



SOULS FOR SALE

By RUPERT HUGHES
ILLUSTRATED BY DONALD RILEY

Remember Steddon, a pretty, unsophisticated girl, is the daughter of a kindly but narrow-minded minister in a small, mid-western town. Her father, Rev. Doctor Steddon, violently opposed to what he considers "worldly things," accepts motion pictures as the cause for much of the evil of the present day. Troubled with a cough, Remember goes to see Dr. Bretherick, an elderly physician who is astonished to find her in a bad plight. Pressed by the doctor, Remember admits her unfortunate affair with Elwood Faranby, a poor boy, son of the town squire. As Remember and Dr. Bretherick discuss the problem, a telephone message brings the news that Elwood has been killed in an accident. Dr. Bretherick persuades Remember to go West, her cough serving as a plausible excuse. Unable to bear the secret any longer, Remember goes to her mother and confesses. Her mother agrees with the plan of the doctor. Mem leaves town. On the train Mem accidentally meets Tom Holby, movie star, traveling with Robina Teele, leading lady of the movies, who are the cynosure of all eyes. The train comes to an abrupt halt, a disaster having been narrowly avoided, and the passengers at Tucson meet Dr. Galbraith, a pastor, who knows her father. She miscalls Tom Holby "Mr. Woodville" in order to make her fancied suitor seem more real. While the Galbraiths are away, she writes them as well as her parents that she has married "Mr. Woodville" and that they are to live in Yuma—for which place she buys a ticket. Arriving there she falls in with the movie company of Tom Holby. Tom insists that she become an extra and is most cordial to her. She finds herself in the movie game. After her accident, Mem receives a letter from Leva Mematic, inviting her to Hollywood, and stating in her letter that she can get her a position in a film laboratory. Mem gets a job in a film laboratory but loses it. She meets a Mrs. Sturges from her home town, who talks of the evils of the movies and says that the stars are forced to sell their souls. Mem has a letter saying that her mother is coming to Palm Springs, and Mem goes there to meet her. She decides that she will sell her soul to get a job in the movies. Mem gets a tryout with the Bermond movie company. She finds herself posing with Claymore as her detector, obeying his commands in a kind of stupor. Mem is trained to be a star and in due course her first picture is finished, and she is being "lent" to the company starring Tom Holby. She will play the leading woman in Holby's new picture. Meanwhile, Claymore has got Mem away to himself. Mem and Claymore become more and more interested in each other. One riding one day Claymore takes Mem in his arms, and she does not object. They are interrupted by a holdup man who takes their money. Now Go On With the Story

Dear wife, he wrote her mother.—The Lord giveth and taketh away. I have lost you and my darling daughter, but in my loneliness I still can say "Thy will be done."

I think you should know, however, how things are here. Otherwise I should not write you. But I am afraid that the daughter that was once ours might tire of the husks of sin and wish to come home repentant.

Bitterness filled my soul when I learned that she was leading a life of riotous mockery, and when I saw the picture of her smiling in wanton attire at the side of that smirking French general, I had it in my heart to curse her. I wrote in my haste. I repented my hardness of heart and bowed my head in humble shame when I read your angry reply. I had lost your love and your admiration, but that was deserved punishment for the idolatry that had grown up in my heart to you; and for the mistakes I have made in not giving our daughter a better care.

But now it has pleased the Lord to pour out the vials of wrath on my gray hairs. The old mortgage on the church fell due long ago, but foreclosure had been postponed from time to time. We gave a benefit to pay it off, but everybody was too poor to respond, and it did not pay expenses.

The manager of the motion-picture house offered to share the profits on the showing of a picture in which, as he had the impudence to tell me, my daughter played a part. But while it would have drawn money for curiosity that would not have responded to a Christian appeal, I felt that it would have been a compounding with evil, and I put Satan behind me and ordered the fellow out of the house.

The church is to be closed. What I shall do next or how take care of the little children that still cling to our home, the Lord has not yet told me in answer to my prayers. I still have faith that in His good time He

will provide a way or call His servant home, and I hope you will not take this letter as a plea for pity.

My cup is full and running over, but my chief dread is that unhappiness and want may be your portion as well as mine, and that I shall fail you utterly after providing so poorly for you all your days. I can only pray that my fears are the result of loneliness and age and weariness.

And now may the Lord shield you with His ever-present mercy, or at least give us strength to understand that in all things He knowest best.

Your Loving Husband.

As she read this letter and saw back of the lines the heavy brows of her old father, saw the bald spot she had stared at from the choir loft, saw all the old sweet wrong-headedness of the veteran saint, Mem's heart hurt intolerably.

Her mother sobbed: "What on earth can I write the poor darling?"

Mem replied: "The answer is easy. I'm going to send him all the money I've got."

Her mother cried out against robbing one of her loves to pay another. It seemed a cruel shame to take the first bit of cake from her daughter and sell it to buy bread for her husband.

"You'll need it yourself. You may not have another job soon. You need new clothes and a rest."

"Rest and new clothes can wait."

Her mother kept a miserable silence for a long while before she could say: "Your father will never accept money you have earned from the pictures. He'd rather die."

This gave Mem only a brief pause. She answered simply: "Doctor Bretherick got me into this business by making up the pack of lies that brought me out here. Now he can make up a few more and save daddy from desperation."

She sat down at once and wrote the doctor a letter, telling him what he must know already of her father's helplessness. She inclosed a money order for two hundred and fifty dollars. She wrote a check first, but was afraid to have it put through the bank at Calverly lest her father hear of it. She instructed the doctor to make up another of his scenarios about a repentant member of his congregation wishing to restore some stolen funds—or anything else he could invent.

Then she set the wheels in motion to secure an immediate engagement with the next to the greatest comedian on the screen, Ned Ling, a reader of important books! a debater of art theories—but above all a man afraid of nothing so much as he was afraid of love.

It was a period of dead calm and torpid seas, and so Mr. Bermond willingly arranged to "rent" her to Ling, who wanted her at once at first sight.

Meanwhile, through Claymore, Terry Dack was about to be struck off in innumerable portraits and showered upon a grateful world.

At the age of five he would commence his business career with a salary of two or three thousand dollars a year.

One of Mem's pictures was shown soon after at a theater in Los Angeles, and she sat in a vast throng. She saw with pride a fat woman snifle and thought it a beautiful tribute. She saw a baldheaded man take a handkerchief out and, pretending to blow his nose, dash his shameful tears away. And that was beautiful to her with a wonderful beauty.

The papers the next day in their criticisms gave her special mention. A marvelous thing to see one's name in print and with a bouquet tied to it.

She had but a little while to revel in this perfect award, for in a few days a letter came to her, forwarded from the studio.

Her heart plunged with terror as she read.

I seen your pictur last nite and it maed me sick you're awful innasent and sweet in the pictur and you look like buter wouldnt melt in your mouth but I know beter for Im the guy who held you up wen you was with that other guy and took off yore wedin ring off you I didnt know who you was then and I dont know yet who he was but Im wise to you and all I got to say is Ive got my eye on you and you beter behave or else quit playing these innasent parts you movie people make me sick you're only a gang of hypocrits so beware.

Mem felt odious to herself, with all the revolting nausea of evil revealed. There is remorse enough for a struggling soul that knows its own defeats and backslidings, but it is nothing to the remorse that fol-

lows a published fault.

The letter was more hideous than headlines in a paper. It was more dreadful than such a pilloried public shame as Hester Prynne's. It meant that somewhere there was a man in an invisible cloak of namelessness and facelessness who despised her and jeered at her sublimities of purity. Her highest ambitions were doomed to sneering mockery.

After a day in Ling's studio, he took her to "The Beggar's Opera."

She had so lost her orientation at the end of the servuctive villanies, that she did not faint when Ned Ling said:

"I've laughed myself hungry. I haven't ordinarily any appetite. Let's go to my house and have a bite."

"To your house?"

"Yes. It's all right. I'm quite alone there. Just a Jap. Very secluded."

She wanted to say: "You tell me not why I should go, but why I should not. And I won't."

But it seemed a silly little-girlish, old-maidish, prune-and-prismish thing to say, so she said, "All right," and got into Ling's car.

When he said "Home," to the driver she almost swooned, but not quite.

The Jap showed no surprise at the late arrival of his master with a lady. Evidently it was the ordinary thing. Mem longed for a mask or a fire escape or a gun. She glanced about for weapons of defense.

But Ned Ling said: "Some scrambled eggs and bacon and some wine. Would you rather have red or white? Let's have some champagne—yes? We'll have some champagne—native California—but good."

She was hungry, but he kept her hands prisoner and preferred to talk.

Afterward they went into the beautiful living room, a strange room for a clown; more like what a millionaire's room should be, judging from what she had seen in the movies.

He made her sit down on a long couch and snuggled close to her. She was curious rather than afraid. He took up her hand again and studied it, talking in the rather literary manner he sometimes assumed: "Each separate finger has its own soul, don't you think? Hands are families. Queer things, fingers. Your right hand and your left hand aren't the least alike and your face is still a third person."

Before Mem quite realized how solemnly ludicrous a couple of comedians could be—if anybody had been looking—except God—and perhaps that Jap valet—Ned Ling's head was on her breast and his eyes were turned up into hers—like a baby's. He was in a new-born prattling humor. That was the secret of his success. He was a baby with all the baby's privileges of impropriety, selfishness, hatefulness, adorableness.

He could revert to infancy and take his audience with him, make old men and women laugh at the simple things that had tickled their childish hearts. And withal there was an amazing sophistication. He



Wed On Bet
Isabel Bennet Forsman of New York married Carl E. A. Forsman on a bet made during a gay party. Now she asks annulment.

was a baby that calculated and measured, triumphed and yet wept and wanted always, the next toy. He was thinking of Mem as his next toy and she was thinking of him as her next child.

His warm head and his brown eyes, like maple sugar just as it is luscious to syrup, and with the same gold flakes glistening—they were quaintly babyish to her in spite of his old talk.

"I want to love and be loved, but not too much love. I'm afraid of love. It has hurt me horribly. And I haven't been true to some of them—and that hurt's me worse. I don't know which is ghastlier—to see a woman laugh at you or cry at you. Marriage is no solution. I don't see how it can help being the end of love. Love ought to be free—like art and speech. Of course art isn't free. There's the censorship. Well, marriage is like censorship. Everything you do or say and feel must be submitted to the censor. They call this a free country and have censorships and marriage!"

She smiled. He was more like a prattling baby the more cynical he grew. His heavy head made her breast ache and yearn for a baby. But he wanted only the froth of life without the body and the dregs.

"Could you love me just enough and not too much," he pleaded.

If he had said, "Marry me tomorrow," he might have had her then. But she had not his opinion of marriage. She had played the game without the name—endured the ecstasy and the penalty without the ceremony. She had escaped public shame by a miracle of lucky lies and accidents. The hunger remained for the rewards of marriage, the honesty of a home, the granite foundations of respectable loyalty.

So when he pleaded with her for a love that cheated and played for fun, and not at all for a kiss, for caresses, she shook her head—mystically as he thought, but very sanely, calmly, in truth.

Finally she yawned in the face of his passion and said, "I'll be going home now, please."

TO BE CONTINUED

Heh! Heh!

A boy on his way to school ate too many green apples. As he took his seat the teacher asked him to name the present season. The boy arose in spite of the pain in his stomach.

"I'm sure it's not the apple season," he said, timidly.

"How do you know that?" inquired the instructor.

Without a second's hesitation, the boy replied "I have inside information."



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What is lovely never dies, But passes into other loveliness.—Aldrich.

It is sometimes interesting to delve into the very distant past, through the many books available to us, to find out how our very ancient ancestors felt about beauty culture.

In my search I came across a story which amused as well as enlightened me. The tale was about a very elegant, artistic gentleman of the year 3300 B. C., who suddenly discovered that the feminine sex was losing interest in him. He attributed this lack to the fact that his hair was turning gray, so he rushed to a learned gentleman of the village.

"Tell me, Oh learned one," he said, "what can I do to recover the color of my hair?" A modern beauty specialist might have hesitated, but the learned one immediately gave the formula for the treatment. "Get the blood of a black cow, rub it up in lard and boil, after which it is to be applied to the locks," answered the Learned One. Unfortunately the book has no record of the success of this treatment, but there is no question in my mind that much time and money, whatever the currency of the day happened to be, was spent both by men and women in trying to pro-

long youth and enhance beauty. Perfume was an essential to the life of the Egyptian. Religious rites could not be performed without incense. Perfume was used in embalming, and was also a vibrant part of the aesthetic side of living. Famous archaeologists who have in these modern times broken the silence of the old Egyptian tombs, unearthing mummies buried thousands of years ago, have brought forth evidence of the activities in the beauty field in ancient times. Some of these explorers discovered cream jars which had been buried with the mummies and which still gave forth a delicate haunting fragrance, which they could not analyze.

To critics who sometimes feel that too much time is devoted by the women of today for beauty culture, I should like to recommend these records which date back to the earliest times known to human knowledge. For they show conclusively that there has never been a time in the history of the world when men and women were not interested in prolonging youth—and enhancing their personal appearance.

HELENA RUBINSTEIN.

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