

The Husband Hunter

1930 BY NEA SERVICE INC. BY RUTH DEWEY GROVES

CHAPTER XXV
 Phillipa's father came lunging toward her, with clenched fists upraised.

She drew back from him with a scream, which she tried vainly to suppress. She saw his massive frame quiver from head to foot, as he stopped short before her. Into his eyes came a startled, questioning look which Phillipa was quick to interpret as horror of what he had been about to do.

After all the chastisings, brutality of his grown daughter was impossible for him. It was a matter to what heat she aroused his ready temper.

But his manner had been so ferocious, so determined, it nearly frightened poor Mrs. West to death. She collapsed into a convenient chair, and fell to sobbing brokenly. Her world seemed tumbling about her. Phillipa had always been respectable. That she should now be mixed up with a married man... it was too much for her mother.

Phillipa paid no attention to her, as she sat there with her apron thrown over her head as though with it she would shut out the disgrace that hovered over them.

The girl walked to the door. She had nothing more to say to her parents. Let them come to her now, since they had seen fit to insult her! Her father did not protest her going. His knees felt weak and he wanted to sit down. He preferred to have Phillipa out of the room.

She went to dress. She was going out with Alan and the subject that chiefly occupied her mind was her appearance. While her parents discussed the situation in the kitchen, she hummed softly over her cosmetic laden dressing table without giving them a further thought.

She was a bit concerned about what she should wear. Alan had been a trifle grumpy that day; he hadn't said where they would go. As a matter of fact, and Phillipa was well aware of it, he hadn't wanted to go anywhere. To begin with, he'd been indifferent about the choice of her ring. He told her to pick out what she liked and Phillipa had taken him at his word. Then she suggested that they ought to celebrate the occasion. Alan acquiesced without interest.

Phillipa expected him to be in the same mood when she met him in the lobby of his hotel. It was their habit to meet there. Now, since the place was convenient to the night life district of the city, and she did not want him to call at her home.

She had misled her parents with a suggestion here and an implied statement there about her engagements. They thought she had suddenly acquired a number of pleasure-loving friends. Never before having given her mother cause to worry, Phillipa's deception went unsuspected. And when, on occasion, she had admitted Alan brought her home it was always when she could say she had worked overtime, and that he came along with her, because he thought she shouldn't be alone in that neighborhood at night.

It was a bit of surprise to her to find Alan changed when he greeted her at the hotel. He was clearly in the grip of some excitement, which he did not at once reveal. At first she thought he had been drinking, but she had to give up that explanation. But his face was flushed, and his eyes shone with his secret stimulation.

Phillipa was a trifle puzzled, feeling he had no right to keep exciting news from her. She began speculating. When she came to consideration of Natalie, a dark frown streaked itself across her brow, but she had to force herself to look pleasant. Alan's eyes were upon her, broodingly, searchingly appraising her. It seemed to Phillipa.

It made her nervous. "Oh, let's dance," she exclaimed pettishly.

Silently Alan got up from the dinner table, and took her out upon the crowded floor. He had chosen the place. Phillipa would have preferred one more intimate, but when she was uncertain of the man's mood, she made it a practice to stop light; excepting when she lost her temper completely.

Alan did not hold her tightly, and when she glanced up at him, trying to find the answer to her strangeness in his face she found him gazing out beyond her, vacantly, as though he looked into great space.

Back at their table, seated and sipping sparkling water—Alan had ordered it without consulting her, another sign of his preoccupation—she smiled over to him.

"Of course, you do dance divinely," Alan said, "but even so, it's much better when you keep your mind on it. What is the matter with you tonight, anyway?"

Here he squirmed a bit mentally. The thought that Phillipa loved him was always disconcerting to him. He wanted to love her, perhaps he would... well, in time.

Only—and this was why he did not like to think of it—the whole thing bored him. Not completely—but in a way. He hoped to be thrilled at starting life again, in a sense, but he found himself sinking deeper and deeper into apathy instead.

He decided to honor Phillipa with the truth; to treat her with the honesty becoming their relations. If, deep in his heart, there was a small desire for escape but his decision he did not acknowledge to himself anymore than he would have let Phillipa know about it. Alan could never become a cad; his active gallantry was sufficient to prevent it—but he could, and often was, a very small boy beneath his successful-man exterior.

"I've had some very exciting news," Phillipa said suddenly. She drew in her breath and waited, but her eyes burned expectantly.

"I've had a letter from Natalie. She's coming back."

"This time Phillipa spoke. "From Natalie?" she echoed in dismay. Alan instantly became defensive. "To the house in Hillshire," he explained.

"But Alan..."

"I can't help it. She has a right to come back."

"She has nothing of the kind!" Phillipa was thoroughly indignant. "She left you, and she's probably married out there. You aren't going to stand for anything like that!"

"I can't keep her out of her home," Alan protested.

"Her home! Didn't you build it?"

"Well, I built it for her and I'm not an Indian giver," Alan answered sheepishly, his meekness torn away by her. "I had her furnished for her. She misjudged me."

"She shouldn't come back," she said furiously. "It's an insult to me!"

"Well, now, Phillipa," Alan began pacifically.

"If you mean any respect for me, you won't permit it," she stormed on.

"But, my dear, I'm not living in the house. There has to be some property settlement. You know. Why shouldn't Natalie have the house if she wants it? I know you wouldn't care to live there. We can build another house..."

"And a much finer one, too," Phillipa put in foolishly. Alan paid no attention to her remark. Fortunately for her, Alan had weighed her attitude, their engagement, in all likelihood, would have been broken on the spot.

He seemed, and this was no easy matter for Phillipa to accept, to be engrossed in Natalie's return. Was he glad of it? The thought, in its unpleasant potentialities, served to calm her a bit.

"She asked me to see the agency that supplies her with servants, and get a maid," he rambled on. At least it seemed to Phillipa that he rambled, for it annoyed her to have him talk of Natalie unnecessarily. But they were on the subject now, and she felt she ought to say something that would help to cover her bitterness.

"Why not a cook?" she asked.

"I suppose she knows you aren't living in the house? Alan, she wouldn't expect you to, would she?"

Suddenly her voice was vibrantly pleading. Alan had a feeling of helplessness held up to him for aid.

"No, no of course not," he answered gruffly. "No doubt she thinks she can manage without a cook."

He reached out and picked up the menu card. "What would you like for dessert?"

"Dessert?" Phillipa repeated in astonishment. "Why, we haven't had anything but hors d'oeuvres and soup!"

"That's right," Alan said indifferently. "What shall we have?"

"Goose, you've already ordered squabs."

"Well, then, let's dance," Phillipa was about to say she'd much rather talk, but thought better of it. They danced without conversation, and Phillipa guessed that Alan was not even thinking of her.

She kept telling herself she had nothing to fear. He had asked her to marry him. They were engaged. Nothing could change that. She could hold him. Alan was too decent for anything else. Better let him alone. Naturally, it upset him to know that Natalie was coming back to occupy their former home.

She didn't quite like the word "upset." It didn't adequately describe his reaction to his wife's announced return. But she preferred not to substitute a word more fitting. Not even in her thoughts would she admit that Natalie had any hold upon Alan, that could eliminate her, Phillipa.

Alan himself could not have analyzed for her what was in his mind. When he received Natalie's letter, he read it with surprise as his paramount emotion. Then he began, almost imperceptibly and unconsciously, to be thrilled.

It was a short letter, little more than a note, but perfect as Natalie was perfect. Beautifully written on pale tinted paper. She simply said she was returning, and made a few ordinary requests concerning the house.

She did not say she was coming back to him. Alan was puzzled over her complete omission of reference to their estrangement. He had never, in fact, understood the silence she maintained about his having closed the house. Of course, they had corresponded very little since he had moved to town, but he had expected her to take some interest in the matter.

What he did not know, to help him understand her attitude, was that Natalie's mother had taken a hand in her daughter's marital affairs about the time the house had been closed.

Natalie hadn't known what to say about it at first. Her heart agreed with what her mother said. She knew she loved Alan. Being away from him had convinced her he was the greater part of life for her. Everything was flat and dull without him. There was always an ache in her heart.

There were moments when loneliness pressed in so hard upon her that she wanted to cry out for relief. The world, in her father's household, seemed to belong to her sister, Florence, and Florence's ubiquitous boy-friend, Andrew. Until Andrew went away to New York. Then Florence deserted her night and day to be taken there too.

There was no time or place for yearning, except in the dark at night, or under cover of a deceptively collected exterior. At times, she thought her heart would break right before her family's eyes, and they wouldn't know a thing about it.

She thought they wouldn't. She didn't know how discerning real mothers are. But she was to learn and be prayerfully grateful for the maternal peccolity.

They were baking cakes, loaded with fruit and spices, for one of Florence's parties, on a morning when the sun shone brightly through the early curtained windows, and turned the kitchen into a place for stinking happily.

Mrs. Jayhunter looked at her daughter, and grew misty-eyed. A moment later she slipped into the pantry and wiped the budding tears away, certain that she had put altogether too much nutmeg in the last bowl of batter.

But it didn't seem right to her that there should be anything to weep over in beautiful Natalie's life. Goodness, think of what that kitchen could be like. A roly-poly baby pounding a sitting spoon on the arm of its high chair, a bird in the window, singing to burst its throat; a tabby purring below on the braided rug in front of the radiator; heavenly smells coming from the oven...

Good gracious, what had she done now? More nutmeg?

"Mother, what is the matter?" Natalie was looking at her in alarm.

Suddenly Mrs. Jayhunter put down the mixing spoon she had just taken up after her trip to the pantry, and faced her daughter with a degree of finality in her eyes that completely awed Natalie.

"I want to have a talk with you," she said firmly.

"Well," Natalie was hesitant about consenting.

"It isn't well," her mother declared stoutly. "Put that pan in the oven and turn the gas down. Then heaven help anyone who interrupts us. I may be making a big mistake, but at least I'm going to do a thorough job."

"Whatever in the world are you talking about?"

"I'm going to talk about you and Alan."

Natalie's hand shook, as she closed the oven door. Her mother saw that it did, but she had made up her mind to be ruthless in the necessary degree.

She ordered Natalie to sit in her own "cooking chair" as she called the little rocker by the window, and Natalie did as she was bid. Mrs. Jayhunter wanted more room, so she remained standing, holding her hands in clearing up the table where they had mixed the cakes.

She tore right into Natalie's trouble as if it were some obnoxious thing that had to be slain. And there was so much the air of a crusader about her, with back set in such apparent love for both her and Alan, that Natalie was half-won.

In time she wrote to Alan, and the day afterward Mrs. Jayhunter dispatched a letter of her own.

(To Be Continued)

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AT THE PELICAN



LYVELYN BRENT and MELBA KENNEDY in "BROADWAY" A UNIVERSAL SUPER-PICTURE

It is seldom indeed that a spectacular super-feature comes to the screen able to justify all the promises which have preceded it. Superlatives are so common and exceptionally meritorious pictures so rare. That is why "Broadway," the Universal special which opened at the Pelican theater last night, was found so completely satisfactory. For "Broadway" not only justifies but exceeds every anticipation.

Naturally it was assumed that "Broadway" would have to be an exceptionally good picture, if only because of the obvious excellence of the play from which the story is taken, which ran in New York for almost two years.

But besides showing to greatest advantage everything responsible for the success of the play, the all-around picture achieves dramatic and spectacular effects patently impossible on any stage. The most elaborate of all these are the sequences which occur in the gorgeous dancing and dining hall of the Paradise Night Club, which, although merely referred to in the play, are shown with indescribable beauty in the film. A huge, strikingly executed example of cubistic art is presented in all its dazzling colorings, the while a top-price revue, in marvelous costumes, features many cleverly staged song-and-dance numbers.

AT THE PINE TREE



-GLORIA SWANSON- in a scene from "THE TRESPASSER"

"The Trespasser," Gloria Swanson's first all-talking picture, is showing at the Pine Tree today. Edmund Goulding, director and author of the picture, had two weeks of camera and dialogue work behind him before Miss Swanson now appears as Marion Donnell, stenographer in the office of a Chicago corporation lawyer. In this picture she wears many beautiful clothes.

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Mrs. Paddock Sues For Divorce Decree

Myrtle Mary Paddock yesterday filed suit for divorce from Albert LeRoy Paddock whom she married in Vancouver, Wash., on October 9, 1926. They are the parents of one child.

She alleges cruel and inhuman treatment and asks the care and custody of the child. David Vandenberg is attorney for the plaintiff.

Freckles and His Friends



Mischief Afoot



Mom'n Pop



Revenge



al's super production of Edna Ferber's novel in which he plays Captain Andy Hawks. He also played in the next big Universal super, "Broadway."

Trophy Night Held, Bend Men Attend

Trophy night of the Klamath post of the American Legion was celebrated with a large attendance. Several guests from the Bend post were present, including Dr. Hemingway, commander; Leon Dovereau, adjutant, and Fred Triplet.

The Bend visitors requested that Klamath Legionnaires join with them in securing special cars to the state Legion convention which will be held at Baker, August 14, 15, 16. All local members interested in attending are asked to get in touch with

Commander Leon Crawford. A report was received from the Memorial Day committee. Various veterans' organizations of the city will participate in the Decoration Day parade. All Legionnaires are urged to be out. A large number of trophies for the new souvenir case which the local post is starting were brought to the meeting. Refreshments ended the evening's entertainment.

Pigeons' eggs are generally hatched out in pairs. The smaller egg produces the male, the larger the female.

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