

LOVE FOR TWO

RUTH DEWEY GROVES

1926 By NEA Service Inc.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Rod bent his head far back and Lila drew away with a little laugh. "We can forget everything that's happened," she said softly, "and just take our happiness in our own way. Hold me in your arms Rod, please. We've a right to each other."

Rod jerked himself free of her embrace and took a step backward. He came up sharply against the grill railing. "Lila, you're crazy," he said. "How could there be any happiness for us together?"

Lila looked at him with a touch of scorn. "Must I literally throw myself at your feet?" she taunted him.

"But there's Cy . . . and Bertie Lou," Rod reminded her with great simplicity.

"What do they count?" Lila flared. "Cy ought to know what an old man gets when he marries a young girl. And Bertie Lou doesn't care a snap of her fingers for you!"

"Even so, we're married to them," Rod replied, a trifle wearily.

Lila drew in her breath and pressed closer to him. "What of that?" she asked. "Marriage needs to keep us from being happy, need it? Oh Rod, don't sacrifice me for two people who don't know what it means to be in love!"

"Are you going to leave Cy?" Rod asked her. "I couldn't let you do it for me Lila. I just couldn't, that's all. Cy's my friend."

Lila ran a smooth finger along his cheek and curled it over his ear. "I don't intend to break his heart, Rod," she said, "but he's going on a trip next week . . ."

"My God, Lila haven't you any decency?" Rod cried, breaking entirely free of her clinging arms. His words were like a lash across Lila's face.

"I didn't know you were squeamish," she fired at him. "You ought to divorce Bertie Lou if you think so much of decency."

Rod moved toward the door without answering her but she was before him like a darting flame and stood with her back against the door handle.

"So that got you, did it?" she mocked him. "It isn't so pleasant to hear a truth like that, is it? All right to talk to me about decency, but how about a man who permits his wife to fall for another man and makes no effort to prevent it?"

Rod fairly trembled with outraged feelings as he stood before her and listened to her scathing denunciation.

"You've led me into this," she went on. "Everyone knows you don't care what Bertie Lou does. Well, why shouldn't you care . . . unless you wanted to be free to do the same? You're a big fraud with your talk of decency. I'd like to know how you got that way!"

Rod tried to brush past her. "Oh, no," she stopped him, "you will hear the rest of it, Mr. Good. You told me yourself that Bertie Lou's gone out to Marco Palmer's place," she laughed shrilly. "A house party! Are you kidding me or yourself? Decency, ha, ha. I'm not good enough to get on with you, but your innocent little wife, who be-

longed to Marco Palmer, is good enough to be married to . . ."

"Move, or I'll make you," Rod ordered in a voice that vibrated with suppressed fury. Lila threw her head back and closed her eyes. "You'll have to make me," she dared. The next instant she was rudely and very forcibly thrust aside.

When she righted herself Rod was gone.

But his destination was given no thought in the blind terror that possessed him. Lila's words seared like red-hot irons into his consciousness. Oh how damnably sure she had been! Bertie Lou and Marco Palmer! Fool, fool, fool! Could he see? It wasn't true! God, it wasn't true!

He found himself at home. Not one step of the way he had traversed remained in his memory. He might have walked miles or blocks; he couldn't have told which had he not known the distance.

The apartment was unbearable. He went into Bertie Lou's room. That was the worst place of all, with a breaker of faded roses on the dresser.

Two hours later Rod was driven out of the place by his mental torture. Where had he left his hat?

He started without it, but saw it in the hall and put it on. When he reached the street he hailed a taxicab. Strangely, the driver knew where the Palmer estate was. "Get me there, and don't let anything stop you," Rod ordered recklessly.

"It's some ride, brother," the man returned. He had his doubts of this wild-eyed fare and he had no relish for a long country drive with no pay at the end of it. A fight, maybe.

"Get there," Rod flashed back. "It's 10 bucks in advance."

Rod dug out the money, handed it to the driver and climbed into the cab.

He drove that car with every nerve in his body, straining forward for more speed, now and then speaking to the man at the wheel, urging him to "give it a little gas, man, can't you?"

"Say, what is this, a race with the stork?" the driver barked at him the third time he asked for speed. "I can't afford a ticket. No, I've had the limit."

Rod settled back to endure the rest of the ride in silence.

It was daybreak when the driver turned off the state highway and took the road to the Palmer country home far out on the south shore of Long Island. The house, set a quarter of a mile back on the blue stone driveway, appeared dignified and peaceful in the early morning light.

Most of the windows were shut-

tered, but a few on the second floor showed drawn blinds. There was a wooden door, used to close the house during the family's sojourn in the south or abroad, leaning against an outside wall.

Rod understood. Marco was using the house in his parents' absence.

He instructed the taxi driver to wait for him, and walked up to the door to ring. As he reached for his hand he saw with surprise that the door was not on the latch. It swung open a few inches and Rod obeyed an impulse to enter without ringing.

Inside a strange sight met his eyes. The furniture of the hall was still shrouded in linen covers and the floor was bare. Top coats and hats were thrown over chairs and on stands, indicating that Marco had not brought a butler out with him. But those carelessly-placed coats and hats were a welcome sight to Rod.

It was a house party! A flood of relief that soothed him like cool water on a parched tongue swept over him. He strode on into the living room, oblivious of trespassing; not caring, had it occurred to him.

The living room presented a deplorable sight. The air reeked of stale tobacco smoke, and countless ash trays, filled with cigarette ends were everywhere. Trays with telltale glasses, green and brown pinch bottles, with an array of smaller bottles about them like chicks huddling around a squat hen, decorated the room lavishly.

Rod saw a piano with a torn record trailing out of it like a gigantic ticker tape. The floor was marked by dancing feet and some of the covered furniture was heaped in piles, or overturned.

A few chairs and a dayenport near the fireplace had been uncovered. On one chair, pinned to the back, was a corsage of orchids.

Rod turned grim at the sight of it. Bertie Lou and orchids. Did she get so many that she cared little for them? But who would think of flowers at a party such as this must have been?

Rod struggled hard against the memory of Lila's words. Had it been his fault that Bertie Lou was receiving orchids? Could he have stopped it if he'd tried? But they'd agreed to remember their marriage vows until they wanted them broken legally.

For half a moment Rod believed in Bertie Lou without doubt. Then he thought of Lila—of her trickery and faithlessness. Women were devils! Bad! A man was a fool to trust one of them! Rod would know soon. He'd find Bertie Lou somewhere in this warren of sleeping revelers and wring the truth from her!

He took the stairs two at a time, his feet making but little sound on the thick paper that was laid over the silencing rubber pads. When he reached the second floor landing, a broad, spacious central hall in reality, he paused to look about him.

There were three corridors leading to the sleeping rooms. Rod could see down the one on his right without moving. He took a step in that direction when a man's voice down the corridor that led to the rooms in the back wing attracted his attention. He heard an indistinguishable feminine murmur in reply.

He turned to the left and when he came abreast of the middle corridor he was just in time to see a young man step from a room and hear him say with a teasing laugh: "I won't be long, Mrs. Marco Palmer of the future."


So this was the man whom Lila linked with Bertie Lou!

Rod noticed that he was wearing a silken dressing gown and bedroom slippers. Not a bad looking boy.

But what sort was he to pull a thing like this under his mother's roof, even if he was going to marry the girl?

Rod's lips curled in contempt, but he went on, intending to make Marco tell him where he could find Bertie Lou. Halfway down the corridor he stopped. A maid had appeared from some

No Poison in



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THREE SERIOUS COUNTS PLACED AGAINST HEALTH

DETROIT, Mich., Aug. 13. (A P)—John M. Health was arraigned before United States Commissioner J. Stanley Hurd Monday on three charges growing out of the death of Richard J. Sandlands, federal prohibition agent. Health stood mute and a plea of not guilty was entered for him. He was ordered held in the county jail in default of \$50,000 bond.

The charges against Health were the same as those made last week against his wife, Maxine. He was charged with assaulting, resisting and interfering with a federal officer in the performance of his duty, resisting the officer's attempts to seize his boat, and using a dangerous weapon in resisting him.

Health's examination was set for August 26. Mrs. Health's examination, originally set for Aug. 16, was changed to that date also.

BANDEES HUNG MISSIONARY

TSINAN, Shantung, China, Aug. 13. (AP)—Henry Wasche, American missionary who has been captured by Chinese bandits is being sought by military detachments of the Nationalist government.

Wasche was captured at Tung Changfu, Shantung, where the missionary colony numbers fourteen, including Wasche's wife and daughter.

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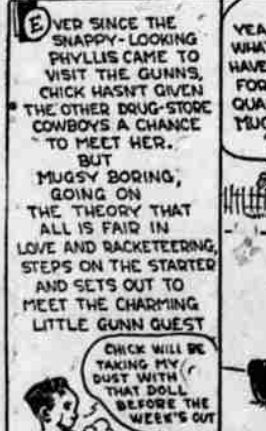
SIDE GLANCES

By George Clark



"I'd get my sticks back from him anyway. He'll think that"

Mom'n Pop



EVER SINCE THE SHAPPY-LOOKING PHYLLIS CAME TO VISIT THE GUNNS, CHICK HASN'T GIVEN THE OTHER DRUG-STORE COMBOS A CHANCE TO MEET HER.

BUT MUGSY BORING, GOING ON THE THEORY THAT ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE AND RACKETEERING, STEPS ON THE STARTER AND SETS OUT TO MEET THE CHARMING LITTLE GUNN GUEST

CHICK WILL BE TAKING MY DOLL WITH THAT DOLL BEFORE THE WEEK'S OUT

Mugsy Swings Into Action



YEAH, BUT WHAT'D I HAVE TO DO FOR THE QUARTER, MUGSY?

NEVER MIND, YOU'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH, AND IF YOU DON'T WANT THE JOB I CAN GET A DOZEN OTHER KIDS TO DO THE TRICK FOR ME

GRAB AMY'S JUMPING-ROPE AND RUN AWAY WITH IT?

THAT'S WHAT I SAID. START PLAYING WITH HER AND WHEN YOU GET THE CHANCE, GRAB HER ROPE AND LEAVE HER REST TO ME AND REMEMBER, BUTCH, DON'T OPEN YOUR TRAP

By Gowan



MOM! BUTCH BORING TOOK MY JUMPING-ROPE AND RAN OFF WITH IT

A BIG GIRL LIKE YOU SHOULDN'T CRY OVER THAT. BUTCH WAS PROBABLY JUST TEASING YOU. HE'LL BRING IT BACK

"TO CHICK FROM PHYLLIS". BOY SHE'S A WHIZ! I'VE LOVED WIMMIN BUT THIS IS A LOVE THAT COMES BUT ONCE IN A LIFETIME

IN THE MEANTIME, ALL UNWARE OF THE DIFERFUL PLOT OF THE BLISSFUL MONOPOLY OF PHYLLIS, CHICK SOLILOQUIZES OVER THE FACT THAT A GREAT LOVE HAS COME INTO HIS LIFE

HAVE MUGSY'S SCHEMES? WATCH TO-MORROW

Freckles and His Friends



DID YOU DO THAT WITH A REVOLVER STANDING WYAY BACK THERE??

YES!

A Bit Unsteady



BUT DADDY WON'T LET ME HAVE HIS REVOLVER ANY MORE— HE SAYS MY AIM IS TOO UNSTEADY AND THAT I MIGHT HURT SOMEBODY!!

By Blosser



IF I WAS OLDER UNCLE HARRY WOULD LET ME HAVE A GUN TO SHOOT BOY! I USED TO SHOOT AN AIR RIFLE LIKE NOBODY'S BUSINESS

OH—SEVERAL TIMES MY DADDY LET ME SHOOT HIS REVOLVER

DO YOU SEE THAT TREE WAY OVER THERE? WELL, ONE DAY I STOOD JUST ABOUT WHERE I'M STANDING NOW AND SHOT AT IT— JUST WALK OVER TO IT AND LOOK ON THE TRUNK