

• SERIAL STORY

OF BRIGHTNESS GONE

BY HOLLY WATTERSON

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MRS. HARPER

CHAPTER XX

IN her almost two years of private duty she had nursed some testy patients, Candace reflected, but there had been none quite the equal of this turgid of a little old woman, Mrs. Harper.

She was at the moment cleaning up the mess Mrs. Harper had made by throwing a glass of orange juice at the floor nurse, Miss Finch. She had just cleaned up Finch, too—as far as possible, that is, without the complete bath that was the only thing that really would do it.

Finch had orange juice all the way from her cap and hair down to her white brogans. Candace had felt sorry for her, she was so upset and so terrified, but though she had carefully controlled the impulse she had felt strongly like laughing, too.

Mrs. Harper demanded testily from her bed, "Just why are you smiling? Just what are you thinking that's so funny?"

Candace straightened and favored the furious old lady with a most winning smile of candor. "Why, I was just thinking that the thing I really like about private duty is that one meets such nice people," she said.

"Meaning me, I suppose. Meaning I'm not nice. Young woman, you're impertinent!"

Candace opened her eyes wide. "But you would have thought me impertinent if I'd refused to answer," she pointed out innocently.

Mrs. Harper snorted. "You couldn't have told a polite lie, I suppose?"

"That never occurred to me," Candace said.

Mrs. Harper snorted again, but more mildly. "You are impertinent. But it's all right, you amuse me. I like people with a bit of gumption. That other little thing," she said contemptuously, "that comes practically crawling on her belly in her anxiety to please every time I ring."

"Finch hasn't been nursing as long as I have," Candace said. "She hasn't yet learned, like Alice, that a lot of the White Queens who go around yelling, 'Off with their heads!' are nothing but old cards anyway. She's afraid of you. And you just rang for her to be unpleasant."

"Certainly I'm entitled to have 20 minutes in peace, for my dinner? You had just had your own dinner? You didn't need orange juice, you could certainly have waited until I got back. Finch is busy enough without you plaguing her with unnecessary things when you have your own special to do them for you. She knows you just do it to be nasty and it makes her nervous. No wonder she's awkward sometimes."

"SOMETIMES!" Mrs. Harper repeated scornfully. She added suddenly, "See here, young woman, are you suggesting that I'm a White Queen, nothing but an old card? You'll find I'm real enough, your head will come off fast enough if I complain about you to Dr. Patterson."

"I doubt it," Candace said calmly. "I'm a good nurse, I have a good reputation in this hospital. And you—" She laughed a little. The wicked old woman really amused her. "You've worn out about a dozen specials in two weeks. I think Dr. Patterson would know which of us was at fault."

Mrs. Harper sighed. "I'm afraid you're right," she admitted. Then she brightened. "As a matter of fact I'm thinking of letting my other specials go and taking you on for full-time duty."

Candace threw up her hands in genuine horror. "Human flesh couldn't stand it," she said with feeling.

The wrinkled old face looked hurt. "See here, I'm not really as bad as that. There are people who are very fond of me. Take my grandson Duffy for instance—"

Candace groaned inwardly. Du-freese Carter Harper was in her opinion the worst plague ever visited on man—or rather, woman. But the old lady adored him, and there was no point in actually hurting her. She said, "Mrs. Harper, I should have told you before I am asking to be taken off your case."

"What?" she exclaimed, aghast. "Why?"

"Well, there's a gall bladder case that I've been on from time to time," Candace explained, lying easily; "they're going to operate finally. I'd like to be with the case then. It's interesting to be able to follow one through like that."

Mrs. Harper said indignantly. "My case isn't interesting, I suppose?"

Candace grinned. "There are people going out working every day with things a lot worse than an already-healed wound on a finger where a benign tumor's been cut out," she said good naturedly. "You could be out and around if you wanted to be."

Mrs. Harper demanded, outraged. "Why would I stay here in this hole if I could be out of it?"

"I don't know," Candace said, "unless you like the attention being thought sick earns you. Unless you like being fussed over."

"Well, I never—" Mrs. Harper said. Then she smiled too, weakly. "You win. You're right, partly at least. It's Duffy," she admitted.

"He races around so, that when I'm well he spends scarcely any time with me. If I'm sick he almost goes out of his mind, he can't do enough. He's really fond of me, you believe that, don't you?" she asked anxiously.

HIS devotion to his grandmother was, in Candace's opinion, the youth's one saving grace. She said warmly, "He is indeed!"

His grandmother said happily, "He's a good boy. Spoiled, maybe, but essentially good."

Candace thought ruefully. "I wouldn't go that far. . . . But apparently no agreement was necessary to that."

Mrs. Harper settled herself into her pillows contentedly. "Now that we understand each other, you'll stay? I'll make it worth your while."

"I'm sorry," Candace said. "No." The old lady sat up sharply. "Give me one good reason why not," she demanded. "My tempers don't bother you. You're not afraid of me. It can't be that."

A sudden thought struck her. "Has Duffy," she asked, "come tom-cattling around? Is that it?"

That was it. And exactly the right word for it, Candace thought grimly. She began, "Mrs. Harper, I—"

She saw Mrs. Harper look toward the doorway and she turned too, to see Duffy himself standing there. Her expression chilled perceptibly.

He looked boyish and handsome and he was smiling broadly and laden as usual with flowers and packages. She would have liked to slip out, but of course the flowers had to go with her to be cared for. Duffy managed to touch her and to be a long time in passing them over.

There was a package in her

pocket, she discovered, when she got outside. A small box, looking like something from a jeweler's. She thought furiously, that does it, I'm going to Dr. Patterson right now. I've had enough of this. . . .

(To Be Continued)

The final test of military aircraft is their record in action, and so far in this war the combat record of American planes has been good.

—Maj. N. F. Siussee and Maj. E. C. Locke jointly to Society of Automotive Engineers.

Go in wholeheartedly and do your best. Less than that is not full service.

—John S. Dunsmuir, new G. A. R. national commander, in message to army age youth.

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THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



U. S. NAVY UNDER-SECRETARY

HORIZONTAL

1,8 Pictured

U. S. official.

15 Disintegrate.

16 Weir.

17 Iniquity.

18 Liquefied.

20 Auricle.

21 Select.

23 Move wearily.

24 Rigid.

26 River (Sp.).

28 Upon.

29 Nuts.

32 Animal.

36 Ages.

37 Charge.

38 Sedate.

41 Mineral.

42 Male sheen.

43 Parent.

44 Assault.

47 Lounge.

51 Kite end.

55 Air raid precautions (abbr.).

56 Competitors.

58 Fish eggs.

59 Giggled.

62 Unlocks.

64 He is Under-

Answer to Previous Puzzle

VERTICAL

9 Radical (abbr.).

10 Symbol for erbium.

11 Street (abbr.).

12 At that time.

13 Exclamation.

14 Musical instrument.

15 Pin poetry.

22 Obliteration.

24 Also.

25 Beg.

27 Within (abbr.).

29 Foot (suffix).

30 Before.

31 Eccentric wheel.

33 Make lace.

34 Greek letter.

35 Relative (abbr.).

39 Rodent.

40 Print measure.

41 Military police (abbr.).

44 Low voice.

45 Sea eagle.

46 Spotless (var.).

47 Turkish money.

48 Above.

49 Woman.

50 Lord Lieutenant (abbr.).

52 Space.

53 Electrified particles.

54 For fear.

56 Soap heap.

57 Chinese empire.

60 Credit (abbr.).

61 Knight of the Elephant (abbr.).

63 Measure.

