

The Worm Turned—A True Story

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thing about Glen Reston, for as soon as I opened the door, she began:

"Mabel, that Glen Reston phoned for you tonight."

"What did he say?" I nervously asked.

"I didn't get all the message, but he said something about joining the party at the Plaza Club at twelve."

"Well, it's half past eleven now!" I flashed a hasty glance at my wrist-watch. "Gee! I'll have just about time to jump into a dancing frock and make it."



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I whirled excitedly away toward the hall; but was stopped at the door by a protesting "Mabel," from my mother.

"Yes?" I turned impatiently. "My child, who will chaperon this party?" mother asked softly.

"Why, no one," I said surprisedly. "I'm going with Glen Reston."

"And Mrs. Reston?" persisted my mother.

"But why the cross-examination?" I flung up my head challengingly. "Glen's all right, and anyhow, I've got no time to chew scandal; I must hurry as it is."

I started again towards the hall but again my mother stopped me.

"Mabel," she said calmly, "I think you had better give up this party tonight."

"Oh, don't be a crab, mother," I pleaded, "I have been going all along, anyhow, and I..."

Mother cut my sentence short—"That's the trouble now, you've been going all along and I'm going to put a stop to a girl at nineteen racing all over New York after midnight, with a married man."

"Well, it's mighty funny that suddenly you decide that I can't go out to a party," I protested. I paced the floor, scraping the carpet from under foot and yelling at top voice:

"I'm going out. I'm old enough. I'll have you understand. As an individual, I have the right to live my own life. You can't lock me up or treat me like an infant. I'm going. I tell you, and that's all there is to it."

"Not quite 'all' there is to it," my mother corrected. It was evident that she had nerved herself to meet the crisis.

"I, too, know a parent's rights and duties, and intend to observe them. I have been a very weak and foolish mother, Mabel; but hereafter I intend to take a different stand."

"You can disobey me, of course, if you choose. You can go out to-night with this man and his fast crew. But if you do, I warn you, my daughter, that my door will be closed against you on your return and you will have to go elsewhere for your support."

I could see from the expression of my mother's face that she really meant what she said and yet because I was young and foolish, and had been allowed to have my own way for such a long time, I soon found myself descending the stairway dressed in my dancing frock. Down through the hall I strutted, opened the door and slammed it ostentatiously behind me.

I walked North on Lenox Avenue until I came to a certain corner where I always met Glen. Not until then did I begin to think of what I had done at home and how I had insulted my mother for the first time.

I tried to console myself with the thought that she did not really mean what she said. "That's just another one of those war-like theses of admonition of hers. She'll be all right by morning," I said to myself and turned to look at the big clock in the window of the drug store.

It was far after twelve o'clock and Glen had not arrived. I rushed thoughtlessly into the drug store and into a private booth, the first one I saw, slipped a nickel into the coin box and called the Plaza Club. But by the time I got Glen on the phone I was so upset by the protracted waiting and the operator's blundering mistakes that I could hardly make myself intelligible.

"Glen, I've been turned out!" I announced dramatically.

"Whadda you mean, turned out?" he stammered back.

Glen had been hitting the cocktails heavily, and both his tongue and his wits were a little dulled.

"Turned out of home. Mother says if I go to the dance with you tonight I can't return. The door will be closed against me."

He laughed irresponsibly. "Well, why not take her at her word and spend the week in Atlantic City. Eh Kid?"

I drew back at the insult, not only of his words but of his tone. I was ready to go back home and ask forgiveness. With a sudden sick disgust, both of him and all he represented, I crashed the receiver down on the hook.

"I will go home," I said, decidedly, as I rushed out of the booth to come

face to face with a terrible situation. The lights in the store were out, and the place was empty.

With difficulty, I made my way among the show-cases toward the front door, then paused with a start at the sobering realization that confronted me.

I glanced about me in confusion. In my perturbation I had failed to notice before, that the lights in the windows behind the big bottles of colored water had been turned off. Only a single bulb burned at the back of the store to serve as a night light. By its dim illumination, the labeled jars of the drugs along the shelves and the fronts of the cabinets filled with toilet preparations stared glassily down at me.

Indeed, there was a sort of tomb-like silence in the place. Outside, the taxicabs were chugging up and down Lenox Avenue, a string of bobbing lights, and the occasional footfall of a pedestrian passed along the sidewalk.

The only sound that reached my ears was the measured ticking of a clock on the wall that, as I stood there, struck the hour.

One o'clock, and the place closed for the night! Not exactly an agreeable predicament for an innocent stranger.

But at the moment I was not frightened. When I had gone into the telephone booth, the druggist was back at the cash register, casting up his accounts for the day. I couldn't

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Spring Fever Suggestions

SPRING FEVER RECIPES

Oh my, no! These dishes do not produce Spring fever. They are filled with fruits—and greens—just the kind of food we need this month to keep our bodies alkaline:

Peach and Orange Salad

Peel oranges and cut into one-fourth inch slices. Arrange on lettuce-covered salad plates, alternately with canned sliced peaches. Garnish with walnut-halves.

Cabbage Delight

Peel oranges, removing all white skin. Cut into one-fourth inch slices and then into segments. Cover salad plate with finely shredded cabbage. Sprinkle with orange segments. Serve with French dressing.

Double-O Salad

On a bed of lettuce leaves arrange a thin slice of Bermuda onion, add one-half inch slice pared orange, another slice Bermuda onion and a second slice orange. Garnish with green pepper and watercress. Serve with French dressing.



WHEN FOOD SOURS...

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