Gorgeous

BY LAURA LOU BROOKMAN

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CHAPTER XXXVII

BILL'S voice was strained, trying to keep steady. "Oh," he said, "a wedding! Well, I think I can guess the rest. It's Jamieson, isn't it? He's a lucky guy, Toby, and I wish you both every happiness. Every happiness in the world."

"But it's not—" Toby began.

"It's not Jamieson?"

"No," Toby said. "It isn't."

One of Bill Brandt's hands gripped the edge of the table. "Toby," he asked, "aren't you in love with Tim Jamieson?"

"You don't understand, Bill—"

"No, I guess I don't. I didn't know there was anyone else. Well, the congratulations hold, whoever he is. I hope that he's good enough for you."

"Bill Brandt!" Toby's voice rose, exasperated. "Will you please listen to me for a minute? Will you give me a chance to go on and tell you what I've been trying to?"

"Why, yes—sure."

"You seem to think this is my wedding I'm talking about. It isn't; it's Harriet's. She's going to marry Marty Hiatt next month. She told me last night. Other people aren't supposed to know about it yet, but I know she wouldn't mind my telling you. Marty's a peach and I'm sure they'll be happy together. Don't you think it's grand, Bill?"

He did not answer, did not seem to be listening. "Wait a minute," Bill said, leaning forward. "Let me get this straight. Did you say you're not in love with Jamieson? Is that right?"

Her eyes met his, wavered. A faint glow of pink tinged her cheeks. "Well, you're partly right—"

"What does that mean?"

"It means"—the color in Toby's cheeks was definitely deeper as she hesitated, choosing the words, "that I'm in love—but not with Tim."

She raised her eyes then, eyes glowing radiantly.

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FOR a moment Bill seemed speechless. Then he said, the words tumbling one on another, "Toby, I haven't any right to say this to a girl like you, but I'm going to say it. I've got to. If you don't—if it isn't Jamieson you care about—have I got a chance?"

She was smiling. "You've got—more than that, Bill."

He pushed back the chair, got to his feet. "Come on," he said abruptly, "let's get out of this place."

Outside he signalled a taxicab and the driver pulled toward the curb. As they waited, Bill nodded toward the cafeteria. "It's all right for corned beef," he said, "but it's a hell of a place to kiss a girl. And I'm going to kiss you, Toby—"

He helped her into the cab and climbed in after her. "Anywhere," Bill told the driver. "Anywhere at all—only keep going."

Twenty minutes later he was saying, "Toby, there isn't an adjective in the language to fit you. You're the kind of a girl a man dreams about, even though he knows she doesn't exist. She couldn't, because she'd have to be perfect and they don't make 'em that way. Except you, Toby.

"I've got to be honest with you, darling. All I've got to offer you is a $50 a week pay check and the kind of apartment that goes with it and a couple of hundred dollars in the bank. I'm crazy about my job and I'll work hard at it, but I don't suppose I'll ever be able to give you the things you have now—a beautiful home and servants and cars and expensive clothes. You're the most wonderful girl in the world, Toby, and if you'll give me the chance I'll spend my life trying to make you happy. If you think you could marry a sap like me, if you could—oh, Toby, will you?"

She said, "Yes."

Poets have sung of such ecstacy. Musicians have set it to music. Toby and Bill had only the hum of the taxicab motor; it was enough.

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HE said presently, "I told you I'm only getting $50 a week now, but I think I can get a raise. I've been working for it and Blane half-promised me—"

"Fifty dollars is a lot of money, Bill. I used to earn $15 and I lived on it. We'll get along in grand style."

"But you're used to so much more—"

"I'll *have* more, Bill. I'll have you!"

Later he asked, "What do you suppose your father will say when we tell him?"

"He'll say he's getting a son he'll be proud of. He likes you, Bill. He told me so. And I think he knows the way I feel about you. Besides, my father would be the last person in the world to tell anyone else who they should marry, or try to manage their lives for them. You know what his parents did to him by their interfering."

"Yes, I guess that's right. Gee, he's swell, Toby! You know I can't believe this has happened. I was so sure Jamieson was the one you wanted—"

"I did think so, Bill—once. But I found out I was mistaken. Tim's all right. Now that I understand him we're good friends. But I never really was in love with him, any more than he was in love with me.

"I thought I was broken-hearted over Tim once, but it was only my pride that was hurt. It was Father who made me understand how different real love is. Knowing the way he loved my mother, hearing him talk about her, and knowing the way he feels about her, after all these years, made me understand what real love is. I realized it was the way—I feel about you."

"Darling—!"

"But, oh, Bill, you wouldn't help me a bit! Honestly, I thought I was going to have to do the proposing!"

"How could I guess you would care anything about a sap like me?"

"Will you please stop calling my future husband a sap?"

"Say it again, darling, will you?"

"Sap."

"No, that's not what I mean. Say 'future husband' the way you did just then. I like to hear you say it."

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SUDDENLY a harsh voice from the front of the cab interrupted. The driver had turned and was eyeing them. "This is Jersey City," he said. "You want me to go any farther?"

Toby said, "Jersey City! Good heavens, Bill, look at the meter. Tell him to take us home. We can't waste money like this."

"Oh, hang the meter."

"But he gave the driver the address and the cab turned around. It was while they were making the turn that Toby noticed the card on the back of the driver's seat, bearing his license number. There was a picture of the taxi driver with his name and a few lines of type above the signature of a city official.

Toby put a hand on Bill's arm. "Bill!" she said excitedly, "do you remember how we used to leave notes for each other in the telephone booth at the drug store?"

"Sure."

"And do you remember the page of the directory we always used—the one with the name 'Finklewitz' at the top of the page?"

"Yes."

Toby pointed to the card on the back of the driver's seat. "Look," she said.

Bill read the name. It was "L. Finklewitz." "Well," he said, "so it's our old friend, L. Finklewitz. That makes it perfect, doesn't it?"

But it wasn't the taxi driver he meant, it was Toby's lips.

(THE END)

To make "chunu," a powder used for soup, Peruvian Indians soak potatoes in water and freeze them. Then, each morning, they dance barefoot upon the spuds. In several days, the potatoes become dehydrated and hard as stone. They then are beaten into powder.

Although the distance from Spitzbergen to the north pole is about 800 miles, Lieutenant Bauendahl, a German, believed that it was possible to travel over the icy wastes by means of a suspension railway. After his first plan failed, he tried to reach the pole on a raft.

Hit-and-run drivers killed 2150 people in the United States last year.

Lovely Lorelei

Taking her cue from Lorelei, who combined aquatics with her singing to the enhancement of her charm, Sonia Day, comely young Denver vocalist, finds that swimming makes it easier for her to negotiate opera's high C's. The legendary sailors who cracked up on the Rhine probably never glimpsed a more bewitching siren than Sonia, tugging at a rope on the beach near Los Angeles.

Flapper Fannie Says

Sitting under the old apple tree is romantic to the core.

OUT OUR WAY — BY J. R. WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE — BY AHERN

MYRA NORTH, SPECIAL NURSE — BY THOMPSON AND COLL

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE — BY HAROLD GRAY

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS — BY BLOSSER

WASH TUBBS — BY CRANE

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES — BY MARTIN