

# Handmade Rainbows

By Mrs. HARRY PUGH SMITH  
Mc CLURE W.N.U. Service

## INSTALLMENT TEN—The Story So Far

Laura Maguire, wife of Mike Maguire, happy-go-lucky editor and mayor of the town, is mother to four children: Tom, whose real estate job is profitless during the depression and who is married to Mary Etta, secretary to Harvey Cobb Leigh, a big shot; Alec, unable to get a job and who takes up with a flashy divorcee older than himself; Shirley, en-

gaged to Jaidr Newsom, also out of work since his father closed up his factory to stop losses, and whose marriage is thus delayed; Kathleen, in whom a stranger, Ritchie Graham, also a newspaper man, is interested. Ma Newsom wants Jaidr to marry Connie Mays, the banker's daughter. Tom wants Mary Etta to move to the small town where

he can make a living; she won't give up her job; they separate. Alec dates up Lou Knight on a bet. She is the town drunk's daughter. Banker Mays calls on Mike Maguire and threatens to break him if he continues to flay his banking methods. Kathleen is critical of her father—for her mother's sake. Kathleen is very unhappy.

without turning her head stumbled out into the blazing sun of the side street.

## CHAPTER XV

Laura was sitting flat on the floor in the living room patching a worn place in the big Axminster rug when Tom came softly through the open folding doors from the boxlike front hall.

She assumed that he had had to make a business trip to Covington for his firm as he sometimes did. Only she saw the ghastly shadows under his hazel eyes and next the suitcase which he gripped in his left hand.

"Tom!" she whispered, her voice trailing off into a tremble in spite of herself. "You don't mean—" she began, but she couldn't go on.

Tom nodded curtly. "Mary Etta and I are all washed up."

"Tom!"  
"She loves her job and her efficiency apartment and the new car far more, I guess, than she ever loved me. Anyway she wouldn't think of giving them up for me or any other man. She was willing to pay my way since I don't seem to be very good at that myself. But I couldn't see it. I offered her an alternative. A pretty shabby one, I admit. But she wasn't interested. And so," he spread his hands, "bloody to love's young dream—or was it a nightmare?"

Laura could have wept. She was not deceived by Tom's laconic manner. He was terribly thin-skinned emotionally. She knew she had to tread delicately. And she prayed for tact.

"Darling," she said very gently, "pride is a cruel master, and the rewards seldom equal the punishment."

"I know," he said bleakly, but his mouth did not lose its difficult line.

"You love Mary Etta. She is your wife. And marriage, happy marriages, are always a matter of compromise. One gives and takes."

"I know," he said again and added bitterly, "it's also what that Frenchman said, a mirror. In which one loves and the other merely reflects his love."

"Tom, I'm sure Mary Etta cares for you."

"You say that because you think I want to hear it. But you are wrong. Mother, and I've been a fool not to know it long ago. Mary Etta must have had some affection for me once or she would never have thrown in her lot with mine. But you see, she is true most of all to herself. And I've let her down badly. She admires successful men who kick their way up in the world by the sheer drive of their ruthless personalities. She couldn't respect any man if he paid his bills. Knowing she merely tolerated me while at the same time her money kept us going, I've got out. I had to. For her sake and mine. I'm going in with Colonel Shoup. He's offered me fifty a month and commissions if there are any. Mary Etta and I could live on that in Covington. I gave her the choice. She refused. And so here I am. Only—" his hazel eyes were feverish—"for God's sake, keep the others off me. I don't believe I could bear a lot of damn fool questions right now. Tell them the truth if you like, that we've made a hash of whatever happiness we might have had and are through for good. But don't expect me to talk about it even to you."

Laura's hand rested on his shoulder which quivered under her touch. "All right," she said quietly, "if that's the way you want it."

He squeezed her hand gratefully and then, picking up the suitcase, rapidly mounted the staircase to the back room with sloping eaves which he had shared for years with Alec.

Kathleen came home from the office at four that afternoon in anything but a happy mood. It had been one of those days when everything tangled itself up unpleasantly. Mike's fracas with Banker Mays had left his daughter both nettled and uneasy. Then there was Ritchie Graham. Kathleen admitted that from the first he had been a source of an unreasonable amount of exasperation to her.

Ruth Yates was throwing a swimming party that evening at the new Porterville pool. And Hot Shot Mays had called Kathleen at the office to say he'd pick her up at home at a quarter to five. Kathleen who felt as if she had been used to strike matches on all day found the idea of a plunge very edifying. And that had little to do with the fact that it was one of those sultry May afternoons which borrow their languor from June. It had even given her a disproportionate thrill to tell Gene Mays she was just living to see him again—this in a voice loud enough for Ritchie's ears, although he merely grinned.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

to ear. She may be poor, and I grant you she's no scream for looks. But she's a lady, which is something you would know nothing about."

"Dear, dear," jeered Henry Baxter, "the gal must carry a wallop like a mule. She don't look torrid. But then I never took her home after midnight. If she's that potent maybe I'll cultivate her myself."

Alec got to his feet deliberately. "All right," he said, "you asked for it."

His right fist flailed out. He put into it a great deal of concentrated venom. Henny ducked with the blow, sliding half under the fountain for protection. From his barrage he yelled for mercy in a shrill falsetto that wasn't so funny as he meant it to be.

"I'll eat them words, Cheest, can't you take a joke, feller? If you say so, the gal's a calla lily. Far be it from me to insinuate anything else."

"See that you don't," growled Alec.

Suddenly he felt better. As if he had released a lot of accumulated bile. He felt almost blithe, in fact. Maybe he had made a fool of himself. He realized he would have been wiser to take the razzing with a grin. When the gang found a sore spot they romped on it. If he

constituted himself Lou Knight's champion he would very likely have his hands full. But then Alec never had minded that. It was emptiness he dreaded. Nothing so frazzled his nerves as a vacuum. He had a queer feeling he would enjoy thrashing a lot of people in defense of a girl who was a little like a starved and bedraggled alley kitten.

"So there you are!" exclaimed Buddy Pryor, bounding in at the street door with the exuberance of a gazelle who had had a dose of hot drops. "I've been combing the town for you. Where on earth did you disappear to last night? Myra was fit to be tied when you never came back."

Alec shrugged. He hated to have Myra and Natalie get onto the Lou angle. So he suffered in silence while Gene Mays explained exactly where Alec had vanished to the night before.

"But, gee," protested Buddy, "you told us she turned you down. And you paid your bets too as if you had lost."

"What bets?" queried Gene who had a nose like an eagle for scents other people would prefer to keep to themselves.

"Myra bet Alec he couldn't make a date with Lou Knight," Buddy explained. "You see, it was all a stunt. Myra didn't think Alec would have the nerve. But I guess he was drunker than he looked."

Gene Mays laughed. "So that's why the new girl friend," he accused Alec. "Your blonde lady picked the worst little suggin' in town and dared you to phone her. And you were full enough of giggle water to call her bluff."

"Yes," said Alec in a strangled voice. "That's exactly how it was." He heard a little gasp and whirled sharply. Lou Knight stood in the rear of the store waiting for a package which the druggist was wrapping up for her. Her face was averted. Alec could see only her profile and a quivering little chin. But of course she had heard. And once she had thought him wonderful. Lou clutched her purchase and

cooed Gene.

"You can believe what you like," Alec snapped. "Only remember this. Keep your dirty tongues off Lou Knight when I'm around or I'll smear somebody's mouth from ear

to ear.

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### Early Education

A man was in court for stealing a sum of money and heard the judge say, "And in addition to the sum of money, you also took some jewelry." "Yes," replied the prisoner, "I was educated to believe that money alone would not bring happiness."

## ASK ME ANOTHER?

A General Quiz

### The Questions

1. What country originated chile con carne?
2. What American university was once called King's college?
3. In the United States what is a burgee?
4. In what year did the first ocean steamer pass through the Panama canal?
5. Can you name a presidential power under the Constitution which has never been exercised by a President?
6. What are the two most northerly countries of South America?
7. What American naval vessel was called "a cheese box on a raft"?
8. The Cape of Good Hope is the southernmost point of which continent?

### The Answers

1. Mexico.
2. Columbia.
3. A flag with swallow tails.
4. In 1914.
5. Power to adjourn congress.
6. Colombia and Venezuela.
7. The Monitor.
8. Africa.

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According to Ernest Thompson Seton the Indians and half-breeds in the employ of the Hudson's Bay company have an unusual method of honoring an outstanding achievement. If, in their opinion, a white man has performed some unusual feat, a tall tree is selected. Then a man is sent aloft to lop off certain limbs. The mutilated tree stands as a living monument and is always referred to as "So and So's loobstick."

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### Improper Act

One improper word or act will neutralize the effect of many good ones; and one base deed after years of noble service, will cover them all with shame.—Aughey.

### Full or Empty

The wise man is like a druggist's chest, silent but full of virtues; and the blockhead resembles the warrior's drum, noisy but empty.—Sadi the Persian.

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