

**SANDY** by ELENORE MEHERIN, Author of "CHICKIE"

THE STORY SO FAR  
SANDY McNEIL, in love with life, married BEN MURILLO, a rich Italian, to please her overbearing family. A son and daughter, BOB and JUDY, were born. Her mother, Mrs. McNEIL, her uncle, and her aunt, Mrs. HONOLULU, there she meets RAMON, the same slender man who declared his love. MURILLO says he will release her. JUDY MOORE, a cousin, tells Sandy love is everything. MURILLO overrules her as she goes for a trial with RAMON. He appears, unexpectedly, at a party she is giving for her friends. She leaves his house and accepts the kindly attentions of RAMON, whose home she shares. She leaves for her home when she hears her mother is ill. Sandy's mother dies and she goes to live with her cousin, JUDY, after parting with RAMON. JUDY introduces her to her friend HAL HUME, to JUDY. He is fascinated by Sandy, whom he sees frequently.

CHAPTER LXXXI

He came down the steps, his heart singing. Her white, angelic face had turned to his; her sweet, soft hands touched his cheeks and the most beautiful lips in all the world murmured, "I love you, Douglas. Dear God, I do."

So he swung along, jubilant, seeing JUDY and Hal peep coming from the car he approached chuckling. "Gee, what a day. Oh, boy, wasn't it a pig?"

He stood with his hat off, face all sparkle and joyous youth. The wind lifted his smooth, brown hair. With a swift hand he slicked it back, stooped to JUDY, "Have a good time, Judy darling? I did. Pretty gay, aren't we?"

JUDY, hearing the song in his voice, could almost see Sandy's kisses on his glowing, ardent mouth. She said with pathetic gayety: "The best time in the world," and softly, "You look so glad, Doug."

Eyes twinkling, "Ain't life terrific, girl?"

She went in stealthily, switched on the hall light, let herself sink on the lowest step of the long flight of stairs. She whispered, breathless, "I can't go up—I can't face her. It's done now—it's too late now."

She felt faint because her blood moved in slow, sickening circles from her heart to her throat—back and forth—in a stifling way.

They loved each other. After today no one could doubt it. How they

loved each other. After today no one could doubt it. How they

loved each other. After today no one could doubt it. How they

loved each other. After today no one could doubt it. How they

loved each other. After today no one could doubt it. How they

loved each other. After today no one could doubt it. How they

loved each other. After today no one could doubt it. How they

loved each other. After today no one could doubt it. How they

loved each other. After today no one could doubt it. How they

loved each other. After today no one could doubt it. How they

had danced, lost in the sweetness of each other's arms. He loved Sandy. And Sandy loved him.

JUDY drew long, stormy breaths, struggling as though she were drowning. "I have no right to care! What right have I to care?"

She stood up, found herself unable to proceed. She wanted to bury her face against the wall and cry—cry with long, shaking sobs that would tear the heart out of her, tear it in two.

But they loved each other, and this gave them the right to stand apart from all the world—the right to fling everything to the winds. JUDY believed this. For a great love she would do it.

She now saw herself brushed aside. Douglas and Sandy, with quick, reckless hands, pushed her away and ran off together.

She caught the banister, cowering against it as though these two were actually flying down the stairs and she would not have them see her.

She went up heavily, praying that Sandy would be in bed—that she would be asleep. She had an idea that her eyes looked haggard—that at any moment she would be forced to stop her hands over her face; that she might not cry out, "I can't bear it!" that these words might leap from her strained and breaking heart.

Sandy heard her coming slowly. The color swept and died in her cheeks. She murmured, "I can't help it." She drew her hands together, ready to faint with these mingled emotions of pain and joy.

She glided to the dresser, lit the stately candles that were the pride of the room. "You're a bit late arriving," she said, trying to be very casual. "Wasn't it wonderful?"

The light fell on her red hair and dewy eyes. She was whiter than JUDY had ever seen her—whiter and more beautiful with the love yet warm on her lips—warm and shining in her dewy eyes.

"Why didn't you go to bed?" said JUDY, going straight to the closet, putting her hat on the shelf. "Did you enjoy it?"

"More than anything I've ever seen—Sandy picked off a long streamer of the wax dripping on the candle. "She knows," she thought unhappily. "She looks like a stone."

JUDY was a long time hanging up that coat and hat. She emerged with a kimono wrapped about her, her head lowered as she studiously plumed the folds together. "Games wear me to a frazzle. I ought to apply for a place on the team, all the work I do. Think I'll take a bath. Don't wait for me. Blow out the candles."

"She hates me," Sandy thought, creeping between the cold, smooth sheets. "It's killing her to have me here. She can't bear to look at me. Lord—what are we to do?"

She kept very near to the edge on her own side of the bed. "I've taken him from her," she broke her heart, she now murmured, rutting her hands over her face. "Why did I come here? Why do these terrible things always happen?"

She felt the sweep of his arms; his young, happy eyes going like plums to her inmost soul. She felt this and flushed with joy.

She knew now what JUDY meant, saying: "It's love when you can hardly bear it if he looks clear into your eyes; when all your heart and soul just longs and longs for him to kiss you. And you could pour your whole life out for him to drink in a single hour of joy—that's love."

Yes, and she had this now. She had never known it before. It was hers—theirs—they had a right to it! She would reach out her arms, draw him to her—hold him. She saw herself doing this. She whispered: "I won't give him up—he won't give me up. Why should we?"

We won't!" Hearing JUDY padding across the room, she pretended to be asleep.

JUDY, too, lay on her own side of the bed, her hands crossed on her breast.

The presence of JUDY, lying still as the dead, filled Sandy with a shivering unhappiness. Now miserable, she defended herself: "She did everything for me! I didn't take him from her. He never thought of her as he thinks of me. He never would have thought of her like that. Oh, would he—would he?"

And JUDY with her pulses thudding, filling her with sickness and heat so that she longed to dash the clothes off, leap from the bed—JUDY thought: "She's not asleep. How can she lie here after what she's done? What did she do? If he wanted you, could anyone take him from you? Don't pity yourself! What have you for a glorious fellow like him to love? What beauty have you?"

Not a muscle of her body moved; yet she felt clamorous with mutiny. Slow, burning tears gathered in her eyes. She could love as Sandy never could! She could bring him fire and glow of her pure, young heart—the passion of her high, young soul—fling it to him—ask nothing in return; she could drop on her knees and yield up all her life if he should need or wish it. She was his mate—his real mate—

"But he doesn't want you, JUDY! Moore—oh shame, shame—crying for yourself!"

Sandy felt a faint trembling as JUDY's rigid body relaxed. "She's crying—Lord, is she crying? Oh, how can I be so lame? ... Because it is I he wants—I that he loves—he that I love—he only!" And she, too, felt the flame and beauty in her spirit—glowing there for him. None other could bring it—only she! And there was no help for it.

She turned over. Her foot touched JUDY's. JUDY said in a queer, gentle way: "Are you awake, Sandy?"

"Yes."

"Your feet are freezing. Put them on mine. I'm boiling."

"Oh," said Sandy, ready to cry.

"Yes."

"Your feet are freezing. Put them on mine. I'm boiling."

"Oh," said Sandy, ready to cry.

"Yes."

"Your feet are freezing. Put them on mine. I'm boiling."

"Oh," said Sandy, ready to cry.

