

—but then, they were not. Nothing but greed had caused her to marry the doctor, who was twice her age—lust for money. She had bartered her soul for the pleasures that this wealth could provide, and should suffer the consequences, even though she did not love him.

His case was different. He had married from a sense of duty, or honor, wed to keep his promise to his mother to repay her for all of the sufferings and worry he had caused her. He was willing to pay his debt; why shouldn't she be?

She looked up suddenly into his eyes. "It's so hard sometimes to find some one who understands," she murmured. "Single people never know what we married ones go through.

Even though I have just met you, it is so good to confide in a man like you, a young married man who understands." She had come very close to him. As she looked up into his face, her large black eyes piercing his own, Leslie breathed hard.

"I think we had better go back into the house," he said coldly, turning on his heels and leading the way.

"They had hardly been missed. Joyce and the doctor had raked out musty volumes to substantiate their arguments, and had them spread out over the center table.

"Why, I hardly realized how late it was," said the physician, looking at his watch. "Mr. Kayne, I congratulate you on having a most interesting wife. She nearly got me tangled up one time."

"And I return the compliment," replied Leslie. "Yours almost tripped me too."

The Hargraves were putting on their wraps when the doctor remarked: "I hardly knew that two young people like you lived in the city. My office practice is so confining that I get very little time for social engagements. I just tore myself away tonight. By the way, Kayne, here is my office phone number, call me up some time."

"Give Mr. Kayne the house phone number, too," interrupted Cleo. "He

may find it convenient to call up there sometimes." There was a significant look in her eyes as she wrote out the number herself and handed it to Leslie.

"Quite an interesting woman, don't you think?" he remarked to Joyce when they had gone. "Nifty dress she had on, too."

"That's the way with husbands," she rejoined. "They can always see pretty things on other women, but not on their own wives. I brought this dress especially to please you, and you never said a word."

"Why, that is new, isn't it; very chic—what did it cost?"

"Only a hundred and fifty; cheap at that."

"Cheap!" roared Leslie, "you must think that I'm made of money."

"Don't rave so. Not a penny of your money paid for this. I got my check from the school board today."

"Well, why didn't you give me a part of it to help me out of debt? Clothes, clothes, always clothes, and I keep my nose to the grindstone trying to pay off the mortgage on this house, pay for this furniture, pay for the car. The money you earn does not belong to you alone. You're a cheat!"

"But, Leslie, can't you see the people judge you by me? If I dress shabbily, they will think that you are not able to support me. Nothing succeeds like success. You know, I am your show window. If I look successful, clients will come to you."

He displayed a handful of unpaid bills. "If it were not for Aileen, I mean, Miss Roberts, I don't know what I would do."

"There you go again, continually raving about Aileen, who is merely your secretary, while I get no credit for making a home for you. I believe there is something in these private secretary jokes after all."

Leslie forgot the unpleasantness of that night, forgot Cleo Hargraves, forgot Aileen Roberts, forgot — no, he could not forget Owen.

It was a week later when he entered the office after lunch to find Aileen crying. "Why, Miss Roberts," he inquired, "what is the matter?"

She was reluctant. "It's your friend," she stammered after much persuasion, "Mr. Clifford. He insists upon annoying me when you are out of the office. He just left here a few minutes before you entered. Won't you please speak to him?"

Leslie walked abruptly into Rupert's office. "See here, Clifford," he blurted out, "you've got to stop annoying Miss Roberts, my secretary. Her time

is valuable. You must leave her alone."

"Perhaps you would like to have things all to yourself," suggested Rupert sneeringly.

"What do you mean to insinuate?" demanded Kayne.

"Don't play the innocent lamb with me. You know blamed well you want the girl for yourself, or else you wouldn't be so interested."

"Surely you are mistaken. Miss Roberts is nothing more than a child to me. It is merely a bit of gallantry on my part that prompted me to intercede for her. Remember, I am a married man."

"Gallantry," jeered Rupert, "I suppose you want to call it gallantry that madly you steal my wife and hide her in your apartment in New York and I know right now that you know where she is and are putting up for her. Yes, I think you want Aileen for yours! If a dog like you would do anything."

There was a scream behind him.

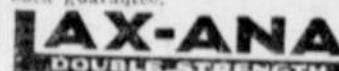
Leslie turned. His face showed his dismay.

"My God!" he cried. It was Joyce. How long had she been standing there? How much had she heard?

(To Be Continued)

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"I LOST MY DEAREST FRIEND BECAUSE MY SKIN WAS UGLY"

(A True Story From Life)



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