

LOVE FOR TWO

RUTH DEWEY GROVES

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THIS HAS HAPPENED

BERTIE LOU WARD married ROD EYER, who had previously been engaged to LILA WARD. Lila makes her miserable for the bride until she meets rich MR. LORE, and marries him. Then she asks Bertie Lou to forgive her.

Trying to keep up socially with wealthy friends plunges the Bryers in debt and Rod becomes depressed. Lila sees her chance to persuade him to accept a higher salary from Lore. Shortly after she asks Rod to put some jewels in the safe during her absence. They disappear and Rod wants to notify the police, but Lila insists that they keep the matter secret, warning him that suspicion against him might spoil his career. Bertie Lou finds out that he has been seeing Lila secretly and is heart-broken.

She is called home to her sick mother and catches a train without seeing Rod. The separation, added to Lila's plotting, causes a coldness between them. Rod expects the other to make advances or explanations.

Rod goes to the Lorees without her and Bertie Lou goes out with MARCO PALMER to relax. One evening Rod finds her packing a suitcase for a week-end at the Palmer estate and he tells himself that her love is dead and that he is infatuated with her. He dismissed her, but Lila deceived him about the stolen jewels when a con- tinuous admirer her near at a dinner party.

Confronted, she admits that she gave him an empty case in order to make him dependent on her. He repudiates her treachery and disavows her. Lila and she sneeringly reminds him that Bertie Lou is at a house party with young Palmer. He leaves her and drives madly out to the Palmer estate.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XXXV

FOR half a minute Rod failed to grasp the significance of what he heard, or rather the import of hearing Bertie Lou's voice at that time and in that room. He stood where he was, hushing about breaking in upon her while the maid was present.

And then, before he had come to any decision about what he should do, it came to him with a startling impact that Lila had a right to Bertie Lou had not kept their agreement. She had broken her word, her vows, and destroyed his last remaining faith in her.

Rod stood there, helpless, for a black period that never could be measured, while the degrading conviction of Bertie Lou's guilt rooted itself deep in his soul.

It was like soiled fingers tearing at all that was clean and decent in his life. A bitter nausea swept over him and he leaned weakly against a wall for support.

The maid came out of Bertie Lou's room and turned in the other direction without seeing Rod. It is likely that even if she had seen him she'd have mistaken him for one of the party.

He looked precisely like a drunken man at the moment. His head hung on one side with his chin upon his dress shirt front and he appeared ready to collapse.

After a bit he attempted to pull himself together. It was in his mind to face Bertie Lou and he even took a few steps toward her door. But he did not reach it before he turned and walked dazedly, staggeringly, away.

What was there to say? He could not bear to see her, perhaps to fall down and beg her to deny what his eyes had seen. Rod dared no longer to trust even himself.

No one was decent, no one was right. He might make a worm of himself. And Bertie Lou might let him do it, might lie. They might begin living a hell of married life that was without respect, without faith, utterly unalloyed.

Fear of the depths of degradation to which he might sink to save himself from accepting the horrible truth of Bertie Lou's unfaithfulness.

The temptation to plead for him from her, a lie that would admit him to what he would always suspect was a fool's paradise, was too great to be resisted.

Why he suffered so terribly over what he had discovered Rod did not ask himself. Perhaps he thought, vaguely, that it was the pain one feels upon learning of the falseness of the world. Two women. One whom he had respected as a person who would keep a fair bargain had proved herself a cheat; and one he had loved and believed a really noble character had shown herself to be even worse.

Rod climbed into his taxicab and was driven as hopeless as any the human mind can encounter. Everything was gone. His position, his friendship with Cyrus Lore—though he hardly realized this at the time.

It was the devastating destruction of his faith in the two women who had meant all of love and honor to him that reduced him to a feeling of unspeakable disgust and loathing for them.

Strangely, it was Bertie Lou who drew his blackest thoughts. He could have killed her. If he had his hands on her throat then, he told himself. Her smooth white throat, her damnable kissable throat! The memory of it was torture to him.

The driver turned. He thought he'd heard a groan. Well, it might have been. Queer fish, this fare of his. Reeling out of a house like a man who'd seen into hell, and now he sat there, his head dropped in his hands and swaying to and fro to beat the devil. "I'll tell 'em, I'll be glad to drop him—and how," he told himself.

Rod did not speak to him during the drive back to town. Time seemed to mean nothing to him now. The driver asked him, when they reached the Quinsbury Bridge, where he should take him and Rod gave him the address of his apartment.

When they got there he stumbled out of the cab and handed the driver a bill which the latter stuffed into his pocket with a surprised grin after one glance at it. Rod did not ask for change.

He climbed the stairs to his floor like an old man. Bitter, disillusioned, sick. An epithet had attached itself to Bertie Lou in his mind and he repeated it over and over with maddening monotony.

Money, money, money. Lila wanted it. Bertie Lou wanted it. Lila wanted love too. Rod wondered, with a stab of pain through his dulling misery, if Bertie Lou wanted it too—if she loved this Marco Palmer.

"But she didn't have to do it that way," Rod muttered aloud. "She could have had her freedom. . . . To marry young Palmer. . . . Oh, God, Bertie Lou."

The cruellest thing that ever happened to Rod happened then.

He knew that he loved Bertie Lou. He knew why Lila and her treachery to Cy, her trickery, and her profane offer of love had slipped out of his mind.

Bertie Lou was all that mattered to him. She had been all that mattered to him, ever. He forgot the epithet in thinking of her as Marco's wife.

How clear the glass in retrospect. What is easier than looking backward? It is like solving other people's troubles; to see where you made yesterday's mistakes.

Rod knew what had happened to him—knew that Lila had fascinated him. The old appeal, that had lured him to her before he learned to care for Bertie Lou, had never, perhaps, burned itself completely out. He had hated her, as she said, because she was selfish and scheming.

He faced it frankly, even admitting to himself that Lila's determined pursuit of him might have flattered him. No, that was not so; he honestly had not known that she was deliberately working for a renewal of their love for each other.

He had been warned by their friendship and understanding. If he had come to believe himself in love with her again it was because she had reversed his opinion of her and compelled him to admire her respect her as a truly noble creature.

His desire for her, that now rankled in his memory like a poisonous weed, had not been noble. But at least, it could be said for him that he had held it in check, never so much as caressing her slim fingers. Rod did not feel ashamed; only humiliated that he had wanted to take her in his arms and kiss her.

He took upon himself the full blame for having killed Bertie Lou's love. He saw it now—she must have suffered over Lila. Who could tell to what lengths Lila had gone to break Bertie Lou's faith in him? He'd never sought to find out why she had gone back to Wayville without a word to him.

He found it easy now to understand why he hadn't wanted an explanation upon her return. He did not spurn himself, the painful remorse it cost him to admit that it was because of Lila that he hadn't wanted to take up their life where she had broken it off when she left.

Lila, Lila again, with her subtle insinuations against Bertie Lou, her play on his natural resentment.

Rod sank upon the davenport and buried his face in his hands as he and in the last, and the prayer that came at least once to almost every human being's lips burst from his in an agony of repentance. "Oh God, if I only had it to do over again!"

How tenderly, how dearly, he

him till death. You're luckier than you realize."

The fear that she had ruined her chances with George by showing him her heart and mind when all her defenses had been shattered by what she had overheard between Tony Tarver and Dick Talbot, made Crystal's face burn a dull, ugly red behind the smeared cold cream.

"Just who is George Pruitt, Faith? Is he some one awfully special? Remember, I'm new in Stanton."

"George Pruitt is very special, indeed, Crystal. As a person, I mean, not because his family is very rich and in the inner circle of 'society' in this State."

"He spent several years in New York and Paris, trying to make a career as an artist for himself, but his taste was never as great as his appreciation, conceptions and ambition. So he came home, to work into his father's business."

"He loves books, music, art, intelligent conversation, more sincerely than any other man in Stanton, and back of his darling homely face is a most beautiful soul. George Pruitt is—"

"Good! Now let's get back to the clubhouse, or Faith will be looking for us. A couple of my friends have asked to meet you, and Nils and Bob are waiting to dance with you, too. You'll dance out a pair of stockings before midnight if we don't watch out."

George held a lighted match while Crystal tried to erase the traces of tears.

George waited near the doorway of the club porch for Crystal while she made up her face anew. When she laid her hand upon George's arm, with an intimate, possessive gesture, and cocked her head provocatively as if to listen to his compliments—all for the benefit of those who might be watching—she heard a girl mutter disgustedly:

"Well, George has fallen at last! And I've tried to land him for two years! There's no accounting for tastes!"

Crystal had a sudden, knee-weakening conviction that she had made a mistake, that if she had "played" George differently.

"I'll bring in my things, and we'll undress, cold cream and gossip together, honey," Faith said to Crystal, when her husband's cousin slipped into the house at half past one that eventful Sunday morning.

"Bob and I have just got in, too. I'll be back in just a minute, or would you rather go right to bed and gossip over your Sunday morning breakfast tray in bed?"

Crystal looked up at her cousin's wife with large hazel eyes that were for the moment completely honest and wistful. "Please come, Faith. I—I don't think I'll go to sleep very early."

Faith hurried away, to return almost immediately with a dark purple silk kimono over her arm and a tray of toilet necessities in her hands.

"Bob's already asleep," she laughed softly. "Now! Room for two on this dressing-table bench. Isn't it a bother having to cold cream? Have a good time tonight, Crystal?"

"Fine," Crystal replied unenthusiastically. "I danced with eight different men, counting Cousin Bob and Nils Jonson—"

"And they don't really count, because they're married men," Faith laughed. "I'm so glad you and George Pruitt clicked."

"He doesn't care for many girls, but when he makes up his mind to be your friend, you can count on

would cherish Bertie Lou. For a moment he forgot that she had been false beyond the breaking of her vows—that she had broken their pact, her promise to give him warning, to tell him when another man had entered her life.

Rod groaned over it, when it did come back to him, as was inevitable. It was too late now to make amends to her, to pray for forgiveness.

He could pray only that his mad obsession, his cursed infatuation for Lila, had not driven Bertie Lou beyond the gates of happiness. There must be a chance for her.

There was nothing left for him to do but make it as easy as possible for her. Clear out, that was it. And even as she thought came to him Bertie Lou was on her way home, wondering if he would still be there or out to breakfast when she got in. If only she could have breakfast with him . . . shut your eyes, Bertie Lou and think of something else!

She was dreadfully hungry. The tray was untouched in her room at the Palmers, she supposed. Unless Marco had ordered it removed when he discovered that she'd left. It was likely.

He'd gone on to his own quarters to dress on their way back from the swimming pool. They'd gone for an early dip when the party finally broke up at dawn. Every-one else had gone to bed.

The water was cold but fresh. Marco had ordered the pool filled that night, though it had been emptied for what his parents believed would be the last time for the season just before they went abroad.

Bertie Lou had enjoyed the few minutes they spent in it after a dive from the springboard. Marco had spoiled the appetite it gave her for breakfast, though, when he suddenly took her in his arms and tried to kiss her.

Bertie Lou was angry. She'd told him she didn't like that sort of thing. But Marco had only laughed at her.

This was in her room, after they'd got out of their bathing suits in the shower rooms downstairs and come up in dressing gowns. Marco had asked for a cigarette and Bertie Lou had let him come in for one.

When he was gone, promising to dress and return to breakfast with her, Bertie Lou hastily packed her suitcase and hurried down, to the garage and bribed the chauffeur, who had been kept up for all night duty in case a guest decided to leave to take her to the railroad station.

She was not far behind Rod, but far enough to make a great difference in their lives.

(To Be Continued)

THE NEW Saint AND Sinner

By Anne Austin © 1928 by NEA Service, Inc.

"But she's married to Bob Hathaway, and in love with him, and I want to be your friend, if you'll let me. Not for Faith's sake, but because I like you for yourself."

"Yes, George," Crystal answered humbly, deeply touched, despite the whisper in her heart: "Even if he isn't good-looking, I wish he wanted to be something more than a friend, just so I could hold my head up among other girls who have so many beaux."

"Good! Now let's get back to the clubhouse, or Faith will be looking for us. A couple of my friends have asked to meet you, and Nils and Bob are waiting to dance with you, too. You'll dance out a pair of stockings before midnight if we don't watch out."

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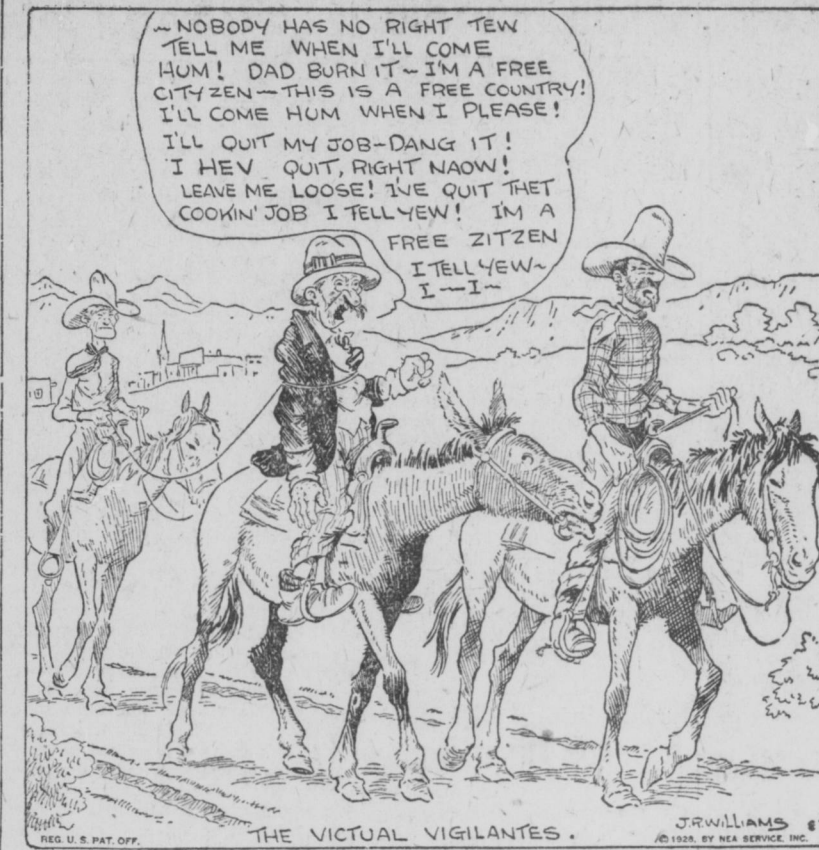
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OUR WAY

—By Williams



THE VIRTUAL VIGILANTES.

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BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

GEE, I WONDER HOW ALL TH' FOLKS ARE BACK HOME?

WOULDN'T YA LIVE TSEE EM, THOUGH? LET'S CALL 'EM UP, LONG DISTANCE TONIGHT

WILL YA EVER FORGET HOW SWEET CORA AN' TH' PROFESSOR WERE WHEN WE LEFT?

I'LL SAY—AN' WEREN'T TH' FELAS NICE? I BELIEVE THEY REALLY HATED TSEE US LEAVE

AFTER ALL, THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME, IS THERE, BASE? (SWIFT-SWIFT)

NOPE! HOME, SWEET HOME! GEE—HEY—??? NOW SEE—TH' CAR WON'T RUN—AN' IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT—YOU STARTED IT

YOU EVEN HAVE IT FEELIN' BAD—IT'S JUS' BROKEN DOWN N' CRIED

AW—DANGONE SUCH A SENTIMENTAL CAR—IT'S BEEN HOME SICK EVER SINCE WE LEFT

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FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

IT'S FROM FRECKLES AND HE SAYS—AN' CA' ANY WAY HOME AND BRINGING A BIG SURPRISE WITH ME—A LITTLE GIRL—MORE LATER—OUR BOY IS COMING HOME!

GOODY, GOODY!

IS RECEIVED BY TAG

WASHINGTON TUBES II

GET UP, GOZY, THEY'S A LOTTA EXCITEMENT ON DECK. SUMPIN'S HAPPENIN'.

WHY, DERN MY SOX! IT'S GIBRALTAR, WASHIE! THE ROCK O' GIBRALTAR! WE'RE PASSING IT.

AN' HERE'S AFRICA ON THIS OTHER SIDE. GEE WIZ! RIGHT BETWEEN EUROPE AN' AFRICA.

BOY! WATCH OUT! TH' ATLANTIC INTO TH' MEDITERRANEAN. WHY, WE'LL BE IN TUNIS IN NO TIME, AN' THEN OUR FUN BEGINS. HAPPY DAY!

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SALESMAN SAM

HEY, YOU! I WANNA BUY DERBY!

SORRY, MISTER—CAN'T SELL YA ONE JUST TOOK INVENTORY ON 'EM, AN' THAT WOULD THROW ME OFFA MY COUNT

WHAT YA DOIN', SAM—FALLIN' ASLEEP ON TH' JOB?

BE QUIET, GUZZ! I'M CHECKIN' UP ON HOW MANY MICE THERE ARE IN TH' STORE

FER TH' LOVA LIZZIE, NEVER MIND TH' MICE—YOU COULDN'T COUNT THAT HIGH ANYWAY!

AWRIGHT THEN—INVENTORY'S COMPLETED! HERE'S TH' LIST, AN' BELIEVE ME IT WAS HARD WORK—I'M ALL IN!

WELL, YA DID A FINE JOB, AN' I'M GONNA GIVE YA A LITTLE MANAGER—TH' MANAGER OF TH' HOTEL DELOP WANTS TH' BORROW YA FOR A GUY I KNOW MY CLERKIN'—HOW ABOUT IT?

ME A HOTEL CLERK? HOT TOMATOS! I'LL SAY I WILL! AN' I'LL SHOW THAT T' BORROW YA FOR A GUY I KNOW MY CLERKIN'—HOW ABOUT IT?

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MOM'N POP

BRUCE DANGERFIELD'S PARTING ASSURANCE THAT THERE WAS A SURPRISE IN STORE FOR THEM SENDS THE GUNNS HOME FROM HIS FAREWELL BREAKFAST IN THE CLOUDS, NINE MILES HIGHER THAN THE ALPS. WHEN THEY RECALL THE FACT THAT, WITH HIS FRIENDSHIP REWON, LITTLE AMY WOULD AGAIN BE IN FAVOR AS AN HEIR TO HIS MYTHICAL MILLIONS

WE'VE ENJOYED EVERY MINUTE YOU'VE BEEN WITH US, BRUCE

THAT GOES FOR BOTH OF US

YOU'VE ALWAYS HELD A BIG SPOT IN MY HEART, BUT I'VE PREPARED A BIGGER SURPRISE FOR YOU—THIS HAS BEEN THE MOST SUCCESSFUL FAREWELL PARTY I EVER THREW

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THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE

We may have seen a curious looking weather-glass in the form of a round tube. First of all we require a glass tube ten inches long and three-fourths of an inch in diameter. Then we must fill the following prescription at the druggists': camphor, two drams; potassium nitrate, half-dram; ammonium chloride, half-dram; absolute alcohol, two ounces; water, two ounces.

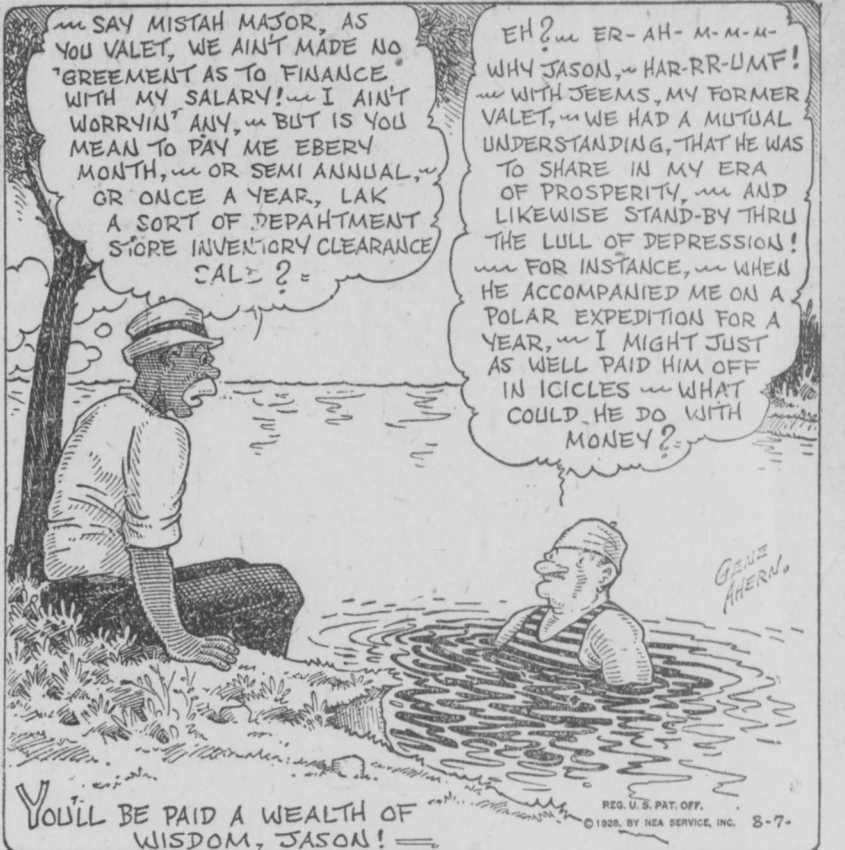
If the solid ingredients do not dissolve readily, shake the bottle. Then put a cork into the top of the tube to keep out dust.

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OUR BOARDING HOUSE

—By Ahern



YOU'LL BE PAID A WEALTH OF WISDOM, JASON!

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—By Martin

—By Blosser

—By Crane

—By Small

—By Taylor

—By Taylor

—By Taylor

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