

The Innocent Cheat

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CHAPTER XLVI

"Eva!"
"Eva!" Helen repeated, her voice a mixture of surprise and consternation. "What are you doing here?"

Eva removed the handkerchief she had pressed against her lips and answered, with a note of defiance, that Helen certainly could guess that she had come to see Brent.

"You wouldn't come to the telephone this morning," Eva charged; "and I had to do something."

"I'm sorry," Helen apologized. "I told Mrs. Wethering I would not talk to anyone. But Eva dear, you mustn't stay. I want to see Leonard. Won't you please go? My car is downstairs. Wait in it, please, please."

"No," Eva stubbornly shook her head. "Oh, but you must," Helen insisted.

"Why?" Eva asked pitiously. "I have something to say to Leonard, too, Helen. I don't know why you want to see him, but I got it out of him, and Mrs. Wethering said you were not really ill. Oh, Helen, you aren't going to marry Leonard, are you? You can't! After all those things you said..."

"Stop, please stop," Helen begged. "But why did you refuse to see Bob? He was almost insanely happy over your promise to marry him and then..."

"Oh, Helen, tell me, tell me," Eva begged. "I can't tell you anything—until I've seen Leonard," Helen said, miserably. "Do this for me, Eva; go now."

"If I thought that it would help Bob, I'd go," Eva answered. "I know I owe you more than I ever can repay, Helen, but this is something... I only want to ask Leonard if he is going to marry you. You see what it means to me. But I'd wait for Bob's sake."

"Then do go, do hurry," Helen pleaded. "It may mean a great deal to Bob."

Eva reluctantly gathered up her hat and coat. As she put them on her eyes fell upon

Brent's desk. It was open—the desk he kept locked. She saw a pile on the desk of papers and a note on one side, and it gave her the idea of leaving a note for him.

She walked over to the desk, deliberately avoiding a meeting with Helen's glance, and sat down before it. When she had written the note she looked in a blotter, but there was none in sight. She pulled out a drawer and closed it again to try another.

With the second drawer she was more successful. She took out the blotter, used it, and started to put it back again when she saw what had been lying under it.

With a cry she reached for the daily gleaming object and drew it out.

"It's a locket like mine!" Helen rushed to her side. She saw in a glance that the locket was holding up to the view Brent had given her from her father—

from the man he had said was her father, she remembered.

"It's" but she got no further in saying she thought the locket was hers.

Eva opened it. "It's mine!" the girl exclaimed excitedly. "Oh, Helen, I'm so glad for mother's sake. You've no idea how she

prized it. She hasn't quite forgiven me for losing it. Leonard must have found it and didn't know how to return it to."

Helen was staring at the pictured face in the open locket. Charles Nellin! She recognized him easily. Among Evangelina Cunningham's possessions she had found a likeness of him that the eloping girl had left behind.

She was too confused for a moment to speak—to question Eva. And then, while Eva still held the locket in plain view Leonard Brent opened the door of his apartment.

He always entered without unnecessary noise. The two girls did not hear him even when he came up behind them. They were absorbed in Eva's find and their own thoughts concerning it. Eva was delighted for her mother's sake.

er's sake, and Helen was trying to put her chaotic impressions in order.

Suddenly, with the ferocity of a tiger, Brent reached for the locket. But just an instant before he did so Helen saw him.

Eva screamed, and automatically thrust the locket further from her reach. Then as she recognized him, she started to relax. In another second he'd have had the locket in his possession had Helen not sprung forward and seized it.

Brent turned upon her with a snarl. "Give that to me," he rasped, and neither girl had ever seen the beast on the surface of him before that moment.

Helen knew instantly that the locket was of vital importance to him. And it concerned the Cunningham family. She did not need time to decide that Brent must not have it.

No thought of herself, of possible exposure that might land her in prison, came to her as she made the next move in the game. It was enough to frustrate Brent.

She turned and ran toward the door. Brent had not expected her to do that—to be so quick to grasp the fact that the locket was evidence he wished to conceal at any cost.

Helen gained the foyer before he came after her. She reached the door, jerked it open and flew into the hall just a few steps ahead of him. She was fast, but a short distance from the elevator Brent had almost caught up with her. Helen heard him calling viciously to her to stop, and her heart sank. She dared not call for help, and unless there was an elevator on the floor she never could hope to escape with the locket.

Oh, thank God, there was one.

A physician was sent to the apartment as soon as he pronounced himself unable to aid the man who lay on the floor of the closed elevator. He found Helen quieter, trying to overcome her own emotion to help Eva, who still remained hysterical, though less violently so.

"Have you been with...?" he... Helen faltered brokenly.

The doctor nodded. Eva caught the significance of

the motion. "Oh, no, no!" she screamed.

"Don't, dear, don't," Helen pleaded.

"Please, let me attend her," the doctor said. Helen stepped aside.

The superintendent of the building came in after dispersing the crowd of curious tenants that had gathered outside the door. Helen answered his questions as best she could.

Then others came. Men acting in official capacity. She was obliged to go over the story of the fatal accident many times, until at last the doctor put an end to her ordeal by ordering her to take Eva home.

Helen declared herself unable to drive her car. It was Eva who offered a sensible solution. "Telephone for Bob," she said, weakly.

He was located at his work and came as quickly as a taxicab could get him to them with a driver bribed to make all possible speed.

While they waited for him Helen had time to collect her thoughts—to face her new situation.

Brent was dead. All that his death meant to her did not come to Helen in a flash. It dawned upon her slowly that it had freed her.

Suddenly she remembered the locket. Where was it? She jumped up from the bed where she sat beside Eva, who had been ordered by the doctor to rest there, and flew out into the living room.

She'd had the locket when... when... when it happened... She thought with horror from the recollection that it might now be in the elevator.

"I've lost something," she said to the Japanese, who watched her curiously as she frantically searched the room.

He went on with his work of straightening up the place, which had become disordered during the recent commotion.

While Helen flung pillows off the divan to search there, he moved stealthily toward a bit of

gleaming gold that lay on the floor near the door.

Helen's evident concern over her loss had aroused his cupidity. He sensed a reward. His eyes moved avidly over the room while he worked, and, more calm than Helen, he had seen the locket.

But just as he stooped to pick it up Helen saw it too. She rushed over and held out her hand for it. The servant was forced to give it over.

Helen opened it and stood staring at Charles Nellin's photograph, asking herself a thousand questions.

Where had Eva's mother got this locket? What did she know of Charles Nellin? Or of Evangelina Cunningham?

The only answer she received was a sudden impulse to go to Mrs. Enns and put the question to her.

To Be Continued

The honesty of the British public is well known in the British Museum, according to the superintendent of the Reading Room, Mr. Sladen, who has just retired. He states that it is a very rare occurrence to lose a book.

LOOK FOR WORLD'S END MASEFIELD, Sask., Canada—A new religious cult, banded together by Archie Chanceler, his brother, Sid, and the latter's wife, has sprung up near here. The cult's belief is that the world will end November 6 of this year and so sure are they that they have sold all their holdings and stock, keeping just enough provisions to support them until that day.

PAN OUR TALKIES LONDON—One English newspaper has taken an unfavorable stand against American "talkie" movies. These are influencing the talk of English children, the paper says. "Talk in youthful circles today is of 'boobs,' 'ginks,' 'stamps,' 'taps,' and 'dumbbells.' The effect of these talkies is already reflected in the conversation of children, and in many instances of grownups," the paper says.

TAKE TO AIR FOR TEA LONDON—Tea-trips in the air are all the rage in London, doncher know? They have proven so popular that afternoon tea-year by the Northern Air Lines

trips are to be instituted next company. Girls will be engaged to act as waitresses and tea will be handed around by a girl in cap and apron during an hour's trip.

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