

Jerry wants \$500 more to open his own store. Did he steal the \$500 Morrow lost?

SUSAN KANE

From the moment they danced together, Susan knew that Jerry was the one man in the world for her.

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 in which her childhood days have been spent. 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 she starts work, 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 her way to put him off without danger of losing the job which he has secured for her.

She goes out with him once to the theatre, and is almost caught by Edith. But shortly after the movie a man whom she could really love, and Tom is forgotten.

Jerry Kent is his name, and he embodies all those qualities which Susan desires in a man. He invites her out, they become quite friendly and she learns that he is a clerk in a radio store, anxious to get enough money to open up his own shop. He attends night school, so the two can be together only for a few hours at a time. But within a week they are deeply in love.

Tom asks her to go out again with him, and they talk heatedly together for a few moments in the cafeteria. Edith sees them and her old jealousy is aroused. Jerry comes in, and Edith deliberately sets out to snare him away from Susan.

Now go on with the story.

CHAPTER VIII.

Susan had no desire to go out with Tom Morrow, and yet she feared to blankly refuse his request for another date. He would be harder to work with than ever if she did that. It might even mean that she would lose her position.

Then too, there was Edith to be considered. The sheer luck which had saved her from Edith's wrath on previous occasions could not be counted upon to help her always. Some day Edith would find her out, that much was sure.

She pleaded a headache and a general nervous condition.

"I've got to get more rest and quiet," she said. "I guess I've been running around a little too much since I left home. I'm just not used to it, that's all."

"Then you don't care to go...?"

"No, Tom. Not tonight."

"Tomorrow?"

"Not for a long time yet. Maybe a week or more. After I get used to this work, everything'll be all right." Tom accepted her apology, but did not seem particularly pleased. He arose sullenly from the table where they had been sitting and went into his father's office. Susan arose and continued with the work which she had been doing when he had stopped her.

She went about clearing the tables in her usual methodical way. Occasional stolen glances told her that Jerry was no longer talking to Edith. Between mouthfuls he gazed up and grinned happily at her. Susan's face broke into a soft smile. Later he talked to her in a brief moment as she cleared the table adjoining his.

"Are we going out tonight, kiddo?" he murmured.

"It doesn't look like it?" she whispered back. "I've got a headache."

"That's too bad. But what about tomorrow night? That would be even better for me. I won't have to hurry off to school. We can take in a matinee dance and have supper afterwards."

"That'll be swell, Jerry."

"O.K. Where'll I pick you up?"

"Come to the front window here. I'll be dressed and waiting for you. Don't come in. I'll wait until I see you out front and then I'll hurry out. That all right?"



They went to their little restaurant and had a light supper. Gazing deep into each others' eyes they talked until a striking clock reminded them that it was time to be going.

"That's fine with me, honey. Make it eight o'clock, say?"

"O.K." She turned quickly away from him as Tom suddenly appeared from the office, and made as though she had been working elsewhere all the time. She could feel Tom's sullen eyes upon her back. She dared not turn, fearing to face him. She worked as fast as she could, her face flushed. Jerry finally left.

The next evening Jerry waited on the sidewalk before the cafeteria at the appointed time. Susan, who had finished her work earlier in the afternoon, was waiting for him at a table near the front window. When she saw him coming, she jumped up and went out to meet him.

Everything seemed to go off perfectly. And yet, as Jerry took her arm there in front of the cafeteria, Susan had just a second's glance into the interior, and there she saw Tom Morrow, watching her every action with frowning brow and puzzled face. Tom—whom she had told she was too sick to go out for a week! He had caught her. What would he do now? Fear clutched at Susan's heart.

But the reaction from the sight of Tom, watching her, was soon dispelled as they danced together. From the very first moment that Jerry held her in his arms, both were conscious that something great and wonderful had happened—that at last both of them had found the one person in all the world each had always hoped to find.

They knew it from each other's eyes and voices. Susan knew it from the way that Jerry held her, from the way her fingers trembled ever so slightly in his hand.

At first there had always been a sort of pretense of indifference between them, but when Jerry talked of his aims and of the dreams which he hoped might some day come true, this barrier seemed gradually to break down.

"I've got five hundred saved already, honey," he said. "All I need is another five and I can get that store of my own. Won't it be great? It won't be long after that when I'll feel worthy to ask you to be my wife."

Susan thrilled to his words. "You know," he went on as they waltzed about the hall. "I love you... You're the only girl in all the world for me. And somehow—well, I think you love me too!"

Susan was conscious only of moving in perfect response to his firm, sure touch and to the rhythm of the music. A queer hush had come inside her, so that it didn't seem to be her at all who was dancing.

"Won't you say it, dear?" he pleaded. "Won't you say it and give me the right to go on loving you—all the rest of our lives?"

She pressed her head against his shoulder then with a little throaty sob of ecstasy that nobody heard but him. After that his arms seemed very tight around her when they danced. All too soon the evening was gone.

They went to their little restaurant after that and had a light supper. Gazing deep into each other's eyes, they talked until a striking clock reminded them that it was time to be going.

As they arose to leave, Susan fumbled nervously about her for a moment, then looked up in dismay.

"What's the matter," Jerry asked. "Hunting for something?"

"My purse," Susan mumbled. "I thought I had it with me."

"I haven't seen it this evening," Jerry said. "I hardly think you brought it with you."

"Want to walk by there and get it on your way home?" Jerry asked. "It'll be as easy to go that way as any other."

"I hardly think they'll be open. They usually close about eleven, and the cashier, who stays to check up, is gone before twelve. What time is it now?"

"Eleven forty."

"We might catch the cashier there. We can try, anyway."

The two found the cafeteria closed and locked. But a faint light shone through from the rear, and in response to the girl's timid knock, a figure advanced to the door and opened it. In the semi-darkness Susan recognized him. Tom Morrow!

"Well!" he said. "What's the trouble?"

"My purse," stammered Susan. "I left it here this afternoon. It had all my money in it. I wonder if I could look for it now."

"I guess it wouldn't matter much. I don't suppose you'd run off with any of the firm's money. Need any help?"

"No. I think I know where it is, all right." She hurried through the rows of empty seats and tables back into the deserted dressing room, for-

getting for the moment about Jerry. If she had thought, she would have asked Jerry to wait for her somewhere where there would be no danger of his meeting up with Tom. But she had never supposed that Tom would be there at that time of night.

As it was, Jerry struck up a conversation with the younger Morrow, while Susan was busily engaged in the search. The two finally came into the dining hall and sat, talking quietly together. They had a slight speaking acquaintance, having met several times before in the cafeteria.

Susan returned triumphantly a moment later and left the establishment with Jerry. There was nothing in Tom's outer bearing to show that he resented the intrusion of the couple at that time, but even in the darkness Susan could distinguish that sullen flash which so often came into his eyes, like cat's eyes in the dark. She found herself thinking. She was sorry now that she had come back, even though finding the purse compensated somewhat.

CHAPTER IX.

The next morning Susan was surprised by being called into the office by Tom Morrow's father. The old man seemed vastly displeased with something. Susan wondered what could have happened.

"Miss Kane," he began abruptly. "You were in here last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"About what time?"

"About a quarter to twelve. I was looking for my purse."

"I see. That's what Tom told me. Now—did you happen to see a rather bulky brown envelope on one of the tables as you came in?"

Susan thought a moment. Then she said slowly, "Yes, sir, but why..."

"Was it there when you went out?"

"I don't remember."

"I see." The old man stroked the point of his chin slowly.

"What was in the envelope?" Susan asked timidly.

Mr. Morrow looked up at her sharply.

"About five hundred dollars," he said.

Susan gasped. "It disappeared?"

"Absolutely. And, Miss Kane, there's no way of getting around it—you and Tom and some other young man were the only ones in here last night. I don't believe Tom would take the money. But it disappeared. That's all the evidence I have."

Susan's mind reeled. Suddenly she thought of Jerry. Jerry had said that he needed five hundred dollars more to swing the deal that would make him the owner of his own shop. And he had been there that night!

Still she couldn't bring herself to believe that Jerry had taken the money. Jerry, she knew, was hardly the type of man to do a thing of that sort.

"There's one other thing, Miss Kane," the elder Morrow went on. "Tom says that you told him you weren't feeling well and wanted to rest during this week. Yet last night, as you admit yourself, you were out with some man until long after midnight."

"But what's that got to do with the money?"

"Just this. Suppose you knew that the money was here, as you easily might have known from working here, and that Tom had charge of it. Wouldn't it be easy to drop in with some friend, an accomplice, perhaps, divert my son's attention long enough for him to get hold of the money, and then leave? Of course he'd never suspect you. He told me he was sure you hadn't done it. But that doesn't prove that you had no hand in it. It looks like a cooked-up scheme to me."

"But I knew nothing about it until just now..."

"How do I know that? And there was your friend, remember. By the way, what was the name?"

Susan's mind debated swiftly whether she should disclose Jerry's identity or not. In spite of herself, she was still half afraid that he had taken the money. He had wanted it so much. Five hundred dollars! How much that would have meant to him. Still, Susan knew he wouldn't stoop to thievery.

She decided that it would be best to tell. Even if she didn't, Tom would be able to tell who he was.

"His name is Jerry Kent," she said. "He works in a radio store on U Street. If you want him, here's his phone number. But I'm sure he's innocent. It's just a waste of time..."

Mr. Morrow deliberately took the slip of paper which she handed him and spoke into the telephone. Having gotten Jerry on the wire, he asked him to come to the office of the cafeteria for a minute. Then he sent a messenger down into the main dining hall to bring Tom up.

"We'll settle this thing once and for all," he said. "Won't you sit down until the others get here?"

Susan took the proffered seat. She was glad to be able to sit down. Somehow she felt weaker, more tired, than she had ever felt before.

She hoped, she prayed that Jerry hadn't taken that money in a moment of madness. It would mean punishment for him surely. It would mean the end of all their dreams. And yet, it would have been so easy, just as Mr. Morrow had said.

Who was responsible for the disappearance of the five hundred dollars? Read the smashing conclusion of the dramatic life of SUSAN KANE in next week's installment.

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