

The SNOB

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SYNOPSIS
Nancy was pretty, a GAGE, and a blue-blood, even though she did live on the other side of the railroad tracks. But she was a snob, and falling in love and becoming engrossed to handsome ERIC NELSON, whom she had met at the Hippodrome, was a shock to Nancy's pride causes her to break the engagement when she finds that Eric's mother is a washerwoman at the circus. Unable to stand the tension of her enforced separation from Eric, she leaves him and moves to San Francisco. Here a new town, she meets Gerald Hall, a man of means, and Nancy starts a romance with him. She hears that Eric is interested in another girl.

Nancy's only real funds when a letter arrives from her mother minus the usual allowance check. She learns that her mother is ill and that Eric has said that he will be unable to send her more money. Nancy wonders if she should take Mr. Hall into her confidence.

CHAPTER XXV.

"I crave food," Nancy said, "and lots of it."

Jerry was surprised.

"How come, woman? You haven't such a healthy appetite ordinarily."

Should she tell him now or wait?

"Wait" cautioned better judgment.

She couldn't eat if he were watching her knowing she was REALLY hungry.

He took her to the Golden Pheasant and ordered a meal which made her faint with anticipation. She found, however, that she had gone without solid food for too long to enjoy it. After the soup she was unable to do more than nibble. And Jerry laughed at her.

For a girl who was HUNGRY

Suddenly tears filled her eyes. Tears of weakness and gratitude. It was so supremely satisfying to see him sitting there. To know that he would come to her rescue once he understood.

"Jerry," she said, "I was starved. Honestly! I've lived on less than a dollar all week."

The smile in his eyes froze into horror.

"Not really?"

She nodded, fumbling for her handkerchief.

"I may as well admit the truth. My father can't afford to send me any more money."

"Why didn't you tell me sooner, dear?"

"I couldn't," she gulped. "Didn't want you to know."

He patted her hand, saying, gently, "I'd do anything in the world to help you. Suppose you open up your heart and tell me about it now."

But if Nancy had one foot in the grave she would still have thought it necessary to embroider the bare facts of her dying.

So she smiled uncertainly and repeated her story, hitting only the high places. Her room rent was unpaid and she MUST have a position.

"That's not so tragic," he com-

forted. "I imagine I can still get you into the chorus at the Theater."

"Oh, Jerry, can you? You see, while I don't exactly want to be a chorus girl I might do it for a little while."

"See here," he cried, bluntly. "You're darned lucky if you get to be one. You've no experience. I don't like your attitude."

He continued, "I don't see why, if it's necessary to make your living, you should feel above doing anything you are able to do."

"You don't understand," she faltered.

"Evidently not! But I can tell you this, Nancy, if Winslow gives you a place and you persist in these above-your-job ideas you'll be a complete flop. I may be able to get you a position, but the Lord Himself can't hold it for you."

She supposed his advice was well meant, but it seemed unnecessarily brutal.

"I'll do my best to make good, of course. Perhaps I do have some old-fashioned ideas."

"Small-town stuff," he retorted. "And you'll have to get it out of your system before you succeed along any line."

Her small white face was so obviously distressed that he relented. "See here, Nancy, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings."

"All right. You didn't."

"I'm afraid I did," he insisted, gently. "But, my dear, I've seen so much more of the world than you have. I really want to help you."

His criticism had been a severe jolt to her already wounded pride. Then he said, "I'm going to advance your room rent."

She flashed, "Indeed you are not!"

"Don't be silly. You can pay me back. If I don't, what are you going to do?"

"I don't know," she admitted drearily.

Some way the scene wasn't going as she had imagined it.

"You expect me to help you, don't you? I take it that was your reason for confiding. And, in that case, I think I should be the judge of what form that assistance shall take. Don't you trust me, Nancy?"

She responded instantly to the melancholy in his voice.

"I trust you absolutely."

"That's better," he said, more cheerfully. "If you trust me, I'll take my advice. And you won't be schoolgirly and prudish about accepting whatever I offer."

His words disturbed her a little. But at the moment she was in no position to dictate.

On the way home he drew her close to him, whispering, "Why do you keep pushing me away? Is it because you know that's the surest way to keep me crazy about you?"

"Of course not!" Nancy stammered, embarrassed and bewildered.

Arrived at the rooming house he kissed her passionately.

"Aren't you getting tired of this game we're playing?"

"Why, no," she said. "I'm satisfied."

He laughed with a satanic lack of mirth.

"I don't believe that, Nancy. Will you meet me tomorrow for lunch? I want to talk things over with you before I make an appointment with Winslow. And, in the meantime the irate landlady must be appeased."

He passed a little roll of bills into her hand.

"Use these and call it a loan if you like."

"Oh, thank you, Jerry! I can pay you back soon, can't I? I suppose my salary will start right away?"

"Not while you're rehearsing. But don't worry about that tonight. We'll discuss it tomorrow."

With almost the sensations of a drowsy woman, Nancy crept into the house. Cramping the money into her pocketbook. Thinking, "If only I didn't have to take this!"

Humiliating as it was to accept Jerry's help, it would have been worse to ask Mrs. Watson's charity. As the landlady answered her knock Nancy was unspeakably grateful she had not come to ask it.

"Small-town stuff," he retorted. "And you'll have to get it out of your system before you succeed along any line."

Mrs. Watson eyed the roll of bills hungrily.

"You understand how it is with me, Miss Gage. I meant no offense."

"I'm sure you didn't," Nancy replied.

Her feet dragged up the stairs. Not since the news of her father's accident had she felt so discouraged. Now when her room rent was paid, with the assurance of food and a position her spirits were sinking. She hung her dress and coat in the

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