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PERSONAL

ANY GIRL in need of a friend, write Elsie H. Allemann, the Salvation Army White Shield Home, 565 Mayfair Avenue, Portland.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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PARTY who took keys from automobile, January 28th about 6:30 please return to Box 334 Beaverton

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WANTED—Cheap horses for fox farm. Telephone Beaverton 9855.

CAN LOVE COST TOO MUCH

Weekly Short Story

"It was Roberta, an old friend of mine who ran an employment agency who sent me to Vernon Bond," writes a young girl who had always complained that her life was dull. "He was looking for a stenographer, and for many months I served him faithfully. But I could not control the love in my heart. And one afternoon, when the others had gone, he could not resist taking me in his arms. Roberta had told me of his beautiful, but cold wife and his two lovely children. When I next went to see Roberta, she knew I was in love, and warned me that I might be the cause of much unhappiness in his life. But wasn't love worth it?" Read her answer in this week's paper.

I was ahead of time for work Monday morning. I was shocked when I noticed how worn Vernon looked. He seemed as if he had passed through a scorching emotional crisis. He went directly to his desk.

"I'm swamped with important work," he began in a strained voice. He picked up a letter and began dictating.

Suddenly his face paled. He half closed his eyes, and reaching blindly for my hand whispered, "Jean my little Jean come to me." He pulled me over to his chair.

I was in his arms again, all my longing expressing itself in my clinging lips. "You're mine!" I whispered fiercely. "Nothing shall come between us."

I kissed him again and again. "Yes, I'm yours," he answered "body and soul. Jean do you realize what has happened? You're just an impulsive, moody little whirlwind of emotion, and yet I want you more than anything in the whole world."

"Oh, I've waited for you all my life," I interrupted wildly. "Now that I've found you at last—"

I didn't finish. His eye caught the photograph on his desk of his wife and children staring at us accusingly. He unwound my clinging arms, got up and began pacing up and down the tape carpet. His gaunt figure was the picture of tragedy.

Then, just as though he had switched on a strong current of will power his face grew stonily resolute. He came over to the desk where I was huddled.

"Jean," he explained gently yet firmly "we can't go on like this. I'm a married man. My duty lies over there." He indicated the photograph. Then he walked over to the window, took several deep breaths,

and came back.

"I can't work this morning. Answer my most urgent letters. Tell my clients I've been called out of simply must get a grip on myself." town. I've got to be alone. I

I hated my room with its mocking dreams. I knew the location of Vernon's shack. Often Roberta and I had hiked past it.

"I will force my happiness I won't give up!" I vowed as I gritted my teeth and counted the dollar bills in my purse. I could catch a train that in an hour's time would take me within a mile of Vernon's shack. I would find him and bring him back to my arms.

Once in the passenger coach I shivered as I looked out of the window.

As I alighted, the season's first cold wave penetrated my sheerhose and slippers. I wasn't properly dressed for the tramp. But a wild hopefulness goaded me on. If only I could nestle in Vernon's arms in the shack, I felt sure of my undermining his will power.

Mocking voices seemed to be jeering at me in reply. I clenched my hands as I raced along the highway, whispering tensely under my breath "I love him He's mine! I can't go through life without him!" I must have my mate! I will have him!

My body muscles were tense with the conflict between conscience and desire. It was as though I was fighting some physical obstacle.

Then the huge lights of a motor bus shone directly on a padlocked gate, and I knew I had reached Vernon's shack. Everything was deathly quiet.

In the moonlight I fumbled with the lock. I couldn't move it. I had grown so stiff with the cold that as I attempted to climb over the gate, my arms and legs refused to function properly I made several failures in securing a footing. Finally, teeth chattering and knees trembling, I scrambled over the top, lost my footing, and sprawled full length in the mud.

My head struck a rock. I lay stunned. Gradually I became aware of the moon shining into my eyes. I realized dully that unless I exerted all of my will power, I would never find Vernon. Surely the shack could not be far off. If only I could hold out a little longer, I could rest in the shack.

During my fall the heel of my left slipper had been wrenched off. I had torn my hand on some fence wire, and from the painful throbbing over my left temple, I knew that the spot was swelling.

The stars were out, but I ached too much to notice their beauty. I wished now that I had eaten something before I had left New York. Clinging along I fell down again, weak from overexertion and lack of food. As I huddled momentarily against a tree, I thought I saw a light coming from the shack. I hobbled toward it hopefully. Evidently it had been merely a reflection. It was pitch dark inside as I peered through a window. And I couldn't find traces of a motor car.

Then I began to cry comparing myself to trapped wild animals waiting for death. My impetuous weary pilgrimage had been futile. My head throbbed incessantly. I decided to lie down on the porch floor. Perhaps if I lay very quiet the throbbing in my head would stop. The moonlight seemed to be mocking me.

Sometime later I opened my eyes and saw Vernon's anxious face bending above me.

"You're here," I whispered "Nothing else matters."

I closed my eyes again. Something pungent was being held to my nostrils. I began to feel stronger immediately. He gave me more coffee and I swallowed it. I was awake.

"What happened darling?" I asked. "I thought you had gone."

"I was out in the woods, Jean. Got back just a few minutes ago and found you sprawled on the floor. I'll get you some more coffee."

He brought back a steaming cup from the stove, and I gulped it down. His haggard face distressed me.

He didn't even touch my hand after I had finished the coffee. I could see his iron will taking possession of him again. He began "Jean, we can't stay here all night together."

"Why not?" I protested. Yet even as I uttered the words, I realized that for the time being it would be futile to oppose him. His strong will was uppermost now. He would dominate me.

He looked at his watch. "It's only eight o'clock. I can easily get you home in two hours, if you feel strong enough."

At that I stormed. "After I've walked a whole mile out here to see you!"

"Jean, we've got to leave, child. Don't look at me like that. You're driving me mad."

He didn't finish. He turned away from me and almost ran out of the room.

I heard him starting the motor of the car. "Jean," he called in a hoarse voice. He was resisting me. I entered his car unwillingly, every cell in my body crying out for his love. But he steeled himself against me. We sat in starved silence as the car raced back to New York. In less than two hours I was back home.

For three days Vernon was away on business and not one word did I hear from him.

On the fourth morning I was going downtown to business. It was during the rush hour. I was standing listlessly in the crowded subway train, fighting dizziness, as passen-

gers jolted each other, while they tried to cling to straps. The car lurched and I had difficulty in keeping on my feet. Then suddenly my heart began hammering. Vernon, my mate was back in New York! He was entering my car. I could not prevent a gasp of joy and surprise from escaping me.

I forgot my resolutions, Roberta's warnings, as I made my way through the crowd and clung to his warm throbbing fingers that so often had closed over mine. He turned white.

"You've been sick," he exclaimed in concern. "Lean on me, Jean." He gripped my arm firmly. I was grateful for his support. As we neared his office, he commanded "Jean, I've got to talk to you."

"Yes," I nodded, his nearness affecting me like wine. Vernon was here, beside me pulsating with desire to ruse. Nothing else mattered.

I never knew how we climbed the subway steps to the street. My heart was pounding furiously. It was heavenly just to walk beside him in the shelter of his towering shoulders.

He guided me to a parking station. "Get into my car, Jean," he said. I obeyed.

Presently New York lay behind us. In all this time we had not exchanged one word.

He parked the car alongside the road behind some shrubbery and a group of maples that acted as a screen. Nearby down the hill on the outskirts of a town, a white house with green shutters stood out distinctly among snug suburban homes.

On the lawn a laughing boy and girl frolicked in a swing, their sturdy little legs exercising up and down, as they climbed higher and higher. A collie was excitedly barking up at them.

I began to envy the people who lived in this restful place. Beyond the children lay a garden a profusion of chrysanthemums and gold-anglow reflecting the sunshine. A capable looking woman was standing near the fence with shears and basket, cutting blooms for her neighbor. Both women were smiling.

Vernon chin in hand, sat studying the home intently. He was the picture of tragedy.

"Vernon," I faltered "are those your children in the swing?"

"Yes," he nodded, his voice scarcely more than a husky whisper.

"Don't you see, Jean, why I couldn't let you stay in the shack all night?" His voice was very gentle. "Don't you see what it would cost me? It has taken me years to build up my reputation for stability here."

The longer I sat there the deeper became my conviction that I didn't really love him if I allowed myself to wreck his future. I couldn't take him away from his family and home.

"Please take me home, Vernon," I pleaded.

"Goodbye," I whispered hurrying away from him. From my doorway I watched his car turn around the corner. Then very slowly, because tears blinded me, I climbed up to my room, and began packing my trunk.

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