

Buying Barbara

by Julia Cleft-Addams • Author of "YOU CAN'T MARRY"

SYNOPSIS: Out of a curious failure, whereby the senior members of Quentin, Lody and Cane died penniless, and James Cane prospered and was knighted, has grown an equally curious situation, 22 years later. Barbara Quentin and Mark Lody, children together, are to be married in five days, although Mark is a cripple and often cruel. It was nothing but a series of strange fortunes that bankrupted the firm, yet Farrell has fallen in love with Barbara at first sight, and tries to win her from Mark. And his child in the picture is the girl who had expected him to propose to her—Lella Cane, daughter of Sir James. Barbara, however, is determined to remain the wife in Mark's room, and he laughs.

**Chapter 9
BAITING BARBARA**

Barbara rearranged the fire, kneeling before it to hide the color that swept her face, then resumed her seat.

She knew better than to chatter to Mark but his hard stare discomfited her and she picked up a sheet of drawings from the floor and began to examine them. She was bending over the third before she realized that he had probably left them on the floor on purpose.

They were in pencil and they were brutal. They followed the fortunes of a man and a girl—a lame man and a girl with a plodding, peasant soul. They showed the lame man cooking a meager dinner while she, tall, square and frowning, battled with her ledgers.

Or he—in a boudoir cap—went while she glowered, three small coins upon the table between them. Or he sat, his shoulders timidly hunched, winding yarn, his skin tea, propped up to hold the skein clear, and she tinkered at some bookshelves against the wall.

Barbara, as usual by the crackling log, closed her eyes. Often, with Mark, one had to close one's eyes for a moment, and fumble back for things—beliefs, vows, endurances.

They came in the form of pictures. Mr. Lody, coming through the garden to turn Mark's tear-stained, sulky face to his; Mr. Lody relinquishing him and laying his hand instead on her curls.

"Babs, I want you to promise something, I've got to go away. Until I come back, take care of Mark. Take good care of him, Babs." And then, three minutes later, the sound of the shot.

And then there was her own mother, fading gently out of life before her husband had been a full year in his grave. "Never forget that it's dignified to earn and mean just to take. I planned, you know, to keep a little shop. Perhaps when you're a grown-up girl, my baby, you'll like to keep a little shop."

"This is naughty of you, Mark," she protested tranquilly. "And it's brilliant. You're always most brilliant when you're most unkind."

"It's not unkindness, it's the cry of the sensitive spirit!" He flicked a cigarette end in the direction of the grate. It was not extinguished and she was obliged to get up and put it into the fire or it would have burned a hole in the hearth-rug.

"Judith has been telling me I'm too sensitive," he went on, "so I must be. Am I, Barbara?"

"Not about stupid, conventional things," she said cautiously. (So often, in this kind of conversation, one helped to dig a pit for oneself.)

"Not about stupid, conventional things," echoed Mark in tones of admiration. "And how stupid the conventions can be only a free, jolly, Bohemian soul like our Barbara can ever know. Now I come to think of it, we shall be bowing to a very stupid convention next Thursday. Let's cut it out and keep house together under the bulging clerical eyes of Toxeter. But no—I forgot! It would be bad for business."

Barbara was still determinedly smiling.

"Would you rather put off getting married, Mark? As things are, we can quite well wait a bit. We can't aff—we can't spare time for a honeymoon, anyway."

"Postponement of sentence? I'd rather get it over, my dear."

She was goaded, in spite of the long, patient years, into a flash of pride.

"If you're even remotely serious in what you say, let's call it off! We can go on being close friends—"

"Thank you!" she, thank you for those kind words!

"—nothing need be changed. But, after all, it was your suggestion, originally. You—asked me to marry you."

He lit another cigarette.

"But, beautiful Barbara—solemn, hard-working, sensible Barbara—I always ask women to marry me

love with them. But, generally, they refuse."

She felt the blood scorch her face. She was not jealous. It was not that. It was that there were so many rumors in this little town about Mark and his affairs; there was a very nearly substantiated story about Mark and Lella Cane—and somehow Barbara could not bear that curious coarseness in Mark, that laid these things bare.

She regained her control with an effort.

"There is still time for me to fall into line with the others," she said quietly. "Say what is in your mind instead of—of baiting me into saying it. That's—vulgar."

She knew, as she used the word, that it was the wrong one. To accuse him of vulgarity was to strike home, and under the smart of a deserved blow, he could be devilish. She stumbled on and made things worse.

"I think we shall have to decide tonight, one way or the other, because if you don't want to live in Toxeter I ought to close the shop there and accept that London contract—"

He giggled.

"Beautiful Barbara, how could the whims of a foolish, coy creature like me be allowed to interfere with Big Business? And, by the way, how was business today? Isn't that the question that every loving help-mate huris at the weary wage-earner before he—I'm sorry—she falls upon the evening bonnet?"

She said nothing. She need not, surely, help him to torture her. The mouse need not stay alive to amuse the cat. She wondered, dazedly, for she was tired and sick at heart, whether Mark would kill her one day, or if he had shifted over to one side and was watching the fire. Only Mark could make a silence so fright-ening.

She found herself breaking it, after all. She told him how business was and how she hoped it would be. Forgetting him, for a moment, she stepped into the future, calculating, planning. So much for their living expenses in Toxeter, so much to pay off the mortgage on the little house she had taken there, so much for holidays and health. "And your legacy for absolute emergencies, Mark. It's blessed to know that that will always be there."

"Oh, didn't I tell you? I spent it." She hit off her exclamation. Quite useless—worse than useless to exclaim over Mark! She sat helpless, the mouse waiting for the claws to strike again. . . . Mark was drawing something from under his pillow. He tossed it into her lap.

"Gift of the bridegroom to the bride. Open it, beautiful Barbara. It cost such a lot and it is so proudly out of place."

She opened the case. A very fine emerald lay on a pale jade velvet and a platinum chain was coiled round it. The setting was platinum, too, and unusual—a spider's web, fine but strong, in which the jewel was invisibly held.

With unsteady fingers she closed the case. "She did not like emeralds. He knew she did not like emeralds. It was Lella Cane who liked them. Three hundred pounds for an unwanted emerald when I was going to be a struggle to find enough for rent and food!"

She felt, for the first time in her life, the desire to strike the smile from his face. She clutched the case, her breath ragged. Take good care of Mark—good care—good care—he couldn't help being like this—he was a cripple, shut off from life, bitter, frustrated.

"Barbara—"

He had half-risen and flung out a hand, but she could not go to him yet. A moment—give her a moment—she sensed that he had flung away the black mood; he would be charming now, gentle, perceptive, immensely appealing. A moment and she would be able to take his hand.

"Barbara, don't shut your face up like that! Don't lock me out of your eyes like that! I won't be a beast any more. I'm damned sorry—"

In a moment, in a moment! When a hurt goes deep, one must beg just a moment—

"Barbara, come over here."

She turned stiffly, still not looking at him. She would have gone to him, of course, but at that moment the door opened and Mrs. Lody came in, followed by the man who had pulled her back on to the pavement in the Yarn Market.

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Barbara, tomorrow, does something she will never be able to forget.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTING DISPLAYS INSTALLED BY MANY RESIDENTS

A number of attractive outdoor Christmas lighting displays are being installed by local citizens throughout the residence district and others are planning to decorate their homes, shrubs and lawns, to spread the glad spirit of the Yuletide season throughout the entire community. Some who do not install elaborate lighting exhibits will substitute colored lights in their porch fixtures, display lighted Christmas trees in their windows or follow similar plans to share their Christmas cheer with every passer-by.

There are many effective, though inexpensive decorative items which can be secured at local stores at small cost, including electric candles, illuminated wreaths and even complete strings of indoor or outdoor colored lights, all of which contribute their share to the general holiday atmosphere of the community.

To aid those who have not fully decided upon their lighting effects for this year, the following list of decorative ideas is offered as a suggestion.

1. Substitute a red lamp for the customary one in your entrance fixture and put a wreath around it.

2. Place electric candles in Christmas wreaths in your windows. (Electric candles are far safer than the wax variety and are cheaper to operate.)

3. Run colored lights through the trees and shrubbery on your grounds.

4. Place Christmas trees in tubs in the yard and trim them with strings of colored lights.

5. Run strings of colored lights along your veranda.

6. Festoon strings of colored lights along the eaves of your house.

7. Place colored lights in your flower boxes.

8. Twine colored lights in wreaths or garlands and hang them in the windows or festoon them about the outside of the house.

9. Place illuminated stars over the doors or on the roof of your house.

10. Illuminate your Christmas trees, both those used indoors and those in the yard, with strings of tiny electric lights.

11. Place colored lights, one red and one green, in twin sockets and place them in the windows.

12. Hang illuminated Christmas trees in the entry or in the windows. It is hoped that all lighting displays will be installed before Christmas eve, Saturday, December 24, and that they will be kept in place over New Years in order that everyone may have an opportunity to enjoy these attractive examples of the Christmas spirit.

Empire—Rudy J. Hillstrom, Marshall, submitted low bid on project for construction of power line to radio compass station here.

FREE—Pioneers and descendants photographed without charge for pioneer historical collection—SHANVILLE STUDIO.

SANTA and the MAGIC DOLL

by SIGRID ARNE

SYNOPSIS: Inga and Pinochio, two Toyland dolls, bring back Santa's keys, which had been stolen by a dwarf, who is sorry and becomes one of Santa's workmen. Meanwhile Pinochio is worried that no little child will want him on Christmas.

**Chapter XVII
Santa Reads His Mail**

By that time it had grown so close to Christmas—just as it is today—that all the toys were very excited thinking about the children they would shortly belong to.

Mail was coming to Santa from children so fast that he had to give over one big room just to opening the letters.

You should see how he handles letters. Each night his reindeers and sleighs flash down over our cities and towns, and some of his assistants jump out and pick up letters to Santa.

When Santa gets them he sorts them all out.

"Ho, there!" he shouts, as he opens each letter. "A baby doll and a story book for a little girl!" And a toyshop elf rushes off to the huge shelves and gets down the toys for the little girl.

"Ho, there!" shouts Santa again. "Roller skates and a baseball for a little boy who I know has been very good to his small sister this year. Find a very good pair of skates." And another elf rushes off to get Santa the order.

But through all the bustle-bustle this particular year, there was one toy that was sad.

It was Pinochio who had curled up on top of a pile of toy beds where he sat looking morosely out on the scene.

Not a single letter Santa received asked for a toy clown. Pinochio had tried hard and long, but never once did there seem to be any little child who wanted such a homely, good-natured little toy as a clown.

His little face with its long nose that was ordinarily so happy was pulled into long lines, and sometimes a big tear rolled down his cheeks. He looked so hurt when the handsome tin soldiers had their daily drill.

And worse, there were so many letters asking for soldiers.

"Ho, hum," Pinochio said to himself. I suppose I'll just be stuck in extra in some stocking, and the little boy or girl who gets me will just play with me one day, and then forget all about me.

But Pinochio had forgotten one friend who was worrying about him. That was Inga. She saw how sad he was and she hurried off to the long cupboards of doll clothes. She took down a fine, blue uniform with a gold cap and a little gold sword.

"I think you'd look fine in these," she said, "why don't you slip them on?"

Pinochio laughed at her for a minute, and then he saw how fine the



Pinochio dresses up in a handsome soldier's uniform given him by Inga but he was so thin the suit hung like rags.

cap looked silly with his long nose sticking out below.

Poor Pinochio hung his head and walked away from the mirror.

"It's no use," he said to Inga. "I'm just a clown." He slipped off the uniform as though every movement hurt him. Inga couldn't say a word.

But a little fairy had been watch-

ing the scene. She felt so sorry for this good-hearted toy.

"Don't worry," she said to him. "I know how your troubles can be fixed. And I am leaving right now to do it."

Tomorrow—It's Christmas Eve PROVOLT MEN SERVE BANQUET FOR CLUB

WILLIAMS CREEK, Dec. 22.—(Sp.) The Provolt Community club held its regular semi-monthly meeting December 17, the men furnishing the supper. Two weeks ago the men and women each put on a play, the losing side to furnish the next supper. A pleasant social evening was spent with music.

Martin Treps of Grants Pass has organized an orchestra in the school with 13 pieces. Members of the orchestra are Mr. Shipman, Wilma Lemmon, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Varner, Louis Varner, Linwood Varner, Mrs. Lee, Delmar Sorrels, Orval Lewman, Thelma Wilkinson, Harold Boat, Jean Goldsmith, Victor Sparlin and Milton Boat.

Pershing's Brother Ill
NEW YORK, Dec. 22.—(AP)—The condition of James F. Pershing, brother of General John F. Pershing, took a turn for the worse this morning at Manhattan general hospital.

It takes a Christmas Seal to make it Christmas mail.

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Glean Of Hope For Tommy!



BOUND TO WIN—The Accusation!



By EDWIN ALGER

SMATTER POP—Sound Would Get Through a Leak Like That



By C. M. PAYNE

THE NEBBS—Just A Kid

