

# The Love Dodger

By VIRGINIA SWAIN

## BARBARA INTERVIEWS A FAMOUS MUSICIAN IN HIS SUITE IN A DOWNTOWN INDIANAPOLIS HOTEL

**BEGIN HERE TODAY**  
In order to see **BARBARA HAWLEY**, who is with her fiancé, **BRUCE REYNOLDS**, and a job on the Indianapolis **Telegraph**, which **ANDREW MODER**, a close friend of her father before his death, is managing editor.

Barbara makes friends with **BOB JEFFRIES**, a rough and ready police reporter, and with **him** "covers" a big railroad wreck. After writing a wonderful story of the wreck, she faints in the newspaper office from excitement.

**NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY**

**CHAPTER VI**

**B** ARBARA sat up on the little wicker couch in the women's restroom and stared about her. Adeline, the telephone girl, and

Miss Badger were leaning over her, one with a smelling salts bottle and the other with a flask.

"I mustn't ask 'where am I?'" thought Barbara. "But I'd certainly like to know."

Then it all came back. "I did what they said I'd do," she cried out, in a rush of wretched memory. "I fainted, just as the other girl did."

Miss Badger tightened her lips and said nothing. She nodded to Adeline to stay with Barbara, and left the room.

Adeline made up for Miss Badger. She fussed about Barbara, doing all the little, useless, feminine things that make a patient feel comfortably pampered. Then she sidled closer, and said:

"That old thing asked me what you said when you were coming to, and I told her I didn't hear. You did talk about Bruce somebody, you know. But it wasn't any of her business or mine either."

"Mr. Wells said for me to get you a taxi when you felt better and send you home. Are you well enough to go alone?"

"Perfectly," smiled Barbara, feeling a glow of friendliness. "But I don't really need to go. I'll be all right."

"No," said Adeline. "You'd better do what Mr. Wells tells you. That's the only way you can get along with him."

Barbara took a long nap that afternoon in her own bedroom, and woke up to a dinner tray waiting on the table beside her. She felt blissfully rested.

Only the thought of her ignominious collapse at the very door of the Telegraph office remained to harass her. She closed her eyes at the memory and tried to shake it off. Then she settled down to the tray of food, with her mother hovering over her.

A thump sounded on the front porch beneath her windows. "The paper," said Mrs. Hawley, and went down to get it.

There it was—the wreck story and pictures, spread all over the front page of the Telegraph. In a column side by side with the main story was what Barbara had written, printed under her name.

Barbara gasped and looked a little harder. Then she read voraciously. It was her own story, slightly rearranged here and there, but essentially the same copy that she had laid on the editor's desk six hours before.

To the infinite danger of the dinner tray, she burrowed into the pillow beside her and began to cry. Nobody knew, when Barbara came into the Telegraph office the next



"You are music itself, with your great child-like eyes and your shining hair and your smooth white throat," the great pianist said to Barbara, as he placed his hand on hers.

morning, that a conquering heroine had just entered.

Nobody gave any sign, for that matter, that yesterday had been any different from any other day. Wells was buried in his assignment book, as usual.

Barbara swung through the gate into the reporter's lair and with airy gesture, hung up her hat and coat.

Nobody looked up, except Miss Badger, who gave her a sour good morning.

Barbara advanced to the city desk to get her clippings. Wells brought his head up with a jerk. "Nice work, Miss Hawley," he said. "You didn't give me a chance to tell you so yesterday. And any time you want to faint, after your copy is in, it's O. K. with me. Only you might choose a softer place to land than that tiled corridor."

Barbara smiled.

"Your assignment this morning," said Wells, "is an interview with Alexei Nikolakoff. He is at the Claypool, resting for his concert to-night. You may have some trouble getting in—out I don't think so."

This last remark was accompanied by a significant smile.

She had no trouble at all. Nikolakoff's manager, an officious fat man, met her in the hotel lobby and ushered her to the suite in which the "world's greatest pianist" was staying.

Alexei proved to be a little man in a purple velvet morning robe, against which his long, white fingers gleamed. He rose from the chair in the lounge on which he had been breakfasting and greeted Barbara with a calm "Good morning."

The bustling manager departed.

Barbara found herself seated in an armchair with a cup of coffee from Alexei's tray in her hand.

The artist was drinking delicately, with tiny sips from the thin cup. His eyes were fixed upon Barbara with a gaze that brought the blood to her cheeks.

Seeing her confusion, the man dropped his eyes and began to talk of the beauty of Indianapolis, the comfort of American hotels, the welcome of American music lovers.

Then he touched upon music. Barbara listened, fascinated. It

was needless to ask questions. She felt instinctively that it would not do to inquire of this cultured gentleman what he thought of the American flapper, or whether he considered bobbed hair a detriment to musical success.

The interview was being done for her, in the wealth of amusing anecdote, of lightning wit, or serious criticism upon life and letters, upon beefsteaks and politics, that flowed from his lips.

She took no notes, but she listened eagerly, interjecting an occasional comment of her own.

As swiftly as he had begun, the man stopped. He rose and took Barbara's coffee cup.

Then he rang for the manager, who bustled out with the tray. Nikolakoff called him back as he reached the door.

"Open the piano," he said curtly, "and arrange the light."

Then he turned to her. "I will play for you," he said, "some of the things I have never played for an audience. Come."

The next room proved to be an impromptu studio. In one end stood a black concert grand, shining richly under a floor lamp which repeated the color note of Alexi's lounging robe.

The man seated himself at the piano, waving Barbara toward a chair near by. He began to play.

On he went, from waltzes of Chopin to Mendelssohn dirges, Bach fugues, Grieg studies, MacDowell sketches, with here and there some wandering melody that Barbara felt sure must be his own.

She sat rapt, watching the miraculous fingers, lost in the music, totally forgetful that time was passing and a greedy press waited for copy.

The music flowed, as from a treasure house, all stored with beauty and knowledge and understanding.

It stopped as suddenly as the talk had stopped. Alexei whirled about to face her. "You like it," he said, more with the air of declaring a fact than asking a question.

Barbara nodded. She could not speak. Nikolakoff kept his compelling gaze fastened upon her.

Like an automaton, she rose and walked toward the piano. "Music,"

he said, and reached for her hand. "—You are music itself, with your great, child-like eyes and your shining hair and your smooth white throat. Why should I make music for you?"

His voice was serious and his eyes were grave, staring into hers. Barbara felt a surge of terror through her veins, but it was curiously mixed with delight. She wondered calmly what was going to happen next. But she could not tear her eyes away from his. He would not allow it.

He rose and put his hand on her shoulder. Barbara moved, retreated, knocked against something and heard a crash behind her.

When she looked at Alexei he was standing by the fireplace, lighting a long cigarette and flicking the match delicately into a porcelain vase up on the mantel. He was staring contemplatively at the broken statue that Barbara had knocked from a table.

A thought of how much trouble he was making for the maid that would have to clean the vase burst ludicrously across Barbara's mind. She had a way of thinking ludicrous things at tense moments. She wanted to laugh, or to cry.

When he spoke it was in his calm and assured manner. The notes of emotion that had trembled through his last sentences were gone.

"I am very sorry to have startled you," he said. "There was no reason for fright, though in another moment I should have kissed you. You might have found it occasion for joy rather than for fear. But one never can tell about you women, particularly in America."

Barbara spoke stammeringly, like a school girl.

"I do not go in for those things, Mr. Nikolakoff. I care only for my work. I don't believe in emotion."

Nikolakoff threw his head back and laughed.

"Work," he said, "and a woman!"

He laughed again, very musically. "Women were not made for work. They were made for life. You can't beat life, my dear."

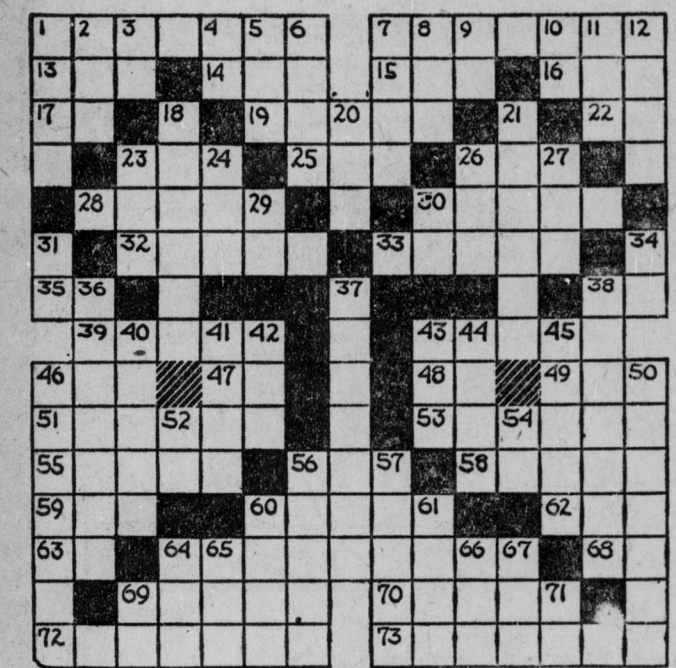
He rang for the manager, who showed Barbara out.

She reached the Telegraph office six minutes too late for her interview to be used.

(To Be Continued)

### Today's Cross-Word Puzzle

A large number of three-letter words makes this an easy crossword puzzle.



#### HORIZONTAL

1. Hairbow.
7. Small bit of shining metal.
13. To regret extremely.
14. To be indebted.
15. Age.
16. To lubricate.
17. Measure of area.
19. Crippled.
22. Standard type measure.
23. Devoured.
25. Insane.
26. To wager.
28. Top milk.
30. Looks toward.
32. Horse (fem.).
33. Title of nobility.
35. Point of compass.
38. Neuter pronoun.
39. Sleeps.
43. Small island country.
46. Hurried.
47. Exclamation of surprise.
48. Morphin dye.
49. Part of harness.
51. Aggregate property of one or more persons.
53. Germ cell.
55. Mocha (leather).
56. Dandy.
58. Silk.
59. To sin.
60. Procreated.
62. Sorrowful.
63. Point of compass.
64. Ability to hold.
65. Behold.
69. Hourly.
70. Mistake.
72. Officer on a ship.
73. Children's first school book.

27. Pair of fives.
29. Myself.
30. Fourth note in scale.
31. Like.
34. Preposition.
36. Rubbed spot.
37. Small hardy fowl.
38. First letter of a name.
40. To come in.
41. To carry.
42. Feminine pronoun.
43. Drunken spree.
44. Ay.
45. Instigates.
46. Feels, indignant displeasure.
50. Sineus.
52. Paid publicity.
54. Mother.
56. Lea.
57. To become exhausted.
60. Orb.
61. Fearful.
64. To propel a boat.
65. Age.
66. English coin.
67. To bow.
69. Masculine pronoun.
71. Second note in scale.

#### Answer to Yesterday's Crossword Puzzle:

SLAT SLAMS NEAT  
PURP TONAL EAVE  
ANTA ASIDE USED  
RESPIRE EASERS  
PRESERVE  
INDEED RELATED  
DEARS ASP FLARE  
ERN CRUEL LAT  
AVENA CIT PROSE  
SESAME N SOONER  
TERAGLINS  
RETURNED AMESITE  
ODOR COSTA EXON  
ODOR TRUER RIND  
TEES SEERS SAGS

#### BAKERY IS PURCHASED

Middle West Corporation Takes Over City Company.

City Baking Company, 901 E. Sixteenth st., has been purchased by the National Baking Company, a corporation operating bakeries in the Middle West.

Russell L. White, secretary treasurer, will become a director of the National concern and manager of the Indianapolis plant. William El-warn, City Baking Company president, will retire.

#### SEEK CHILD ATTACKER

Muffled Cries Bring Aid, but Man Eludes Posses.

By United Press  
MANILLA, Ind., Dec. 18.—Posses of Rush County citizens today were scouring the countryside in this vicinity in search of the man who attempted an attack on 14-year-old Louise Hupp.

The girl's muffled cries aroused farmers, who rushed to her aid, but the assailant escaped in an automobile.

### BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES—By Martin



### OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS



### OUR BOARDING HOUSE—By AHERN



### FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER



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