

# LOVE FOR TWO

## RUTH DEWEY GROVES

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CHAPTER XXVII (Continued)

Rod reminded her that he would save to pay her for the stolen jewels.

"You act as though I demanded my pound of flesh," Lila complained sorrowfully. "And I'm afraid, if you persist in that attitude, that Bertie Lou is not going to like having her spending curtailed. It will make a good impression with Cy, though, if you seem to be less reckless with your money."

Rod was plainly puzzled. Bertie Lou had been so sure that Cyrus had wished them to enjoy Rod's good salary.

"But it isn't so much the way she handles your money that makes me think she has changed," Lila explained. "She hasn't acted very well toward you."

"In what way?" Rod asked defensively.

"Well, she hurried off in a pretty cold-blooded manner, I think," Lila declared.

"She was upset—excited," Rod replied loyally.

Lila patted him on the shoulder. "Good boy," she applauded, "but if everything is so hunky-dory about you worrying about?"

It was her trump card, "No Rod," she said as he hesitated for an answer. "I know you well enough to see that you're hurt. I've watched you struggling along under a lot of debts, trying to make both ends meet, get ahead, and save money to build that house you're always talking about. I've cautioned Bertie Lou many times against throwing money away. But New York went to her head, I'm afraid."

Rod stared at her as she spoke, bewildered at the discrepancy between her statements and Bertie Lou's.

Lila had risen to her feet and was leaning against a white pillar. She looked flawlessly beautiful in the pale moonlight that lent spirituality to her conventionally pretty features.

Her hair was dressed to fit her head like a gold cap, and her full throat rose from a lacy robe de style gown that was charmingly feminine and revealing.

Rod could not believe she was lying. She spoke so earnestly, almost sadly. "I can't tell you how sorry I am," she went on, "because . . . if you're not happy, Rod . . ."

Her voice trailed off wistfully.

Rod rose to make an answer. Why, Lila shouldn't say that! He was happy, perfectly happy. He was about to tell her so when Cyrus joined them, with a demand for Lila to make some sandwiches.

The cook and maid had been given the evening off. The Lores had not expected to entertain tonight. Cyrus came up and put an arm around Lila's waist and drew her to him. Rod was facing them. What he saw then surprised him beyond words.

### CHAPTER XXVIII

A SURGE of hate spread itself over Lila's features, contorting them into a fleeting ugliness. She turned her head quickly away from Rod's stare.

But even in the moonlight her expression had been an unmistakable indication of displeasure. Rod could not see clearly enough to recognize it as anything more than that. But it was sufficient to trouble him.

Thinking it over that night, he concluded that Lila had no love for Cyrus. He had come to believe that she had. But even with that revealing moment on the piazza to enlighten him he had not the faintest idea why she had been so much annoyed at her husband's demonstration of affection.

Lila, boiling with resentment over his intrusion upon her life—tete-a-tete with Rod, could have told him. She could have explained that Cyrus had spoiled the moment she had been waiting for—the moment when Rod needed sympathy, the moment he seemed bewildered and doubtful of Bertie Lou's love.

For, despite his loyalty, Lila knew that he must be pondering over Bertie Lou's behavior.

She had pondered over it, too, until she received a clew. In a conversation with Rod on the subject of the detective she had engaged, she asked him if he had told Bertie Lou anything that could give her a hint of their secret. Rod said no, that he hadn't even told her he was at Lila's the afternoon he had returned the empty jewel case.

Lila remembered having told Bertie Lou that he had left her left hand that occasion. Casually, she inquired of Rod how he had explained his lateness in arriving home, and he said he believed he had lied about it.

"Well, the fat's in the fire with Bertie Lou," Lila told herself. Abandoning all hope of deceiving Bertie Lou any longer, she decided to make the most of her erstwhile friend's absence.

When Bertie Lou returned—if she ever did—Lila knew that she would have little or no influence over her, no further opportunity to lead her into extravagance or things that Rod could criticize.

Perhaps Bertie Lou might induce Rod to give up his position with Cyrus.

There Lila faced the possibility of losing him altogether. Unless she could complete her sorcery before his wife returned.

No need now to consider Bertie Lou's friendship. At last she could speak freely, could start to sow the seeds of discontent in Rod's mind.

She was furious with Cyrus for having interrupted her initial move and for having reminded Rod that she belonged to another man.

But to Rod it seemed that he had gazed upon the secret travesty of a wife who had made a ghastly mistake.

He pitied Lila. But he admired her tremendously for having kept her secret so well, for having lived so sportingly up to her bargain of exchanging her freedom for money.

At least she had not whined. And if he had discovered what she had proudly hidden from the world it was purely by accident, he felt, and not by reason of any public display of yellow on Lila's part.

He thought of her unflinching man-

festation of affection and consideration for Cyrus, a man whom he knew she did not love, and compared it with Bertie Lou's treatment of him, whom he had believed she loved.

He observed Cyrus closely for the rest of his stay at the Birchers.

There was nothing in his manner to indicate that he suspected Lila's true feelings toward him. Rod asked himself if it were not possible that he too might be taking his wife's love for granted.

Was there any such a thing as love? Was it love to keep a man calling his home every hour to inquire if there was a letter for him?

And was it love that caused Bertie Lou to plunge him head over heels into debt—send him begging his father for a loan?

It looked very much like indifference and a shallow ambition, rather than love. Rod did not want to think so, but Lila had set herself to present Bertie Lou's character and conduct to him in this light.

And so, so false in her method of putting her destructive efforts in the guise of friendly advice and sympathy was she that Rod found himself thinking Bertie Lou had revealed herself as selfish and unloving.

It did not come suddenly, his verdict of her; but as the weeks wore on and she made no mention of returning to New York, Rod was compelled to believe that she did not mind being apart from him.

Then there was her cold letter when he had to refuse the money she asked for. Bertie Lou had hated writing for it, but she needed funds . . . she had used practically all her immediate cash for her fare home.

She did not want to appeal to her father for a loan, since that would cause him to wonder why Rod did not support her with money.

Rod had replied with half the amount and the statement that he had no more to send. Bertie Lou was amazed. He must be spending money like water!

Well, Lila's habits and tastes could account for that. For any man who aspired to an affair with her would soon find himself with a lean pocketbook, Bertie Lou believed.

Rod did not write for a week after receiving her sarcastic letter. During this period of waiting Bertie Lou had assured herself through a hideous night of alternating doubt and still faintly surviving faith that she did not care whether he ever wrote again or not.

For she had received a letter that fairly scorched her heart and seared her pride. It was a poisonous anonymity.

But Bertie Lou thought she knew who had written it. The writing was very much like Molly's, despite an apparent effort to disguise it.

It was brief. The writer merely suggested that Bertie Lou should return to Rod at once if she wished to get him out of the clutches of a certain bleached blonde over whom he seemed to have lost his head.

As the writer had guessed, Bertie Lou was too proud to take any notice of the communication. She did not return to New York.

Her letters to Rod grew even colder and further apart, and when he flatly demanded to know when she intended to return, she replied that she thought she might spend the summer with her mother.

The letter had done its work. It kept Bertie Lou away from Rod, as it was designed to do. Not as long, perhaps, as Lila—for it was Lila who was the guilty person—hoped that it would.

It was too late now to think of preparing dinner in the apartment. Bertie Lou set about removing the marks of travel from her person and getting into a fresh costume. It was nice to be back in her comfortable, well-furnished home . . . but it was purely a physical pleasure.

There was no elation in her heart; merely a half-dread, half-eager feeling. She was excited, but not happy. For some reason, though, she put on a dress that Rod had liked.

She was in the living room when he entered the hall. She heard him open the door and walk toward their bedroom.

(To Be Continued)

# THE NEW Saint AND Sinner

## By Anne Austin

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The Hathaway house was eerily quiet. Crystal felt as if she were the only thing alive in it, as she sat before the little apple-green enameled dressing table that had once been dedicated to Cherry Lane's beauty worship, and stared with wide, amused eyes at her own reflection.

"To think that on my very first day in Stanton I should meet you, beloved—my perfect knight out of all the world. Dick Talbot! Dick! No—I shall call you Richard. My lips really look lovely as I say your name."

"Tony didn't want you, or she would not have given you to me. Were you glad, Richard? I never dreamed, when Tony and I were drawing up specifications for our heroes at school that I should find you here! T. D. and H."

"You smiled at that, didn't you, Richard beloved? 'Tall, dark and handsome' . . . Oh, you are, you are—all of that and more!"

"I shall smile at you like this," and poor Crystal wretched her rouged mouth into a tender, slow, provocative smile, "and I shall say things that will make you smile in return, and—so you won't think I'm slow—I'll say things that will shock you just a little."

"I'll be daring and gay and gallant, like Tony. Dear Tony! We will always thank her for bringing us together, won't we, Richard? I'm sure she isn't in love with you, or she wouldn't have suggested that you take me to the dinner dance instead of that oat, Lon Edwards!"

Clumsy little liar! I don't see why Tony has any use for him at all. Oh, I'm going with you, Richard!"

She clasped her pretty hands over her heart and "registered" ecstasy, carefully watching her reflection.

She must arch her eyebrows a bit more—like this, one just a tiny bit higher than the other; curl the corners of her mouth in the shy beginning of a smile, like this!

"I must get another marcel tomorrow," she decided suddenly, in a more normal voice. "And a bleaching facial. Oh, I wish I didn't tan and freckle. I wonder if I ought to have my eyebrows plucked a little."

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Rest Daylight Features

—Tuesday—

WKRF (239) INDIANAPOLIS (Hoosier Athletic Club)

A. M.

10:00—Recipe exchange.

10:15—Panatrophe.

10:25—Interesting bits of history, courtesy of Indianapolis Public Library.

10:30—WKRF shopping service.

11:30—Livestock and grain market; weather and shipping forecast.

WFBM (275) INDIANAPOLIS (Indianapolis Power and Light Co.)

Non-stop copy to Lilly C. Walk & Son; Lester Huff on the studio organ.

P. M.

12:30—Livestock market report, Indianapolis and Kansas City; weather report.

3:00—Play ball with the Indians vs. Kansas City at Washington Park.

### OUT OUR WAY



WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY THE SMUGGLER.

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASHINGTON TUBBS II



SALESMAN SAM



MOM'N POP



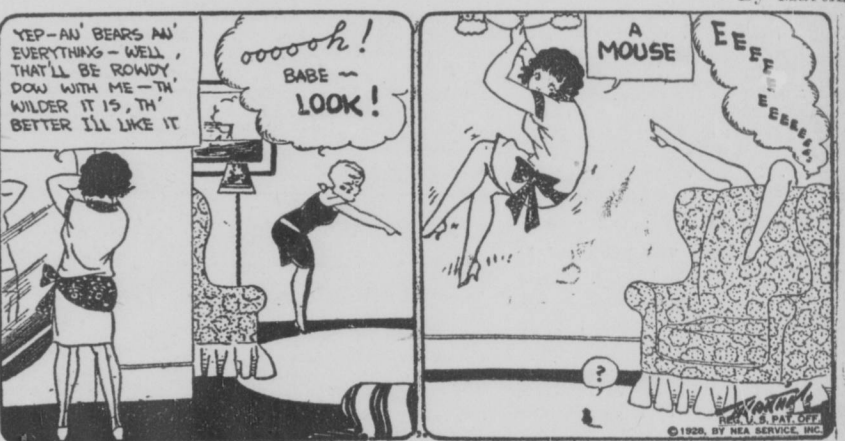
THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE



### OUR BOARDING HOUSE



BACK-FENCE TENNIS



THE MEDITERRANEAN!



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