JOANNA

Story of a Modern Girl and a Million Dollars

A Million Dollars

WHAT would you do if somebody suddenly left you a million dollars??

The Times is offering $100 in prizes for the best answers to this question written in 300 words or less.

Joanna, whose story appears on this page, was left a million. Read about what she did with it.

The first prize is $50; the second, $20; the third, $10; the fourth, $5; the fifth, $3, and there are twelve prizes of $1 each.

Send your letter to the story editor of The Times so it will reach him on or before Nov. 10.

SYNOPSIS

With unusual solemnity, MR. HARKNESS, buyer in the silk department of a mammoth store, summons JOANNA MANNERS, beautiful clerk, to appear before MR. GRAYDON, owner of the store. Joanna shudders at the thought of possible dismissal and thinks of the bills that have been accumulating. She would pawn her fur coat if the worst happened, but she dreaded to do this. Her friends would notice. Only common, steady John, with whom she had quarreled last evening, would not think less of her for that.

Instead of reproaching her, Graydon delivers an overwhelming message. Some one whose identity she is not to know has placed $1,000,000 on deposit at the Metropolitan Bank subject to her personal check. Graydon assures her "there are no strings tied to the proposition," and has his chauffeur take her to the banker, ANDREW EGGLESTON, Graydon's old friend.

With $10,000, her first withdrawal, in her purse, Joanna leaves the banker's office with his nephew, FRANCIS BRANDON, who tells her his attentions will be ardent.

Her first purchase is a mink coat from Cohen, her furrier. When he insinuates that the rich gentleman might buy her an ermine coat later, Joanna sheds tears of rage and orders the chauffer to drive her home.

By H. L. Gates

CHAPTER V

In the Drawing Room Only

WHILE the limousine moved alone in the endless procession of its kind, out of the neighborhood of the little furrier whose experience of life in his own field had taught him that "furs for maids" inevitably meant "rich gentlemen," and into the beautiful shopping avenue where the dreams of women find reflection in the store windows, Joanna fought valiantly to assemble her wits and her understanding.

She tried to plan—and couldn't. Her brain, always in tune with events of the moment, things that went on around her, was unaccustomed to the burden of anything that had to do with tomorrow, or any deeper problem than the discovery of some new zest for today. Once John—funny old John, who had loved her for such a long time—had taken her by the shoulders, swung her around, put his hand under her chin and forced it up so that she had to look up into his face, and had said:

"Will you really marry me, Joanna?"

And she had said, "Sure!"

What else was there to say? What else to thing about? Ready any time he was. But John asked her, then:

"What sort of a wife will you be to me, Joanna? And do you think I'll be the kind of husband you really want?"

And that was John's old-fashioned way. Mussing thing up. As to what sort of a wife she'd be, how could she explain? She knew, deep down inside of her, that she'd be a darned good one to him, but she hadn't been spending her time thinking up ways to explain why! Small chance! The wives she knew were the kind that men who weren't their husbands were always buying red roses for. She had tried to wonder, once, why men bought red roses for other men's wives, but she had given it up. She knew why these other men's wives drank more out of other men's hip pocket flasks than they did out of their husband's, but she couldn't have put that into words, either. And she knew, too, that these wives, whom she met at dancing places, at the cheaper and gaudier cabarets to which her boys could afford to take her, and at occasional beach parties in the summer time, were not the kind she'd be to John. But how in the dev— the deuce! could she get all that into common sense words? So all she could say to John, that time, was:

"Aw, you give me a pain! You take what you get, and I'll take what I get, and whoever kicks first can take the gate!"

Which made John say a thing or two she didn't like and a quarrel was the outcome and so that was that. She knew, perfectly well, what she'd do with fifty dollars all at one time. With ten thousand dollars she was like a schooner at sea with the masts broken down. With one million dollars—her head ached! Joanna wasn't very good at figuring things out!

* * *

WHY? Who? What was the strange, astounding, unbelievable thing behind it? She'd always marvelled at the things people thought up for the movies, and for the plays. She'd even thought of herself as married to a Wall Street broker with an apartment on Park Ave. and a butler and a maid all her own. All girls had crazy dreams like that. But she'd never heard of a thing such as had happened to her. She didn't know what to do about it, except to go to Mrs. Adams, where she roomed, and, somehow, that was a waste of time. She ought to be out spending her money. But where should she begin? Let's see! First, now that she had the cost, she'd buy some—what?

Good Lord! With a million dollars, everything she could think of seemed cheap and useless! And Cohen! He thought she's fallen for a——!

Well, she'd get some flowers for Mrs. Adams, who had been worrying about her last week's room rent, take them home, sit down and see if she could think it over. Then she'd try to get that jazz mind of hers down to business and figure out what was to be what! She'd been let in for something by somebody for some reason or other, and while the going was good she'd go!

Joanna didn't like the way the chauffeur acted when she rapped on the glass that separated them, and, when he had stopped the car and put his head in through the door, she told him to stop at a flower shop. He was cold, and up in the air—like he knew things. He said she didn't need to rap on the glass—that there was a speaking tube. And he added:

"That's one of the things you must learn, since you've pulled the gears into high speed." She knew what he meant and she wished she knew how to give poison to some people. She tilted her chin and told him she'd asked for a flower shop and not education.

* * *

ROSES? No! The last time she'd wanted a day off from the store, to go on an automobile drive with a fellow who'd got a car from somebody, she'd told old "Good Morning" that it was her birthday and she was having a party. "Good Morning" had sent her a bunch of roses as a birthday remembrance, and she had to listen to his soft stuff for a week afterwards—until she thought the roses were paid for. So she didn't like roses.

Lilies? They were what she remembered of her mother's funeral.

Geraniums? A long time ago, when she was a very little girl, she used to go out in the morning and water the geraniums in the front yard before she went to school. Gee! that was a long time ago! If there was anything she hated at that time it was geraniums, because they seemed to be such utterly useless things for a girl to have to put water on. But her mother liked her geranium bed. That was about the time that her mother and father used to talk about her marrying the druggist's son, when he grew up. They were about the same age.

She was always in trouble in those days. She had to kiss the druggist's son whenever they happened to be together with nobody looking because he'd quit giving her ice cream sodas if she didn't, but she didn't like him. He demanded too many kisses for each soda. Ten cents apiece would have been cheaper, if she'd had enough dimes. The fellow always passed her house in the mornings while she was watering the flowers and stopped. And she had had to go around the corner of the house and kiss him or he'd charge her for her ice cream soda after school.

She'd never liked geraniums. But her mother did. So, she wouldn't take roses or lilies to Mrs. Adams, but geraniums. Mrs. Adams was not a bad sort. If she didn't kick about the money maybe she wouldn't get it.

The florist explained that geraniums didn't come in bunches, but in plants, only. "People don't buy them as cut flowers, you know," he explained. "They take them in pots."

"Well here's where you learn something you didn't know," Joanna informed him. "Just cut me up ten dollars worth of plants will you? When I want geraniums I want geraniums. I'm a different class from other people, you know!" Funny, that she should think of geraniums, and her mother, and the druggist's son, because she had a lot of money in her bag and wanted to do something for Mrs. Adams! She'd forgotten what geraniums looked like.

* * *

BUT Mrs. Adams hadn't. When Joanna, overdue in her room rent, as usual, stepped out of the automobile, in front of the rooming house, something electric brought the slatternly, but motherly, landlady to the window. When she'd rubbed her eyes and recognized her delinquent roomer, she estimated the armful of flowers. Joanna and geraniums! And a limousine! What's wrong?

To the chauffeur, who helped her to descend and who took her bundle—the wrap she had put aside for the new one of mink, Joanna said:

"You may go back now to your boss. And if he asks about me—tell him I'll see him at church, will you?"

The man saluted. Mrs. Adams, watching from the window, saw it. Joanna, suddenly was upset again.

"Say, you!" she said, her lips set, "you're just about the same as a new run in an old pair of stockings to me, but you're running the wrong way. We're saying goodby now, and we'll probably never say hello again, but I'd like you to remember that you were in on the start of something ,today, that's going to have a big finish!"

He made no reply, but just looked at her, somewhat sorrowfully. She added, irrevelantly is seemed:

"And it didn't start the way you think and it won't finish the way you expect, take it from me!" Then, her flowers hugged close, she went into the house.

Mrs. Adams was a dear old soul, or a mean old termagant, according to whether you owed your room rent or not. Not that she was so much different, under the latter circumstances, but the general aspects of her seemed different. As a matter of fact she was good for four weeks of arrears for any girl, and after that, why, as many more as a girl required, if she was in real hard luck and actually trying to get out of it. Joanna, herself, had once comforted a girl friend, who had mortgaged her room rent for two weeks ahead on a dress she couldn't afford with: "Never mind, dearie! The first week's the hardest. After that she'll pray for you and I guess that won't do you any harm, either."

* * *

MRS. ADAMS was breathless with curiosity when Joanna faced her, in the drab room which gained its proper designation from the iron-clad rule which the landlady laid down meticulously to each new lodger: "My young ladies receives their company of the other sex in the drawing room only!" Her young ladies customarily referred to the big front room downstairs, with the two spindle-legged gold chairs and the three overstuffed things in faded red, as "the drawing room only." Joanna, speechless for a moment, shoved her flowers into the landlady's arms. At the same time she noticed that the old lady had taken off her apron. She'd never seen Mrs. Adams, except on Sundays, with her apron off. It gave her something easy to talk about as a starter:

"I didn't know it was you getting out of the automobile," Mrs. Adams explained. "And I wasn't taking chances. That's my rule; when an automobile comes to my house off comes my apron. I was properly raised in my young days!"

She allowed a tear, or two, to escape over the flowers marvelling at the assembly of so many geraniums also a beloved memory of girlhood, in one bunch. Then she was ready to be told about the car, and the absence from the store, and the reason for the gift of blossoms.

Joanna made her put the flowers in water, turn down the gas in the oven so that whatever was cooking there wouldn't burn, put her broom out of the hall so it wouldn't worry her, and sit down. Then she told her.

The girl began slowly, deliberately with infinite detail, an account of the summons conveyed through "Good Morning," and her reflections while she waited in Mr. Graydon's office. Then her words hurried; she became excited. She talked fast. She got up and stood in the middle of "the drawing room only," and talked with her arms as well as her lips. She was just about to arrive at the bank, in her recital, when Mrs. Adams, who had been listening, placidly, interrupted:

"Tell me; where'd you get that new coat, Jo? It is mink, ain't it? And it's real mink, too, or I've lost my eyesight.

"Sure it's real," Joanna assured her. "It's the only real thing Cohen had in his shop—it's what he's done business on all season. Cost a thousand bucks and that's what I'm coming to. When I got to the bank—!"

"You say you had a thousand dollars to pay for that coat, Jo?" Mrs. Adams interrupted again.

"In five hundred dollar bills! Cohen's eyes almost exploded. And I've got some more in my hand bag and one of them's for you, but never mind the coat till I get out of the bank will you?"

CAREFULLY, with constant repetition, and with infinite detail, Joanna completed her story. When she had finished she was flushed, excited, crying again. She'd rubbed her lips with the back of her hand so much, in her nervousness, that the scarlet was blotchy, and the tears had played havoc with her eye lashes. She sank down in a chair and finished with a pose that she instantly recognized as a good one, and one she'd remember for some future occasion—arms stretched down beside her and palms turned out with fingers spread.

"Now that's my story for you to stick to, and what do you know about it?"

Mrs. Adams didn't know what we know about it. When Joanna came to the million dollars the landlady patted her hair and tucked in a gray wisp that hung down behind; but when the girl came to the end she was silent, motionless, and she kept her hands folded in her lap.

Joanna went over and kissed her on the top of her head, lightly. She didn't respond to that, which, Joanna understood. It was a lot of news that had been thrown at her.

"Now I'm going upstairs and try to cry," said Joanna, gathering her new coat on her arm. "And if I can't cry I'm going to laugh. If I can't do that either I'll try standing on my head and see if I can figure things out that way," She didn't notice a sad little shake of the head which the landlady sent her way.

She turned to the door, but stopped, and opened her bag. She selected the crispest of the $500 notes, went over to the gray-haired Mrs. Adams, showed her the size of it and then crumpled it in the old lady's toil worn fingers. Mrs. Adams, with wet, troubled eyes, looked into the girl's face, and would have said something, but Joanna stopped her by putting a hand over her mouth.

"Just keep the lid on the 'don't want to take it' stuff," she said. "I know you couldn't think of accepting it, and it isn't coming to you, and I only owe you for two weeks—but I've got to give something to somebody, haven't I?"

She was going out the door when she stopped again, and turned around. Mrs. Adams still was looking at her dully. She struck a pose that, she concluded, was particularly appropriate for the framing of a doorway—body leaning against one side of the door frame, hand stretched across to the other, and her chin turned across a shoulder into the room:

"There's one thing you can do, Mrs. Landlady-mine," she said; "You can hold in the news till I get ready to spread it, and you can keep your other flappers out of the drawing room only' for tonight, because my John's coming around on his regular date and when he gets here I'll need the whole darn room for a lot of heavy stuff."

(To Be Continued)

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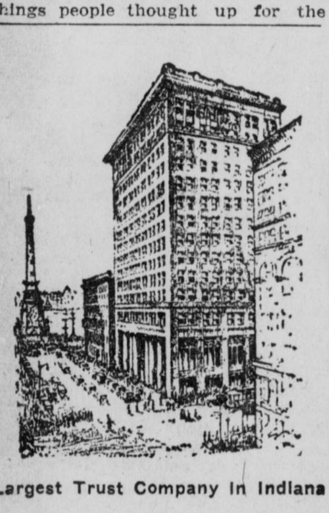

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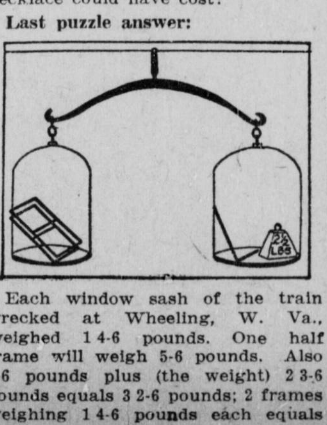
What is the smallest amount this necklace could have cost?

Last puzzle answer:



Each window sash of the train wrecked at Wheeling, W. Va., weighed 1 4-6 pounds. One half frame will weigh 5-6 pounds. Also 5-6 pounds plus (the weight) 2 3-6 pounds equals 3 2-6 pounds; 2 frames weighing 1 4-6 pounds each equals 3 2-6 pounds.

TO SELL TRUCK ROUTE

The public service commission Friday approved the sale of a Connersville-Richmond truck route by Henry A. Sanders to T. R. Donnell and Company, Indianapolis.

Petitions for routes from Newcastle to Muncie, Louisville to Evansville, and Valparaiso to the Indiana-Illinois State line were denied.

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LINCOLN HOTEL
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LOUISVILLE
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$2.75 Round Trip
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STATE WILL AID IN TRUCK FIGHT

Commissioners to Confer With Ohio Officials.

Public Service Commissioners Frank Singleton and Clyde H. Jones will attempt to induce the Ohio public service commission to cease arresting Indiana truck and bus drivers who venture into the neighboring State.

Singleton and Jones will confer with the Ohio commissioners at Columbus, Ohio, Monday, it was decided by truckmen and the Indiana commissioners Friday.

If the Ohio authorities do not stop arrests, on charges of technical violations of the Ohio law which requires motor carriers to have permits to operate, the State will help truckmn in a resort to Federal Court.

INSANE PATIENTS REBEL

CACERAS, Spain, Nov. 7.—The patients at the insane asylum here staged a revolt. The insane mutineers attacked their wardens with iron bars, killing a nurse. Military forces had to restore order.

LOCAL GROCER IS KILLED

John Whitestine Dies When Shot-Gun Is Accidentally Discharged.

By Times Special

NOBLESVILLE, Ind., Nov. 7.—John Whitestine, 62, of 4214 Twenty-First St., Indianapolis grocer, died in the local hospital late Friday afternoon.

He had come to Hamilton County on a hunting trip with his nephew, Vern Whitestine. While alighting from an automobile his gun struck his foot and was discharged, the entire load entering his left side.

TEMPLARS WILL MEET

Past Grand Commander of Order to Speak Tonight.

Leonidas P. Newby, past grand commander of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States, will speak at the seventy-fifth anniversary of Raper Commandery, Knights Templar, tonight at the Masonic Temple.

Eminent Commander Oscar L. Pond will be toastmaster. Dr. Lewis Brown will give a historical review.

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THE PUBLIC IS
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