

The Innocent Cheat

NEA FICTION

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By Ruth Dewey Groves

AUTHOR OF "RICH GIRL—POOR GIRL," ETC.

CHAPTER XVII

"Will you permit me to drive home with you, Miss Breat?" Bob asked. His tone was cold enough to bring a sharp refusal to Helen's lips, but his next words checked its utterance. "I want to tell you about Eva," he said.

Helen hesitated, and Mrs. Ennis further delayed her reply by saying good night. She must, she explained, see to her supper. Helen watched her hurry up to the front door and disappear within the house before she turned to Bob, who had stood quietly waiting for her answer.

"Is there anything you think I should know about your sister?" she asked.

"Yes."

Helen moved over. "Will you drive?"

"Bramblewood," Helen directed. "Do you know where it is?"

"I've lived in Yonkers all my life," Bob told her, smiling at

"that my importance in the world is of small matter. But I'm glad to know about your sister. I'd feel as bad over hurting anyone, but in the case of a girl with a rare talent I would have a greater responsibility. I'm glad you told me."

She wished that he had told her more—why he suddenly believed that she owned a heart, for one thing.

Bob, too, was thinking of the quick change in his opinion of her that had come over him in a moment. He tried to tell himself that it was something that had been in her expression as she said good night to his mother. "A yearning that no hard-boiled girl could feel," he put it.

For the rest of the way to Bramblewood they talked of Eva and her future. A thought that she could help the girl's ambition came to Helen but she did not speak of it to the brother.

"Won't you come in and meet Mr. Cunningham?" Helen invited

table. It was coldly formal in its long expanse of polished mahogany. With her head tipped to one side, like a nodding yellow rose, she mused on the possibilities of a cozier setting. Suddenly she wheeled back to the butler. "It's warm," she said. "Can't you place a table on the western veranda?"

"Under the climbing roses, Miss?"

"Yes. And a shaded light if candles won't burn out there. And, Ashe..." She paused and there was a hint of laughter in the corner of her softly curving lips as she said, "not too much service."

She hurried then to her room to dress. Some instinct that she did not stop to analyze prompted her to choose something unusually becoming.

Silver cloth—that would be lovely. But it was much too formal. Thoughtfulness for her guest would not permit her to overdress and make him uncomfortable by contrast.

What should she wear? At last she selected a simple little dinner gown of white chiffon with a spangled cocktail jacket.

When she entered her grandfather's room her eyes were lit with a new radiance. The delight of being lovely and perfectly gowned, of glowing with health and standing face to face with a new friend, ran joyously through her youthful person.

"Charming, my dear," Mr. Cunningham remarked, and Helen was moved to go over and kiss him. Careless seemed to fit her mood.

"Has Mr. Ennis told you how he has reformer me?" she asked. Bob looked uncomfortable, remembering what he had said to her at the hospital. Had he actually told this beautiful girl that she was a menace?

Helen laughed. Perhaps she saw that he was impressed with her appearance. It was quite possible that she did, for she was perfectly normal.

She did not wait for her grandfather to answer. "Come along,"

Frank Lowry Was Leading Man of Lakeview Section

Tom Howell Tells Zeke How Lowry Became His Guardian Angel in the '90s. Zeke Starts Another Continued Story, So Wipe Your Specs.

BY ZEKE SQUEAKER

IT WAS in Lakeview during the late '90's that I first heard of Frank Lowry, declared Tom Howell of Sprague River, a few days ago, while commenting on the chivalry and character of old timers in Oregon.

I HAD squatted on a homestead in the Goose Lake valley and business quite often took me into the county seat. While all the residents of the place were at first new and strange, still I would no more than meet a man than he would eventually remark:

"Have you made the acquaintance of Frank Lowry?"

He's a fine fellow, that Frank Lowry."

I WENT to the county clerk to file some papers. After the fee was paid and the books closed, it was: "Have you yet run into Frank Lowry? A capital fellow is that Lowry."

IF I WENT to a lawyer for some legal advice and the attorney was inclined to wind up the interview with a bit of sociability, he went through the ritual:

"HAVE YOU yet run into Frank Lowry? A swell guy is that Lowry."

AT THE postoffice the postmaster demanded: "Have you had the pleasure of meeting

Frank Lowry? A prince of a fellow is Lowry."

IN THE pool hall where I occasionally loitered the proprietor told me that if I ever needed a friend to call on Frank Lowry, "He's as fine as they make 'em, is Lowry."

NO, I HAD not met Frank Lowry. I asked several people where the gentleman might be found. But he was always out of town, was Frank Lowry. Just left for his ranch about an hour ago, or he was up at Bill Smith's place.

I WOULD hotfoot it for Bill Smith's place to find that Lowry had gone over to see Jeremiah Rudd. At Rudd's I would be informed:

"Just left here this instant. You early bumped into him. So I never could catch the elusive Frank Lowry."

FINALLY, I grew to detest Frank Lowry. Whenever he asked me the stock question I came near swearing at them and muttering, "no," and I hoped I never would. Yet I always re-

trained from these insulting statements.

I TOLD Mabel, my wife, about Lowry and how everybody thought we should meet him. But I judged him a cad and a windjammer, and not knowing anything else to think of him, Mrs. Howell accepted my appraisal of the man.

WE WERE young then, however. Mabel was 24 and I 27. Both hailing direct from the suburbs of Chicago, we knew little of western ways and we eventually discovered that we had a few practical things to learn.

OFTEN we sat before the kitchen fire and poked fun at the man everyone suggested that we meet. Ofttimes in jest as I came in from the field at meal-time, I would banter my wife with:

"Have you seen Frank Lowry?"

"He's a fine guy, is Frank Lowry," she would playfully reply.

BUT—FATE listened in. In time every one of those sneer-

ing jibes was to be sharpened, barbed and poked into our own sensitive beings, causing wounds that will never heal in this life, for—

Our Guardian Angel was Frank Lowry.

(To be continued.)

ZEKE.

A Massachusetts professor says women teachers are feminizing the thought of the nation. There must be some reason why men smoke cigars, at that.

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At the end of the dinner, Helen suggested a paddle on the lake.

her question.

"I'm staying there," Helen said. Bob wondered in what capacity. Surely, he thought, not as a guest of old Cyril Cunningham's. But he said nothing of his conjectures and presently Helen asked him about Eva.

Bob's answer was indirect. "You said you were through with reckless driving," he remarked. "Did you mean that?"

Helen was astonished. "Of course I did," she answered.

"I would like to believe it," Bob said, "because... well, if you had injured Eva in any way that might have ruined her career it would have been a crime. She has a great talent—we hope she will be famous some day."

"I'd never have forgiven myself if she'd been permanently injured," Helen told him.

"I know it," he answered with a degree of sincerity that was puzzling to Helen.

"I thought of that," he went on hurriedly; "what a devil of a cross you'd always bear. And so I wanted to make you see that other people—people you probably know but little about—have hopes and dreams that mean as much to them as your pleasures do to you. Suppose you had learned too late that you had crashed someone the world is in need of! And suppose you had smashed yourself up?"

Helen laughed with a touch of bitterness. "I'm afraid," she said,

when Bob drove up under the portecochere.

"I'd like to very much," he agreed readily. "I've seen him many times at a distance."

"He's quite nice," Helen said, thinking of her grandfather's reputation and wondering if this young man had heard of it.

She was greatly relieved when Mr. Cunningham greeted him with more than ordinary cordiality. Apparently, she thought, there was to be no repetition of the treatment that had been recorded to her mother.

After the introduction and a few words about the accident, Mr. Cunningham asked Helen if she had dined. She looked at Bob and both smiled. It seemed they had quite forgotten dinner.

"You'll stay?" she appealed to him. He nodded in assent before realizing that he had done so. He smiled then over the idea of following up that nod with a regret.

"Will you go down and see about it, my dear?" Mr. Cunningham requested of Helen. "I'd like to talk with Mr. Ennis."

Helen left rather gaily. At least she wasn't going to be faced with a dull evening on this occasion.

She found the butler in the dining room, arranging her place. "There will be two, Ashe," she said, with a pleasant lilt. "And please give us something nice." She turned and looked at the

portable by contrast.

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"Good night, Mr. Ennis," Mr. Cunningham said. "Sorry I cannot join you at dinner, but I trust you will visit us again."

"Thank you, sir," Bob answered courteously, and left the possibilities of the future to the future. He had small hope that a girl like Helen would care to encourage his visits.

What she was in this household he had not yet discovered, but it was plain that Mr. Cunningham was very fond of her. At any rate she was someone above the reach of a struggling law student.

That his thoughts of her had gone so far as to take into account the apparent difference in their stations would have been significant to Bob had he thought of it.

But he was absorbed with the moment itself. Helen's bright, richly colored hair and meltingly soft brown eyes were working their magic with him.

He scarcely knew what food was set before him, scarcely was aware of the unobtrusive butler's presence. The setting, delightfully romantic, lent an atmosphere of unreality to the occasion.

Could it be possible, Bob thought, that it was he who sat opposite this exquisite girl who talked in a musically modulated voice that fell upon his ears as softly as the tinkle of a bell or the murmur of a meadow brook?

And at the end of dinner, when the demi tasses stood half empty and Bob's cigar glowed beneath the thread of smoke that curled upward from it, Helen suggested a paddle on the lake.

They walked down to the boat-house through a garden of roses. The air was heavy-scented with fragrance. In the opening beside a tiny pool Helen halted and lifted her face to the stars. She was conscious of an indefinably sweet pain at her heart. So much beauty, she thought, carried a hurt. Was it because it was fleeting? But it wasn't. Gardens, the stars, moonlight, would endure forever.

"It is we who go on, we who leave it," she said to herself, while Bob stood watching her in silence, spellbound by her loveliness.

At that moment she understood that life is not simple for those who feel. Already in her heart was stirring an indecision, a realization of fate, that brought a pang.

Impulsively, without thought, she reached out for Bob's hand.

(To Be Continued)

Andy Says

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Can't Quit

OH NO—THIS JOB WILL LAST SEVEN YEARS!

WHO SAID SO?

By Blosser

THE JUDGE!!

Mom'n Pop

THERE'S AN APPLE-KNOCKER OUTSIDE WHO WANTS TO SEE YOU, BUT HE WON'T GIVE ME HIS NAME

Whozis?

WHAT SORT OF A LOOKING BABY IS HE? DOES HE LOOK MAD?

HE'S SHORT AND STILL HE ISN'T AWFULLY AND HE ISN'T EXACTLY DARK OR LIGHT, AND HE WEARS A BROWN DERBY

By Gowan

HE SAID YOU GAVE HIM THIS CARD AND THAT YOU TOLD HIM TO CALL AND SEE YOU ANY TIME

MY ADDRESS IS WRITTEN ON IT, EH?

By Gowan

UM, I WONDER IF THIS IS THE BIRD WHO WAS OUT TO THE HOUSE. I'LL TAKE A CHANCE. IT'S A NEW WAY OF MAKING A TOUCH IF THAT'S HIS GAME.