

HOUSEHOLD
HINTS

To separate lettuce remove the core, then let water from faucet flow into the head until pressure of water forces leaves apart. If still firm let head stand in cold water to cover.

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DOANS PILLS



THE Secret OF THE MARSHBANKS

• BY KATHLEEN NORRIS •

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W.N.U. RELEASE

THE STORY SO FAR: An orphan, Charlotte (Cherry) Rawlings knows almost nothing of her early history when, according to the wishes of her guardians, Judge Judson Marshbanks and Emma Haskell, she becomes the secretary of Mrs. Porteous Porter, wealthy San Franciscan invalid. Busy as she is, Cherry sees the judge from time to time and meets the members of his household; his dictatorial old mother; Amy Marshbanks, debutante daughter of his dead brother, Fred; and Fran, his gay young second wife. Cherry soon learns from Emma that her mother (never married) had been Emma's sister Charlotte; that her father was the judge's brother Fred—Amy's father—and that shortly after Cherry and Amy were born Cherry's mother had switched the two babies. The poor Cherry Rawlings is really the rich Amy Marshbanks! The judge confirms the amazing story, but to protect Amy his mother burns certain papers that would have proved its truth. Meanwhile Cherry had fallen in love with Kelly Coates, a young artist (who for a time had been infatuated with Fran Marshbanks); and Amy is determined to marry Count Mario (Gogo) Constantino. The judge is shot to death in his library and everybody is under suspicion. Kelly finally convinces Cherry that he is over his infatuation for Fran and she happily agrees to marry him. Amy flies to Reno to marry Gogo. Cherry discovers there are gunpowder marks on Fran's negligee. Police find love letters Kelly had written to Fran, but he assures Cherry they are harmless. Returning from a restaurant to the Marshbanks home Kelly and Cherry find four officers waiting at the door. Now continue with the story.

CHAPTER XVII

"You go upstairs and get into dry things," Kelly said to Cherry. "No use your catching pneumonia."

He sat down at the desk, and Cherry reluctantly went away. May was waiting for her in the hall and not only personally managed the hot bath but descended afterward to the kitchen for tea and toast.

"If you aren't in for flu, I'll miss my guess!" said May.

When she came upstairs with the tray, it was to ask Cherry if she would have her little mid-afternoon meal in old Mrs. Marshbanks' room. "She don't feel very good and she asked if you wasn't too tired would you come in and see her."

"Well, of course," Cherry said. Feeling aching and dull, she was not only vaguely flattered by the proposal, but she was glad of any company on this dreadful afternoon.

Cherry found her grandmother restless and uneasy. But to Cherry's great relief she seemed disinclined to speak of the affairs of the moment.

The clock struck four. The old woman looked across at her companion, her voice sounded oddly firm and clear in the silence.

"Judson was an honest man," she said, "but he never was fair to his brother, Frederick."

Cherry was unable to speak. She felt her throat thicken; tears stung her eyes. The proud, stiff old voice went on.

"I would be very sorry to think that anything I had ever done had hurt you," said Mrs. Marshbanks. "When something surprises you and—distresses you, sometimes you act without thinking."

"I don't think it matters much now," Cherry said, with some difficulty. "It might have been unimportant. Nobody knew what was in that envelope."

"It was unfortunate. I suppose," the old woman said reluctantly and proudly, "that my boy inherited his disposition from me. He would not be crossed."

"You are much stronger than your father," said Mrs. Marshbanks. The girl felt an odd sense of pride. It was something—even on this strange, terrible day—to have won the respect of her strange, alienated old grandmother.

"You can stand what would have broken him," Mrs. Marshbanks presently added. "You know, I suppose, that Judson left you a little property in his will? What I have will be yours, too," she went on, unemotionally. "It is not what you might have had, but it is something."

"Thank you," Cherry said simply. There was a tap at the door and she sprang to it, her heart hammering wildly. It was Kelly.

He looked tired, and was graver in manner than she had ever seen him.

"Fran and I are going out with these lads a while," he said, without preamble. "I wanted you to know. See you later."

She caught at him, her eyes frightened. He smiled and was gone.

Mrs. Marshbanks and Cherry sat quietly, saying little. It was a relief to both when Greg came in.

"What's happened?" he inquired. "Martin looked like Boris Karloff when he let me in."

"Nothing's really happened; at least we don't believe it has," Cherry told him, choosing her words carefully. "But Fran went sort of crazy today and told them a long story about how she killed your father."

"What do you know about that?" Greg commented scornfully. "It's got on her nerves. What'd they do?"

"Well, she and Kelly Coates went out with them—to police headquarters, I suppose."

"Coates, too?"

"Ha!" Greg ejaculated, more seriously. "I never knew there was anything going on there!"



"If it is to Amy's interest, zen we must fight," the count put in.

"It was over anyway," the girl stated. "And he and I were going to be married," she added, after a pause.

"It sounded as if you said—you didn't say . . ." old Mrs. Marshbanks stopped in midsentence, looking keenly at the girl.

"Yes, we planned it only a few days ago," Cherry said dully.

"Fran knows it?"

"Nobody knows it."

"But if that's the case, how could she possibly have quarreled with Jud about him?"

"That's one reason why I think she didn't."

"You mean you're to marry Kelly?" The older woman still found it hard to believe.

"Some day," Cherry answered simply, looking away to hide her filling eyes.

"And how long has this been going on?"

"Ever since I first saw him—for me. He walked into my life," Cherry said, "and he's never walked out."

"Well," said the old lady dryly, "that complicates matters."

"I should think it would simplify matters; I should think it would let Kelly out of it, at least," Greg said.

"I don't think anything any more," his grandmother stated wearily. "I guess I've lived long enough. So you got him away from Fran, did you?"

"That was all over. They hadn't seen each other for months. But Fran suddenly got all worked up about it. She had letters from him that the police found."

"Those letters!" the older woman said scornfully.

As Cherry was about to leave old Mrs. Marshbanks, Amy and Count Gogo burst in.

"Gran, darling," Amy said with her kiss, "we were going through town on our way to Del Monte and we got homesick, and so we're putting off our honeymoon, and we came home to see you! You kiss her, too, Gogo!"

Cherry informed the newcomers that Fran had been asked to go to police headquarters "to explain something," and that Fran had "sort of broken down" earlier in the day, and they were questioning her.

"But why? She doesn't know anything about it!" Amy exclaimed, aghast.

"You cannot possibly know zat, dear," said the count.

"She said it was on his account."

"The thing is, Gran," Amy burst out, "that yesterday when I grabbed some things to go and meet Gogo there was some mail on the hall table, two or three letters for me, and I took them along. We didn't look at them until this morning and then I—we—Gogo felt—we both felt, that it might be important, and that we ought to talk to someone about it."

"If it is for Aimee's comforts, zen it is important to me," Gogo said impressively.

"You say it's business, Amy," old Mrs. Marshbanks said, with a level look at Gogo. "What sort of business?"

"It's from some lawyer, Gran," Amy explained. "Mr. George Comstock. He says that owing to the sudden death of his father, Judge Thomas Comstock, affairs in the office—I'll read it," Amy interrupted herself.

"Affairs in the office have been in some inevitable confusion, owing to the recent sudden death of my father," she read aloud. "My partner, Mr. Edward Brace, and I have been attempting to the best of our ability to straighten out his affairs. We now discover that a document deliverable to you on the occasion of your twenty-first birthday, November seventeenth of this year, has been overlooked, and is now eleven days overdue. The envelope, sealed, was deposited here at the request of your father, the late Frederick Archibald Marshbanks, at the time of his death. The accompanying instructions request that we also get in touch with Charlotte Rawlings, whose whereabouts we are now endeavoring to ascertain. Assuring you of our regret in the unavoidable delay . . ."

"Amy stopped short, lowered the hand holding the letter looked blankly at her grandmother. "What on earth does it

mean?" she demanded. "Why, I don't know, dear," faltered the old lady.

"Aimee has told me of a story told by Cherie here," the count began anxiously. "Coot it haf anything to do wiz zis?"

"If it is a duplicate of that paper Uncle Jud said he had had . . ."

Amy added, again leaving her sentence unfinished.

"If it is to Aimee's interest, zen we must fight," the count put in.

"Cherry, did they write you?" Amy demanded.

"The Comstocks were great friends of your father," old Mrs. Marshbanks contributed. "But I never heard . . ." She stopped short, shaking her head.

"It seem to me zat I should have known of zis, Aimee," said the count.

"Gogo, why should I tell you a lot of family rubbish that I didn't believe myself?" Amy answered sharply. "Up to now—up to the time I got this letter, there wasn't any proof of anything!"

"I am sure," the old woman began faintly. "I am sure there isn't any truth in what Judson said: It put Amy in such a terrible position. Oh, my child," Amy's grandmother said, in a burst of anguish, "why did you marry until this matter was settled? How could you rush off without telling us—without . . ."

"But you are not saying zat Aimee perhaps will be robt of all ze money her grandfather gave her?" the count put in, in a tone of stupefaction.

There was a brief silence. The count moved to Amy and touched her on the shoulder.

"It will be very hardt, it will seem very strange to my frienz, my frienz zat I have promise to help," he said in an annoyed tone. "I tell zem to come and stay wiz me, I tell zem zat my horse—my house, all is for zem." His reproachful look swept the circle; he spread his hands open, appealing for sympathy.

"Your room is ready, Countess," May said, from the doorway. Cherry saw a little pleased look, a mollified expression, come into Amy's face. The title was impressive to them all.

"The first thing that Gogo said when we read this horrible letter," Amy said, looking first at her grandmother, then at Cherry, "was that it wouldn't be fair to me—it would put me in a false position for him to have married me thinking that I was—well, was rich and that I could help out all these people he has promised to help, and that he could pay up some bills. As if," Amy diverged suddenly with an attempt to speak scornfully that Cherry found infinitely pathetic. "as if money mattered! It was only—Gogo says it's only that he expected something different and made all these plans, and now of course he won't be able to carry them out."

"We'll know tomorrow," Cherry said, one hand over her aching eyes. "He says, Gogo says, that it's a bad sign that they want to get in touch with you, Cherry," Amy observed, as she trailed away disconsolately, leaving Cherry alone with her grandmother.

The old lady extended a hand to her, and as Cherry went to stand before her, grasping it, she drew the girl down so that Cherry's ear was close.

"She's destroyed her life!" the old woman said, in an electric whisper. "The money was all he wanted."

Crossing the hall, Cherry could hear Gogo's voice speaking high and angrily in Amy's room; she heard nothing from Amy in reply.

With a heartick pang of sympathy for Amy, Cherry turned away from her own doorway, and went downstairs. When she reached the lower hallway Fran and Kelly were just coming in.

Both looked beaten. Kelly's face was gray, and Fran was obviously exhausted. Her eyes, sunken in rings of pale violet, went almost without recognition to Cherry's. She said faintly she was going to rest before dinner.

"You'll want your dinner upstairs, Fran," Cherry said, all sympathy.

"No, no," the other woman said feverishly. "I don't want to be alone. I'll lie down for a while!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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Then one day he was surprised to hear that it was broken off. But that very evening he was even more surprised to see the young lady in question out with the newly discarded young man.

"Why, Doris," he said chidingly, "I thought you had finished with that young man. And here you are out with him."

"That's right, I have," was the reply from Doris; "but I had to give him seven days' notice, didn't I?"

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