, but she had an appointment with Theresa at eleven, she must really go. Leonid also insisted he had an engagement uptown and would walk by Relly's alley with her on his way for a bus. And they went out quickly, the others barely pausing in their play to say good-by, although Duane's eyes followed her to the door. She did not look back.

Theresa surprised her one morning by asking abruptly:

"When are you going home, Jerry?"

Jerry blushed and marveled that she did so. She would have said she had never thought of going home.

"I don't know—perhaps not at all," she said confusedly. "I am not thinking of it—yet. Theresa, what do girls do when—there is nothing to do—and no reason for doing it?"

"God knows. I've often wondered," said Theresa tersely.

She had tried to help Jerry come into her own, had offered countless suggestions in that impersonal way of hers which kept her interest free from all intrusiveness. But to every suggestion Jerry had but the one answer: "But why, Theresa? Why?"

For Jerry, still passionately in search of a raison d'être, saw no entertainment in a hard manual work which would wear her out mentally, physically—for the sake of earning a few

"Oh, Hello," She Said. "You Startled Me a Little."

"Not a bit. I like it," Jerry spoke with truth. She loved being wanted. "But I hope it isn't a real trouble, just a little attack of moods."

Mimi lit a cigarette and snatched among the cushions on the chaise longue, puffing a cloud of smoke about her. With the light on her face, Jerry could see that she was ghastrly pale beneath the creamy layers of rouge and powder.

"Oh, I shall love anything you give me, Theresa, you so seldom do things like that. But I hope it is just a little teeny scratch of yours—a splash of paint on an inch of canvas if no more. I should love something of yours. I've been wanting one so awfully much and—"

"You're very inquisitive," said Theresa. "But I shan't tell you a thing. It will be here when you come back. I've a big notion not to go at all."

declared Jerry. "I don't care for the old show—I want to see my present."

"You go along," Theresa tossed her wrap from the chair across her shoulders. She followed her out into the hall and leaned over the banister as Jerry stood on the second step below, smiling up at her. "Jerry, you wished once that I might have been your sister. Do you still?"

"Yes, more than ever."

"I wish so, too," Theresa acknowledged soberly. "But of course it couldn't possibly be, not by any manner of means." She hesitated a little. "The things that go into making a Jerry, and those that go into a Theresa—Oh, no, not by the wildest stretch of imagination." She laughed a little, ruefully, and, leaning over, kissed Jerry suddenly on the top of her head. "Run along now, and be a good girl."

CHAPTER VII

And Jerry Saw Prudence

Jerry left Almee at the entrance to Relly's alley, hurriedly let herself into the house, and started up the stairs on a light run. She was impatient to see the present Theresa had left for her. She noticed no unnatural quiet in the house. And yet when she saw Mimi waiting for her at the top of the stairs, a lovely picture in her bright gown with trailing tinsel fringes, she felt a sudden chilling of her eagerness.

"Oh, hello," she said. "You startled me a little. You look like a solemn ghost in silk and fringe."

"Come into my room a while, will you?" Mimi asked, and there was a hollowness in her usually lifting voice. "Everybody's out. You're the first one home. I don't want to be alone."

Jerry, with her usual willingness to please, followed along into the narrow hall, an effective room, which Theresa found unbearably stuffy, but into which Mimi fitted to nice perfection, all shaded lights, with great bronze burners of pungent incense, oriental hangings, silken cushions.

"Sit here, dearie, in this light, it just suits you," Mimi said absently, from force of habit, tucking a cushion against Jerry's shoulder as she had done a hundred times before. "I'm frightfully upset. You don't mind my troubling you, do you? You are so soothing."

"Not a bit. I like it," Jerry spoke with truth. She loved being wanted. "But I hope it isn't a real trouble, just a little attack of moods."

Mimi lit a cigarette and snatched among the cushions on the chaise longue, puffing a cloud of smoke about her. With the light on her face, Jerry could see that she was ghastrly pale beneath the creamy layers of rouge and powder.

"It's Theresa." Her voice sounded almost irritable.

"She works too hard," Jerry assented. "We must take her in hand, and make her spare herself a little. I wanted her to go to the theater with us, but she would not hear of it."

"In a way I suppose she could hardly go tonight," Mimi spoke apologetically, the tone in which she always tried to excuse Theresa's abruptness. "Don't mind her, Jerry. She doesn't mean to be rude."

"I don't mind her. I think she's wonderful."

Mimi twisted her fingers into a rigid, knotted gnarl.

"She was wonderful, but, but—she killed herself," she said hollowly.

Jerry cried out, struggled to her feet, and then sank back white and horrified among the cushions.

"She might have left the pictures," Mimi chattered nervously, with cold lips. "Some of them were fine. I could have sold them for a great deal of money."

"Mimi, did she owe you money—Theresa?" Jerry's voice was eager. She should love to do that parting kindness to the memory of strange Theresa—to pay her final debts.

Mimi stared at her, shook her head. "Of course not. She owed nobody anything. We took this house together, but she has always borne the expense of it, from the very first."

"Um, she would," whispered Jerry, disappointed that she was denied that final happiness, but understanding Theresa with the cold but kindly hand.

"Oh, that is why she said good-by, and kissed me," Jerry whispered. "That's why she said she would—give me a present—"

Mimi caught upon the words hopelessly. "A present! Theresa said it! Come, quickly."

They ran feverishly down the hall to Jerry's room and reached for the button, Mimi's hand ahead of Jerry's, flooding the room with light. They saw it instantly, standing out vivid and bright in the small room, propped upon the piano against the wall, Theresa's parting gift to the one who had most desired her—the "Ocean Rider," a tumult of green and white.

Jerry stood before it, sobbing pitiously, twisting her hands together.

"Oh, Theresa, how could you?" she wept. And then, remembering Mimi, she tried to stifle her emotion, to be quiet, self-possessed. "She—she wasn't unhappy about it," she stammered weakly. "She was quite gay."

She laughed at me and kissed me— Her voice broke on the pitiful words. "Perhaps—she is really getting—rested, as she said."

"Come on back," said Mimi. "It makes me nervous. I never liked that picture. There is something so—defiant—about it."

They sat down opposite each other, stiffly, Jerry in the great chair, Mimi lighting another cigarette as she lay tense and rigid on the chaise longue. Looking at her suddenly Jerry realized that the painted woman in the trailing silken gown was broken-hearted, suffering things indescribable that her very thoughts were bleeding.

"Mimi, you loved Theresa, didn't you?"

That curious, clinging friendship between the young girl with her terrific energy, and the frivolous, light-hearted woman was the greatest mystery Jerry had touched upon in the great city.

Mimi smoked passionately, twisting the cigarette between her lips. Suddenly she tossed it into the fireplace, lit another. Her fingers were blue.

"You didn't know that I am Theresa's mother, did you, Jerry? I don't suppose she told you."

That was more than Jerry could bear. She broke into high, hysterical laughter.

"Mimi! Don't!"

Mimi nodded again. "She was my daughter." She began to explain with nervous intensity. "She called me Mudder when she was a little baby, but she grew up into such a funny, long-legged monster of a child! And I had—my admirers, my career. In the profession they want you always to remain young, unmarried and free. It was absurd to lay claim to youth with a great girl like Theresa brandishing my past in my face. So we fell into the way of using Mimi and Theresa. Lots of them do, on the stage. She liked it—Theresa liked it."

Jerry said nothing, could say nothing. Poor Theresa! She thought of the terrible, tragic loneliness of the brilliant young artist. Her mother she had sacrificed to youth and beauty, her love she had given up for Art. Now she was dead, glad of her freedom from a life which had only tired her. Jerry shuddered. She sat motionless, shocked beyond words.

The KITCHEN CABINET

(By 1925 Western Newspaper Union.)
The best portion of a good man's life—his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness.

SEASONABLE GOOD THINGS

The refreshing, cool cucumber, although having little nourishment, being 90 per cent water, is especially adapted for warm weather food. We like its crisp freshness, and there are many methods of serving it which will be enjoyed by the entire family.

Stewed Cucumbers.—Peel, quarter and seed the cucumbers. Fry a little onion in butter, add the cucumbers, turning until brown on both sides. Remove and add a tablespoonful of flour to the fat in the pan and when brown add a cupful of veal or chicken stock. Season with pepper and salt, replace the cucumbers in the pan, cover and simmer a half hour. Serve hot.

Stuffed Baked Cucumbers.—Take the largest sized cucumbers for this dish. Cut them into halves and remove the seeds, leaving a smooth cavity for the stuffing. Drop these shells into boiling water and cook for five minutes, then chill in ice water, drain, fill with a mixture of cold meat, mushrooms, hard cooked eggs, or leftover vegetables well seasoned, adding crumbs to make the filling of the right consistency. Tie the halves together, basting occasionally with gravy or butter while baking. Bake about an hour.

Japanese Method.—Cook the cucumbers whole, slit them and serve them with butter and salt, or boil the peeled cucumbers in a mixture of milk and water, then dip in egg and crumbs and fry brown, or dip in fritter batter and serve cooked as any other fritter.

Cream of Cucumber Soup.—Use two or more cupfuls of chopped cucumber cooked in a small amount of water and the water and the cucumber put through a sieve, adding to rich milk a binding of a tablespoonful each of butter and flour cooked together. Onion may be added if desired. This is a delicious soup if you like cucumber.

Tomato Ice.—Cook a quart of tomatoes seasoned with sugar, paprika, nutmeg and a little grated lemon peel. Strain through a sieve and freeze. Use an ice cream dipper to serve it, adding a cone of the tomato to a nest of head lettuce. Cover with mayonaisse and serve with toasted crackers.

Belgian Hash.—Soak one-half cupful of prunes, a half cupful of currants over night, add two finely chopped and well-cooked hocks, a half cupful of sugar, three-fourths of a cupful of vinegar, and one-fourth of a cupful of water, half of a grated nutmeg and salt to taste. Put in the oven and cook until the liquid is absorbed. More sugar may be liked; often a cupful is not too much; but to the uninitiated half that quantity is a great plenty.

Everyday Good Things. Plenty of good vegetables should be served during the season when they are so plentiful.

Virginia Creamed Beets.—Boil the beets until tender in unsalted water. Rub off the skins, slice and arrange in a deep dish. Make a sauce, using two tablespoonfuls of butter, and when bubbling hot add two tablespoonfuls of flour, a little salt and red pepper, a spoonful of sugar and a cupful of hot cream. Heat well and pour when smooth over the prepared beets. Serve hot.

Hindu Salad.—Shred some crisp tender lettuce and arrange on salad plates. On these lay four slices of ripe tomato, cover two with chopped celery and onion, the other two with finely minced water cress. Pour French dressing over all.

Serve lettuce daily, and use the following for salad dressing for a change.

Another Thousand Island Dressing.—Take one cupful of thick mayonnaise, six tablespoonfuls of chili sauce, two chopped red peppers, half a tablespoonful of chopped chives. Serve on wax beans or cooked peas.

Baked Kidney Beans.—Soak three cupfuls of kidney beans over night; in the morning parboil them with four large onions. Put them into a bean pot with a pint of stewed tomatoes, one-third of a teaspoonful of pepper, a tablespoonful each of salt and sugar and one-half pound of salt pork. Bury the pork in the beans and add just enough water to cover the beans. Bake five hours in a moderate oven. Mustard may be added in place of the onions, or both will be liked. If the salt pork is not relished add a cupful of olive oil.

Dutch Stuffed Doughnuts.—Take three cupfuls of bread dough, add one-fourth of a cupful of butter, one cupful of sugar, with nutmeg to season. Add two well-beaten eggs, mix well and roll out rather thin, cut into rounds the size of a tea cup, put a spoonful of jelly or jam or a thick boiled custard in the middle, pinch the edges together into a round ball and drop into hot fat. When done roll in powdered sugar. Serve with coffee or hot chocolate.

Green vegetables, like lettuce, may be washed and dropped into a cheesecloth bag and kept in the ice chest until ready to serve.

Scraps of Humor



IN WASHINGTON

Megaphone Man on Rubberneck Wagon—In front of you is the National Capitol.

Sweet Young Thing—Oh, isn't it angelic?

Mr. Grouch—Angelica? Why, young woman, how can you speak of it as being angelic?

Sweet Young Thing—Well, it has wings, hasn't it?—Florida Times-Union.

MARK OF HEREDITY



Bobbie—Gimme half your cookie. Mine's all eat up.

Ethel—I never saw such a greedy boy. I don't believe you were brought by a stork, at all. An ostrich must have brought you.

Couldn't Joke Adam. Whatever troubles Adam had, No man could make him sore. By saying, when he told a joke, "I've heard that one before."

According to Plan. Harold—When I asked Dorothy if she would be mine, she fell on my breast and sobbed like a child, but finally she put her arms around my neck and—

Ethel—Oh, yes, I know all about it, I rehearsed it with her.

The Test. "When I put the coat on for the first time and buttoned it up, I burst the seam down the back!"

"Yes, that will show you how well our buttons are sewed on!"

Beat Him to It. His wife—I hear Mrs. Tripplewood was led to the altar for the third time. Mr. Pester—Led to the altar? I hear she was there first.

SPEEDING PARTING GUEST



Hostess—Going so soon, Mr. Pastunge?

Mr. Pastunge—No, I'm not going for at least an hour, but I have to begin to start the engine of my second-hand car.

Left With Thorn. Talks about the roses
Where the light is born,
When the darkness closes,
Leaves us with the thorn.

Extra Urn Suggestive. Kriss—So you felt uncanny while courting that little widow?

Kross—You bet. She kept the ashes of her late husband right on the piano.

Kriss—Oh, that isn't so terrible.

Kross—Maybe not. But I didn't like the looks of the extra urn.

Might Have Been Worse. Dobbs—The man in the next apartment isn't such a bad chap, after all. Hobs—is that so?

Dobbs—Yes. After he had awakened our baby last night with his saxophone he kept right on playing so I couldn't hear it crying.

Why She Made Him Promise. Mabel—I let Jack kiss me on condition that he wouldn't mention it.

Marie—I suppose you wanted to break the news yourself, eh, dear?

Seasonal. Traveling Man—Do you have hot and cold water in this room?

Bellhop—Yep; hot in summer, cold in winter.

Kindly Judge. "Thirty dollars fine for colliding. But how did it happen?"

"Your honor, I was trying to kiss the girl with me."

"Did you get the kiss?"

"No, sir."

"Make the fine \$10."

Must Have It. "I suppose your wife always wants the last word."

"Yes, especially the last word in hats, gowns and hosiery."

Jerry is now more than ever adrift. The natural thing is for her to go home. But will she?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

All in Same Profession. The bride, the bridegroom, the best man, two bridesmaids and the uncle of the bride who gave her away were all doctors at a recent marriage ceremony in London.

Nellie Maxwell