HIGH COURAGE

by Jeanne Bowman.

SYNOPSIS—Joan Farnsworth has lost her name, the fortune she should have inherited from Luke and Lucinda Farnsworth, and even her fiance, Rob Crocker, who deserted her the moment he found she was not to inherit the Farnsworth Fisheries. But her life as "Nikki Nielsen" in the Finnish colony of Union Town is happy, and she knows now that she loves John Newman, leader in the community. And she hopes to learn more of her past and to improve her future with his help.

Chapter 29

FISHER GIRL

WILL you marry me, Nikki, when I come back from Alaska? You know I love you."

"John, I'm afraid."

"Afraid?"

"Afraid to trust my feelings. Two months ago I was going to marry Rob Crocker. Now I don't love him. This feeling I have for you is so different, I'd like to believe it would last forever, but how can I? How do I know? I'm not like you. I haven't been true to a dream, as you have. Oh, I liked you that night at the dance, I hoped i'd see you again. I even asked Duke Lansing to find you and bring you up, but you didn't come and Rob did."

"Forget it, Nikki, let's sit here and talk. We've a lifetime ahead of us. I'll sail tomorrow and during the time I'm away I believe you'll learn to trust your own feelings. Somehow I believe we're destined for each other."

Anne sat on a gray boulder, and John at her feet, hands clasped about his knees, looked up at her. Wordless communion, until a family of bluejays clattered down into the dell and began scolding.

"We'd better get away before Papa Jay has apoplexy," Anne ventured.

"Want to walk to the top of the hill? There's an old logging road near here."

Slowly they walked, trees meeting over head, wild currant waving plumes of fragrant red blossoms in their path, flowering dogwood with blossoms like carved ivory dipping and swaying above them.

They crossed streams on plank bridges swung on cables and then came out on the heads, the river below them, and beyond the Pacific, silvered with afternoon mist.

"I know a short cut back," John said, looking at his watch. "Perhaps we'd better take it."

THEY talked as they walked; that is, John talked and Anne listened. "It won't be easy being the the wife of a fisherman, Nikki, I want you to understand that. Not that I intend to remain one always."

"What do you intend to do, and what did you major in, at college?"

"Political economy," he answered, "it's always appealed to me. My Irish side, I guess. But I believe there is going to be a need of statesmanship in this country. I believe there will be the need of men who can see both sides of the class struggle which is making itself felt these days.

"I'm as anti-radical as men are made, but I realize that unless leaders come out of the ranks, agitators will speak for them and the chance of welding the two factions into a harmonious whole will be lost.

"I want to be financially free to carry on this work. I've been asked to run for the legislature but I'm not ready to accept. I'm too young for one thing, and I'm not financially able for another. But with you to help me, Nikki—"

He looked down, and when he saw the tenderness in her eyes as she looked up, he waited for nothing more.

"Nikki," he whispered, "I know now what you're going to say when I come back from Alaska. I do, don't I?"

"I think so, John," she agreed.

She wondered if a ship coming in from storm ridden seas, knew the peace she found in the haven of his arms. And then breaking into the charm of the moment came John's voice, low, curt—

"Nikki, hide there, behind that thicket, quick."

Like a shadow, Anne obeyed. She saw John walk towards the beach and stretch out in the sand, back to a log. A moment later she heard voices.

For a while she could not identify them, and then she looked out across the water. There was a fish trap there. The pilings to which the different sets of nets were hung were old, weatherbeaten, some of them broken off at the water-line. The little shed which sat on its long legs at the mouth of the trap looked as if it were ready to collapse at the first wind storm.

For fully five minutes John waited, then nonchalantly stood up, brushed the sand from his clothes, and sauntered back towards the road. Once there, he motioned Anne to join him and hurried her back over the trail without pausing to explain.

When they were in view of the others he slackened his pace. "That's an old fish trap the government ordered abandoned some time ago. Evidently some tramps hiding out there."

"I thought traps were always set where the current carries the fresh water."

"There's a current there, some freak sends it into that cove. The trap there used to be one of the best on the river."

"But why were you afraid for me?" Anne persisted.

John smiled down at her. "Must I remind you that you are very precious to me?"

They joined the others and a few moments later embarked upon a smooth sea, tinted with the last of sunset.

Anne, going up the steep flight of stairs to the grey shingled house she called home, smiled at John.

"See that window?" she asked, pointing to the one looking west. "I'll wait up there until I see your ship come home."

They stood for a moment in the darkness of the room. "And as soon as we sight land, I'll start looking up here, Nikki, and it's the last thing I'll look at when I put out to sea."

The next morning Anne stood at the window, watching a puffy little tug escort The Star of Lapland to the bar, then stand by as the sails unfurled to catch the brisk morning wind. Long she stood there, until the last fluttering pennant had merged with the horizon mist, and then she turned to pick up the threads of living, frayed by John's departure.

"I KNOW I'm a girl, but even a girl has some brains."

Anne sat on a wharf piling, curls tucked under a seaman's cap, slim figure boyish in blue slacks and high dark blue sweater.

"But, Nikki," George was protesting, "girls don't fish . . . it's . . . well it isn't nice, you know, what I mean, no girl wants to go around smelling like a fish market."

"I wouldn't be a very big market smell, George," she insisted, "I only weigh a hundred and twenty."

"And the men swear something awful, sometimes."

"But they swear in Finnish, so I wouldn't know but what they were reciting poetry."

"Yeh, but you're learning the language fast."

"Wouldn't that be fun," said Anne hopefully, "I could learn to swear in Finnish and folks wouldn't know; oh, George, you've cinched it now; there are two or three persons I'd just love to practice on."

"But, Nikki, there's storms and fogs. It's dangerous being a fisherman." He paused and looked at the girl, who sat looking west, chin thrust forward and out.

"And we'd like to take care of you, Orvi and me."

Anne smiled at him. "I know you would. And I'd love to have you take care of me, but I have reasons for wanting to do this, George, won't you trust me?"

"Sure," began George dubiously, "but, gee, I wish John was here."

"So do I," agreed Anne lightly, and jumping up thrust out her hand. "Is it a bargain? Am I hired?"

"You knew you would be," grinned the big fellow sheepishly.

But having agreed to take Anne aboard the Nikki, as part of her crew, both George and Orvi set about making a fisherman of her.

At first, determined to cure her of her peculiar intentions, they gave her work that taxed her strength, duties which had sickened girls who had made holiday trips with them.

Anne said nothing. She stood duty at the winch until she thought her back would break and her arms pop out of their sockets. She learned to use a gaff without closing her eyes. She became acquainted with all the intricacies of the engine, and horrified Lilsa by returning from the drift one night as oil smeared as any garage mechanic.

The fish were running; they poured into the Columbia. And the Sorki boys were happy. They would go a long way this summer toward paying off their debt. But there were others who were not contented, men who fished for the Farnsworth canneries.

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Clouds gather, tomorrow, over the future.

SANTA FE DIESEL FLIER HAS BLAZE

GALLUP, N. M., Nov. 21.—(AP)—Its shiny new motor scorched by a perplexing fire, the Santa Fe railroad's experimental Diesel locomotive idled on the tracks here today as officials opened an inquiry into the blaze which abruptly stopped it attempted record breaking dash last night.

Why the flames suddenly licked out to damage the new type engine unit as the train sped two hours and a half ahead of its schedule on the trial run from Chicago to Los Angeles was the predominant question confronting the executives.

Hardly had the fire cooled and the train of industry's notables been hoked to a regular steam locomotive for the continued journey to Los Angeles when S. T. Bledsoe, Santa Fe president, declared the "mishap will in no way cause the company to change its plans for a faster schedule and the use of the new equipment."

Engineer Quits, Record Perfect

NORFOLK, Neb. (UP)—H. J. Butler, Norfolk, No. 1 engineer on the Chicago and North Western lines west, has joined the ranks of retired trainmen after 52 years of service with no accidents, no wrecks, no persons injured or killed on his trains. He had reached the automatic retirement age of 70.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

Fort Jefferson, nicknamed "Fort Folly," is today a forgotten and ill-considered venture of fortifying the entrance to the Gulf of Mexico. Costly, futile, and abandoned, the old fort now stands like a ghost town of gold rush days on Dry Tortugas Island, 125 miles off the coast of Florida.

It was started in 1846 as the Rock of Gibraltar of the Gulf, to give the United States control over those waters. Five hundred guns were planned in three tiers, and the fort was to cover 16 acres of ground.

Fourteen years went into the fort before construction was halted. The idea was almost abandoned and the plan was dropped. During the Civil war, the old fort was used as a prison. In the Spanish-American war about $800,000 was sent by the navy in repairs, but Fort Jefferson was not used. It lay forgotten until the World war when at last it became useful—lead was stripped from window casements and salvaged for munitions manufacture.

Every year in St. Ives, Huntingdonshire, England, 12 boys and girls gather at the council schoolhouse to shoot a game of dice—and Bibles, strange as it seems, are given to the winners. Instructions for this strange ceremony, together with a legacy to buy the Bibles given to winners, were in the will of the Rev. Dr. Robert Wilde who died in 1678. Dr. Wilde's will has not been followed to the letter—he instructed that the dice be rolled on the communion table, but in 1860 church officials vetoed the idea and since then the game has been held in the schoolhouse.

Tomorrow: Glenn Curtiss' Most Enduring Speed Record.

DIFFICULT DECISIONS — By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

S'MATTER POP— By C. M. PAYNE

TAILSPIN TOMMY—CELEBRATING VICTORY! — By HAL FORREST

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—NO ARGUMENT — By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—HOW'RE YA DOIN'? — By SOL HESS

British Bee-Keepers Hopeful

LONDON (UP)—It is reported that British bee-keepers are secretly hoping that the Italian advance will massacre quantities of Ethiopian bees. This would disturb the supply of Ethiopian beeswax and give the British apiarists a chance in their own country.

BOWLING GREEN, O. (UP)—Harry Loo crashed his car through the display window of a store, causing damage of $1,000. He explained to police he was turning in the general direction of a garage to have his brakes fixed.