

PRUDENCE'S DAUGHTER

By **ETHEL HUESTON**

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CHAPTER X—Continued

She was late and made haste to slip into a fresh dress, brushing her hair, powdering her creamy skin with her usual gentle care. She was very quiet during dinner, and Prudence's eyes rested upon her often with troubled, unobtrusive sympathy. And after dinner, while her father read the evening paper, and while Prudence worked with an absurd bit of lace that was becoming a handkerchief to correspond with Jerry's newest gown, she sat in a great chair under a shaded lamp, a magazine upon her lap, and stared across it to the delicate pattern of the oriental rug. Jerry was considering how to surrender the broken toy.

The sudden ringing of the doorbell caused her to start violently, although she laughed immediately at the absurdity of her nervous tension. And when Katie came into the room and said in an awed voice:

"It's a policeman, and he wants to see Miss Harmer," Jerry was only amused—curious but not concerned.

"You've been speeding, miss, and you pay your own fines," said Jerrold. "Bring him in, Katie."

"Speeding! Good heavens, I crawled at a snail's pace," she denied lightly. And added slowly, "most of the time," as she remembered the burst of speed with which she left Locust street.

With the usual easy clubbiness of the small town and the Middle West, Jerrold asked the officer, whom he had seen and knew by name, to sit down, and offered him a cigar.

"This is my daughter," he said pleasantly, indicating Jerry in the great chair. "You wanted to see her?"

"Yes, if you don't mind," the officer began. "There was an accident downtown today, and if the chap dies Miss Harmer may be needed as a witness. Whether he dies or not, he may bring suit, and then—"

"Why, I didn't see any accident," protested Jerry in some surprise. "Everyone was driving carefully because of the ice. I came through town, but I didn't even see a flat tire."

The officer looked in his note-book. "Man run over. A fellow named Gritton drove the car that did the damage; we've got him locked up, waiting to see if the man dies. Now he says he saw you right beside him, a little in front. He says he has seen you often, knows you, knows your car, and—"

"Oh, I assure you I saw nothing," Jerry denied quietly.

"He swears the chap stood beside your car, his foot on the running board, talking to you, and that you started off in a great rush—"

Jerry did not move, did not speak, sat as one turned to ice.

Prudence got up quickly, crossed to her chair, sitting down lightly upon the great arm of it, her firm, soft fingers lying against Jerry's frozen hand. Jerry tried to smile at her, to nod reassurance. The attempt wrung her mother's heart.

The officer, unnoticing, had continued his narrative. "Started off very fast, with a great jerk, and swung the fellow back so he slipped on the ice. And Gritton was right behind you and ran over him before he knew he had fallen. Of course, if the fellow was bothering you, Miss Harmer—" he suggested, with the solicitous interest of an officer in a small city where her father was a man of power.

"He was not loitering my daughter, I assure you," Prudence interrupted softly. "The young man is a great friend of ours, a very particular friend. Nothing he could do would annoy my daughter in any way."

Jerrold came quickly to her assistance, enlightened by Prudence's defense, his less agile imagination having followed through the situation more slowly.

"My daughter drives fast, as you probably know, but she is a good driver and a careful one. She did not know there had been an accident. If she is in any way to blame, you may rest assured we shall not shirk our responsibility."

"Of course, of course; I just wanted to see if she would back up Gritton's story—"

Jerry nodded her head.

"Oh, yes," Jerrold went on quickly. "The man you mention, Mr. Allerton, I believe, did speak to her beside the car, and my daughter, in a great hurry to get home, started off very fast. She did not know he had fallen. She is naturally very much upset over the whole thing. She is simply horrified, as you see. Can't you wait until tomorrow, to give her a chance to—recover—"

"Oh, my dear str, we're not blaming Miss Harmer. It was this fellow Gritton did it. And of course the other chap—what's his name—he consulted the note-book—Allerton—he may not die anyhow, and—"

Jerry winced pitifully.

"Tell us—" Prudence hesitated to ask, fearing the effect upon Jerry, who clung to her hand. "He is hurt—how seriously?"

"Oh, you can't tell yet. They've got him up at St. Joseph's. There may be internal injuries, can't tell yet. Now,

don't you be upset about it, Miss Harmer, nobody's blaming you. But if he should happen to die, you see, you'll have to testify at the inquest and it'll be up to the state to prosecute."

Jerry was a stony, graven image, and Jerrold hurriedly got the officer out of the room and away, and then came back and stood beside Jerry on the other side from Prudence, two stalwart bulwarks of love and pity. Jerry looked up at them and smiled.

"Mother," she said, "I love him—I loved him all the time."

"Yes, I know, sweetness." Prudence was brooding tenderness itself. "Get the car, Jerrold and ask Katie to bring our coats."

"He—he kissed me, and he was—drunk, mother. I thought he felt—just as I did—and he was only—drunk. I don't even know if he remembers—that he kissed me."

Katie came in with their coats, and at a sign from Prudence went out at once, leaving her alone with her daughter. Jerry stood up, and her mother put the great fur cloak about her shoulders very gently. Jerry did not know that she was trembling.

"You wouldn't feel—nice about it, mother—to know it was only that when you thought it was—something else."

"No, sweetness, I shouldn't like it."

Jerrold honked shrilly to them from the car outside the door, and with her hand in Prudence's, Jerry herself led the way. As they drove swiftly along toward the hospital, no word was spoken.

Jerry sat erect and motionless, staring upon the snow which the lights of the city sprinkled with scintillating gems.

When Jerrold, after first helping Prudence out, telling her to be careful, to mind the ice, not to fall, went back to assist Jerry, he said, a little awkwardly, but determined that she must have his view of things at last:

"Jerry, all men are fools sometimes. You shouldn't expect too much of any of us, you know—not all the time, at least."

Jerry nodded her head trying to smile her appreciation of his effort to help.

"There are a lot of fine things about him," he went on determinedly. "I—I had him stay up at the house with me while you were in Mount Mark."

"I know it, father."

Jerrold shook his head, vaguely puzzled. How women got on to things the way they did there was no knowing. He had covered all his tracks so carefully.

"That is why I looked at you that night at the station," she said in a

subdued little voice. "To see if you had anything against him."

"Not a thing," he declared, "not a thing in the world. I like him."

"I know it," whispered Jerry.

"Jerry," he said, "You've Got to Admit It Was Treating Me Pretty Badly."

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dream, her great, shadowy eyes fastened almost hypnotically upon the white face on the pillow.

He opened his eyes and a warm brightness flashed into them when he saw Jerry beside him. He smiled—that whimsical, tender smile whose gay effrontery had charmed and stirred her from the first.

"Jerry," he said, and the tender voice was weak, "you've got to admit it was treating me pretty badly."

He looked up at her, not smiling now. And Jerry stood over him, her eyes melting into his, agonizingly intense. Suddenly she willed. Tears rushed into her eyes, the proud little chin drooped and quivered. She turned, a crushed and broken figure, toward her mother, even in that hour of its renunciation the tender dream of her youth dying hard within her, and cried despairingly:

"I can't help it! Maybe it is a different kind—the feeling is just the same."

She dropped on her knees beside the bed, the pain in her face, the shadow in her eyes, yielding to a joyous radiance as she pressed her lips against his shoulder.

Now and then, not often, Jerry talked to Duane of Art.

softly, very soberly, drawing her to him. He whispered the rest. "Jerry Allerton."

Jerry flushed deeply, and her brilliant eyes gave him a dazzling glance beneath the cloudy lashes.

"Come quickly, and see the rest of the house," she begged.

There were other brooding, harassed, middle western fathers who foresaw ill results for the entire prairie land in Jerry's joyous romance. It was Irvin Weatherly who voiced this fear to Jerrold.

"I'm surprised you'd permit such a thing," he said plaintively. "You're setting a bad example for all the girls in town. You ought to talk to Jerry."

Jerrold did not understand.

"Why, they'll all be setting off to New York to study Art," he protested. "The town's full of it. Every place you go they talk of nothing else—Art, Art, Art—and they're all dabbling at dishes and drawing figures on tablecloths and sprigging flowers on good mirrors. The place is alive with it."

"That's queer," said Jerry's father. "I can't say I ever noticed we had such a passion for Art among us."

"Well, I reckon they figure to do as Jerry did. She didn't bring home any Art to speak of, but she seems pretty well satisfied with what she did bring. And it's catching, Harmer, it's catching."

"A good idea, Jerry," he said. "I can't say I consider Duane particularly born under a mechanical star. You shall have him. At a great sacrifice on my part, of course. But I can only tell you in fairness that your young man will not be financially dependent on you and your houses. He had enough left out of the wreckage to tide him over, and he thinks of going into Iowa real estate on his own account. Your interests will dovetail very neatly along that line, won't they?"

Jerrold flushed with pleasure over the warmth of admiration for his effort that he met in the eyes of Duane and of Prudence, who whispered proudly that she couldn't have done it better herself. But Jerry turned great, questioning eyes upon Duane.

"Then you were not—completely—ruined, as the papers said?"

"Not—completely."

"Then why did you come here?"

Duane laughed, held her to him, kissed her hair.

"Then after all you really did—a little—she began eagerly, unable to voice the hope that was almost a prayer within her heart.

"Oh, Jerry, a very great deal," he whispered.

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"It isn't really the work," she explained, leaning back against the banister of a circular staircase which had cost her two hundred dollars more than her figures had allowed. "It is just like play, with something to show for it—besides. Two things to show for it—a sweet little place for someone to live and set an example to the neighborhood, in the first place." She paused impressively.

"And in the second place," Duane encouraged her, reaching almost as by habit for her eager expressive young hands, his eyes feasting upon the radiance of her beauty.

"And in the second place, the bank account of Fairy Geraldine Harmer!"

"Do you know what is going to sound the sweetest thing in the world one of these days?" he asked very

softly, very soberly, drawing her to him. He whispered the rest. "Jerry Allerton."

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"GATHER YE ROSEBUDS—"

The young schoolmistress asked if any boy could bring her a bunch of flowers next morning, and met with a ready response from Jacob.

"Thank you, Jacob," she said. "Have you a nice garden?"

"No, please, miss, but I go round with the morning milk," was the frank reply.

Method

"What makes you keep on asking me if the razor hurts?" asked the man who was being shaved. "I've said 'yes' three times and it hasn't made any difference."

"No," answered the barber. "I was merely trying my razors out to see which of them wants honing."—Washington Star.

Scratch for a Living

A novelist, who was in need of money to pay his rent, called on a friend one morning to borrow the amount. As he left he said:

"Jenkins, old man, the difference between a novelist and a hen is that they both scratch for a living, and the hen gets hers."

CLEANING THE CLEANER

Mrs. Prye—"You don't seem to have a vacuum cleaner, Mrs. Wayback?"

Mrs. W.—"What, them things! I heard Mrs. Brown tell somebody they gather so much dirt you have to clean them out every day."

The man who takes in serious mood Each serious thought that may intrude In mind is ever tempest tossed; And he who cannot laugh is lost.

Farm Drug Practice

Ilram—One of the pigs is sick, so I give 'em all some sugar.

Si—Sugar! What for?

Ilram—Medicine, of course. Haven't ya heard of sugar-cured hams?

The Next Best

She—Do you mean to insinuate that I am a liar?

He—No, I wouldn't be so rude, but you have every qualification to be a weather prophet!

Wonderful But—

Old Lady (to young struggling lawyer)—And don't you think law is a wonderful profession?

Young Lawyer—Yes, madam, but a darn poor occupation.—Texas Ranger.

Doing Well

"Why are you going around the country buying up these old crazy quilts?"

"I'm making a good thing of it, my boy, selling them as cubist tapestry."

NO SHOW AT ALL

"Don't you think if I went to a medium I might obtain help from the spirits?"

"Don't think you'd have a ghost of a show."

The Greatest Human Need

This world is not in need of brains—it could afford to lose some. If those who have them took some pains Now and again to use some.

Horrors

"No, I told you I don't care for any coffee. That was the cause of my father's death."

"Coffee killing anyone, how come?"

"Five hundred pounds fell on his head."—Colgate Banter.

The Real Trouble

Hub—I wish, my dear, you wouldn't finish my sentences for me.

Wife—You talk so slow, dear.

Hub—That isn't it—you listen too fast.



WRIGLEY'S JUICY FRUIT CHEWING GUM
THE FLAVOR LASTS
SEALED TIGHT KEPT RIGHT

Albers flapjack flour



Flapjacks and syrup—how they spread sunshine in hearts [and stomachs] these nippy days! Tempting! Tender! Easy to make! Easy to digest!

"Albers stands for Better Breakfasts"

Los Angeles New West - - -
Hotel Cecil
Main Street bet. 6th & 7th
700 ROOMS
300 without bath \$150
200 with bath \$200
200 with private bath \$250
GOOD GARAGE FACILITIES

USKID TOP LIFTS
Your heels stay neat and comfortable twice as long with USKID TOP LIFTS
ASK YOUR REPAIRMAN OR THE UNITED STATES RUBBER COMPANY

Boschee's Syrup
HAS BEEN Killing Coughs for 59 Years
Carry a bottle in your car and always keep it in the house. 50c and 75c at ALL DRUGGISTS.

Elderly Wives Preferred
Judge T. G. Allen, who has been probate judge of Chase county for the last seven years, during which time he has issued licenses for and married hundreds of couples, has observed a peculiar fact with reference to Mexican couples who come to his court for matrimonial purposes, says the Topeka Capital. He has found that in the majority of cases Mexican bridegrooms bring to the marriage altar brides who are older in years than the grooms themselves. That trait is not noticeable in any other nationality, the Judge finds, as in the big majority of cases the bridegrooms are older than the brides. Just why the Mexicans should prefer a wife older is not quite clear, at least to this matrimonial court.

Hawaiian Islands Growing
According to scientists, the Hawaiian Islands are gradually pushing up out of the ocean, and within a generation may form a territory as large as Japan.

You Need this Tonic
HOSTETTER'S CELEBRATED STOMACH BITTERS
It tends to promote good health, strengthen the digestive organs and to keep the stomach in good condition. At All Druggists.
THE HOSTETTER CO., PITTSBURGH, PA.

To build you up

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