

THE RICH SCRUB GIRL

The Strange Case of Molly Cage who Scrubbed Floors to be Near Her "Ideal Man"

By DONN BRYAN
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MOLLY Cage attracted a world of attention and found herself in the glare of the spotlight almost before she knew it, and this was exactly what she wasn't looking for, didn't crave, wouldn't have had at all, if she could have escaped it.

But fate is fickle, and poor little Molly could do nothing to ward off the cruel blows that chance landed against her frail physique.

Molly could have purchased, had she wished, anything that pleased her fancy and given a check for it "on the spot," whether it amounted to one dollar or thirty thousand. Money problems did not faze her. In her life love and romance were everything.

Her father had made a fortune overnight in oil, and Molly came into possession of his vast estate upon his death. In fact, this noble colored girl had more money than she knew how to spend. And all her life she had been pampered and spoiled by loving parents who wouldn't let her soil her delicate brown hands.

Therefore, it was strange when she performed with amazing dexterity the stunt that placed her in the limelight. It wouldn't have been so extraordinary if she hadn't been the wealthiest girl in town. But love is known to make fools of both women and men who feel its strong currents.

In another part of the northwest Missouri town where she resided, lived a prominent novelist who was steadily gaining a place at the top of the ladder of success. He was forty and single, rather good looking, and certainly brilliant of mind. Molly Cage met him in society but she knew that he had forgotten her almost as soon as he took her slim hand upon introduction. There was something quite old-fashioned about Roy De Horne. That was his name in private life. His writings appear under a nom de plume.

Molly Cage recognized love when it came to her. She had been starved for it; that is, the sort of idealistic love that she wanted. She might have married a hundred men in her town and all of them mad with admiration for her, but she wanted the love of a man she could love in return.

She was chic and demure. She possessed certain mannerisms and certain charm that made men sit up and take notice. Albeit she was shy; she had her way with men, as she had with her parents.

But this story concerns her sacrificing desire to win response to her frantic love for the writer-gentleman. When she found that she could not be near him in any other way, she accepted a position in his small cottage near the water tower as a scrub girl.

Can you picture pampered and petted Molly Cage scrubbing floors with her bejeweled fingers and her silken ultra-modern styles? But love—Aye, love enslaves them all; there are few, if any, who can withstand its irrational demands.

Of course, De Horne did not know that she was crazy about him, and perhaps did not care. He simply thought that she was a poor girl in need of employment and he told her when she presented herself at his house that he would give her five dollars a week to keep the floors of his small cottage clean.

Because he was somewhat of a recluse, he avoided the social life of the city as much as possible. He worked incessantly. Sometimes he worked day and night. Therefore, it is perfectly natural that he forgot about having met Molly Cage before, that he had shaken her hand, that he had bestowed upon her one of his winning smiles in the drawing room of her fashionable house in an exclusive residential district. He had too many other matters to occupy his mind to remember such commonplace incidents.

Molly Cage devoured every book he wrote. The most of these books were about brazen women who pos-

sessed sufficient nerve to go after the thing they wanted. Consequently Molly crammed her pretty little head full of many sensational ideas, and what resulted made interesting columns for the newspapers.

Once the famous novelist walked into the low-ceilinged kitchen where she was down upon her hands and knees scrubbing the base of the crude stone fireplace, and told her that she wasn't scrubbing properly. From anyone else that would have been enough to rouse her ire, but she delighted in it—delighted in hearing the sound of his voice, whether he reproached or praised her.

Then he pointed with the toe of his polished shoe to a spot on the stone that she had missed. "You'll have to do better than that," he expostulated, "or I'll have to employ another girl."

"I'll do better," she averred, "you may rest assured of that. Just give me another chance."

She sat there on the floor looking up at him.

what she wanted in the manner of a real woman of the world, who was thickly coated with cosmopolitan lacquer.

She slipped into the side entrance of his cottage one night, knowing this door was always unlocked, and hid herself in a clothes closet. He was entertaining a woman from the outside world, a city woman who had come down there to renew old acquaintances. And while she was hidden in the closet she listened to their conversation and gleaned enough information to make her terribly jealous. But she lost her nerve that night and slipped home

He shoved her away from him.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," he said, reproachfully.

"You like women," she remonstrated. "Why don't you like me?"

"You're too young for a man like me," he protested. "And—er—there is some difference in our standing."

With that he withdrew from the room.

Molly was afraid she would be discouraged, but she wasn't.

Then at a social function the fol-

De Horne, "and I want you to return it."

He looked at her in amazement. Then, giving way to temptation, he took her into his arms and kissed her.

"I'm mad about you," she whispered, nestling more closely to him.

At a fashionable ball several weeks later she revealed her true identity to her lover. He was shocked. Another man there tried to steal her attention, and the author resented it. They had words.

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Yet, she could have bought and sold the man.

He nodded. "You'll get all the chances you deserve," he rejoined, and then walked off and left her.

From where she worked she could hear the steady click of his typewriter and knew that he was creating another thrilling love story.

Then she found that she had stood it as long as she could. Copying after one of the characters in his stories, she decided to go after

again, without having accomplished her supreme desire.

While she was scrubbing his study the next day she took advantage of the opportunity and flaunted her girlish charms in his face. She knew how to do this. He sat there and looked on with amused toleration. Perhaps he was as fully surprised as he had ever been in his life when she suddenly threw her arms around him and pressed her lips against his mouth.

lowing evening, at her home, she hid in a room upstairs while her mother lavishly entertained the author and a number of guests. She was afraid that he would recognize her.

"Gawd, I love that man," she murmured, while she lay sobbing on her bed in her luxurious pink and blue boudoir.

The next day she resorted to different tactics. "I love you," she declared in the study, walking in on

And the writer, in a fit of anger, knocked the man down in the oak-paneled drawing room of Molly's home. They fought like two infuriated jungle beasts. The author was the winner, but he created such a disturbance that he was ashamed of himself, and stole away.

Molly, slipping on a chinchilla coat, followed him to his house, and entering at the side door, con-

(Continued on page 4)

The Thirteen Most Gifted Negroes in the United States

By EUGENE GORDON, Brilliant Essayist

An extraordinarily interesting article promised our readers some time ago, will appear in the ILLUSTRATED FEATURE SECTION at an early date