

SERIAL STORY.

\$15 A WEEK

BY LOUISE HOLMES

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YESTERDAY: Ann sees the boy across the alley writing a letter, decides he is the "Lonely" of the ad. Elated, she goes to the Center, completes her dress. She is thrilled with the prospect of meeting "Lonely" on Saturday.

CHAPTER V

THE following morning Ann stopped at the postoffice and was handed a letter. She went to a desk and slit the envelope, noting that the stationery was of nice quality, that the handwriting, although a bit stilted, was masculine and honest looking.

Lonely had written, "My Dear Miss Smith: Yours of the third inst., received and contents noted. In reply will suggest that you name a meeting place. At said meeting will you please wear a white flower for means of identification? I will do the same. Respectfully yours, K295."

Ann read the letter again, her excitement a little dashed. It was so lacking in the saving grace of humor, so utterly without personality. She crushed it in her bag and, more disappointed than she would admit even to herself, went on to the re-making of hats.

Ann experienced several reactionary moods that morning. The first was indignation at herself for having been a poor fool, the second an inclination to laugh at "Yours of the third inst.," and the last a definite let-down of spirit. It was incredible that the little episode had meant so much in her uneventful life.

On the heels of disappointment came reason. After all, what had she expected? What, if anything, was wrong with the dignified letter? Wasn't it proof that the writer was a gentleman? Would not a flippant answer have been offensive?

At noon she obtained stationery from the matron in a department store lounge and wrote a letter to K295. It was as brief and to the point as his had been.

"My Dear K295: If satisfactory to you I will meet you in front of the Blasfield painting in the foyer of the public library at 7 on Saturday evening. I will wear a white gardenia. Sincerely, Ann Smith."

SATURDAY came face to face with itself on the calendar at last. As there would not be time to return to her room after 5 o'clock, Ann dressed for the great event early in the morning. The new frock was a triumph. The skirt was short and flaring, the little jacket tight and well fitting. The pancake hat was vastly becoming, the scarf and gloves added a dashing touch.

Arriving at the shop, Ann turned this way and that before Mrs. Pringle's admiring eyes. Admiring eyes had followed her on the El and in the street. Her bronzed hair shone, the soft curls clung lovingly to her white neck. Rich color dyed her cheeks, her mouth was poppy red. She walked and stood with the assured confidence of looking her best.

"How do you like it, Mrs. Pringle?" she asked, shining eyed.

"Hm-m." Mrs. Pringle's dull eyes were slightly envious as she regarded Ann's slim hips and stylishly broad shoulders, her flat little waistline and sweetly rounded breast. "Well, I must say you did all right, Ann," she said. "You could give that Irene Temple aces and spades and still win by a length. Too bad you ain't going to a cocktail party out on the North Side."

Ann, who had not again mentioned newspaper personals to Mrs. Pringle, smiled radiantly. "I think I'll see a show tonight," she fibbed. "Just to celebrate."

She busied herself with a shapeless mass of felt and the pendulum of her emotions began to swing again. As the day advanced, it swung faster and faster. By the time Mrs. Pringle hurried away shortly before closing time to do her Sunday marketing, Ann was a prickly bundle of nerves and thwarted impulses. At 6, half mad with indecision, she tremblingly smoothed cold cream on her face, removed it with a sweet smelling pad, and applied powder. Her cheeks burned hotly, the use of a lipstick would have been sacrilege.

Ann took the gardenia from a glass where it had reposed since noon and pinned it to her lapel. She adjusted the smart little hat. Suddenly she was crying.

"I can't do it," she sobbed furiously. "Damn it all—what's the matter with me? I'm a coward. I've put on the brakes for so long that I can't let go."

Removing the gardenia, she threw it on the work table. Angerly she snatched the hat from her head. "I won't go a step," she muttered fiercely. "I absolutely refuse to make a fool of myself. I'll drop the whole crazy business and forget it. For the rest of my life I'll just—just twirl my thumbs!"

Her chin wobbled and her voice shook. "For fun and excitement, I'll look across the alley at that young man. When I want to be really hilarious I'll go to the Center and make a dress that no one will ever see." She sat down, burying her head on a bent arm. "Maybe—when I'm old—I won't care," she sobbed.

AFTER a while Ann lifted her head and stared about the cluttered room. This and another room, not quite so cluttered but no more beautiful, were her life. She had no one, not a single person of her own. All her life would be like this. Again she wept. Then, out of emotional chaos, she remembered that another person, just like herself, so lonely that he had flung his desperation to the

four winds, would wait in front of the Blasfield painting at the public library.

Ann again applied a scented pad to her face. She put on fresh powder. She pulled the little hat to just the right angle. Examining the gardenia for signs of bruise, she firmly pinned it to her lapel.

She had decided upon a course. She'd locate herself in the reading room where she could view the Blasfield painting without being seen. When K295 appeared she would be able to make a snap judgment as to his possibilities. If necessary, she could dispose of the gardenia and thus obviate a difficult situation. The plan was not exactly fair, it definitely put K295 at a disadvantage, but it was a protective measure and Ann prepared to act upon it.

Ann ordered an egg salad sandwich—there was no tax on a 10-cent sandwich—in a drug store near the shop. She noticed the waitresses and the cashier. How much did they make? Were they, too, scrimping and saving within the confines of a budget? Perhaps some of them lived with their families. Would \$15 a week go farther or less far if you had a family? That, she supposed, would depend upon the earning power of the family.

The waitresses laughed and loved among themselves and Ann envied them. Friends. Did they appreciate what it meant to have friends? She heard one girl tell another that her boy friend had been given a raise—\$18 a week now. The girl spoke proudly, her eyes shone. Dividing her happiness made it seem more real, more precious.

As she left the drug store she heard a bus boy whistle. "Class," he said, obviously referring to her. "I wish someone would tell me

wrens games find the swag to stress like that." Fortified by the obscure compliment, Ann wandered slowly along State street to Randolph. Turning here, she went on to Wabash. Her knees shook as she went into the library.

(To Be Continued)

During December, 1939, air passenger traffic increased 74 per cent over December, 1938. The figures for revenue passenger miles were: 65,017,499 for December, 1939, and 37,366,803 for December, 1938.

Ancient Warrior Fights for Finns



The old fight in Finland. This grizzled warrior from Oulu is mustered into fighting ranks.

OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASH TUBBS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



FLAPPER FANNY



CREATOR OF TOM SAWYER



CREATOR OF TOM SAWYER



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