

Nothing Venture

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: While buying a gown for the dinner which Ferdinand Francis is giving herself and Jervis wears as the glittering year that Jervis will be killed. She has overheard Robert Leonard plotting death for a man she believes to be Jervis. Although Nan and Jervis are married and Nan loves her husband dearly, she knows she represents to him only the means by which he has saved his property from the schemes of his former fiancée, Rosemary Carey. Nan waits fearfully for Jervis, who is late.

Chapter 11 IS HER SECRET SAFE?

The last stroke of eight died away and left Nan shivering. She couldn't go on standing on the doorstep. She must do something, but she didn't know what.

She moved, and just as if her movement had broken into a set pause, a car drew up at the curb. Jervis jumped out, and at the sight of him Nan knew how frightened she had been.

"I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting, I'm frightfully late, but I had to go back—"

She said something—she had no idea of what it was—and then they were in the taxi, and she was staring out of the window and trying to quiet the beating of her heart. Just for an instant she caught sight of the edge of a bandage where his left cuff slipped back. She was ready to swear that it had not been there this afternoon.

She got herself quiet, and turned round on him.

"What made you so late? I thought something had happened."

"Well, something did happen." She took a breath. "My tie wouldn't tie."

Nan looked at the tie. It had a very ordinary appearance. Her eyes, suddenly bright, gave him the lie.

"What has been happening?"

"Happening?" His eyes met hers with a hint of distance and a hint of mockery.

"Yes."

"The distance went; the mockery remained."

"First news bulletin, copyright reserved!"

"Yes."

"Barometric pressure—" said Jervis.

"Is your wrist broken?"

"Certainly not. Why should it be?"

"Barometric pressure," suggested Nan.

"Nothing so original."

"Please tell me."

"There's nothing to tell."

"How did you hurt your wrist?"

Jervis leaned back into his corner of the taxi.

"You might say I had bumped it up against a coincidence."

"I think we will both call it a coincidence," said Jervis. His tone was light, cool, and even.

Nan took a breath and sat back. She felt easily, coolly, airily put in her place. Her place was a long way off. But by the time they reached the Luxe she had herself in hand. Jervis talked pleasantly and lightly all the way; she had only to sit in her corner and listen.

Ferdinand was waiting for them in the lounge. He looked very odd in evening dress. His tall coat was not only an archaic model, but it looked as if he had made a habit of sleeping in it for years. His white tie was ready-tied. Beneath the electric light his hair was like a newly scraped carrot. A prolonged hand-shaking attested his enthusiasm.

"This is topping," he said, and went on saying it at intervals as he piloted them to the famous Gold Room.

He had an eager, affectionate manner that was pure harm to Nan. For the first time, she could see herself as Jervis' wife. F. F.'s admiring gaze approved her. It darted from her to Jervis, and told Jervis that he was a lucky man.

"If you aren't hungry, you can go home. I'm going straight through this menu—and I shan't say that I mightn't have a second helping here and there."

"I've felt hungry, but I've never felt greedier."

He sidded off into the story of how he once walked from Vienna to Berlin without a cent.

Nan enjoyed her dinner very much. It was rather like a dream to be wearing a pretty frock and dining at the Luxe. In a dream there is no past and no future. She gave herself up to the dream, and a roving tide of happiness rose in her and blotted out everything except the present.

She watched a new Jervis. She had never seen just that amused sparkle in his eyes or heard that warm, bantering note in his voice. She listened in a smiling silence whilst they capped stories and reminded one another of ridiculous or strenuous adventures shared.

She learned by piecing scraps of their talk together that they had knocked about Europe and the Near East for the best part of a year in another's company.

"I was doing awful articles on Great Men's Hats, and Brigands' Shoes—that's why we had trouble in Anatolia—and what Grimmins Like for Breakfast. The biggest rip of the lot began the day on bread and milk—in a bowl with pink rosebuds round the edge."

"You were writing articles. And what was Jervis doing?" said Nan.

"Jervis was mending a hole in his head," said Ferdinand Francis. Was it fancy, or did he hold her eyes with his for a moment? She repeated his words mechanically.

"A hole in his head?"

With a wrenching sensation she looked away and saw Jervis frowning.

"I'd had a fall," he said. "I came down on some slippery rocks and broke my head. I was just home from Harvard, so I got a year's holiday and went racketing round with F. F. He picked me up just as the tide was going to finish me off, and has stuck to me like a burr ever since."

"Do burrs pick people up?" said Nan. "I thought it was the other way round." She laughed to cover the faint tremor in her voice, and was aware of Ferdinand's eyes upon her.

"Mrs. Weare, don't take any notice of him. He's rotten at telling a story, and I'm a whale at it. Besides, he was unconscious, and if the tide had drowned him, he wouldn't have known a thing about it."

His restless, curious eyes thrust questions at her: "Am I going to tell this story? Do you want me to tell it? If not—why not? Yes—why, why, why?" The high light in the brown eyes was like a bright elusive question-mark.

Jervis' voice broke in on them.

"There's nothing to tell. F. F.'s a professional yarn-spinner."

"Don't you want the story, Mrs. Weare—exclusive tale of eye-witness? Or—do you know it already?"

Panic knocked at Nan's heart.

Nan meets a rival tomorrow, whom she must fight on her own ground.

HUSBAND SLAYER GIVEN FREEDOM

CHICAGO, Sept. 2.—(AP)—Dorothy Pollak was acquitted by Chief Justice Harry M. Fisher yesterday of the murder of her husband, Joe Pollak, whom she killed with a single pistol bullet July 27.

BROKEN WHEEL CAUSES DEATH

LA GRANDE, Ore., Sept. 2.—(AP)—Lon Lilly, about 30, was dead and two companions injured today as the result of the collapse of a wheel on their automobile as they were returning to LaGrande last Wednesday from a fishing trip.

SEES FIRST FILM AT 84, LIKES IT

PORTLAND, Ore., Sept. 2.—(AP)—James Anderson, who said he had "lived in the sticks" all his life came to Portland last night and for the first time in his 84 years saw a motion picture show. He liked it. After the show he returned to the

TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Lost Mail!

Free Picture of your baby made by Shanghai if you purchase a \$1 Baby Dress, etc., from Wurts Gifts. Prizes for the mothers.

BOX OFFICE AND BEGAN ASKING QUESTIONS. A relief operator took him in hand, showed him the projection room and explained how the machines worked.

"I'm going to see some more of these things," Anderson said as he left.

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—"W. H. D."



By EDWIN ALGER



By C. M. PAYNE



By C. M. PAYNE



S'MATTER POP—The Little Man Puts One Over On Willyum



By SOL HESS



THE NEBBS—A Hint



MUTT AND JEFF—Ain't Jeff's Twin Brother Got Fun!



By BUD FISHER



TEN KIDS!!



By George McManus



STEELHEAD GOING FAST IS PLAIN

Dr. Chas. Wiborn, sportsman of international reputation, passed through Medford yesterday, en route to California. Having just returned from a fishing trip with Zane Grey and Homer Grey, well-known writers, his talk while here was devoted to fishing, and he expressed great regrets regarding the wane of steelhead fishing on the Rogue.

PAINT FIRM PLANS BIG AD CAMPAIGN

CLEVELAND, Ohio, Sept. 2.—(AP)—Believing a revival of business has begun, the Sherwin-Williams company, paint manufacturers, disclosed plans today for a \$1,000,000 advertising campaign. President George A. Martin said the advertising will be placed in 2,641 newspapers.

BRINGING UP FATHER



CHOLERA KILLS 30,000 IN CHINESE PROVINCE

HANKOW, China, Sept. 2.—(AP)—The cholera epidemic in Shenai province had killed 30,000 persons up to August 15, says a provincial government report from the capital, Sainfu. The epidemic has been widespread several months, intensified in several parts of China by flood conditions.

LUCKY WOMAN



Dr. Wiborn is making plans for an extensive fishing trip to New Zealand. He is widely known as an angler and

is one of the organizers of the famous "Eye club at Campbell river, Vancouver island, B. C.