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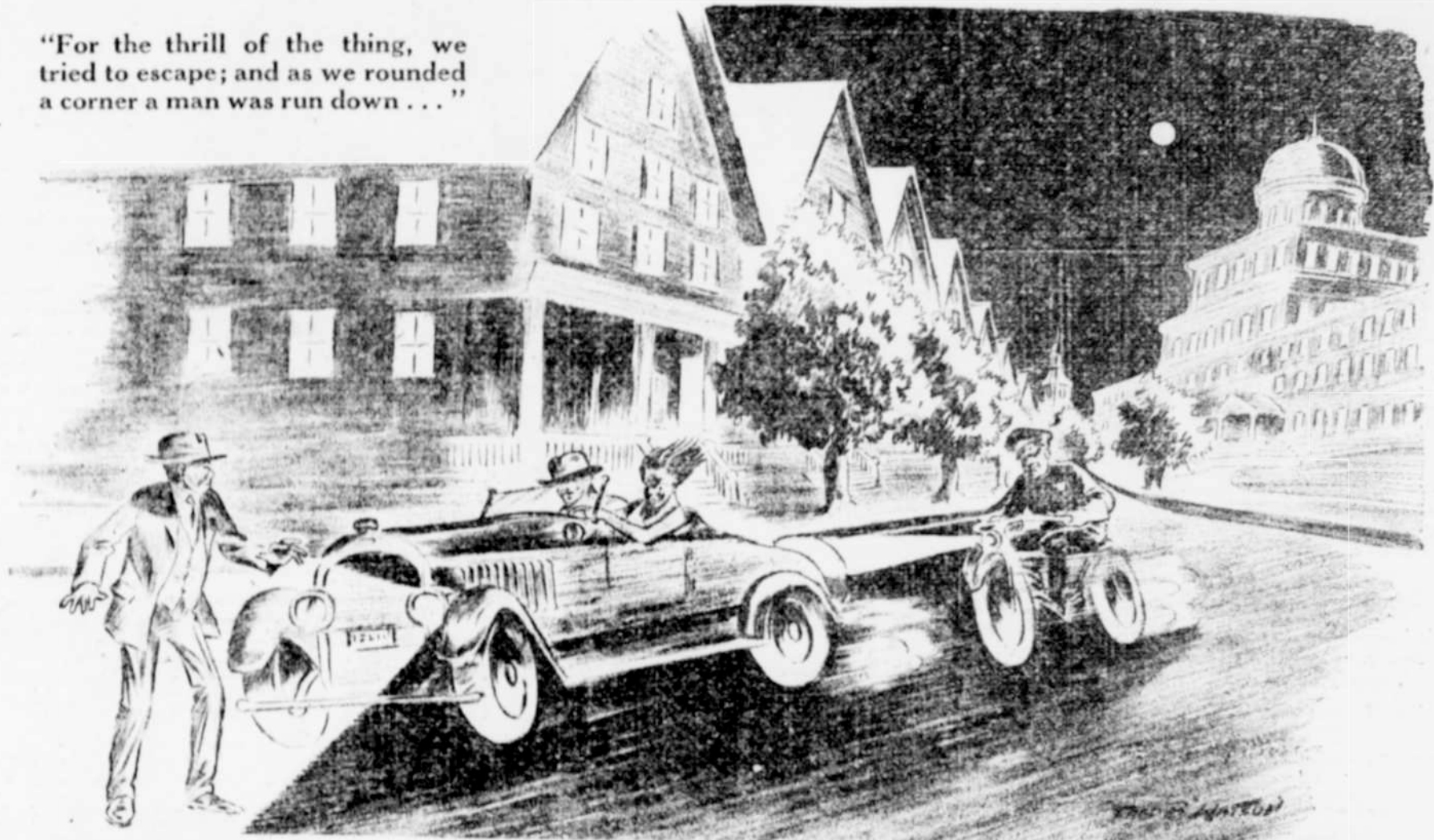
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SHE PAID THE PRICE

The Love Story of A Reckless Atlanta Girl who Wanted Thrills

"For the thrill of the thing, we tried to escape; and as we rounded a corner a man was run down..."



By EDWARD WORTHY

Norman Wayne put the receiver of his phone back on its hook. He was disturbed. Leila had phoned and said

that she was coming to see him—after ten years. But that was like Leila Thorne, he reflected, always doing the unexpected. He knew he should be glad, but somehow... it had been ten years since he last saw her.

Their last meeting was stamped indelibly on his mind. Her voice floated back through the years to him: "No Norman," she had said, "no, I won't do it all. You must release me from my promise to marry you. Life is too interesting to settle down for one man."

"But my dear," he said, "surely you cannot mean what you are saying. After all we have meant to each other? You are just wrought up to-night and tomorrow you will see things in a different manner."

She tossed her head, with its finger waved black hair in impatience. "I am as sane now, Norman, as I ever will be," she replied. "I care for you and respect you more than any other man I know of, but I realize now, the wrong I would do you by marrying you."

"I must love the man I marry, so that I will want to give up my parties, gambling, and my hunt for a thrill. I want to live—to live my life to the limit."

"When I met you, I thought I was through with that sort of thing, but the impulse is too strong—it seems to be in my blood."

"In my blood," that stuck in his mind. Yes, well might that be, for he remembered her father, Herbert Thorne, Atlanta caterer, who had lived a steady life. His fortune had been accumulated through hard work and long hours, and he had left his two motherless children, Leila and her brother Thomas, a substantial fortune at his death. His son and daughter were his exact opposites. They took after the mother, who had died early.

But Norman loved Leila Thorne. He knew of the reckless life she and her brother had chosen to live; but after she met him, she had given up, or so he had thought, her reckless-

ness. She was the only woman he had ever really loved.

"But," he found himself saying "you told me that you loved me."

"That is why I am not going to marry you," she replied. "I love you too much to make you suffer. Don't you see that my desire for a good time and my desire of fidelity to you would always clash and in time I would come to hate you? You would always stand between me and the thing that I craved."

She was so beautiful, he thought, as she stood before the open grate fire with her hands behind her; her lithe figure in a gown of silver, shimmering in the soft light. Her hair was cut in a wavy bob, and it was as black and as shiny as a crow. The dark straight-forward eyes, and the determined chin were indications of a characteristic; that she was determined to have her way. Her mouth was generous and sensual; lips, shaped for a caress.

He wanted to take her in his arms and crush those lips to his and tell her that it did not matter; that her life would be his. But he realized the futility of such action. He could no more adapt himself to the pace of her life than she could adapt herself to the serenity of his.

"No," she was saying, "it is best that we give each other up now, to avoid a living hell for us both."

He wanted to brush these objections aside, but he knew she spoke the truth. He was jealous, he reflected and flirting added zest to her life. She liked to twist men around her finger. Their wooing and love-making amused her. But for all this frivolity he saw something deeper and more rational in her eyes, when he looked into them. She had told him, and he had believed her, that he was the only man she had ever loved.

He rose and caught her hands in his. "Some day," he said steadily, "you are going to find yourself. You will find that a 'good time' is fleeting and devastating, but love and happiness last through eternity."

That was the last time he had seen her, because the next week he had

left for Europe on a Rosenwald scholarship, and for nine years he had earned his living as professor of English in Howard University in Washington. He had not written to her, and as time had gone by, all that re-

mained was a sweet memory of her. No other woman had entered his life. He had become resigned to a memory.

And now after ten years she was coming to him. But ten years would

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