

LOVE FOR TWO

RUTH DEWEY GROVES © 1928 Service Inc.

THIS HAS HAPPENED
BEETIE LOU WARD marries ROD
BEYER, who had previously been engaged.
LILA, who has been spending a week in
the honeymoon and the only shadow on
the splendor of the New York is
that she was Rod's first love.
Anxious to make a good impression,
they go to an expensive hotel
until they can find an apartment
of their own. MOLLY FRASER,
she urges Bertie Lou to buy more than
Tom at poker, and, feeling under obligation
to them, recklessly invites the
whole party to a social gathering.
Tom scolds him for the extravagance and
they quarrel. However, this is the last of moving into
their new apartment.

Rod's hand shook slightly when he
held a lighted taper to the tobacco.
"Loosing sleep," Lila commented
aloud.

"Up too much," Rod acknowledged.

"And no sleep when you do go to bed," Lila went on. "What are you worrying about, Rod?"

"I'm not worrying."

"Do you really think that wealth
makes a person free of all worry?"

she asked suddenly.

Rod turned his head to look at her. She had spoken with a touch of depression in her voice.

"Even a golden crown must carry a few thorns," she went on, but did not speak.

"It is not impossible for me to understand your troubles, Rod, if they are concerned with money. My memory is not short,"

she added with a significant pause.

"Perhaps there are many places

in my mind that once were filled

with the same thoughts that you

were glooming over out there in the

hall."

"Well, you found a way out of

your troubles," Rod said banteringly: "assuming that they were the same as mine."

"You mean my marriage," Lila

returned quietly. "And you're right, Rod. Abracadabra couldn't have

done more for me."

"Who's he?" They both laughed.

"But if you really don't know, Lila explained, "it's a magic word. And

it can help you, too."

"Is that so? I suppose you captured

it in a dictionary or a crossword puzzle and dragged it to the

altar with you to do its stuff. But

you see, I'm already wed. Old Ab

couldn't do a thing for me."

Lila did not answer him at once.

Bertie Lou and another girl were

opening the door. Lila saw them in the mirror over the mantelpiece.

"Men can make money," she said,

motioning over her shoulder to the

new arrivals to join them on the sofa.

The other girl turned back to the library, but Bertie Lou remained. The opportunity for prolonged conversation among them had already passed, however, for guests were now arriving rapidly and Lila had to give up her place beside Rod.

Later in the evening she found another chance for a talk with him. A well known Broadway entertainer was giving imitations of famous stars and everyone was crowded into the drawing room. Lila and Rod stood near the door.

Presently, under cover of the star at the end of a particularly clever and mirth-provoking sketch, she drew him into the hall.

"Come with me, will you?" she said.

Rod was in no mood for comedy. He did not mind leaving the drawing room. Lila led him into the library.

"Wait here a minute," she told him. "I'd better go out to the pantry. Look around. You may find a cup of punch left."

Rod went over to a chair by a window that someone had opened. Outside the weather was below zero but the clean, cold air that came into the sixteenth floor apartment was a blessed relief from the warm, perfumed atmosphere of the drawing room.

Lila was back in a few minutes. "How would you like some milk?" she asked him. It would soothe you." She held out a small tray with a large glass on it. Rod waved it away.

"Take it," Lila urged. "I heated it a little. It will take the edge off your nerves."

Rod was at the point where resistance was a bore. He took the milk. Lila drew heavy curtains over the window before she came to sit on the arm of his chair while he drank slowly from the tall glass.

"Did Bertie Lou ever tell you how I had to get down on my knees and beg her to accept me as a friend?" she asked quietly. Rod glanced up at her. Her expression was serious.

"You know Bertie Lou better than that," he said.

"It's true that I had to beg her,

Rod. But Bertie Lou is a peach. She's never rubbed it in. I only wish I were as sure of your friendship as I am of hers."

Rod was a trifle uncomfortable in his mind. "What've I done?" he inquired.

Lila laughed. "Not a thing to hurt, old dear, but it's what you might do that worries me. You see I want you to trust me and I'm afraid you don't. You don't believe that I'm capable of appreciating your troubles."

"Why should you understand my troubles? Money's nothing to you now."

Rod realized as soon as the words were said that he had admitted the existence of the possibility they had joked over earlier in the evening. He hadn't meant to tell his troubles to Lila or any one else. How the devil had it come about?

Lila's eyes were filled with satisfaction. "But I've told you that I haven't forgotten what tight holes I used to be in half the time over money," she said, a bit impatiently.

A flicker, too brief to betray its

meaning, came to Lila's eyes and was gone. "Then why, if I'm meaningless to you should you refuse a position from Cy?" she asked.

Rod squirmed. She saw that and laughed at him. "Don't be foolish, Rod. You have a right to be happy. Heaven knows you and Bertie Lou are like two cuckoo doves. But you can't enjoy life without any money, not here in New York and with the friends you've got."

Rod groaned. "I'm always telling Bertie Lou we don't belong with you and Cy and the rest of 'em."

"And Bertie Lou has too much sense to listen to you. No, Rod, you're double crossing yourself somewhere. I could understand how you'd feel about it if you were still in love with me. But you say you're not. And you know that the lack of money is turning you into a joyless old foggy and yet you won't accept your chance to give Bertie Lou the things all women want."

(To Be Continued)



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CHAPTER XX

THERE couldn't be any place for my thoughts in your head," Rod replied quizzically and hardly with a smile.

The smiling came readily enough, though to Lila's carmine lips. She caught the hint that sounded in his words and voice—the hint that she lacked the power of understanding. The smile crept up to her eyes, an inscrutable smile.

"You don't want a drink, do you?" she asked, in a negative inviting tone.

Rod shook his head.

"Come in here, then," she said, and turned toward the drawing room door, her hand still on his arm. She had left the door open, but now she closed it behind them.

There was a friendly fire and an incredibly comfortable looking sofa before it. Lila led Rod over to it, and pushed him down upon the cream and gold satin cushions.

"Here," she offered cigarettes in an ivory box.

A golden lamp revealed that

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