

GIRL FALLS FROM TRUCK; COLLARBONE IS BROKEN

The ten-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Holmes sustained a broken collarbone Saturday when she fell from the truck on which she was playing in the yard at her home east of Springfield.



BY **Ruby M. Ayres**

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Giles Chitttenham, distressed over the suicide of his younger half-brother Rodney, returns to Europe from America, where he made an unhappy marriage. Rodney had killed himself because a notorious woman, Julie Farrow, threw him over. Giles is introduced to Julie Farrow by his friend Lombard, in Switzerland. He resolves to make her fall in love with him, then throw her over as she threw Rodney. She tells him she has made a bet with her friend "Jim" Lennox that she can drive her car to the top of the St. Bernard Pass and back. Giles challenges her to take him with her and she accepts. They start out in the face of a gathering snowstorm.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

"He must have been unbalanced to take his life as he did." She shivered a little. "You don't think then . . . don't you think it was an accident?" Chitttenham looked steadily at her. "Do you?" he asked. She shook her head. "I'm afraid not . . . but oh, wasn't it dreadful?"

The deep sincerity of her voice surprised him. She almost sounded distressed instead of being utterly heartless and callous about the tragedy as he knew she was.

"It seems rather pitiable," he answered in a hard voice. She did not answer for a moment or two, then she said with a note of exasperation in her voice: "It would interest me exceedingly, Mr. Chitttenham, to know the real reason why you wanted to come with me."

"I told you. To see if you are really as defiant of Mrs. Grundy as you pretend."

"That's not the real reason, though yesterday I pretended to believe you. There isn't anything at all dreadful in you and I taking this drive together. I've often done more risky things. We're doing a perfectly harmless and ordinary trip which plenty of other people have done before us."

Chitttenham sat staring before him with frowning brows. This woman was more than a match for him and he knew it.

"If I told you the real reason you would not believe that either," he said deliberately after a long pause.

In some strange way he felt as if Rodney were close to him, at his elbow, prompting him, whispering the words of the last tragic letter.

"I'd like to think you were making her pay. I believe I could even manage to laugh in Hell, or wherever I shall go, if I knew that you were making her suffer as she's made me suffer."

And he thought of Rodney as a boy—a little cheery fellow whom he had adored . . . of Rodney in his first Eton suit, shy and a little awkward, trying to feel older than he was . . . of Rodney . . . oh, the pictures came crowding fast and thick, leading up to that one last picture which he had never seen save in his bitter imagination—Rodney dead!

And it was the fault of this woman who sat beside him, speaking of Rodney with that little note of pretended distress in her voice. He shrank a little from her with a feeling of repulsion. Women were all the same, heartless and selfish.

He felt her eyes upon him. "Tell me the real reason?" she said.

Chitttenham turned his gaze from the wet road and looked at her. There was a little flush in her cheeks and her eyes were deep and unfathomable behind their thick dark lashes.

She looked so young—hardly more than a girl—and yet Chitttenham knew that she had been through the divorce court, and through experiences of which no woman need be proud.

"Please tell me!" she said again and now there was a little breathless catch in her voice that seemed to speak of a deep sincerity and interest which she was trying to conceal. Chitttenham asked an apparently irrelevant question.

"Do you believe in love at first sight?" "Love at . . ." She caught his words up, then broke off to ask almost in a whisper: "Oh . . . why?"

"Because," said Chitttenham deliberately, "that is my real reason."

"You should not say such foolish things," she said sharply. "I told you you would not believe me," he said calmly.

"I don't understand you," Julie said in a jerky little voice. Chitttenham said no more, and it was she who presently broke the silence.

"I can't understand you, Mr. Chitttenham. If it's a—a joke—I don't think it's quite good taste, and if it's not a joke . . . I keep remembering what Rodney said of you, that you despised women, that you had never cared more for one than for all the rest."

"Even Napoleon met his Waterloo," Chitttenham said. He laid a hand over one of hers that held the driving-wheel.

Julie did not answer; she was not listening. Her thoughts were in a whirl, and she was trying in vain to steady them and to reduce them once more to sane stability.

He had not been serious, of course, or had he? Julie was surprised and a little afraid because she longed desperately to know. Chitttenham seemed to read her thoughts for she said quietly: "Well, what is the verdict?" "What do you mean?" "Have you made up your mind as to whether I am in earnest or not?" "I know you are not," Chitttenham laughed.

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"You mean you think I am not, but all the same you hope I am."

"Mr. Chitttenham!" There was anger and amazement in her voice, and her cheeks grew suddenly scarlet.

"I thought you liked plain speaking," Chitttenham said calmly. "If I am mistaken I apologize." He glanced at his watch. "We ought to be at Martigny in half an hour unless you have another skid and land us upside down in the ditch."

"We will be there in twenty minutes," Julie said with a little savage intonation, and they were.

Julie brought the car to a standstill with a little spiteful jerk, and passed him with her head in the air and walked into the cafe.

They faced one another across a small table, and as their eyes met Chitttenham said with a smile: "Don't quarrel with me before we are half-way there! If you go on getting angry at this rate you will skid on the edge of a precipice and that will be an end to both of us."

"I'm not angry, I—oh, well, I suppose I am, but it's your fault. Why did you talk such nonsense?" "You mean when I told you that I loved you? Has it always been nonsense when men have told you that?"

"You talk as if such a thing were an everyday occurrence—as if I were a horrid kind of a woman who went about collecting scalps—"

Suddenly she laughed, and shrugged her shoulders. "After all, it's silly to be angry with you. I ought to know better."

He made no answer, and Julie began to pour out the coffee.

It was a very watery sun that shone upon them when they started away, and great banks of clouds kept drifting up threateningly. The road grew steeper and more difficult once they passed the little huddled village of St. Pierre.

She glanced down into the valley on their left and gave a little startled exclamation. They could see nothing for the clouds which lay spread out everywhere like an enveloping blanket.

"It will make it difficult driving back," said Chitttenham. "I know these mountains rather well, and I know just what unkind tricks they can play on the optimistic traveller. I should slow down a little if I were you, Miss Farrow, there is a nasty corner here. It turns very sharply to the left and there is a big drop on one side."

She only just pulled the car round in time, and her face was white.

"Would you like me to drive?" he asked quietly. She recovered herself with an effort.

"I am not tired," she insisted. "Nor going to faint?" he asked with irony.

"It gave me a shock. I did not expect to find such a dreadful corner."

"I warned you," he reminded her. "I know you did, but you do it in such a way—it only makes me want to defy you. I have never met a man quite like you before."

"In what way am I different?" Julie hesitated, biting her lip, then she told him.

"One moment you pretend to make love to me, and the next you sneer at me—"

"And which do you prefer?" "Do you imagine that I like either?" she faltered.

Chitttenham leaned forward suddenly and kissed the hand nearest to him that rested on the steering-wheel.

"I am conceded enough to think that I could make you like being made love to," he said quietly, and then as she did not answer he asked: "Will you dare me to try?" "No."

He leaned back in his seat resignedly. "Then we may as well go on." It took a moment or two to restart the engine.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

Ill at Home—Bud McPherson is reported to be very ill at his home.

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