

## JOANNA

Story of a Modern Girl  
and a Million Dollars

Beautiful JOANNA MANNERS, clerk at Graydon's, is summoned by HANCOCK to appear before her employer.

Mr. Graydon, who observes all the movements of his staff, can only wonder why she is not to know has placed \$10,000 on deposit at the Metro in his name.

Graydon convinces her there are obligations and has his chauffeur drive her to the home of EGGLESTON, Graydon's old friend.

That evening when Joannas comes to Eggleston's, she finds JOHN WITDRIDGE, her fiance, she finds also the quaint and wealthy FRANCIS DORMINSTER, whose partner, Roddy Kinlworth, rich romantic idler, admits he will try his best to dissuade Joannas from her new life.

Joannas promises to share her fortune with John, and he believes her story and departs with coldness.

Brandon introduces her to YVONNE COULANT, famous actress, whose partner, Roddy Kinlworth, rich romantic idler, admits he will try his best to dissuade Joannas from her new life.

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John learns from her chum, GEORGE, that John is willing to apologize for speaking with Eggleston. She sends him a note.

John goes to live with Yvonne, where she meets MRS. JOHN WITDRIDGE, and LORD TEDDY DORMINSTER, who loses no time in courting Joannas.

John and Joannas are now engaged.

Joannas attends Yvonne's party, at which Joannas makes her debut.

By H. L. Gates

CHAPTER XVII.

John

To make of Joannas's appearance a dramatic entrance, openly stage-managed, evidently was an impromptu impulse of Yvonne's. Joannas had expected nothing of the kind. She waited, unsuspecting in her white and gold boudoir. Yvonne had said: "Give them time to decide who's to be nice to who. Then the few in whom you will be most interested will take you in hand."

When a maid, hurriedly posted to catch Yvonne's signal, informed Joannas that she was expected, she hurried down the stairs from the upper floor and onto the balcony from which the grand staircase descended. She was still framed in the doorway when she realized that the people in the great room below were waiting for her, Joannas, their faces uplifted.

She caught her breath. A hand flew nervously to her throat. She would have drawn back but instantly realized that she was too late. Yvonne caught her glance and, with a nod, reassured her.

Then exhilaration leaped through her stirred pulses. The carnival spirit of the scene below reached up and encompassed her. A new ecstasy of happiness quivered at her finger tips, in her toes, and throughout the vibrant warmth of her. This was to be her setting, symbol of the scintillating festival of which her life was to be forever shaped! These people, people of her new world, were waiting down there to welcome her among them and their kind! Bravado came into her eyes, and arrogance dimpled her cheeks. She moved over to first step between the curled and carving star posts, and stood for a moment perfectly still. Then she blew a kiss down into the room.

"A lorette coming out of her shell," Brandon murmured.

"Gad, she carries it off as if she had been born to masquerade!" Kenlworth exclaimed. It was not Roddy's habit to enthuse over a woman except in her presence. He considered it a spendthrift waste of energy. Brandon shot a sharp glance at him. He noticed that Roddy was rigid, his lips slightly parted, and that he breathed heavily.

Joannas moved down the stairs slowly, a softly graceful figure that was taunting in its suppleness and the fragrance of its challenge to women in that room who would have yielded much of whatever was precious to them to have caught from her the least of her fascinations—the least of the beauties her confident arrogance emphasized.

Some one, a man, clapped his hands. Immediately another leaped toward the steps. Teddy Dorminster broke away from Brandon and Kenlworth and John swept past Yvonne, beating his rival to the girl's side. Before she knew his purpose, Teddy had caught her up in his arms. For an instant her eyes flashed and she gave signs of scrambling to her feet, but she smothered the impulse. Roddy held her graciously, easily, as if he were not unused to such performance. She set

in his arms and steadied her body by throwing a hand around his shoulder. Her golden-silken feet and silken expanse above them hung lax. When she looked into Roddy's face it was with only mock reproof.

A woman, her voice already shrill from champagne, cried, "Bravo!" Another echoed the cry and then a babble of voices called out to Roddy and to the girl. Men crowded to the stairs, each eager to perform some share of the task of helping Joannas out of Roddy's arms onto the floor. A woman who stood beside him and Brandon said to her companion, loud enough to be overheard:

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The majority of the men were, of course, only silly. Especially those who were obviously important men of affairs, and who amused Joannas with their common adoption of one phrase, "I wish my wife were like you, now." Three in succession! One who confided to her that he was an attorney representing "some of our very large interests," another whose name was magic in a store that competed with the one she had left, even Pendleton, who had been both a diplomat and a statesman!

He breathed his response to her buoyant and restless youth. Pendleton indicated to her a pretty woman who probably was forty, but looked thirty, and who seemed, in some intangible way, to be not very happy.

Joannas saw that her eyes always followed her husband. Joannas thought she would like Mrs. Pendleton. And she didn't like Pendleton. She gave him an unexpected acknowledgement of his "If my wife were like you, now, I'd know how to really enjoy being in love!"

"Haven't you ever talked that over with anyone? Just for example, Mrs. Marks?"

Offense colored in his face immediately. But the girl in front of him was laughing up at him so brightly that he was helpless.

"Because Doris happens occasionally to meet me for tea," he protested, "doesn't necessarily mean that we have confidences. Anyhow, can't we forget everyone else, for this minute you have given me?"

Joannas couldn't, she told him, and left him with a parting sally. A moment later she timidly touched Mrs. Pendleton on the arm. "You won't mind will you," she asked Pendleton's wife, "If I say that I want to know you? You see," she lied, "I have met Mr. Pendleton, and he was good enough to think you might like me! I wish you would."

The older woman was plainly confused, but recovered instantly. She took one of the girl's hands between both her own.

"Why, that is sweet of you, a—dear!" she exclaimed warmly. She was openly delighted by the pretty enthusiasm of the young girl, who was the night's most frivolous butterfly. She was afraid she would go down in the torrent that seethed about her—a torrent that glittered and swept up laughter, luxury and extravagance, and the stakes of many gambles in love. This fear suddenly distressed Mrs. Pendleton.

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When Kenlworth found opportunity to claim her again he saw that the first excitement of Joannas's triumph in her success among these friends of Yvonne's had subsided, and that she was troubled. She denied it, when he accused her, but almost immediately afterwards admitted it. She had missed John! Brandon had talked with her but a few moments, resigning her, graciously, to others who, made insistent by their third and fourth drinks, demanded their dance or tilt of wits with her. He had not mentioned that John had come, and had watched her entrance down the stairs and hilarious reception. Neither had Kenlworth, and Yvonne seemed suddenly to have disappeared from among her guests. Joannas began to want to go up to her boudoir and confront the pain of her disappointment. She could not restrain a little cry when Roddy told her:

"But there is her?" she exclaimed. "Please, won't you keep people away from me, while we find him? He couldn't have gone."

They looked in the dim-lit winter garden, peopled with couples whose moods were for faint lights, and in the other rooms which had been thrown open. Brandon, too, had missed him, and so had Dorminster. Roddy, failing to glimpse Yvonne in any of the rooms, decided to seek her out in the morning room, off the reception hall, the little retreat of which few of her guests knew and to which none had admission but Kenlworth and Brandon. Roddy was convinced John would not have gone, even if he avoided Joannas, without a word to his hostess.

When Joannas saw him standing in the center of the room she was suddenly angry, despite her eagerness. She would not forgive him, readily, she decided, for ignoring her. Then she realized that she could do nothing but forgive. Yvonne, who had sat directly in front of him, curled in her great, soft chair, rose when she and Roddy entered.

"I've been enjoying this boy of yours tremendously," she said to Joannas. Joannas went quietly up to John. She was biting her lips to keep them from trembling. Yvonne, from where Roddy awaited her, added: "He wanted to run away, but we've managed to keep him. We've had a most interesting conversation."

Nothing more. Yet Joannas was conscious that she trembled, and conscious, too, that she had been faithful to the present day mode which required that underneath that dress she wear but a single garment.

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subject of public  
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