

Alabaster Lamps

CHAPTER VI—Continued

"How about me?" the young Claude had asked, and realized as he said it that it was a fool's question. And the girl had laughed.

"Oh, after tonight you won't count." She had dared to say it, actually dared to look him in the eyes and say it.

"Is that so?" the boy had snapped, and he had never been angrier in his life. Rebelling, seething within him.

And yet, he remembered, he had not hated her.

"After tonight, eh? Well, the night's still young."

Something in the way he said that, struck through her laughing guard. Her expression changed. She began to look over so little—what was it—frightened?

"It's getting late. I think you'd better go."

"It's my last night," he had answered, without moving. "Why cut it short?"

Then she had moved to the door, swiftly, and held it open. He rose to his feet somehow and moved with her. He could not have told exactly why, but there was a dangerous feeling growing up inside him. Yet, now that he understood his younger self, Claude Dabbs felt if the girl had not looked so scared, the feeling would not have grown as fast, nor been so dangerous. If she had laughed at him, he would have been ashamed. If she had trusted him he would have been compelled to be worthy of her trust. But she saw, and feared, the flood tide of feelings she had deliberately evoked and something in her must have answered his passion. She was dreadfully afraid of that—as well as of him.

"I want you to go now," she had said, hard, cold and staring. "If you don't, I'll call down to the office."

He had faced her and shut the door, and now he was sure he hated her. "Go on," he had said grimly. "Call 'em up at the office. What you going to tell 'em? That I'm not your husband?"

She shook her head. He could see her face, puzzled, bewildered, frightened.

"That I am your husband, and you don't care about having me 'round'?" She still stared at him, her mouth open in an odd, babyish way that, angry as he was, he remembered he had thought pretty.

"I'll make your stay in this house short, if you start a row like that."

She sprang to the door, but Claude was there before her. Their hands met on the handle, and somehow, at his touch, she had given up, and away against him. Claude felt a little shiver run through his strong body now at the remembrance of how it had "finished" him, too, but not in the way either of them dreamed.

He was beyond reasoning or thought then. He was entirely given up to feeling. He put his arm about her waist and held her closely to him as he turned the key in the door.

"You can have the key," he had whispered, in a queer, husky voice, "when you call down to the office and say that the man in your room isn't your husband, and you want to get rid of him."

She had looked at him, given a queer little sound, and hidden her face against his shoulders.

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Claude Dabbs stared before him, his lips moving. After awhile he lit his cigar, crossed one leg over the other, and began to talk, in an even voice, quite as though he was continuing his narrative to Ned from the point he had left off.

"Next morning I went out for a stroll before breakfast, and to settle in my mind a plan I meant to carry through quickly, before Polly made up her own mind. We'd talked lots about everything, but nothing was settled."

"Nobody'll ever know how wonderful it was to me to have Polly to talk to. It changed everything. There wasn't a girl in Peace Valley could talk as she did, none I knew, anyway; and the short while I'd been at Rutgers I hadn't met any girls, except Polly. She made me realize that we'd been fond of each other for a long time, though I had taken this to bring us together."

Claude looked up at Ned, who with a languid movement of his hand removed the cigarette from between his lips. Claude noted idly that it was not lit. He glanced at the wall above Ned's desk. A small photograph in an old-fashioned frame hung above it. It was that of a lovely young country girl, with character behind the young loveliness. She was Claude's mother.

"You see, Ned, I'd always been queer about girls. I liked 'em, but expected a good deal of 'em. Not every girl pleased me. Sounds conceited, but I don't mean it that way. It wasn't that—it was Mom."

His eyes turned again to the photograph. "It's one of those things you can't find words for. It's a feeling. Anyway, Mom gave it to me about girls, and Polly was the first. I meant she should be the last. I felt that if we were careful enough about explaining our marriage to Mom she would understand and be pleased. But she never knew."

"Nobody'll ever know how wonderful life was to me that morning. I hadn't forgotten Pop, but since I'd told Polly just how I felt about him, and she'd tried to comfort me, I could bear it easier, because Polly understood. I forgot all about her money. It never entered my head. I only

By Margaret Turnbull

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thought of Polly. When I was going out, she kissed me and said:

"Claude Melnotte, is your home lit by alabaster lamps?"

"I thought she was just fooling about my silly name. She'd read the play, you see. I hadn't, then. I just told her they were Rochester lamps. When I thought about it, as I turned back toward the hotel, I wondered if there was more to her question than just lamps—something behind it. I thought she might have been turning over in her mind whether she'd live with Mom, or insist on having a separate house for just us two. I didn't care. She could have her own way about that—and most everything else, too. But I've read the play since, and I'm pretty sure that there was a catch in it. Her question, I mean. It's the part where he's blowing about the house he's gonna take her to. All lies!

"She wasn't down in the dining room when I came back from the walk, but she'd told me to give her

plenty of time to pack, so I went up to her room. She wasn't there, and her trunks were gone. I went to inquire at the desk. They said the bill had been paid and Polly had gone, long and baggage, to the station, half an hour after I left."

Claude paused, knocked the ashes from his cigar, and without looking up, went on hurriedly: "I'm not asking for sympathy. The girl served me right, and I know it as well as you do. I've told you this, Ned—and you're the only one I have told—because I want you to know the worst of me."

"Polly knew blame well I couldn't follow her, seeing she had money and I had none. Her lawyer, all these years, had refused to give me any clue. But she's never divorced me. Unless I'm much mistaken, the Mrs. Johnston who is up at the White House is Polly, and what I want to know is who is Miss Johnston?"

A little sound, like a sigh, came from Ned and he turned gently on his pillow, and then silence.

Claude jumped to his feet and went noiselessly over to the bed. Ned was sleeping as quietly as a child. Claude took the cold, unlighted cigarette from between Ned's fingers and looked at him with affection.

"Forty-seven years old, and I don't have sense enough to know or remember that other people's love stories are as big a bore as other people's dreams!"

He turned out the lamp and left the room.

In the morning, when he could get Dabbs alone, Ned's apologies were sincere. But though Ned insisted that he had only dropped off at the end, Claude had a shrewd idea from the lame way in which Ned fished for information, that slumber had overtaken him in the middle of the tale. They were in the garage where Ned had tracked him down, and he only laughed as he put his hand on Ned's arm.

"My boy, I was an ass to insist on telling you my old trouble. Botted down, without any of the frills I put on so that you would get my side of the case, the facts are that I slipped up on my promise, broke my word to Polly, and she ran away. And Peace Valley thinks me an old bachelor."

He had made up his mind that it

wasn't the thing to tell Ned his suspicions until he had corroborated them, or dropped them. It would be awkward for the boy, since he was seeing the Johnstons daily.

CHAPTER VII

Mrs. Johnston, having something rather disagreeable to tell Mary, kept putting off the evil day and hour.

Sooner or later it must be told, but Polly Johnston, though by no means a fool, was of a singularly sanguine temperament. She still hoped that kind fortune might intervene in some miraculous manner and save her the trouble and necessity of telling. If not, it would have to be done, but not this day, if she could help it. Having come to that decision, it behooved her to keep away from Mary.

She could refuse to go out, pleading a headache, thus removing herself from Mary's presence and scrutiny.

When the girl presented herself, fresh, smiling, and ready for motor-riding, she found her mother lying down. She did not see the novel that her mother had poked under her pillow when she heard Mary coming. Explanations were made, received, and then came silence.

Mrs. Johnston wriggled herself into a more comfortable position, and the novel fell on the floor. Mary restored it to the couch. Mother never read when she had a real headache. The situation became tense.

"Come, Mother," coaxed Mary, "what's up? You've been grouching sweetly for several days, you know. I've got to know sooner or later, so let it be now."

Mrs. Johnston sighed, made a swift mental calculation that she had better tell the most obvious first, and began:

"I can't keep it from you forever, but I did want to keep it just a little longer. However, here it is, Mary. I haven't any money. Not a cent. And the dividends on the stock, payable this month, just aren't going to be paid."

Mary gave a little gasp of astonishment and sat down on the floor by the couch. "Do you mean, Mother, that we haven't any money at all, or that we're just faced with a period of depressed finances and will have to tide over things until the first of next month, when you'll get something from somewhere? Tell me the whole thing. The very worst."

Mrs. Johnston gave instantly how useless it was to keep anything back from Mary. "It means the very worst you can think. I drew the last money I had in the bank to come down here. I expected, of course, to have Colonel Rittenhauser send me enough money to carry me along for another three months."

"Well, my dear, he's been speculating with all available money and securities. He lost mine along with those belonging to other people, and he's in jail."

"The rest of my money is tied up in stock that isn't paying dividends—that is, all except money invested by my uncle in Russian securities, which are now worth nothing. There's some land here, in this country, but I can't raise money on it at a moment's notice."

"Poor old mother! Have you any cash at all?"

Mrs. Johnston laughed. "About thirty dollars left. I said I'd sent for servants, but I haven't. However, I have interviewed Mrs. Pulsifer on the subject of coming here and closing up this house for me in case I have to go to New York suddenly, so that's that. I think I'll have to go there soon. It'll be a lot harder for you. Mary, then, for me. Just now you ought to have everything."

"Pooh!" said Mary. "Wait till you see me suffer. Honestly, Mother, I can't realize it. We've never had to speak of money like this before. Why we've always had it."

"You always have," Mrs. Johnston answered, "but there was a time when I had none."

Mary was amazed. "You never told me that. You must, but not now. We'll just have to be practical, Mother. What can we sell, and how shall we go about it?" She considered for a long moment, while her mother watched her. "Bring out your jewelry, Mother, and I'll bring out mine. Rent must be paid, you know. We can do without servants."

Mrs. Johnston put her hand on her daughter's arm as Mary rose from the floor. "Don't dear. I can go to New York and borrow money on the land, I'm sure. I was making up my mind to that when you came in."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

He Turned Out the Lamp and Left the Room.



British Troops Land in China



British troops bivouacked in Shanghai. They are part of a new British defense force that has just landed there.

How Bandits Blew Up Pay-Roll Car



Photograph shows the scene of the \$100,000 pay-roll robbery near Pittsburgh. Bandits planted dynamite charges in a dirt road, which they exploded by electricity. Five drivers and guards were injured.

Dawes Visits Sister in Florida



Vice President Dawes and his sister, Mrs. Harry B. Hoyt, at Jacksonville, Florida.

Eastern Girl Shows the West



Photograph shows Mabel C. Osgood, a Buffalo (N. Y.) girl, who never was on a horse before, who rode a broncho 200 miles over the Rocky mountain trails of Glacier National park, setting a new park record for "horseback hiking."

WEALTHY WIDOW WEDS



Mrs. Edward Russell Thomas, widow of the multimillionaire publisher of the New York Morning Telegraph, whose marriage to Col. L. G. Agent, former chief of investigation for the United States veterans' bureau, has been announced.

IS ARCHBIGAMIST



John Kearny, captured by the San Francisco police after he had escaped from a closet in which he had been locked in by a woman who caught him robbing her home, confessed to having been married at least 14 times.

Load 'Em and Eat

Young Bride—Do you keep ice cream freezers?
Hardware Dealer—Yes, we have the exclusive agency for this city. What size do you want?
Young Bride—I already have one—a present. What I need now are some reds—half a dozen vanilla, three chocolate and three orange sherbet.—Good Hardware.

How to Torture Tourist

The Maid—Yes, sir, your suitcase looked so untidy with all those old labels on it from Japan and America and Egypt and Africa that I thought I'd clean them all off.—The Passing Show.

Idleness Has Value

Certainly work is not always required of a man. There is such a thing as a sacred idleness—the cultivation of which is now fearfully neglected.—G. Macdonald.

BABIES CRY FOR "CASTORIA"

Prepared Especially for Infants and Children of All Ages

Mother's Fletcher's Castoria has been in use for over 30 years as a pleasant, harmless substitute for Castor Oil, Purgative, Teething Drops and Soothing Syrup. Contains no narcotics. Proven directions are on each package. Physicians everywhere recommend it.

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Charles H. Fletcher

Wanted All Improvements

Explaining that he had no "muss-e-up" on his pencil, Little Joe asked his father for a new one.

"What do you mean?" asked the puzzled head of the household.

"Well," Joe explained, "sometimes you take your pencil upside down and muss up your writing."

"Oh, that's an error," his father said. "You rub out words with it."

"Well, that's what I meant," Joe answered. "I thought it was a muss-up instead of a rubber-out."

Soft Corns

Money Back Says Your Druggist if Moone's Emerald Oil Doesn't Do Away With All Soreness and Pain in 24 Hours.

Get a bottle of Moone's Emerald Oil with the understanding that if it does not put an end to the pain and soreness and do away with the corn itself your money will be promptly returned.

Don't worry about how long you've had it or how many other preparations you have tried. This powerful penetrating oil is one preparation that will help to make your painful aching feet so healthy and free from corn and bunions troubles that you'll be able to go anywhere and do anything in absolute feet comfort.

So marvelously powerful is Moone's Emerald Oil that thousands have found it gives wonderful results in the treatment of dangerous swollen or varicose veins. Your druggist is selling lots of it.

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ITCHING RASHES

quickly relieved and often cleared

away by a few applications of

Resinol

In the Altogether

Albert Tompkins, director of music at Boise high school, had been earnestly explaining to pupils that an opera is presented in costume but that an oratorio is not given in costume.

Next day, a pupil asked to differentiate between an opera and an oratorio, wrote:

"An oratorio is given without any clothes on."—Pittsburgh Chronicle.

DEMAND "BAYER" ASPIRIN

Take Tablets Without Fear If You See the Safety "Bayer Cross."

Warning! Unless you see the name "Bayer" on package or on tablets you are not getting the genuine Bayer Aspirin proved safe by millions and prescribed by physicians for 26 years. Say "Bayer" when you buy Aspirin. Imitations may prove dangerous.—Adv.

His Opposite

"They say that people with opposite characteristics make the happiest marriages."

"Yes; that's why I'm looking for a girl with money."—Montreal Family Herald.

If Worms or Tapeworm persist in your system, use the real vermifuge, Dr. Peery's "Dead Shot." Only 50 cents at your druggist or 375 Pearl St., N. Y. Adv.

Exactness

Mrs. Y.—Well, you know women are an expensive blessing.

Mr. Y.—They are expensive.

Busy men are seldom afflicted with fits of melancholy.

If You Need a Tonic, Get the Best!

Fresno, Calif.—"It is not long since I was all rundown in health and finally decided to try Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, as I know of other people in my neighborhood who had constantly relied upon Dr. Pierce's remedies and always received satisfactory results. I took only a few bottles and by that time I had regained my normal health."

"Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pills are good, too."—Manuel Y. White, 539 Callahan St.

All dealers sell Dr. Pierce's Pellets, 30 cents for 50 Pellets.

When run-down you can quickly pick up and regain vim, vigor, vitality by obtaining this Medical Discovery of Dr. Pierce, as I know of other people in my neighborhood who had constantly relied upon Dr. Pierce's remedies and always received satisfactory results. I took only a few bottles and by that time I had regained my normal health."

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LOST IN DRESSING



Guest—Here's a button in the

stuffing, Mrs. Green." Embarrassed Hostess—"My, my, that must have been lost when the chicken was dressed."

Nothing Could Be Plainer

Butler—A lady wishes to speak to you on the phone, sir.

Young Lordling—How do you know she is a lady?

"She said, 'Is that you, old pickled onion?' when I answered, sir"—Van-couver Province.

Frying Pan to Fire

Dave—The efficiency man is a wonder. Not a man in the office watches the clock any more.

Hank—No?

Dave—No, sir! But they all watch his new stenographer.

After the Inspection

Gallant Officer—It's not a bad life taking things all around.

Girl Tourist—Oh, is that what you call us—"things"?—Sydney Bulletin.