

STRANGE STORY OF MISSOURI'S MODERN

JEKYLL-HYDE GIRL

Unfortunate Marion Hubble, whose brilliant mind, but wanton personality brought her to a life of crime and ultimately a tragic death.



The force of the blow felled her, but Marion got to her feet. When Freda rushed her back against the wall, she brought down the hand holding the hat pin and killed her old chum. Freda was dead when she hit the floor. . .

Marion Hubble and Freda Littleton were pals, girlhood chums who went to school together, attended social functions together, in fact there was seldom a time in the first eighteen years of their lives when they were apart, even at night; and they had been born just across a tall board fence from one another. They were called "the inseparable chums," by those who knew them.

There must have been a strange and domineering love that guided these girls safely through the early part of their interesting lives together, that kept down jealousies, hatreds, envy, and all other sinister emotions that lead to destruction and tragedy.

They never had any trouble until they had reached twenty-two years of age. Marion was just five days older than Freda, and was perhaps the brighter girl of the two, although Freda was the more attractive. The latter was a trifle taller, slim and willowy, and Marion, on the other hand, was solid of build, with fleshier arms and legs. But she possessed a personality that stood out like a yellow lamp in a thick fog, attracting all those with whom she came in contact with consummate ease.

When it narrowed down to a question of popularity, there wasn't much doubt about who was the leader of these chums. A few people were of the opinion that Marion Hubble "made the balls" and Freda Littleton "threw them."

There was no doubt but that they made an irresistible team.

The parents of these two girls were wealthy and occupied excellent social positions in the little town in which they lived. Marion's father was a farmer who lived in town, and Freda's father was a porter in a bank, but he had invested his earnings wisely which enabled him to amass quite a fortune.

They resided in stately modernistic houses, one white stone, the other Colonial brick. The latter was the house in which Marion lived. Her mother died when she was eighteen, but Freda's mother, father and one other sister made the latter's home somewhat happier than was Marion's home life. The Hubble girl's aunt, a spinster, who hated men and believed in going to bed early, made her life unpleasant.

She was not allowed to have company, and for this reason she fitted up the room above her garage for a boudoir, where it is said, she not infrequently entertained masculine company. Of course her aunt didn't know anything about this rumor, and if word ever fell on her ears to the effect that Marion was enjoying romantic episodes in the back yard, there is no record to show it.

Anyway, the Hubble girl became somewhat like two vastly different persons, and perhaps the above experience caused it. One of those persons was a pleasant, smiling girl, the other a snarling she-wolf, who roamed the streets at night and promiscuously begged cigars from men she encountered. When the time came for her to find love, her dual personality led her to—a peculiarly tragic end.

Marion Hubble and Freda Littleton fell in love with the same young man, Henderson Stout, who carried special delivery letters and worked his way through school, but who was handsome and who could write stirring poetry. He flirted with both girls, but soon made his preference known, which caused the breach between the devoted chums. He said he thought more of Freda.

Notwithstanding his ill-considered disclosure he kept on seeing Marion in her garage boudoir, without Freda learning the facts. However, Freda watched him one night, and when he had entered the garage room of the pretty Marion, she followed and confronted the clandestine lovers from the threshold.

"And so I've found you out," she said to Marion. "You're the thief who has been trying to rob me of happiness, trying to steal the only man I ever loved, trying, in fact, to blast my future prospects."

"And all these years I have loved

and trusted you. I've been a serf to your least desires, Marion Hubble, but I'll never do anything for you again. I don't want you to speak to me after this, never look at me; I don't want to meet you at all. And as for him—"

Here she paused, unable to continue.

But he begged her to take him back.

"I'll never have anything more to do with Marion Hubble," he proclaimed. "I'm through with her. She's not the right kind. She walks

in dark streets and has promiscuous affairs with men. I've heard all about her. That's why I came here tonight, to tell her I was done. You can believe that or not, but I swear to you, Freda, that you are the girl I love and the one I want."

She must have been favorably impressed with what he said, and when Marion Hubble stood with her head bowed, not saying anything and possessed of an air of guilt, Freda agreed to take him back. They left the building together, but their love affair ended that night, just as did

Marion Hubble's.

They found the body of the young man under a huge tree a block back of Marion Hubble's garage residence. He had been stabbed in the throat with a long hatpin, a steel instrument that made a dangerous weapon. But the hatpin was not found.

The crime completely baffled the authorities and there is a possibility that the real killer would never have been found out had not Freda taken a hand in the matter in an effort to solve the mystery of her sweetheart's murder.

A week after the finding of the

corpse under the cottonwood, she sought out Marion Hubble, who had been wearing mourning, and was stricken apparently with great grief, and pointing an accusing finger at her, said:

"You killed him, and I've come here to settle things with you for good and all. I loved him. He was more than the world to me. I long for him even now, and I'll never be happy again. You've not only taken from me the man I love, but you have driven me insane."

"You'll pay for this, Marion Hubble, you'll pay this very night. I'm going to beat you to death with my own two hands and leave your poisoned body here for the vultures to pick. You coward. Why did you have to kill the man I love?"

She threw off a fur coat that she had been wearing, and putting her rings and watch in one of the pockets, advanced towards Marion who, in a scarlet negligee, was waiting to see whether she meant her threat.

And when she found out that the other girl was very much in earnest, she ran to a fireplace and grabbed down her hat off the mantel. From this she extracted a long steel hat pin just as Freda struck her in the face. The force of the blow felled her, but Marion got to her feet.

When Freda rushed her back against the wall, she brought down the hand holding the hat pin and killed her old chum.

Freda was dead when she hit the floor, and after seeing what she had done, Marion fled into the night. She was found in a fisherman's cabin on the banks of the nearby river, but she wasn't taken from this place alive. She still had the hat pin, and when the authorities came to get her, she stabbed herself.

The fisherman had given her shelter from a vicious snow storm, he said, but it was thought that because he was a young bachelor, he had attempted to hide her after she had admitted killing Freda Littleton.

This tragedy which cost three lives happened ten years ago, but the colored folk residing in this section of the state never tire of relating the occurrences to every stranger who crosses the threshold of the community. They speak in glowing terms of the beauty of those girls, and then when they come to the point where the murder took place they lower their voices as if afraid of being overheard or discovered by the ghost of the strange Marion Hubble.

Marion's dual personality is best exemplified by her diary, excerpts of which are quoted here.

"Today Henderson kissed me a thousand times."

"Henderson says I'm like lava from a volcano."

"Last night Henderson and I erected chateaus in the blue of the sky. He talks like his poems read. Red ashes from red roses—I love that poem. It speaks of warm lips of Egyptian princesses upon the necks of stalwart slaves."

"I shall don a gown (she refers to night gown) and stop the first man that passes our house tonight, a transparent gown through which he can see my alluring figure; and if he stops—"

"I think Freda is waking up to my influence over Henderson. But what a costly influence." (Here, she does not make her meaning clear.)

"The sight of human blood fascinates me. Today I cut my finger just to see the blood flow, so richly crimson." (This is the first hint we have that she was capable of two murders.)

"My aunt says I am immodest. But have I not occasion to be? How many women have my beauty of figure? Not even Freda. Her legs are as thin as broom-sticks."

"Oh, my God—I am afraid I'm going to lose him."

Those two women in one, made Marion Hubble a criminal who has been studied and torn apart by students of criminology since the day of her second murder. Such a character has been often chronicled, but seldom found in real life.

One moment Marion was a lovable sweetly smiling creature, and as quick as a flash she could become a glower-

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