

Who Stole the \$500 that Stood Between the Two Lovers and Happiness?

SUSAN KANE

Will Susan Lose Her Job in the Restaurant and Her Lover as Well?

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 to work, and Edith, who considers him as her boy friend, becomes jealous. Susan is alarmed because she doesn't really care for Tom, but knows of no way to get him off without danger of losing the job which she has secured for her.

She goes with him once to the theatre, and is almost caught by Edith. But shortly after she meets a man whom she can really love, and Tom is forgotten, although he does not forget her.

Jerry Kent is the new flame's 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. "It will take just five hundred dollars more," he says. He already has five hundred saved toward the project.

Tom is aroused when he sees Susan slipping away from his grasp as she foretells him for Jerry, and is out for revenge. One night, after Susan and Jerry have been to a dance and supper together, they return to the cafeteria late and find Tom there.

Susan finds the pocketbook for which she has returned, but next morning she finds herself accused of stealing an envelope containing \$500 from the cafeteria on the night before. She knows that this cannot be true, but then she thinks of Jerry.

Five hundred dollars! That was what he had said he needed to open his own shop. Could he have taken the money? Susan didn't believe that he would have taken it if he could, but the fact remains that there were but three persons in the cafeteria that night, Tom, Jerry, and Susan.

The elder Morrow calls all three into his office the following morning.

NOW, GO ON WITH THE STORY:

CHAPTER X

Tom Morrow and Jerry Kent came into the office a few moments later. Jerry looked slightly bewildered; he had stopped his work and rushed up when the elder Morrow had called him. They both sat down, and Mr. Morrow surveyed the three a few minutes before he spoke. Finally he said, "I suppose all three of you know why I called you here?"

Jerry looked at him in surprise. "No sir, I don't," he said perplexed.

Morrow surveyed him sharply, then continued: "Five hundred dollars was taken from this establishment last night. You three were the only ones here. Tom was the only one who had any business here. You two came in, and when you left, the money was gone. I'm not saying that any of you is guilty, but it's evident that one of you took the money, and I want to find out who it was."

"You don't think that I took it, do you?" Jerry exclaimed, fumbling nervously with his hat.

"Well," replied the elder Morrow solemnly, "as I see it, the matter lies between you and Miss Kane. Tom is my son. He had a right to handle the money. It was as much his as it was mine. I'm sure he'd have no cause for taking it. Miss Kane here says that she knows nothing of the matter. Therefore I think I have a right to suspect you since you were the only other persons in the place at the time."

"But, sir, I didn't know there was any money about the place. I came in here with Susan. Even if I had known about the money, I would never have come in here to steal it."

Mr. Morrow surveyed Jerry through piercing eyes beneath shaggy brows. "Did you notice a large brown envelope on one of the tables when you came in?" he asked.

Jerry racked his mind for a moment. "Yes, sir," he replied, "I believe I did."

"Was it there when you and Miss Kane left?"

"I'm not—sure. I never noticed."

"I see. Well, Mr. Kent, that envelope contained five hundred dollars. Tom here tells me that it disappeared when you two left the place." He paused a moment, then resumed: "Tell me this—would you have any use for five hundred dollars?"

"Of course. Anybody could use five hundred dollars."

"But I mean—any special use?"

He bent forward and watched Jerry's face closely. The boy was plainly nervous, rattled. He dropped his hat upon the floor, fumbling with it, and had to reach to pick it up before he answered.

"Well," he said, "Yes, sir. You see, I've always been wanting to open up a radio shop of my own. I've got five hundred or so saved, and I need just about that much more to swing the deal. But I wouldn't steal the money to do it with!"

"All right," said Mr. Morrow. "I guess that's enough." He looked about the room, at Jerry, at Tom, at Susan. "Miss Kane," he said, "have you anything to add to what you've already said?"

"I don't think so," said Susan.

"All right. How about you, Tom?"

"Of course I wouldn't steal the money, Dad. Why should I want to take something that practically belongs to me already?"

"And you, Jerry?"

"I don't know any more than what I just told you. But I do know that I certainly didn't take it."

"H-m-m-m," said Mr. Morrow. "Nobody stole the money, and yet it's gone. Well, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to let you all go, and give you two days in which to come back to me here in private with that \$500. Whoever took it can bring it back within those two days and there'll be no questions asked. Otherwise—" he searched about in his mind for some appropriate threat—"otherwise, I'll have to discharge Miss Kane. We couldn't have her working here with this suspicion hanging over her."

He knew that this threat affecting Susan's welfare would have a tremendous effect upon both Tom and Jerry, as well as upon herself. Whichever of the three had taken the money, he believed, would return it rather than have Susan discharged.

"That's all," he said finally. "You can all go now. Within two days I expect to receive the five hundred. If I don't, more drastic action will have to be resorted to."

CHAPTER VI

Jerry's mind worked fast as he returned to his work. He was at last beginning to realize what it was all about. Tom, he reasoned, had been jealous of him from the start, and had deliberately set out to entrap him by means of this frame-up scheme. His midnight visit to the cafeteria with Susan, coming as it did at a time when Tom was there alone with this large amount of money, had paved the way admirably for Tom's vengeance. Young Morrow had simply hid the money away for the time being, and accused either Jerry or Susan of having stolen it. And it had worked. He had both of them almost in the palm of his hand.

Surely Susan couldn't have taken the money. Jerry respected her too much to harbor such an idea for a minute. And he knew that he himself had not made off with it. Tom, then, was the only possible thief. And Tom's purpose in committing such a deed was now clear in Jerry's mind. The only trouble was that there was no way in which he could prove it, or even be sure of it himself. There was always the fear that Susan had needed the money for something of which he had not known, and had taken it herself. Perhaps he had misjudged her. After all, he had known her only a few weeks. Perhaps she had brought him to the cafeteria that night for the sole purpose of getting the money. But that possibility was still too remote for Jerry to give it much credence.

The thought of Susan's losing her job, or being set adrift in a city of which she knew practically nothing, of being dismissed on such charges, caused Jerry to resolve to act, and act quickly. Yet, what could he do?

All day long he thought the matter over, and at night he tossed awake and pondered the situation. Five hundred dollars had been taken. Both he and Susan were suspected of taking it, while the one who was perhaps the real culprit, Tom, was held practically blameless.

In the early morning hours an idea came. He knew that Tom would never confess, even though he might have taken the money. And he believed that Susan, not having any money of her own, would suffer from the disgrace of being fired when the two days were up. The thought came to him that the only possible solution was to take the blame upon



He found the old man in his office using the telephone. Morrow looked up: "So you are the thief?"

his own shoulders. That would require considerable sacrifice. But, he told himself, it was worth it.

He would have to withdraw the five hundred which he had saved toward his own shop, and turn it over to Morrow before the time was up. That would relieve Susan of suspicion. He didn't care much about himself. It didn't matter what Morrow thought of him. And he would make the old man promise never to tell anyone else what had taken place.

In the morning, he arose early and was at his bank before it opened. His balance, he found, was \$514. He withdrew all but the fourteen dollars. Then he went to see Morrow, taking care that Susan did not see him enter. He found the old man in his office, using the telephone.

"Well," he said, when Morrow hung up the receiver, "I've brought your money back."

Morrow looked up sharply. "Oh," he said, "so you're the thief."

"I'm not a thief," Jerry maintained stoutly. "I simply saw the opportunity, and I took it." Outwardly he was calm; inwardly, miserable.

"Well!" the elder Morrow exclaimed. "At least I'm glad to know that you're honest enough to bring it back. But tell me—why did you take it?"

"I needed it to put into the radio shop I had hoped to open."

"Well, that's too bad. But just remember—it never pays to steal what you need. There's plenty of honest ways to get five hundred dollars. A little slower, perhaps, but much surer."

"Yes, sir," said Jerry. "And now, if that's all, I'd like to go. I've got to hurry for work. You won't say anything about this matter to the folks I work for, will you?"

"Of course not. I promised, you know, that I wouldn't. We'll just consider it a little matter between ourselves, privately. I'm glad to have the money returned, and so we'll just forget that it was ever missing."

"Thank you, sir," Jerry turned and left the office.

CHAPTER XI

A few hours later Susan was called from her work in the cafeteria. She went to Mr. Morrow's office in response to his request.

"Miss Kane," he began, "I'm glad to say that you've just been entirely cleared of this robbery. The thief has confessed, and he has restored the five hundred dollars. I want to apologize to you for ever believing that you could have done such a thing. I hope you'll want to continue with us."

"Of course I want to stay," Susan stammered. "But would you mind telling me—who actually took the money?"

"I'm sorry, I promised the culprit I'd keep his name secret. No one will ever know. That's all I can say right now." He turned and looked out of the window as a signal that the interview was over. Susan left the room.

She was worried. She wondered if Jerry had taken the money, and then restored it when he saw that her position was menaced by its disappearance. She hoped that this hadn't been the case. And yet, she could see no other answer to the problem. Cer-

tainly, she thought, Tom would not have stolen the money which belonged to the business which he and his father owned. She was certain that she herself was not involved. And Jerry was the only one left.

She questioned him on the subject the next time she saw him. He sullenly refused to tell her anything about the deal. She could not understand why. If she had known that he sacrificed everything he had—all the money he had saved toward the little shop which he hoped some day to own—in order that Tom's scheme might be foiled and she might be freed from suspicion, things might have been different. But she didn't understand those things, and the result was that she interpreted Jerry's refusal wrongly. When she left him, it was with the feeling that he had in reality done something wrong, and that he had tried to hide it from her. The idea cut her to the heart.

In the days that followed she went about her work listlessly, thinking only of how Jerry, whom she had held so high, had let her down. Twice when he asked her out she begged off, and made herself utterly miserable by doing so.

On the following Monday, however, she was surprised when, upon being called into Mr. Morrow's office, she found Jerry there. Both the men smiled. Susan surveyed them, a bit dazed.

"Come in," Mr. Morrow invited. Susan walked into the room and the three were seated. "Miss Kane, there's something I want to tell you," Morrow began.

"What is it?" asked Susan timidly. "I simply want you to know how loyally Jerry acted toward you when I threatened you with dismissal. It was he who returned me the five hundred dollars."

"Yes," said Susan, "but tell me—he didn't take it, did he?"

"That's just the point," the old man smiled. "Only last Saturday night I discovered that it was Tom, my son, who had taken the money. He had been gambling, and I knew nothing about it. He needed the five hundred to pay off a big debt. And when he saw a chance to lay the blame upon someone else, he took it."

"But, Jerry—" Susan began.

"Jerry," said Mr. Morrow, "paid over to me the only five hundred dollars he had in the world, in order that you would not be suspected or discharged. I call it real chivalrous. There's not many men today who would do such a thing."

Susan looked at Jerry questioningly. "You mean the five hundred you had saved for your store?" she asked, amazed. He nodded.

"Jerry!" She ran to him, and he arose and caught her in his arms.

"Just a minute," interrupted Mr. Morrow. The two looked up at him. "I appreciate what a sacrifice it was for you, Jerry," he said, "and I admire you all the more for it. And now, just to show you that my heart was right when I accused you of stealing the money, I'm not only going to return it to you, but I'm going to stake you to another five. Will that be enough to get your shop started?"

"Gee," said Jerry. "Yes sir, I guess so."

"All right," said Morrow. "Just wait

until I make out a check." He sat down at his desk.

Susan and Jerry waited, and while his pen was scratching and his back was turned, Jerry snapped an arm about her. Susan rested her flushed cheek against his. After a moment she smiled.

THE END.

WEEK'S POEM

'TIS HOME WHERE THE HEART IS

By GEORGE HORTON

The Prince rides up to the palace gate,
His eyes with tears are dim,
For he thinks of the beggar maiden sweet
Who may never wed with him.

For 'tis home where the heart is
In dwelling great or small—
And there's many a splendid palace
That is never a home at all.

The yeoman comes to his little cot,
With a song when the day is done
For his Dearie is standing in the doo,
And his children to meet him run.

For 'tis home where the heart is
In dwelling great or small—
And there's many a stately mansion
That is never a home at all.

Could I but live with my own
Sweetheart
In a hut with a sanded floor
I'd be richer far than a loveless
maid
With fame and a golden store.

For 'tis love where the heart is
In dwelling great or small
And a cottage lit by love light
Is the dearest home of all.

Thinkless Thinking

So another college professor has made the headlines—this time with the intriguing suggestion that students learn to think without thinking. The professors are fast making a name for themselves in the field of funny ideas. So much so that they have the newspaper boys waiting around now to catch and play up for general entertainment the cunning or startling thoughts dropped so frequently from the academic lecture platforms.

It is always amusing to see a jumping jack or a bean shooter in the hands of a dignified and solemn gentleman. The scheme of effortless or painless thinking appears to be in line with our penchant for developing labor-saving devices, but it is doubtful whether even the best players on the college football teams will ever make a success of it.

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