

Rich and Reckless

By Mary Raymond

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BEGIN HERE TODAY

MOLLY MILFORD, rich and popular, has received proposals of marriage from three suitors, but BRENT STUART, whom she loves, has not asked her to marry him.

Bored with parties, Molly goes to "The Red Poppy," a fashionable night club, with another admirer, WICK MOSS. The lights go out and when they come on Molly finds herself dancing with a handsome stranger. He tells her his name is NELSON WHITTAKER. In reality he is NELSON WHITTAKER, bank robber, one of a group planning to spirit Molly away and hold her for ransom.

A few days later he asks her to have dinner with him and she agrees. Waiting for him at a downtown store, Molly encounters a girl who is her exact double. Impulsively Molly exchanges her luxurious costume for the other girl's shabby one.

Molly and "Whittaker" go to a place called "The Roost." Police arrive and there is shooting in which "Whittaker" is fatally injured. Molly is taken to a hospital and taken to a deserted farm house.

LEOLA BARLOW, the girl with whom Molly changed clothes, is found dead. The dead girl is the heiress, Molly Milford. Molly's kidnappers believe the Barlow girl and that they have been double-crossed. Terrified, Molly waits to learn what may happen next.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER VIII

THE servant said, "A young man to see you, sir."

Brent Stuart stood before a window in the library of his home. It was a room filled with mellow charm and warm color. "I've told you, Simpson," Brent said, "that I won't see anyone today."

"Yes, sir. But this is the young man who waited for hours, Mr. Brent. He seemed so upset, sir, when you didn't come in last night. If you'll pardon my saying so, sir—"

"Yes, Simpson." Brent's tone revealed none of the anguish in his heart. He had spent all the night searching the city for Molly. He had telephoned, and Donna had told him that Molly was out with a strange man—a man she had met at "The Red Poppy." Donna had kept Brent on the phone while she talked about how dreadful it had been of Wick to take Molly to such a questionable night club.

Then Brent had dashed off to make the rounds of the dining and dancing places. He was thoroughly alarmed.

Morning had come, and someone had telephoned that Molly had been found. It was all like a horrible nightmare—that message had torn Brent's world apart.

Molly was dead. Gay, laughing, beautiful, and sweet Molly was dead. With everything to live for, she had found life not worth living. She must have known how he loved her, and yet she had not wanted to stay here with him.

SIMPSON was still waiting in the doorway, watching his young employer anxiously. What was the matter with Simpson? Didn't he understand how to do as he was told? Couldn't he realize how much Brent wanted to be alone now?

"Forgive me, sir," Simpson was saying, "but the young man is so anxious, so excited, Mr. Brent. He said he couldn't leave without seeing you."

"Bring him in," Brent spoke hoarsely.

A moment later Simpson ushered in a dark-haired young man. The stranger stood regarding Brent timidly out of dark, melancholy eyes.

"I have a message for you, Mr. Stuart. That is, I had a message for you and then I lost it."

"I see," Brent's tone was hollow. "Then what was the good of coming here?"

"I was pretty sure I knew what was in the message. The young lady trusted me. In fact, she paid me handsomely to bring it to you."

"I don't know what you are talking about," Brent said. "Won't you sit down?"

"I hurried off as soon as I could," the visitor began abruptly. "I had to tell 'Frenchy' something, give him some excuse. He's the man who owns the place where I play in an orchestra. When I was half-way to town I put my hand in my pocket and the slip of paper the young lady had given me was gone. I must have pulled it out with my handkerchief. I remembered your name, though, and I looked up your address in a directory."

"Yes," Brent put quietly, "then you camped on my doorstep all night, I hear. Or practically."

"She seemed such a nice girl," the stranger said. "So worried and excited. She looked relieved when I nodded my head to let her know I would go. I think she wanted you to come very much. If I had only read the note—but I didn't. I was pretty sure she was afraid something was going to happen. And it did, Mr. Stuart, while I was gone. The man she was with was killed by the police."

"She was little," mused the young man. "She wore a green dress and a hat with a green feather on it. Wait a moment—I have something here I'd forgotten."

He pulled out a crumpled piece of paper. "She wrote some request numbers. This is one."

Brent barely glanced at the crumpled paper. Still holding it, he said, "I appreciate your coming here. It was good of you to be so interested. I have had a great shock today. You'll excuse me now."

The young man bowed and went out.

THE front door closed and Simpson turned away, mournfully. He had been quite taken in by the young man. There, that was the bell again!

The young man was standing there, hat in hand. "I forgot to tell him—"

"I suppose you'll say again it's something important?"

"Yes. Very important."

"I regret, sir, that it is quite impossible for you to see Mr. Stuart again."

"Then you'll take a message for

"Gladly."

The young man spoke quickly. "He wanted to know what the girl looked like, the one who sent the message. Tell him she looked exactly like that girl whose picture is on the front page of the newspapers today."

"But that is Miss Molly Milford, and she's dead," Simpson's voice sank dismally.

"Yes, I know." The visitor brushed this aside impatiently. "But this girl was her living, breathing image. Tell him that."

The door closed and Simpson's breath came heavily. What a narrow escape! So all this time he had been talking with a lunatic. Last night he had been alone with this crazy man for hours. Of course it wouldn't do to worry Mr. Brent with this ridiculous message. Simpson knew better than that. Mr. Brent was suffering almost more than he could bear, as it was.

In the library Brent stood looking down at the piece of paper in his hands. The words, blurred at first by the mist in his eyes, were gradually taking shape. "Please play Butterfly's 'Some Day He'll Come.'"

Brent's hand began to shake. The writing—no, he must be losing his mind. He was about to say the writing was Molly's. The girl who had written this had been living last night. And Molly had been in a department store—dead.

Brent rushed into the hall. "The young man who was here," he called wildly.

"He's gone, sir."

"Gone?"

"Yes, sir."

Simpson took in his young master's eyes, the white, anguished face. Everybody was going crazy. Maybe he was doing wrong to tell Mr. Brent what the stranger had said.

Nevertheless Simpson went on. "He told me to tell you, sir, that the girl who sent you the message last night looked like Miss Molly. She was the living image of the picture in the paper, he said."

"Get me the paper," Brent cried.

(To Be Continued)

A general of the Union army and the president of the Confederacy, enemies during the Civil war, both bore the name of Jefferson C. Davis.

The 17-year locust, Cleodra Septemdecim, appears every 13 years in the southern part of the United States.

Figured to Win

When a model is a model's model for a model, she ought to be the quintessence of perfection. So that's the title that goes to Dorothy Wilson, who presents for inspection the figure that was adjudged best of all in the Model's League contest at Rye, N. Y.

Flapper Fannie Says

Acting the invalid is the last resort of one whose excuses are in valid.

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"Gosh! I hope I'm goin' in th' right direction"

I NEVER DID SEE SO DERN MANY DETOURS

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OUT OUR WAY

BY J. R. WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE



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

