

WEIRINA

The Story of a Girl with a Strange, Brown, and Compelling Beauty



the IRRESISTIBLE

by WALTER GLASTON
Brilliant Negro Fiction Writer

SYNOPSIS

Verna Nash is a remarkably beautiful dark-brown girl, the energetic, ambitious and intelligent member of an otherwise worthless and indigent family that lives in the worst shack in Billy Goat Lane in Norrisburg.

She, of all the six Nash children is the only one that amounts to anything and wants to be somebody. Working as a maid for a rich white family, she sees around her all of the good things of life and resolves to have them for herself some day.

Coming to realize the power of her irresistible sex magnetism, she feels sure of her ability to rise above her lowly station. Her mother wants her to marry Dick Colvin, an ungainly, uncultured laborer. She refuses him on several occasions.

Dick takes Verna to the movies one evening and on the way home proposes to her again. She refuses him and, enraged, he forces her to kiss him. As she screams in his embrace, a man leaps from the darkness and knocks Dick out.

Now Go On With the Story

CHAPTER II

The Dangerous Step

When Verna looked into the intruder's face, her first thought was "How handsome he is." He was tall, brown, immaculately dressed, unruffled, suave—apparently a gentleman. It thrilled Verna, who had never known the glamour of chivalry and romance, to have a young knight bound out of the darkness to her rescue.

"Pardon me, young lady," he addressed her in resonant voice, rubbing his bruised knuckles. "I hope I didn't do anything you didn't want done. I just saw that fellow annoying you and I was fresh enough to interfere."

"Oh, thanks so much," the girl murmured softly, glancing at the fellow from under her long, silken lashes. "It's all right."

With a groan, Dick Colvin sat up and rubbed his jaw and the back of his head, and then slowly rose. He looked around bewildered at first, and then noticing the stranger for the first time, he lurched toward him.

"I'll get you, you . . ." he growled, swinging a mighty blow at the dapper intruder. The man stepped neatly aside, Dick's arm lashed the air futilely, he stumbled to one side and almost fell.

The Lumbering Ninny

"Look out, old fellow," said the stranger grinning, "you're liable to fall and hurt the other side of your jaw."

Verna chuckled at Dick's discomfiture. He was such a lumbering ninny and this other fellow was so slick and quick. It was like a rhinoceros charging a tiger. Then she uttered a little sharp cry of dismay as she saw Dick's face working with rage, advancing with an open knife.

Dick had a bad reputation with a knife. In the frequent Saturday night brawls that enlivened things in Billy Goat Lane, he usually came out the victor. His acquaintances avoided quarrels with him when they knew he was armed with a blade. Now he moved toward the stranger doubled to a dangerous crouch, the knife blade glittering in the moonlight.

"D—n you!" he growled. "I'll stop you from buttin' in where you ain't got no business."

When he was almost upon the stranger, the man stepped back a pace, reached in the bosom of his coat and withdrew a shining automatic revolver. Twirling it on his finger, he stood nonchalant but attentive, a grim, hard, cynical smile playing around his lips.

Dick stopped in his tracks, clicked his knife shut, shoved it in his pocket and grinned sheepishly. "Well, brother, I guess youse th' best," he declared with a tone of finality, and bestowing a baleful glance upon Verna, turned and strode hurriedly away.

"You'd better git away from here," she warned. "Dick's liable to come back here with his gang. He's a bad one, he is."

Humph! Why was she saying that? Was she being attracted to this stranger? She looked at his clean-cut features, accentuated by the moonlight, and her heart skipped a beat. Certainly he was handsome but there was something about his face, a certain expression of calculating hardness that warned her to be careful. After all, she might not be as safe with this man as she had been with Dick. Men were so funny. You could never tell about them.

"My name is Donald Baxter," he said quietly, ignoring her warning. "Donald Baxter from Kalesburg. Just ran over to Norrisburg for a little rest and vacation. Awfully glad to be of service to you. I always say that a man has no business kissing a girl unless she wants him to do it. All caresses ought to be voluntary. I think. That's why I interfered when I saw you weren't approving of our friend's attentions."

How nicely he spoke! Just like the Richlands. And how well dressed he was! Looking beyond him into the darkness, she saw the outline of a low rakish roadster.

"That's my car," he said, looking down softly upon her wondrous brown

beauty. "Won't you let me drive you home?"

Falls in Love

"Well, I—I don't know," she replied hesitatingly. She hated to have him see Billy Goat Lane and the shack in which she was forced to live. Yet, with that keen feminine instinct which was greatly developed in her,

stiffening at his presumption and hastened on. "Now don't get angry. I'm not going to get fresh. I just want to take you home; just want to know you and call you my friend."

"You see, Verna, I've been all over the world but never have I ever met a girl to compare with you. Any man would go mad about you at first sight. I really don't see how you do it

way to the roadster. He helped her in, jumped in beside her, started the power'ul motor to roaring and switching on the lights, dashed down the road the gears singing as they were shifted. Verna sank down in the soft cushions that luxuriously infolded her and gave herself up to the enjoyment of this, her first ride in a real automobile.

to Billy Goat Lane. Don brought the car to a stop with a lurch and helped Verna out. The moon was hopelessly buried in a bank of clouds now, and the night was very dark. The girl started uneasily when Don's steely grip closed around her wrist. She could feel the intensity of his gaze upon her and her heart beat quickened. Was she to have another adventure this evening? Was she to escape one man only to be annoyed by another? She shrank protestingly. Don was quick to notice it and loosened his grip. For a moment he had forgotten himself.

"Don't be frightened, Verna," he said in a simulated hurt tone. "I'm not a roughneck, you know."

"I'm not frightened," she laughed. He seemed so in earnest that she wanted to kiss him, but, of course, she didn't dare. "See you tomorrow, then," she said, and ran into the house.

He looked after her hungrily. Then he caught himself and smiled. What a fool he was, losing his head over a pretty little country girl who probably didn't have sense enough to come in out of the rain. And yet it was so hard to resist her. What a gem she was! How jealous his friends in Kalesburg would be if he brought back such a beauty to add to his string! He lit a cigarette, leisurely settled himself behind the steering wheel, and drove slowly down the highway.

Trembling with excitement, Verna lay in bed thinking of the evening's happenings. To have a knight come to one's rescue; to speed over the boulevards in a powerful motor car; to be in the company of a gentleman of wealth and culture who did not try to force a girl to kiss him but was willing to respect her by bidding his time—what an adventure!

The next night Don called for Verna at the Richland's back door just when she was about to leave for home. She was surprised and pleasantly so, especially since she noticed Miss Anne Richland looking out of the back bedroom window. Verna tossed her head proudly and stepped into the roadster. It was every whit as expensive as the Richland's car, and she was glad to let them see that some Negroes had just as good things as some white folk.

After that first evening, Don was a persistent suitor. Every night his car was at the Richland's back door. Every night he took her driving, to a dance, or to a moving picture. He spent money like water, according to the small town standards of Norrisburg, and that impressed the colored girls of the town more than anything else. They marvelled how Verna had captured him, and tried hard to flirt with him themselves. They soon found it was useless, however, because Don couldn't see anyone but Verna.

He often laughed softly to himself when he was alone and thought of the innocent-appearing part he was playing. He, Donald Baxter, the man with a score of sweethearts, playing the part of the lovesick youth! It was indeed laughable.

True, he liked Verna, and was willing to go to great lengths to win her affection, but he was not thinking of giving her his name. His attentions were not very honorable. He was willing to be a good pal, but not a husband. Why should he marry, he often asked his friends, and tie himself down to one woman, when there were so many he could have, just for the asking?

Verna Is Cynical

He was just here in Norrisburg until things quieted down in Kalesburg. Prohibition officers and the uplift folk had forced him to suspend his operations for a while and he had come to this little town as a safe haven. With plenty of money, plenty of clothes, an expensive car, a lively imagination and a capacity for a good time at all times, he could think of nothing better than utilizing his vacation to play at love.

But as the days grew into weeks, weeks of heavenly pleasure in the charming Verna's company, he began to really fall in love with her.

"Verna, you know I'm getting wild

"I'LL GET YOU . . ." HE GROWLED



"With a groan Dick Colvin sat up and rubbed his jaw . . . then slowly rose."

she knew that she must not let him go. She might never get another chance to become acquainted with a man so well dressed, so obviously cultured, so much of a gentleman, as hence so desirable as a friend.

"Please let me take you home, Verna," he pleaded. "You needn't be ashamed of Billy Goat Lane. You see I know where you live."

"How do you know my name and so much about me?" she asked, consumed with curiosity, while her big, black eyes opened wonderingly.

"Because I saw you the first night I came in town, fell head over heels in love with you, and just had to satisfy my curiosity. He noticed her

without any makeup. It must be a gift."

There was a ring of sincerity in his voice and his eyes reflected it.

Verna hung her head coquettishly. It was nice to hear such things said about one's self when one had always been told by one's mother that one was absolutely nothing. How jealous her girls would be when they saw her keeping company with Donald Baxter!

"Sure, you can drive me home," he agreed resolutely. He might get fresh and want a kiss or two, she thought, but—well, he was her ideal of what a fellow should be.

Donald smiled broadly and led the

Donald chuckled to himself as he drove. What a swell chicken, he murmured to himself, glancing sidewise at her. For a week now he had been watching her, hoping that some way would be found to strike up an acquaintance. The events of the evening had seemingly been made to order for him. Now, everything would be clear sailing. What simple little country girl could resist the blandishments of the famous Don Baxter, bootlegger and gambler extraordinary? He smiled ardently and sent the speedometer up to sixty in his moment of exhilaration.

Don Makes Violent Love

By a roundabout way, they came

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