

JOANNA

*Story of a Modern Girl
and a Million Dollars*

SYNOPSIS
With unusual solemnity, MR. HARKNESS buys the services of a man in the summer, 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 old days of her life.

Instead of reproaching her, Graydon delivers an overwhelming message.

Some time ago, he had agreed to know that she had placed \$1,000,000 deposit at the Metropolitan Bank subject to her personal signature. "I know that you have no strings tied to the proposition," and has his chauffeur take her to the home of MR. H. B. WESTON, Graydon's old friend.

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

Her first purchase is a mink coat from a shop in the city, and when he insinuates that the rich gentleman might buy her an evening coat later, Joanna is shocked.

MRS. ADAMS, her landlady, is dumbfounded when Joanna arrives with a crisp \$500 bill and asks her to keep the news quiet until she sees John, her fiance, with whom she has quarreled.

By H. L. Gates
CHAPTER VI
Re-Enter Brandon

S a rule Joanna ran up the stairs that led from the first floor of the rooming house, once a pretentious residence, to the second floor where she occupied a one-windowed room made by a flimsy partition across what had been the dining room of more glorious days. But Mrs. Adams, who sat quite still in her chair in "the drawing room only," was conscious that Joanna walked up slowly, this time. She heard her open her door and close it, softly carefully. Usually Joanna slammed her door with a bang and a song.

Mrs. Adams examined her five hundred dollar note, turned it over and looked closely at the yellow back, held it closely that she might read the various engraved assurances that it was a solemn symbol of five hundred real money.

And she looked at the geraniums in the pottery bowl as intently as if she were counting the petals. But she seemed to be detached. There

always had been a soft spot in Mrs. Adams' heart for Jo. Somehow, this soft spot was hurting just now.

Her eyes lit upon the bundle Joanna had kicked into a corner. That was like Jo! She'd leave bundles all over the house if they contained anything that had been supplanted by something new. The landlady regarded this bundle with something trouble-some gathering in her eyes. She got up, laboriously. Besides the flowers she put down the five hundred dollar note. Then she went over to the corner and picked up the package.

For a time she held the cumbersome parcel in her arms, staring down at it. Painstakingly she untied the cord and unwrapped it. She folded the wrapping paper, neatly, and put it down. Then she held up the coat and let it open out.

This had been Joanna. The very

breath of her, the zest and the pretense of her. It was imitation fur, but good enough to serve its purpose.

Its lines had the swagger, even if its lining was only mercerized cotton. Mrs. Adams had marveled often at the uncomplaining patience with which a girl like Jo could put her hunger into a thing like this—the hungers that ten and fifteen cent lunches, and scantier breakfasts, piled. She shook her head dubiously. The trouble that had been in her eyes deepened to an inward sadness. She took the coat into her own room, laid it across the foot of her bed, tenderly, and then brought the five hundred dollar note which she folded and slipped into the handkerchief pocket in the coat lining. Then she sat down to

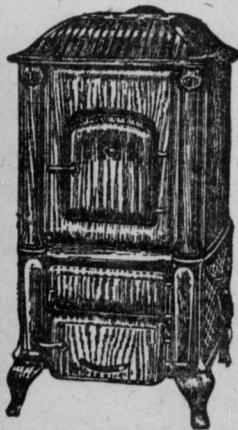
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GAS, GAS, GAS

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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.

think, forgetting all about the flowers on the table in the "drawing room only."

UPSTAIRS Joanna was trying also to think. She sat down on the bed and put her chin in her hand, her elbow propped on her taxicab, she was ready for her descent upon the silk counter. She tried to forego that logical detail of the day, but couldn't. Courageously, she had slighted the shops and stores where girls of the counters and offices got their copies of Avenue modes. She boldly went onto the avenue itself, even into the upper section, where, to be admitted as a patron, is an award of honor which, earned, brings a marvelous deference, and where she was called "Mademoiselle." The result felt upon the silk counter as a sudden breath of some exquisite narcotic that sweeps the senses into appalling ecstasy.

Joanna had timed her visit cleverly: she appeared during the lull between the leisurely shoppers who finished early and the last-minute crush of the hurrying, belated ones. Trailing behind a spacious grande dame who was threading her way through the aisles, she suddenly stood at her old counter, only on the other side of it, her gray-gloved fingers tapping sharply on the polished wood, in obvious imitation of the department buyer. With her roguery dancing out of her eyes at every face behind the counter—the faces of her workday friends, she purred, sweetly:

"Good morning, young ladies!" At that moment Joanna's voice was the silver tinkle of ineffable inner harmonies.

Storekeepers sitting at the counter, curiously to scan the newcomer. In the attitudes of the girls, who served them, they sensed a drama.

It was Georgie, Joanna's best chum and also one of "Mrs. Adams' flappers, who was first to find her tongue:

"Good Lord!" she breathed. "Look what the stork's dropped!"

Then there was a rush. Joanna, without ceremony, oblivious to customers with billows of varicolored silk in their hands, stepped back into the aisle and swung around for inspection.

"Miss Twenty-seven" had become the slender wraith of a hot house flower, all perfume, softness and delicate color; beneath her mink wrap she shone vaguely gray; smart grey tailleur that fell straight from underneath her shoulders, but hugged her hips; skirt that dropped into straight lines without a touch of trimming or vagrant pleats or colors a thing that was infinitely and expensively, "Avenue" gray sheer hose of that quality that echoed into the very souls of Georgia and the rest! Slippers, slippers that were wondrous things of some skin with the sheen of gray velvet! A ravishing little hat, grey with a splash of a scarlet at the side. Georgie estimated the 25% value of that hat at \$100.

"So you weren't fired after all?" Georgie exclaimed, when she had summoned her wits. "Here we've been picking out the hymns for your funeral all day and you—you've pulled off whatever you've pulled off! Let the tidings loose, Jo! What's what—and who?" Georgie's tone had dropped to the confidential level.

A single flower, but that one an orchid, nestled at Joanna's waist.

There was an immediate babel of voices, punctuated presently by the sharp reminder of an impatient customer that there were those with wants to be attended to.

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Joanna's eyes narrowed immediately. There were times when Joanna could remind one of a lynx. This was one of them.

"Drop the 'who' thing, Georgia," she warned.

Georgie stared at her. "Well, for the love of—! The girl on the other side of the counter on the outside now, interrupted, sharply:

"Yes, that's what I said! You're plugging in the wrong line!"

She had intended to let "Mr. Good Morning" feast his eyes, also, but suddenly she lost the flavor of her play. She swung smartly about and, without as much as a nod, leaving an endless volley of questions completely unanswered, she elbowed her way into the street.

She had thought of going up to let Mr. Graydon see her, and to ask of him some more wild questions, but she forgot.

Why did everyone, even Georgie, who, out of some very definite understandings between them should know her pretty well—why did all of them think things? What was wrong with the world, the whole world? Was there no one who really knew about a girl? Not even among other girls?

Something very profound was stirring down below the surface of the deep brown eyes of Joanna, but it was still to abstract a confusion for her to grapple with. She was singing again when she reached home. The world, for some unfathomable reason, had picked her out to be good to.

When Georgia arrived, breathless from her rush from the store, Joanna was in the midst of her feverish unpacking of boxes. She had forgotten her piqûre, and Georgie had forgotten her offense—apparently.

She plunged in to help, vainly trying to get in questions between her squeals of delight over the procession of surprising new things. What ever pertinent queries she had

treasured up against opportunity to voice them, were effectively silenced when Joanna remarked:

"Lay off tomorrow, Georgia. Get sick or have a boil or something. I'm going to take you to some place I found today and buy you some real things—whatever you want. But you've got to wear your dresses looser, little daughter! That black satin you affect is all right, I guess, but when you get the real things that have some honest-to-goodness style in them, why you don't need to wear them so skimpy to look your best. If you don't know what I mean, stay awake tonight and think it over, Georgia. I'm giving you something straight."

"So straight it sounds like a sermon to me," the other girl retorted. "And this isn't Sunday, either! But you've got a license all right, I suppose?" It was a sententious finish, but Joanna preferred not to take it up.

Joanna heard Mrs. Adams, through half opened doors, tell other girls in the house that the drawing room had been assigned for the evening, and heard the flippant rejoinders that there were lots of other wide open spaces in the world anyway. After a while, after she had resignedly signed out one of her new gowns to Georgia as an installment of tomorrow's promise, she thought she heard John come in the front door. She listened, eagerly, lips hot, eyes shining, and body trembling, but there was no call from Mrs. Adams. She fell again to examining herself in the bit of mirror, twisting and squirming to glimpse as much at one time as possible of her gorgeously soft and shimmering evening gown, out of which her throat lifted, round and white. She'd always had a frock without sleeves and a fairly low-cut neck, but each of them, modest affairs, had made her hungry for something real—something that really would be a gown! At last! What the feel of that dress was to Joanna nobody but Joanna will ever know. She wouldn't admit it, herself, and it's the sort of thing that can be painted on a canvas or put into words, but never said in words.

She heard the rattle of the door bell. She signed to Georgie to be quiet, and opened her door an inch or two. She heard Mrs. Adams answering an inquiry, and the voice she heard then was not John's, but the quiet, modulated tones of the man she had met at the bank—Brandon!

She heard Mrs. Adams' confusion: "Why, yes, I'll tell her you're asking for her," the puzzled landlady was saying. "But I don't know whether to put you in the parlor to wait, or not. There's someone—her friend, is in there. I've just been talking to him about her. She doesn't know he's here, yet."

And then Brandon's suave voice:

"I am sure we will get on famously—her—her friend, and I. We'll talk about her, too, you see, if she is very long coming down. I have brought her some flowers. Will you be good enough to hand them to her?"

Joanna heard Mrs. Adams herding him into the "drawing room only," in her diffident, blundering way, mumbling an introduction. So John had come in. She was right when she thought she heard him. And he

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