

The Boxwood Barrier

By BLANCHE SMITH FERGUSON

...So far: As the wedding of aristocratic Judith Goodloe begins, three people are torn with conflicting emotions. Loving someone else, Judith is marrying Reuben. Clissie, across made man and outsider—for his money. Desperately in love with Judith, Reuben blindly refuses to realize that his fortune is evaporating. And Clissie Rogers, maid of honor, loves Reuben. In her hand is the telegram confirming his bankruptcy. Shall she give it to him, and stop the wedding?

Chapter 18

For Richer Or Poorer

"REUBEN, take thee Judith—"
his voice was steady—"to be my wedded wife—"

Clissie shut her eyes. She had come to the end of the world—

Judith's eyes were open very wide. They did not focus on any one object. She felt a tremor pass along Reuben's arm on which her hand rested.

"It's taking it terribly seriously," she tried to feel more solemnly impressed herself.

She was strangely apathetic. She made her responses in a clear voice—"I, Judith, take thee Reuben . . . for richer or poorer . . . until death—"

"Until death!" That had an ominous sound! With the swiftness of lightning tearing across a summer sky, apathy deserted her. It was like coming alive in the midst of one's own funeral—it wasn't her funeral—it was her wedding! It couldn't be her wedding. It couldn't be without Gary!

Bishop, palms, Jim—the universe went spinning round like a top. Why was she vowing her life away when she wanted to be free? She must have been crazy to think she didn't want to wait for Gary. It was not too late—

Her roving eyes sought an open window—sought escape. Involuntarily she took a step toward it—it wasn't too late.

Beyond the windows—the hedge. A faithful sentinel, standing. The only stable thing in her crazy spinning world. It steadied her. Bantly came back. As long as there were Goodloes there must be boxwood—

She went on with her responses but her hand within Reuben's suddenly went cold.

His fingers tightened over it. And then the bishop was calling her. Oliver, Grant was kissing her, and Jim—Clissie was kissing Reuben—standing on tiptoe to do it—and Judith Goodloe was married until she died.

Between one clock tick and another the role she had set herself to play had become utterly distasteful. She wanted to step out of it. Wanted to ring down the curtain—

"The photographer from the Sun—to take your picture, Mrs. Oliver," Dick Blout at her elbow said. "Get a grin on, Reuben!"

Mechanically Judith slipped her arm through her husband's. They stepped before the camera. The wedding party formed a semicircle on either side of them.

The curtain could not be rung down—not yet!

It was wedding after the Goodloe tradition. Another golden link to be added to Amanda's chain of memories. If the link had a flaw it was not visible today.

The bride was toasted in rare vintage. Later there would be a supper that was an epicure's dream come true. The bride cake—home baked and iced by Amanda's own hands—would be cut with a sword worn by a Goodloe during the Revolution, but it was the Virginia Reel, that crowning triumph of every Goodloe wedding that concerned her now.

"On with the dance, on with the dance!" Regal in black velvet and pearls Amanda signalled the orchestra; herded the guests to the lawn. Everyone present, young and old, formed in two long lines. The bride and groom led off. Amanda and Dick Blout brought up the rear. To the tunes of Dan Tucker, Fair You Well My Lady, Turkey in the Straw, they went up the centre, down the sides—

Swing your partners, balance all—
Swing that gal with the water-fall—

"Have To Tell Her"
HAPPY voices took up the tune. Judith smiled down the long line. Her white satin feet trod a gay measure—Her mezzo voice carried clear.

Jim swung his sister around gayly, as Clissie, reckless as a gorgeous pagan princess, started down the center with Reuben.

"How grand you are, Clissie," she smiled down at her. "I'm half afraid to touch you."

His arm around her was bliss. Was torture. She said: "You're pretty swell yourself, old son."

"Thank! Glad I don't spoil the picture."

She thought: "It's my luck to do that!" Now that she had definitely lost him she wanted to spare him. If only she could destroy the telegram that rested like a concealed bomb ready to explode in the

heart of her bouquet. If she only dared to fling it away, but—he had to know—

Reluctantly she dipped jeweled fingers between her chrysanthemums and handed him the yellow envelope. "This came just as you slept before the bishop to say your little piece."

"More congratulations, I guess. He dropped it carelessly into his pocket."

Clissie breathed a sigh of relief. She did a fancy step as she swung on, saying something witty and appropriate to each partner. If Reuben would only forget that telegram until this show was over—

When she met him at the end of the line, his face was terrible.

"Clissie—why in heaven's name did you hold it back?"

"She strove for nonchalance: "Did you expect me to stage a melodrama at the altar?"

"It would have been better," tonelessly.

"That's the thanks I get for not breaking up a perfectly good wedding."

He couldn't speak. He felt nauseated and breathless as though an unseen foe had struck him a violent blow over the heart. His feet moved mechanically to the music.

He had to tell Judith—that was his first lucid thought—he had to tell his wife!

"Have to tell her, have to tell her!" The violins wailed it out. The flute carolled it. The drums moaned it: "Have to tell her—"

Then came another thought more terrible. If he hadn't been a coward—a dishonorable coward he would have told her weeks ago of his precarious position.

"But I thought it would come out all right," Reuben tried to convince Reuben. "I'd have staked my life on the Lullie Justice. I was sure—"

From somewhere within him a voice leered back: "You were not sure. You were afraid—"

A servant touched him on the shoulder. "A long distance call sir."

Lost Opportunity

HE WALKED straight toward the nearest door. He did not deflect his course one inch. He resembled a sleep-walker. The dancing couples got out of his way. Afterwards they remembered spoke of it! Now—they got out of his way—missing steps to do it—"Swing your partners—balance all—"

Not until the reel was over did he get a chance to speak to Judith. "Can you give me a minute Mrs. Oliver?" The first time he had called her that.

He led the way to the deserted breakfast room and closed the door. He felt like a deserter facing a firing squad.

"Judith—" His tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. He was unable to go on.

Outside the twilight had deepened from rose, to mauve, to misty purple. A new crescent moon was swinging high. A string of colored lights that stretched across the lawn was suddenly switched on. They made a rainbow spot of light upon the wall; upon Judith's questioning face.

"Yes, Reuben?"

"I didn't have to tell you—" He stifled a groan and looked unseeing at the lanterns.

"What?" she prodded when he didn't speak. "If you didn't have to tell me what?"

"I—lost every dollar—every cent!"

Her eyes, very blue beneath the misty white of her veil, stared mutely.

He raised his voice as though speaking to the deaf. It was a relief to shout it: "I've lost every thing—I don't own my shirt."

"Don't roar," advised his wife. "I heard you the first time."

"I wasn't sure," Reuben said. "From the dining room came the sound of many voices. The savory, blend of hot bread, fried chicken coffee—Heaven! He had not been put to the test for in a revealing flash he knew, undeniably, that Judith was the weakness of his strength, not the strength of his weakness. He wanted to tell her, wanted to shout so the whole world could hear: "I love you, I love you! I was afraid I'd lose you—"

He could not even whisper it! This was his opportunity to level things between them. He let it pass—unwillingly, miserably—but he let it pass. If she had loved him—

"I see."

"Clissie signed for it. Judith—you can't believe I—held this back?"

In the tense silence that hung between them Reuben wondered if he would have held it back, given opportunity? Thank heaven he had not been put to the test for in a revealing flash he knew, undeniably, that Judith was the weakness of his strength, not the strength of his weakness. He wanted to tell her, wanted to shout so the whole world could hear: "I love you, I love you! I was afraid I'd lose you—"

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STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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

ANNA SEWELL'S BLACK BEAUTY
Famous story of a horse.
WAS HER SOLE LITERARY EFFORT—
YET 3,000,000 COPIES WERE SOLD!
BEDRIDDEN DURING ITS ENTIRE PRODUCTION, MISS SEWELL RECEIVED LESS THAN \$100 FOR THE BOOK!

MOVE 2 MATCHES TO LEAVE 4 COMPLETE SQUARES ALL THE SAME SIZE... (Answer tomorrow)

DIET OF DEATH! PACIFIC SALMON NEVER EAT AGAIN AFTER ENTERING FRESH WATER RIVERS TO SPAWN-- AND DIE...

DON LAIRD—Featherweight, Fought only 60 seconds to win the Western Montana Silver Gloves title at Helena. He scored two 30-second knockouts in the semi-finals and won the finals by default! —Jan., 1938—

4-25-38 McNight Syndicate, Inc.

The Lone Masterpiece

Sincerely rather than long experience in writing served to make "Black Beauty" one of the best selling books of all time for, strange as it seems, Authoress Anna Sewell had never written a story in her life.

Born of poor parents in 1820, Anna was able to attend school only one year. The rest of the time she was tutored at home by her mother. During the year she went to school Anna was trapped one day in a sudden rainstorm. Dashing for shelter, she tripped and sprained her ankle. Lack of proper care permanently crippled her. It was years before she could walk even a short distance.

Anna's mother was able to support the family by writing poetry, and the two traveled extensively over

Bourbons Gain

PENDLETON, April 25.—(AP)—A modest gain in Democratic registrations in Umatilla county was noted today in estimates of total registrations made by the Umatilla county clerk's office, although Republicans still hold a majority.

Mine Confab Set

WASHINGTON, April 25.—(AP)—Julian D. Conover, secretary of the American Mining congress, announced today selection of October 24-27 for the fifth annual meeting of the western division of the mining congress in Los Angeles.

WINDOW GLASS—We sell window glass and will replace your broken windows reasonably. Frownridge Cabinet Works.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Mrs. Swift Is Adamant

JERRY WILL BE PERFECTLY SAFE IN MY PLANE, MRS. SWIFT!

SAFER'N ON TH' GROUND, WHY, TOM'S GOT OVER TEN THOUSAN HOURS OF SAFE FLYIN'!

I DON'T CARE! I WILL NOT LET JERRY FLY!

MARTHA, AREN'T YOU BEING RATHER RIDICULOUS IN THIS MATTER?

DON'T YOU REALIZE THAT JERRY IS A GROWING BOY AND HAS A WILL OF HIS OWN? WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER TO GIVE YOUR CONSENT THAN...

4-20

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Job Wanted

MY FRIENDS, I AM VERY GRATEFUL FOR THIS FOOD—I THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART!

OH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT—IT, OMEGA—

DON'T MENTION IT, OMEGA—

IN FACT, THE SPIRIT OF KINDNESS AND GOODNESS WHICH PERMEATES THIS PLACE MAKES ME BOLD—VERY BOLD!

WELL, SPILL IT—WHAT'S BITIN' YOU?

NOT A THING IS BITING ME, MR. JONES, SAVE THE DESIRE TO BE OF SERVICE AND—

I WONDER IF YOU AND YOUR PARTNER WOULD GIVE ME A JOB?

WHAT? YOU MEAN A JOB HERE ON THE FARM?

4-19

THE NEBBS—Heap Big Brave

I WAS WALKING DOWN THE STREET AND A TOUGH FELLOW BUMPED INTO ME AND TOLD ME THAT YOU'D BETTER NOT IDENTIFY THAT RING THAT JACK KROY HAD AS YOURS!

WELL, IF I DO— THEN WHAT?

HE SAID I WAS PRETTY BUSY IN THIS CASE DOWN IN NORTHVILLE AND IF YOU AND I DIDN'T TESTIFY IN FAVOR OF JACK KROY WE'D GET A NICE ONE-WAY-RIDE

AND WHAT DID YOU TELL HIM?

I TOLD HIM THAT HE COULDN'T SCARE ME— AND IF I CAN DO ANYTHING TO SEND THIS CROOK TO JAIL, HE'S THERE NOW—WHEN HE SAW HE COULDN'T BUE— ME, HE SLUNK OFF LIKE A WHIPPED CUR!!

YOU'RE RIGHT, RUDY, WE WON'T LET 'EM BLUFF US, IF YOU'RE WILLING TO TAKE A CHANCE OUT THERE WHERE THEY CAN GET YOU EASILY, I DON'T SEE WHY I SHOULD...

4-23

NOVELTY

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

COMES DOWNSTAIRS TO BREAK-FAST BY WAY OF BANISTER

IS SENT UP TO BRUSH HAIR. GOES UP BACKWARDS WITH HIS EYES SHUT

BRUSHES HAIR AND COMES DOWNSTAIRS ON ALL FOURS

IS SENT BACK TO WASH HANDS AND CLIMBS UP STAIRWAY ON OUTSIDE OF RAILING

WASHES, AND COMES DOWN, JUMPING, BOTH FEET TOGETHER, EVERY OTHER JUMP BACKWARDS

IS SENT BACK TO GET HANDS REALLY CLEAN, AND DECIDES FOR THE NOVELTY OF IT, TO GO UP AND COME DOWN IN THE REGULAR WAY

4-25

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S'MATTER POI

By C M PAYNE

GO WAY! I WANT A NAP FOR A MINUTE!

YESSIR

22-55-22

POP!

63-53-SMATTER?

DO YA WANT ME TO COUNT YER SHEEP FOR YOU?

4-4-4-4?

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By HAL FORREST

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4-23

REGAINS MEMORY BUT NOT WEALTH

RICHMOND, Va., April 25.—(AP)—Dr. Michael Erim Brooks, who said he lost his memory a month ago and "found himself" any yesterday, sought release from police custody today to return to his home in Los Angeles.

Police held the elderly man on a technical charge of "suspicion of unusual mind" following reports he was giving away \$100 bills on the streets. Dr. Brooks said he had more than \$20,000 in notes of large denominations when he lost his memory. No trace of two \$10,000 notes and three \$1,000 bills he said he had, were found in his apartment here.

TULE LAKE MAN BUYS BIG RANCH AT RUCH

BIG REAL ESTATE, April 25.—(AP)—A real estate transaction of much interest locally is the sale of the Jess Taylor ranch near Ruch, which consists of 116 acres, to Arthur L. Winter of Tule Lake, Cal.

Mr. Winter, formerly engaged in raising potatoes at Tule Lake, has brought his farm equipment here, including horses, truck, and machinery, and is putting the ranch in alfalfa. His family will come in June. Winter expects eventually to run 200 head of cattle, and has a few horses among intended improvements.

Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, who have