

SUSAN KANE

A NEW LOVE SERIAL

Story of a Neglected Country Girl Who Sought Her Fortune in Washington

By EDWARD LAWSON

SYNOPSIS: Susan Kane runs away from her home in Lynchville, Va., to escape the degrading atmosphere into which she was born. She goes to Washington, D. C., where she joins a girl friend, Edith Martin, sharing her apartment. Edith works in a large cafeteria on U Street, and believes that she can get Susan a job there. Mr. Morrow, owner of the cafeteria, does not care to take on any more girls, but his young and handsome son, Tom, sees Susan and induces his father to hire her. Tom tries to make love to her shortly after, and Edith, who considers him her own special boy friend, becomes jealous. Susan is alarmed because she does not really care for Tom, but knows of no way to put him off without losing the job which he had secured for her. Driven by this fear, she finally accepts Tom's invitation to go to the theatre on a night when Edith will be away from home. Tom's car is in the shop on the evening of the appointment, but he borrows one of a friend and meets her. On the way, they are halted for just a moment by traffic, and Susan sees Edith walking along the street. A bad will is sown. Edith sees Susan, riding with Tom—after her repeated warnings to "lay off." Susan fears to go home that night. Now go on with the story—

CHAPTER VI

Fear clutched at Susan's heart as Tom drove her home that night. She knew that Edith had seen her with Tom; knew that the older girl would naturally infer that she had set out to snare him for herself. She feared Edith's mood, the harsh, cutting words which might pass between them. Their friendship was too precious a thing to be broken up in this way. If worse came to worst, Susan figured, she would probably have to find another place in which to live. Her job was fairly safe, since Tom seemed to care for her. To lose that position would be tragic; she had never before realized just how much it had meant to her. There were so many jobless people in Washington—surely she could not afford to join them. Now that she had come to that realization, she meant to do anything which would give her a bet-

ter grip upon her work, even if it meant playing up to Tom. A choking sensation of fear rose in her throat as from the outside of the apartment which she shared with Edith she noted a light in the front room. That would be Edith, waiting for her. Hastily she said goodbye to Tom, warded off his attempt to kiss her, and ran quickly up the steps of the apartment house. Her heart was beating wildly as she pushed open the door and quietly tip-toed in. She found Edith sitting, reading, in the living room. The older girl looked up at her strangely. "Gee," she said, "where on earth have you been all night?" Susan went into the bedroom and took off her hat and coat slowly. Finally she came back and said, "I just went to the theatre."

"Alone?" Susan's heart jumped. She wondered vaguely what would happen if she told Edith outright that she had been with Tom. Of course, Edith would know it anyway; she had seen them cruising along U Street. Still, there was the faint possibility. . . . She compromised by saying nothing. Edith seemed moderately interested in the book on her lap. Susan went into the bedroom and began to take off her clothes, hoping against hope that the older girl would forget that she had asked a question. When she walked back into the living room, scantily clad, Edith looked up at her in mild amusement. Susan was mystified.

Edith finally explained. "You know," she said gaily, "this evening I saw somebody driving along U Street. I could have sworn it was Tom and you. It was dark, though, and I couldn't see very well. It wasn't Tom's car, though, I could see that. This was a little Ford sports roadster. His car is a Chrysler. So I knew it wasn't he." Susan smiled with relief. "Don't worry," she said. "I'm not crazy yet. And you ought to know well enough by now that I don't care for Tom one way or another. He's just a boob to me, and boobs give me a pain in the neck." "I guess you're right there," said Edith. They both went to bed a few minutes later.

CHAPTER VII

It was not until perhaps a week later that romance entered into the life of Susan Kane. He came into the cafeteria one day for the first time since Susan had been employed there. He was tall and rugged, fine-featured, fairly well-dressed. Susan noticed him when he first came in through the swinging door. He was so very good looking, she thought. His posture was that of one who had both feet planted firmly upon the ground. His hair was dark and wavy, his eyes brown. There was a faint furrow between his brows that added strength and determination to his fine features. He looked twenty-four or twenty-five years old.

Susan smiled at him a little shyly once when he caught her looking up from the table which she was supposed to be clearing—looking straight at him. Confused, she bent quickly to her work. He watched her as he ate. She was conscious of his eyes upon her as she moved about, trying not to look again at him. He finished his meal and arose to go. She wanted just one more glance at him before he left. Suppose he should never come again! She went to a littered table halfway between where he had been sitting and the cashier's desk, and began to clear it of used dishes and silver. As he came past, she stole a sly glance upward. He was looking straight at her. In her confusion a spoon and several knives dropped from her fingers and clattered to the floor. Susan's face flushed a deep scarlet as she stooped to pick them up.

Quick as a flash, as if he had been hoping and praying for some such thing to happen, the young man pounced upon the silver which lay strewn about the floor. He handed her a spoon and a knife. She had recovered the other knives herself. "Thank you," she said, timidly. He smiled at her—a fine, clean smile that carried respect.

SO ROMANCE ENTERED THE LIFE OF SUSAN KANE.



She noticed him when he came into the cafeteria. He was tall and rugged, fairly well dressed. Her eyes hardly left him until he had gone. She smiled when he caught her looking straight at him.

"Don't mention it," he said. And then he was gone. Tom Morrow strode past her a moment later. "You ought to be more careful," he chided. "I'm sorry, Mr. Morrow," she said. But in her heart she knew she wasn't.

The young man did not come in again for several days. But when he did, he had a cheery smile for Susan which she returned with interest. As he finished his meal, she found herself standing at the table opposite his, clearing it mechanically but paying no attention to her work. He looked up at her suddenly.

"How's the girl today?" he asked. "Not dropping any more silver, are you?"

She smiled. "Of course not," she said. "I'm sorry that happened." The young man was more frank. "I'm not," he said. "The truth is that I'm glad. It gave me a chance to speak to you. Do you mind?"

To Susan he didn't sound like a flirt. There was something an honest ring in his voice. Perhaps, Susan thought, he was almost alone in the city just as she was—and lonesome.

"No," she said finally. "I don't think there's any harm in it."

Susan was amazed at the rapidity with which their friendship progressed after that. The young man became a regular customer at the cafeteria, and it didn't take much to see that he was attracted not by the food nor the service, but by Susan herself. One day he asked her to see a show with him, with supper afterwards. It happened to be her evening off. Should she accept?

If she didn't, it meant eating alone, and the returning home to an empty apartment. Edith had a date with Tom. If she did, it might turn out to be a very pleasant evening. So far, the young man had impressed her very favorably.

"I think I'd love it," Susan said.

"Fine! My name is James Kent—they call me Jerry for some reason. What's yours?"

"Susan—Susan Kane."

He took her to a theatre on U Street and then to a very neat and inexpensive cafe around the corner. Across the table he looked at her with admiring eyes. She was exquisitely pretty, he thought.

He marveled at the sheen of her deep brown hair. Something about her dancing eyes with their long, thick black lashes intrigued him. He decided that she was the most adorable girl he had ever seen.

For her part, Susan found him very interesting. He was a clerk in a small radio store near the cafeteria, attending school at night. In June he would finish his senior year. And what dreams he had! Soon he would possess a shop of his own, and be hiring men just as someone hired him now. Radio was a great business to be in. It had a future. He described that future in glowing terms. Susan found herself sharing his enthusiasm.

As they finished their meal, he glanced at the clock suddenly and indicated that it was time for him to be going.

"I'm so sorry," he said, "but gee—I can't see you home now. I've got to hurry along to school. Do you mind?"

Mind? Of course she minded. She hadn't spent such a pleasant evening since she had come to the city. It was too bad that he had to leave so early.

"Run along to school," she kidded him. "I guess I can find my way home all right." A moment later he left her.

As she walked home that night, Susan was surprised to find the world suddenly brighter and sweeter. Those few hours spent with Jerry had made a tremendous difference in her life. She had a friend now—a fine friend. Not a jealous friend like Edith, nor an unwelcome friend

like Tom. The thought of seeing him again quickened her pulse. She was smiling when she climbed to the little apartment which she shared with Edith.

In the days that followed, she saw Jerry often during working hours. He began to eat two meals a day at the cafeteria where she worked. She watched for him, and the whole day brightened when he came through the doors. She could not speak to him then, of course—the waitresses were not allowed to talk to customers under ordinary conditions—but she could look, and when she looked, it was almost always into one of his frankly admiring glances.

They went out on several occasions, and Susan felt very proud to be with him. She admired him for his ambition. He had a serious purpose in life, and was willing to make sacrifices to achieve it. There was no doubt in her mind that some day he would be successful. He was that type.

Of course, she was sorry that they could not get out more together, at there was his work and his school to be considered. In the few moments which they did share together, however, they found that their friendship had ripened into love. It was an odd courtship, but it made them both happy. Their eyes were always talking to each other, sending messages of love across the littered tables of the cafeteria. What a pity that they could not be together!

But school would soon be over, and Jerry would have his own business. His evenings would be free. That was something to look forward to. They could go out often then. Susan couldn't think of anything that could make her happier.

Only one thing clouded her horizon now. That was Tom Morrow. She couldn't stand him, that was all. And yet he continued to shower his attentions upon her, fanning up Edith's jealousy to fever pitch.

And Edith—yes, there was more than that one trouble. Edith had seen Jerry when he first came into the cafeteria. She had witnessed the entire little drama which had taken place before her eyes. She had seen Susan change gradually as she had fallen deeper into love with him. She had seen how tenderly Jerry had come to regard her.

She said nothing about it when they were at home together, but the rift between the two girls was felt nevertheless. The fear that lurked in Edith's heart that Susan might take Tom away from her was gone, but in its place had come jealousy. She saw Jerry day after day; she admired him; she wanted him. He belonged to Susan, but what difference did that make? She would take him anyway.

When he came in in the evenings she would delay him at her portion of the counter and talk to him as long as she possibly could without danger of reprimand from Tom. She used all those little feminine tricks upon him to get him to notice her. And it seemed as though she would succeed.

Business happened to be particularly dull one evening, and Tom had cornered Susan and was trying to date her for Saturday. She refused, not because Jerry had already asked her out, but because she did not care to go anywhere with Tom. He tried to persuade her. They talked heatedly for a few minutes, and when she refused after that, he changed the subject.

Jerry came in a few minutes later. Susan watched him from the corner. The place was practically empty, yet he had not seen her. Edith was serving him now, smiling and talking in her best manner. He grinned back at something she said, and for several minutes they stood there and talked while Susan, pained, looked on. They seemed to be getting along famously.

Finally he looked around and saw her. But the impression he got was that she was sitting with Tom, and that Tom was talking softly into her ear. He turned his head back quickly to Edith, nodded cheerily, and then sat down to eat in silence.

What will Jerry think of Susan now? And how far will Edith get with her desire to win him from Susan? Continue the dramatic life story of SUSAN KANE in next week's installment.

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