

Darling Fool

By MABEL McELLIOTT

BEGIN HERE TODAY

MONNIE O'DARE rushed home from Europe in response to a delayed letter from her former fiance, DAN CARDIGAN, only to find him dying from injuries received in an automobile accident. However, just before the accident Dan had married KATHA LAWRENCE, a designing street who pretended to be Monnie's friend but led Dan to believe Monnie no longer cared for him.

The O'Dares have little money. Monnie works to help support her mother, younger brother and sister, and her elder brother, who works in a garage. On the European trip, Monnie was the paid companion of her old friend, MISS ANSTICE COREY.

ARTHUR MACKENZIE, rich, middle-aged New Yorker, whom she met on the trip, asked her to marry him but she refused. After Dan's death Monnie tries to pick up her life anew. She takes a job in DR. WATERMAN'S office. CHARLES EUSTACE, the doctor's nephew, who has been friendly with her, now seems aloof and cool. Arthur Mackenzie writes frequently.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XLIV

MONNIE was at the telephone the following Monday morning, trying to get a blurred connection.

"Long distance calling," the operator droned. "Calling Miss O'Dare."

Then came a man's voice, leisurely, deliberate. "Monica?"

"Yes."

"This is Arthur Mackenzie. I'm passing through your town tonight. May I stop to see you?"

Almost before she knew it she had answered him and the brief connection was broken. A step sounded behind her and there stood Charles Eustace.

"Sorry I interrupted."

She smiled at him. "You didn't. It was just a friend. Then she thought, 'How stupid of me to be like this with him!' She explained, 'It was Arthur Mackenzie. He's dropping in to see me tonight.'

"Dropping in?" Charles' voice was sarcastic. "From London or Paris?"

She flushed, lifting her chin. "Neither. Merely from New York. Why don't you like him?"

Charles shrugged. "He's all right. One of those picturesque buccaners of finance. Rich enough for—"

"For what?" Monnie prompted him.

"For anything." Charles' tone dropped the subject. Courteously, as one stranger to another, he asked, "Is the doctor in?"

"No, he's not." How odd, she thought, that he didn't know Dr. Waterman had gone to Chicago for that conference. Surely she had heard him tell Charles only yesterday about the trip.

"I won't stop then," Charles said. He was gone with a cool and distant bow in her direction.

"I hate him!" Monnie said, aloud in the quiet room. She was furiously angry. No one had ever made her so angry before. She wanted to quarrel with him violently, satisfyingly.

"WHAT did you say?" Charles was on the threshold again, lean and elegant. He had heard her!

"Nothing!" She stared back at him, all defiance.

"Oh, yes, you did." Suddenly his face was not two inches away from her own. He, too, was angry. His lips were set grimly. Monnie deliberately pouted her own, in the shape of a kiss. Almost before she knew what was happening he had pinned her arms to her sides, was kissing her fiercely, angrily.

"You asked for that."

"Oh, oh!" She panted, struggling for release. "How dare you?"

"You wanted me to." He taunted her with that, letting her go.

She would have struck at him blindly but in those strong arms plinked her as in a vise. "Saving them for Mackenzie, eh?"

Monnie flushed a deep scarlet. Not only the words but the tone were insulting.

"You—you're insufferable! I don't know why I ever thought you were my friend."

"Friend!" Charles laughed softly. "You must know that's rot—friendship between a man and a girl. Either they're in love and know it or—"

"Or what?" She was still furious with him but curiosity had her in its grip. She must know what he meant to say.

"Or they're in love and don't know it." Charles finished shortly. He walked over to a mirror, coolly straightening his tie.

"Sorry. I didn't mean to behave like a cave man," he said. "I just stopped in, really, to say goodbye. I'm leaving a day after tomorrow. Before I go may I wish you health, happiness and prosperity—all that sort of thing?"

"Thank you," Monnie was trembling all over. She could scarcely stand but she was determined he should not know it.

"I suppose I won't be invited to the wedding."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

HIS voice was harsh. "Don't you?" Miss Anstice says he wanted you to marry him in London and that you'd almost made up your mind."

"Really? Who's listening to gossip now?" She wanted to put her hands on her hips and shout

at him. She had never felt such a passion of violence in her life. "One hears things," Charles lit a cigaret, watching her coolly. "And you assume I couldn't resist the charms of great wealth?"

"What girl could?"

Monnie whirled on him, a veritable little fury. "You mean 'what poor girl!' Oh, how dare you talk to me like that! You never would—to someone—someone like—" She could not go on. She was afraid, desperately afraid, she was going to cry.

"Like whom?"

She regained her composure after a struggle. "Like Ellen Willard—or—Sandra." Her tone had a wealth of bitterness in it, a deep, abiding hurt.

Charles' tone was contrite. "Monnie, I didn't mean that. You know I didn't. I'm sorry."

She would not, could not, forgive him the injury. All the pent-up pride and loneliness of the past few months flowed over her and, putting her head down on the desk, she wept bitterly.

He hovered over her, desperately contrite.

"No, no, don't touch me. You're all alike—all of you!"

"Whom do you mean?"

"Everybody in this wretched place." The words came between sobs. "At first you were so nice—wonderful, really. I never had known anyone like you. But now you're like all the rest. Go away! I never want to see you again!"

Presently she was able to raise her head, to dry her eyes. Charles stood watching her wretchedly.

"Monnie, if you'd only listen—"

She shook her head with tragic dignity. "You can't do anything now. You've done the worst. I shall never forget it—"

Nor forgive, added her sore heart.

MONNIE dressed half-heartedly for the coming of her visitor that evening. He had said his train would arrive at seven and he would call directly afterward. Monnie was not thinking very clearly of him. Over and over again she rehearsed the scene of the afternoon. Words, expression, gestures—all were printed on her brain. She looked at herself curiously in the mirror, her eyes darkening at the thought of Charles' kisses. How had he ever dared! Oh, she would show him! He thought the worst of her anyhow. She might as well give him reason for thinking it.

Kay came in as she was putting the finishing touches to her hair.

"Nice," commented the younger sister briefly. "I like your hair that way. Makes you look frail and interesting." She grinned, gamin-wise.

"What's this kind of finance like, anyhow?" Kay demanded, dropping on the bed and propping her chin on her bunched fingers. "I'm dying to see him. If the country clubbers thought we had bagged such a big bird they'd all be on our doorstep."

"He's—well, he looks like a movie director's idea of a Wall Street man," Monnie confessed, wrinkling her brow. "He knows what he wants. When he goes into a restaurant all the waiters jump."

"Mmmmm-mm," Kay sighed deeply. "Then he's a man after my own heart. I like 'em bossy."

"He's so rich it scares you," Monnie said after a pause. "But he's nice in spite of it."

"Like him?" Kay watched her idly.

"Oh, yes," Monnie polished her nails.

"Don't seem awfully enthusiastic."

"Don't it? Well, I can't help that." He really is splendid and I'm very anxious to see him."

Kay rolled over on her back and regarded the ceiling. "Home Town Girl Marries King of Wall Street," she chanted sweetly. "Hug With Ropes of Diamonds."

"Don't be an idiot," Monnie tightened her lips, remembering the man who had held her in his arms only a few short hours before. Charles would see! She would show him.

If Arthur Mackenzie asked her to marry him tonight she was going to say "Yes."

(To Be Continued)

The whippet is said to be the fastest thing on legs. This dog can travel 200 yards in from 10 to 12 seconds, or half the time a man would require.

The well-known physician, minister or lawyer can use about 25,000 words.

Flapper Fanny Says

"Or what?" She was still furious with him but curiosity had her in its grip. She must know what he meant to say.

"Or they're in love and don't know it." Charles finished shortly. He walked over to a mirror, coolly straightening his tie.

"Sorry. I didn't mean to behave like a cave man," he said. "I just stopped in, really, to say goodbye. I'm leaving a day after tomorrow. Before I go may I wish you health, happiness and prosperity—all that sort of thing?"

"Thank you," Monnie was trembling all over. She could scarcely stand but she was determined he should not know it.

"I suppose I won't be invited to the wedding."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

HIS voice was harsh. "Don't you?" Miss Anstice says he wanted you to marry him in London and that you'd almost made up your mind."

"Really? Who's listening to gossip now?" She wanted to put her hands on her hips and shout

The girl who tries to become a social queen with card tricks is apt to find herself merely a duce of a nuisance.

MONNIE was at the telephone the following Monday morning, trying to get a blurred connection.

"Long distance calling," the operator droned. "Calling Miss O'Dare."

Then came a man's voice, leisurely, deliberate. "Monica?"

"Yes."

"This is Arthur Mackenzie. I'm passing through your town tonight. May I stop to see you?"

Almost before she knew it she had answered him and the brief connection was broken. A step sounded behind her and there stood Charles Eustace.

"Sorry I interrupted."

She smiled at him. "You didn't. It was just a friend. Then she thought, 'How stupid of me to be like this with him!' She explained, 'It was Arthur Mackenzie. He's dropping in to see me tonight.'

"Dropping in?" Charles' voice was sarcastic. "From London or Paris?"

She flushed, lifting her chin. "Neither. Merely from New York. Why don't you like him?"

Charles shrugged. "He's all right. One of those picturesque buccaners of finance. Rich enough for—"

"For what?" Monnie prompted him.

"For anything." Charles' tone dropped the subject. Courteously, as one stranger to another, he asked, "Is the doctor in?"

"No, he's not." How odd, she thought, that he didn't know Dr. Waterman had gone to Chicago for that conference. Surely she had heard him tell Charles only yesterday about the trip.

"I won't stop then," Charles said. He was gone with a cool and distant bow in her direction.

"I hate him!" Monnie said, aloud in the quiet room. She was furiously angry. No one had ever made her so angry before. She wanted to quarrel with him violently, satisfyingly.

"WHAT did you say?" Charles was on the threshold again, lean and elegant. He had heard her!

"Nothing!" She stared back at him, all defiance.

"Oh, yes, you did." Suddenly his face was not two inches away from her own. He, too, was angry. His lips were set grimly. Monnie deliberately pouted her own, in the shape of a kiss. Almost before she knew what was happening he had pinned her arms to her sides, was kissing her fiercely, angrily.

"You asked for that."

"Oh, oh!" She panted, struggling for release. "How dare you?"

"You wanted me to." He taunted her with that, letting her go.

She would have struck at him blindly but in those strong arms plinked her as in a vise. "Saving them for Mackenzie, eh?"

Monnie flushed a deep scarlet. Not only the words but the tone were insulting.

"You—you're insufferable! I don't know why I ever thought you were my friend."

"Friend!" Charles laughed softly. "You must know that's rot—friendship between a man and a girl. Either they're in love and know it or—"

"Or what?" She was still furious with him but curiosity had her in its grip. She must know what he meant to say.

"Or they're in love and don't know it." Charles finished shortly. He walked over to a mirror, coolly straightening his tie.

"Sorry. I didn't mean to behave like a cave man," he said. "I just stopped in, really, to say goodbye. I'm leaving a day after tomorrow. Before I go may I wish you health, happiness and prosperity—all that sort of thing?"

"Thank you," Monnie was trembling all over. She could scarcely stand but she was determined he should not know it.

"I suppose I won't be invited to the wedding."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

HIS voice was harsh. "Don't you?" Miss Anstice says he wanted you to marry him in London and that you'd almost made up your mind."

"Really? Who's listening to gossip now?" She wanted to put her hands on her hips and shout

The girl who tries to become a social queen with card tricks is apt to find herself merely a duce of a nuisance.

MONNIE dressed half-heartedly for the coming of her visitor that evening. He had said his train would arrive at seven and he would call directly afterward. Monnie was not thinking very clearly of him. Over and over again she rehearsed the scene of the afternoon. Words, expression, gestures—all were printed on her brain. She looked at herself curiously in the mirror, her eyes darkening at the thought of Charles' kisses. How had he ever dared! Oh, she would show him! He thought the worst of her anyhow. She might as well give him reason for thinking it.

Kay came in as she was putting the finishing touches to her hair.

"Nice," commented the younger sister briefly. "I like your hair that way. Makes you look frail and interesting." She grinned, gamin-wise.

"What's this kind of finance like, anyhow?" Kay demanded, dropping on the bed and propping her chin on her bunched fingers. "I'm dying to see him. If the country clubbers thought we had bagged such a big bird they'd all be on our doorstep."

"He's—well, he looks like a movie director's idea of a Wall Street man," Monnie confessed, wrinkling her brow. "He knows what he wants. When he goes into a restaurant all the waiters jump."

"Mmmmm-mm," Kay sighed deeply. "Then he's a man after my own heart. I like 'em bossy."

"He's so rich it scares you," Monnie said after a pause. "But he's nice in spite of it."

"Like him?" Kay watched her idly.

"Oh, yes," Monnie polished her nails.

"Don't seem awfully enthusiastic."

"Don't it? Well, I can't help that." He really is splendid and I'm very anxious to see him."

Kay rolled over on her back and regarded the ceiling. "Home Town Girl Marries King of Wall Street," she chanted sweetly. "Hug With Ropes of Diamonds."

"Don't be an idiot," Monnie tightened her lips, remembering the man who had held her in his arms only a few short hours before. Charles would see! She would show him.

If Arthur Mackenzie asked her to marry him tonight she was going to say "Yes."

(To Be Continued)

The whippet is said to be the fastest thing on legs. This dog can travel 200 yards in from 10 to 12 seconds, or half the time a man would require.

The well-known physician, minister or lawyer can use about 25,000 words.

Flapper Fanny Says

"Or what?" She was still furious with him but curiosity had her in its grip. She must know what he meant to say.

"Or they're in love and don't know it." Charles finished shortly. He walked over to a mirror, coolly straightening his tie.

"Sorry. I didn't mean to behave like a cave man," he said. "I just stopped in, really, to say goodbye. I'm leaving a day after tomorrow. Before I go may I wish you health, happiness and prosperity—all that sort of thing?"

"Thank you," Monnie was trembling all over. She could scarcely stand but she was determined he should not know it.

"I suppose I won't be invited to the wedding."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

HIS voice was harsh. "Don't you?" Miss Anstice says he wanted you to marry him in London and that you'd almost made up your mind."

"Really? Who's listening to gossip now?" She wanted to put her hands on her hips and shout

The girl who tries to become a social queen with card tricks is apt to find herself merely a duce of a nuisance.

OUT OUR WAY



OUR BOARDING HOUSE



SALESMAN SAM



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



THE NEWFANGLES—MOM'N POP

