

"Business Kisses"

By BEATRICE BURTON
Author of "Gloria, The Flapper Wife"

The names in this story are purely fictitious and are not to be taken as referring to any particular person. D.W.C. & F.B.

CHAPTER LXI

In the sunshine of late afternoon the hospital seemed an almost cheerful place when Mary Rose and her mother came into it.

It was 5 o'clock and the supper trays stood on their wagons in the wide hallways. Nurses fussed here and there in their crackling white and blue uniforms.

One or two of them looked curiously at Mary Rose as she and Mrs. Middleton followed Tom's father up to Room 51. They had all heard the story of the wedding last night, of course, and wanted to see the bride who was soon to be a widow.

The white door of Tom's room stood open and a band of slanting sunlight lay across the bed where he lay. He looked, listless to Mary Rose than he had last night—and she wondered if he really were dying.

His face was not so gray, his eyes were almost unnaturally bright and the sheet rose and fell with his breathing. Then Mary Rose saw that it was rising and falling much too quickly and unevenly.

And as she bent over him, she could hear a queer little grating noise in his chest. She wondered what it could be.

He looked up at her and his lips moved as if he were trying to say something.

"Do you want me to kiss you?" she asked, her voice breaking. She knew that he did.

"I want to kiss you," she said, and laid her lips for an instant on his that were parted with the effort of his quick and tortured breathing.

"Old boy," she went on, and she knew from the look in his eyes that he could hear every word she said. "Old boy, we did get married, after all, didn't we? And I'm glad of it." She put her arms around him. He closed his eyes over the look of happiness that was in them.

The minutes ticked by. Outside the windows that faced the west the sun was setting in a glory of gold and scarlet. Its banners trailed along the horizon like the banners of a great army.

The words of Henley's poem written in a hospital came to Mary Rose as she stood there holding the dying man who loved her.

"—So be my passing! My task accomplished and the long day done, My wages taken, and in my heart Some late lark singing! Let me be gathered to the quiet west."

The sundown splendid and serene, Death."

Outside the windows the sunset was growing more splendid and serene as it faded. Above it a sickle moon had come out in the pale sky. And, glancing down at the man on the pillows, Mary Rose saw suddenly that he had stopped breathing. The grating noise in his breast was still.

He had been "gathered to the quiet west" as the sunset died.

And from far away across the roofs of the town the first of the Christmas Eve church bells pealed out into the evening air. They seemed to toll, in Mary Rose's heart like a dirge.

She laid her hand, with its wedged ring shining on it, against the face of the man on the bed—the man who had loved her all his life.

"So long, old kid!" she said, and she was sure that somewhere, he heard her say it to him.

The week that followed was a slow horror to Mary Rose.

She went to the funeral—and sat through it dry-eyed, wondering why people made so much fuss over the dead body, when the soul that they had loved was gone and far beyond their ken.

But afterward, when she and her mother came back to the little brown house, she broke down completely. She cried and cried and could not stop.

"You see, you cared for Tom a lot more than you knew you did!" Mrs. Middleton told her. She was sorry for Mary Rose, but she was the honest sort of woman who couldn't help speaking her mind when she was moved.

"I'm—not crying—b—because I didn't know how much I loved him." Mary Rose sobbed on. "I'm—crying b—because I didn't love him as much as he wanted me to!"

Mrs. Middleton shook her head. "You are talking wild," she said. "You are tired. You come up stairs and get right straight into the bed—and I'll give you some hot milk to make you sleep! Now, come on!"

She half-dragged Mary Rose up

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OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS



THE HOLD-UP

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SALESMAN \$AM—By SWAN



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES—By MARTIN



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER



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Tree Top Music Causes His Arrest

By United Press

PORT HURON, Mich., Aug. 13.—

Harry Olson, 20, parole breaker, was

in custody today, as a result of a

patrolman overhearing him play a

mouth organ in a six foot square

home in a tree top.

In the small shack he had a bed

and an unregistered revolver.

The treetop bungalow was virtually

shielded from view by leaves, and

probably would not have been dis-

covered, officers said, except for the

tell-tale strains from the mouth

organ.

Following the death of Thump and

his wife the estate was purchased

by John Jacques, who has endeav-

ored to maintain to a degree the at-

mosphere of the place as it was

when built. Both he and his wife

were friends of Mrs. Thump.

Should a purchaser appear it is

probable that the relics and midget

conveniences will be removed from

the house and the only remaining

monument to the famous little man

and his wife will thus lose its

identity.

She slipped to her knees and hid her face in the lap of her mother's old gingham house dress.

How can I go and live with them?" she sobbed. "If I'd loved Tom, as they think I did, I'd feel like a daughter to them. I'd want to be near them! But I didn't love him—I've never loved but one man since I was born! And he—hates me!"

She had struggled to keep John

Manners out of her mind for weeks

and weeks. But she couldn't keep him out of her thoughts. His face

came between her and whatever she

happened to be looking at, a hundred

times a day. It was the last thing

she saw, against the darkness of

her bedroom, just before she closed her eyes in sleep at night.

She knew that she never would forget him as long as she lived.

(To be continued)

Mary Rose learns that the engagement between John Manners and Doris Hining is broken in tomorrow's installment.

1927 LICENSES ARRIVE

The next morning at breakfast Mary Rose told her mother about it. "If I were you, I'd go and live with them," Mrs. Middleton surprised her by saying. "Flossie is going to need me, anyway, now that she's going to have a baby. And if you lived with the Fitzroys she and Sam could move right in here."

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(To be continued)

First shipments of the 1927 Indiana automobile license plates, which are being manufactured at Anderson, have been received by the State automobile license department and are being distributed among three branch offices. Approximately 300,000 sets of the plates are included in the contract. The plates have a black background with white lettering.

Half-hidden by trees and set far back from the street, it is one of the show places of the town.

Though most of the furnishings

are of ordinary dimensions, some of

the chairs and tables and one of the

panions were constructed especially

for the owner and his tiny wife, who

was born and reared here. On the

walls still hang many pictures, mostly engravings, which Thump purchased abroad. The stairways of the house are built with steps only about half the normal height.

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his wife the estate was purchased

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were friends of Mrs. Thump.

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and his wife will thus lose its

identity.

The mansion, built in the heyday

of the dwarf's spectacular career,

is of English architecture, modeled af-

ter the home of an actress whom he

met during one of his tours of Great

Britain. It contains eleven rooms,

combining midget features with those

of ordinary proportions.

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