



The GIRL in the MIRROR

By Elizabeth Jordan

THE STORY

CHAPTER I.—Barbara Devon's wedded departure on her honeymoon leaves her brother "Laurie" successful playwright but somewhat inclined to wildness, without her restraining influence. His theatrical associates, Rodney Bangs and Jacob Epstein, promise to "keep an eye on him."

CHAPTER II.—Laurie, who is wealthy, refuses to settle down to work, announcing his intention of resting and seeking "adventure." From his window in New York he sees the reflection of a beautiful girl in a mirror in the house opposite.

CHAPTER III.—Devon learns from the elevator boy in the girl's house that her name is Mayo. Again in the mirror's reflection he sees her with a revolver and fears she means to commit suicide. He breaks into her apartment and, winning her confidence, induces her to lunch with him, though she warns him of "danger."

CHAPTER IV.—Perceptively agitated by the arrival of a man in the restaurant, she mutters that he has "found her." Learning that she is unmarried and the man has no claim on her, Laurie, incensed, accosts the stranger.

CHAPTER V.—Accusing the man of abusing Miss Mayo, Devon warns him to end his espionage. The stranger is politely sarcastic, but from him Laurie learns the girl's first name is Doris. She tells him her persecutor is Herbert Ransome Shaw.

CHAPTER VI.—To Louise Ordway, his invalid sister-in-law, and firm friend, Laurie admits he is "interested" in Doris, not revealing her identity.

CHAPTER VII.—Doris reluctantly decides to meet Mrs. Ordway, and firmly vetoes Laurie's suggestion of applying to the police to protect her from Shaw.

Clad in these garments, Laurie took a few preliminary shuffles around the garage, while the owner, watching him, slapped his thigh in approval. So great was his interest in the "act," indeed, that when the impersonator left the garage and started off, Burke showed a strong desire to follow him and see the finish of the performance, a desire that recalled for a fleeting instant the determined personality of the young gentleman hidden under the trap disguise.

At the last moment before leaving, Laurie took from his pocket the tiny revolver he had brought with him, and holding it in his palm, studied it in silence. Should he take it, or shouldn't he? He dropped it among the discarded heap of clothes, and picked up in its stead a small screw-driver, which he put into his ragged pocket. That particular tool looked as if it might be useful.

Leaving on the country road, with his coat over his shoulders, and a set of the borrowed revolver, he looked about with assurance. He believed that in this unexpected guise, he could meet even Shaw and get away with it; but he meant to be very careful and take no unnecessary chances.

He cut across half a dozen fields, climbed half a dozen fences, was fiercely barked at by a dozen dogs, more or less, and finally reaching the grounds of the house in the cedars, approached it from the rear in exactly the half-shaking, half-cocky manner in which the average tramp would have drawn near a shuttered house from one of whose chimneys smoke was rising. It was a manner that nicely blended the hope of a handout with the fear of a rebuff. Once he fancied he saw something moving among the trees. He ducked back and remained quiet for some time. Then, reassured by the continued silence, he emerged, sauntered to the back entrance, and after a brief preliminary study of the shuttered windows, assailed the door with a pair of grimy knuckles.

He had expected a long delay, possibly no response at all. But the door opened as promptly as if some one had been standing there awaiting his signal, and on its threshold a forbidding-looking woman, baglike as to hair and features but cleanly dressed, stood regarding him with strong disapproval. In the kitchen range back of her a coal fire was burning. A teakettle bubbled domestically on its top, and cheek by jowl with this a big-bellied coffee-pot exhaled a delicious aroma.

The entire tableau was so different from anything Laurie had expected that for an instant he stared at the woman, speechless and almost open-mouthed. Then the smell of the coffee gave him his cue. He suddenly remembered that he had eaten nothing that day, and the fact gave a thrill of sincerity to the professional whine in which he made his request.

"Say, lady," he begged urgently. "I'm down an' out. Gimme a cup o' coffee, will yah?"

Her impulse, he saw clearly, had been to close the door in his face. Already her hand was automatically responding to it. But he whipped off

his dirty cap and, shivering on the doorstep, looked at her with Laurie's eyes, whose beauty no amount of disguise could wholly conceal. There was real appeal in them now. Much, indeed almost everything, depended on what this creature would do in the next minute. She hesitated.

"I ain't had a mouthful since yesterday," croaked the visitor, pleadingly and truthfully.

"Well, wait there a minute. I'll bring you a cup of coffee."

She turned from the door and started to close it, evidently expecting him to remain outside, but he promptly followed her in, and her face, hardening into quick anger, softened a little as she saw him cowering over the big hot stove and warming his dirty hands.

In silence she filled a cup with coffee, cut a thick slice from a loaf of bread, buttered it, and set the collation on the kitchen table.

"Hurry up and eat that," she mutter, "and then clear out. If any one saw you here, I'd get into trouble."

Laurie grunted acquiescence and wolfed the food. He had not sat down, and now, as he ate, his black eyes swept the room while he planned

keeping a careful eye on her, he stretched out a long arm and tapped at the panel. There was no answer. He tapped again. Still no answer. He glanced at the enforcedly silent woman, and something in her eyes, a gleam of triumph or sardonic amusement, or both, was tinder to his hot spirit.

"Have you led me to the wrong door?" he asked. He spoke very quietly, but the tone impressed the woman. The gleam faded from her eyes. Hastily she shook her head.

"If you have—" He nodded at her thoughtfully. Then he raised his voice.

"Doris," he called. "Doris!" He heard a movement inside the room, an odd little cry, half exclamation, half sob, and hurried steps approaching. The next minute her voice came to him, in breathless words, with a tremor running through them.

"Is it you?" she gasped. "Oh, is it you?"

"Yes, open the door."

"I can't. It's locked."

She stared at the unyielding wood before him.

"You mean they've locked you in?"

"Yes, of course."

It would be, of course, Laurie reflected. That was Shaw's melodramatic method.

"We'll change all that, in a minute."

He stepped back from the door.

"What are you going to do?" The voice inside was anxious.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

His Hostess, Having Turned Her Back to Him, He Crept Behind Her.

His next move, lying on his stomach, back of the stove were several dishtowels. They gave him his first suggestion. His second came when he observed that his hostess, evidently reassured by his haste, had turned her back to him, and, bending a little, was examining the oven. Nimbly setting down the cup and the bread, he crept behind her, and, seizing her in one powerful arm, covered her mouth with his free hand. He could not wholly stifle the smothered shriek she gave.

For the next moment he had his hands full. Despite her wrinkles and her gray hair, she was a strong woman, and she fought with a violence and a false strength due to overwhelming fury and terror.

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"Lead on," he invited, buoyantly. There was an instant when he thought the struggle with her would begin all over. He saw her draw herself together as if to spring. But she was evidently exhausted by her previous contest. She was heavily exhausted by her previous contest.

The buxom widow is the winner of the big prize in the latest Austrian state lottery. A few years ago, her husband worked near Ischl as a miner. Today his widow is one of the richest inhabitants of the district.

The winning ticket was first bought by a worker, Johann Bart, at a little tobacco shop at the summer resort of Bad Ischl. But Johann couldn't conjure up enough patience to await the fateful drawing of lots. And so when he visited the local inn one evening, he decided that a glass of beer in the hand was worth an uncertain lottery ticket in the bush.

Accordingly, he ordered a Stein of Pilsner and paid his bill with his lottery ticket.

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