## Love *(Continued)*

on and his married sister moved to New York. Studying accounting at night and working seven days a week, he'd been too busy to make friends. Driven by the feeling that he had a score to settle with life, but not knowing just how, he had set himself, with grim determination, the task of accumulating money. It was Aunt Carrie who had told him that the old Hoffman farm, with some of the old furnishings, was for sale. Then he knew—he could buy back all the good things that had been taken from him.

EULALIE WAS stepping out of the car now. With his pulse quickening, Peter hurried to the door. Marriage hadn't been part of his original plan. That idea had come the day he moved in two weeks ago, when Eulalie and her mother had paid a neighborly call. He saw how much she resembled Dolly. The way she walked, her provocative smile. Marriage to Eulalie would even the score in full measure.

He was reasonably sure she would accept him. Like Dolly, she had expensive tastes. When he mustered enough nerve to ask if she'd go to a movie with him, she replied that she'd seen the only movie in town that week with George Hickman.

"But we could go dancing," she suggested eagerly. "There's a new night club, the Black Cat. My girl friends, Gertie and Lois, have been there, but I've never because it's terribly expensive and George can't afford it. He's saving his money to get married."

Peter asked with a quick twinge of jealousy, "To you?"

She laughed and tossed her head. "I should wait five years!"

George, Old Man Hickman's grandson, a tall youth with a too-serious face, was beside Eulalie now, but he lagged behind, examining the landscaping job he had done for Peter. Just getting started in the business, George had agreed to do the job at the price Peter offered—$50 less than the figure submitted by the landscaping company in town. He'd done a good job, too, Peter admitted grudgingly, looking at the lawn. There was something about the fellow that got under his skin.

Aunt Carrie, aged and bent, but still hearty, was leading everyone toward him, saying in her throaty voice, "'Bout time you met all your old neighbors and relatives, what's left of them."

He met them with an unexpected sense of shock. There were only a few he remembered, and those dimly—some cousins and schoolmates, all middle-aged, with grown families in tow.

They swarmed into the house, bustling about the kitchen with cakes and casseroles, filling the old parlor with life. George, who had brought along an accordion, started to play, and Eulalie's friends, Gertie and Lois, danced with their escorts, two callow youths in loud sport coats.

"Let's dance." Eulalie smiled up at him, her young body sheathed in a sea-gray dress that matched her eyes.

"I'm afraid I can't do any modern steps," Peter demurred. But he needn't have worried, for George was playing "The Blue Waltz," the same tune Old Man Hickman used to play.

Swinging Eulalie around, Peter closed his eyes, and for a moment recaptured the full flavor of yesterday—the smell of the old house with food warming in the kitchen, the laughter and music. But when he opened his eyes he saw, again with that sense of shock, not the folks he once knew, but a whole new generation of strangers.

He saw something else, too. George's hands touched out the tune, but his eyes were on Eulalie. Earnest young eyes, a little sad, and filled with yearning. The way I used to look at Dolly, Peter thought. He swung Eulalie about so that his body blocked her from George's view.

The music stopped and Aunt Carrie announced it was time to eat. In another two hours everyone, except Eulalie and her friends, had shaken his hand in farewell at the door. From the hallway, Peter glanced at Gertie and Lois, who lingered in the parlor with the two youths. Eulalie answered the question in his eyes.

"They're going with us to the Black Cat." She lowered her voice. "I just told them we were going, and they said they'd make it a party."

"George, too?" George was in the dining room packing his accordion.

"Of course not. He wouldn't spend that much money." Her full lips tightened a little.

"He's in love with you," Peter said, watching her carefully.

"I know." Her face softened, but only for a second. "What of it?"

One of the two young men called, "Hey, George, we're all going to the Black Cat. Coming along?"

"Not tonight," George said cheerfully. "I'm taking Eulalie home."

"Oh, no, you're not," Eulalie said. "I'm going to the Black Cat, too. With Peter!" She caught up her coat. "C'mon, kids." She looked at Peter. "We'll wait for you in the car."

THERE WAS SILENCE in the dining room and then the sound of the accordion case snapping shut. Another silence. Why didn't the fellow come out? Peter went to the dining room. George was standing with his back toward him, holding a worn wallet. He took some crumpled bills from it, and counted them.

Peter stood transfixed, watching George, but seeing another young man who had once counted his money and found he couldn't even buy a dollar's worth of love.

George put the bills back into the wallet. He turned toward his accordion case, grim-faced, and his eyes met Peter's fully.

"George," Peter began, reaching into his pocket. "I—"

George's fist shot out and slammed Peter's words into his throat. Peter sprawled; his head struck a chair as he fell. When he came to, George was bending over him, his face contrite.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Hoffman." George helped him up.

Peter got to his feet feeling lightheaded. Light inside, too, as if a cash register he'd been carrying around in there had been removed. "He had it coming, George." He spoke thickly because his jaw was sore.

"What?" George said, confused. "Who?"

"Hank Lahr," Peter answered. "He had it coming a long time."

George looked worried. "You sure you're all right?"

"Never felt better." Peter fumbled in his pocket and pulled out his wallet. "What I started to say—I want to pay you for the landscaping job."

"But it's not quite finished."

"I want to pay you now." Peter took out the correct amount, then added $50 more. "A little bonus, too, George, for an extra-swell job. Take your girl to the dance."

Still standing in the dining room a few minutes later, listening to the car roll away, Peter once more saw his reflection in the mirror.

"Fool!" he cried. "As if you could ever buy back the past. Or the people you once loved." Then he smiled. But with old scores settled at last, a man could begin to live in the present.


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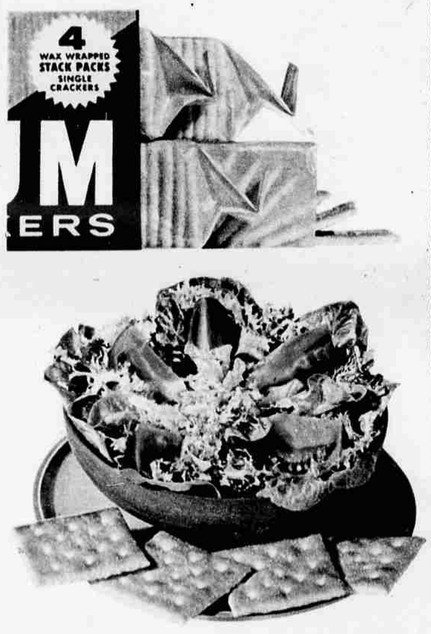


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Serve Premium Snow Flake Saltines out of a Stack Pack with a lettuce and tomato salad. Aren't they FRESH? GOLDEN GLOW, Nabisco's extra baking step, bakes crispness in. Now... CLOSE 'EM BACK!

OPEN 'EM UP... MONDAY 10 PM, SNACK

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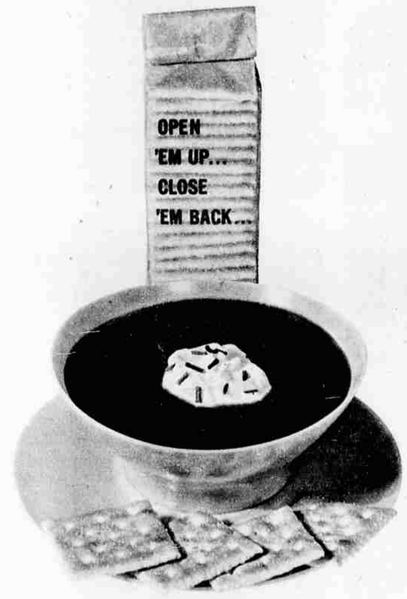
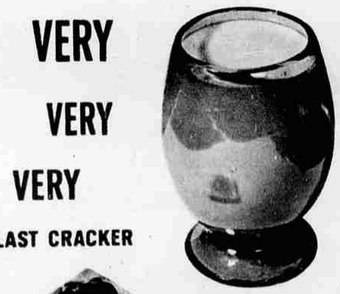



OPEN 'EM UP... TUESDAY NOON, LUNCHEON

Hearty tomato soup, topped with sour cream and chives, calls for plenty of FRESH crackers. The four Stack Packs in every pound package are reclosable, so these are fresh as ever. Now... CLOSE 'EM BACK!



OPEN 'EM UP... TUESDAY 3 PM, SCHOOL'S OUT!

Fresh as ever, tastiest with jam and milk. Yes, inside wax-wrapped Stack Packs keep Premium Snow Flake Saltines FRESH—(unlike outside wax wrappers on other saltines). Now... TIME TO BUY MORE!

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