

# WHIRLWIND

BY ELEANOR EARLY

THIS HAS HAPPENED SYBIL THORNE, Boston society girl, was engaged to a young man named JOHN LAWRENCE, who was sent to France on the eve of their marriage and never returned. Sybil mourned him for months—and then, in the way of youth, gave herself up to romance and indiscretions in a vain attempt to forget.

Years later she contracted a wretched marriage, of which her beautiful child was born. When her son was a year old, Sybil brought suit for divorce. On the day on which her case was to have opened, her husband was killed while motoring from his home in New Haven to court in Boston.

Sybil incurred her family's wrath and the displeasure of her friends by celebrating his death with a theater party. Shortly afterward she was spotted hunting with MABEL MOORE, her dearest friend. The next day she was called for them at Mabel's flat. When she opened the door she shrieked "John!"

He recognized her, and, fainting, fell at her feet.

Sybil and Mabel revive him—and he tells the story of his strange disappearance. John Lawrence—back from the dead!

When he concludes his dramatic and tragic story of battles and death and shames—all as if it were a play—the bravest of the brave—he takes Sybil in his arms.

And, "Do you love me, Sybil?" he asks her.

But, meantime, Sybil had another lover—CRAIG NEWHALL.

Her heart is pounding wildly as she tries to answer.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

## CHAPTER XLIII

SYBIL drew away, but he held her in the circle of his arms.

"Oh, John!" Prayerfully she begged him. "Not now—don't ask me now, John. It's been such a long, long time. So much has happened. How can I tell?"

His arms about her tightened, and he kissed her hair as he had done so many times before.

"You've bobbed it, dearest!" he accused her.

He held her away again, and, looking up, she saw that his forehead was wrinkled as though he were puzzled.

"It's that odor," he said surprisingly.

"Odor?" she repeated stupidly.

"What odor?"

"The stuff you use on your hair," he told her, and pulled his eyebrows together perplexedly. "What is it?"

"Verbena," she said. "You used to like it."

John closed his eyes tightly so that they made a crinkly furrow. And furtive memory drew her skirts tantalizingly across his senses.

"It was a girl in Paris," he said at last. "She used that same stuff. Girl at Maxim's. Something about her reminded me of somebody. But I didn't know what it was—or who it was. She drove almost crazy. Used to sit and watch her—and listen to her. One night—she was a cocotte you see, Sybil—and this night she asked me to buy her a drink. I stood there, staring like a fool—and all of a sudden I got giddy. I didn't know what it was. . . . God, Sybil—don't you see—that girl had on verbena too!"

John passed his hand over his forehead.

"I can smell her now. Verbena. . . . That's what it was."

"Poor darling," Sybil took his thin cheeks between her palms, and drawing his head down, put her lips to his hair. "She reminded you of me, I suppose, only you couldn't know."

"An odor," he said brokenly. "Like a breath from the past."

"And it didn't bring back anything," she asked. "You used to kiss my hair, John—remember? Remember that big psyche I wore? When I had it cut, I put it all away, and kept it in memory of you and your kisses on it. I remember. I had some perfume in a little green atomizer with pink roses on it—Tad gave it to me one Christmas. And I always squirted it on my hair when I was going to meet you because you told me once I had the sweetest hair in the world. That thrilled me awfully. . . . Tell me about that girl, John. You didn't associate her magnetism with any particular thing about her?"

"I knew there was something," he repeated, "but I couldn't quite lay hold of it. I sort of thought it was her hands. She kind of fluttered them. You know the way some girls do, when they talk."

"I used to wonder. . . . Those white hands of hers held the secret of all I'd forgotten. . . . I don't remember of having been conscious of any scent about her. But now it all comes back. I can close my eyes, and see her sitting there."

"She always wore black. French women do mostly. You know. Her hair was sort of curly—bleached, I suppose. And it used to kind of slip out from under her hat. She'd sit there, toying with a glass, and smiling quietly. . . . Sometimes I thought it was her smile that would bring things back."

"Didn't you ever talk with her?" demanded Sybil.

John raised his shoulders.

"Yes," he said heavily. "I talked with her—after a while. It didn't do any good, of course."

"Oh, well," Sybil slid her arm through his. "Let's talk about something else. Come—sit down. We'll talk about me. Have I changed, John? Much, I mean. Of course I've grown older."

THEY sat on the divan in front of the fire, but he did not touch her.

"Look at me," she commanded, "and tell me." She laughed.

"Talk to me tenderly," she begged. Tell me lies."

"Lies?" he said. "I don't have to tell you lies, Sybil. You were an exquisite child, my dear, and now you are a beautiful woman."

She clapped her hands softly.

"Hear, hear!" she cried. "Tell me more, John." And she drew closer to his shoulder.

"You were a white-souled child," he said, and said it in the voice a man uses when he speaks of the dead. "So sweet and good."

He looked deeply into her face, so that she felt herself flushing hotly, and put out her hands beseechingly.

"Yes," he said gravely. "I should say you had changed."

"But," she stammered, "you—really don't know anything about me. Of course I've grown older. I—I've lived so fiercely—and loved and hated. I suppose I have changed. I'm wiser—and hard, I guess."

With a touch of unconscious coquetry she laid her hand on his, and lifted her eyes, swimming now in tears.

"Marrying and having a child," she said, "changes and improves a woman. I think I am far more attractive now than I was when I was 18, John."

He had put her on the defensive, and she found herself growing angry with him in the first hour of their ecstasy.

"Oh, you're beautiful," he cried. "It's not that."

And then he fell silent.

She held his hand in her lap, lifting his fingers one by one, and letting them drop back again.

"Then," she whispered, "all the things you love me for are gone? And all the lovely dreams are dead. Nothing could ever be the same again?"

"Nothing is ever the same again," he told her, and turned to meet her eyes. "You've been disillusioned, Sybil."

He looked at her so intently that she felt embarrassed, as if being disillusioned was like being pock-marked.

"I suppose I have," she agreed, and sighed deeply, so that he might be impressed with the bitterness and tragedy of her life. "You couldn't expect a woman of 28 to be as idealistic as a girl of 18. Women don't keep many illusions. Not outside of nunneries. And life's been cruel to me since you went away, John."

IT was humiliating—this feeling that she must defend herself.

"You used to be a knight sans peur et sans reproche," she reminded him. "You've probably changed a good deal yourself."

"Oh, yes," he agreed. "Men do, you know. I've been a bit of an egg."

He smiled ruefully. "But it's different, somehow, with a woman."

"Why, I think you're horrid! Anybody'd think—" She drew back from his shoulder, and settled her short skirts primly.

"John!" We're not going to quarrel today!"

"I should say not!"

He gathered her in his arms again, and kissed her fiercely—not at all as he had kissed her ten years before. And when she had freed herself, she was half indignant.

"You have changed!" she gasped.

The blood in her veins pumped excitedly. She stood with one hand on the small table at the end of the divan. With the fingertips of her other hand she touched his shoulder, holding him at arm's length.

"Oh, John!" she cried, and her voice was small and breathless.

"My dear, my dear!"

The door swung open noiselessly, and Mabel advanced upon them with a tray in her outstretched hands.

"I couldn't knock," she apologized. "I didn't have a hand left. It's awfully convenient, having a door that doesn't catch. You simply kick it when you've got your hands full."

John took the tray and placed it on a little red table that rubbed lacquered sides frequently with a painted drape screen. There was fragrant coffee in a silver pot, and wafers freighted with toasted marshmallows oozing temptingly.

On the center of the tray was a green bowl with purple anemones had some perfume in a little green atomizer with pink roses on it—Tad gave it to me one Christmas. And I always squirted it on my hair when I was going to meet you because you told me once I had the sweetest hair in the world. That thrilled me awfully. . . . Tell me about that girl, John. You didn't associate her magnetism with any particular thing about her?"

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## THE NEW Saint AND Sinner

By Anne Austin

Faith and Bob Hathaway, who did not properly belong to the "set" in which Mr. and Mrs. Tarver moved, but rather to the "younger married crowd," but who had been urgently invited by Mrs. Tarver, arrived before the host and hostess had appeared, and while Tony and Crystal were sweetly greeting Mlle. Dumont.

Only four other couples were expected, as Tony had persuaded Peg to make it a small, informal party, the better to suit her own—or rather, Crystal's—scheme for releasing Pat from his enchantment.

Introductions were performed demurely by Tony, who noted that Faith, lovely and dignified in dove-gray taffeta on which she wore a corsage of noisette violets, was looking slightly puzzled by the presence of the exquisitely dressed, beautiful French woman. Mademoiselle was wearing an extremely chic black lace-and-chiffon afternoon dress. About her throat she wore what looked like real pearls, and she carried a not-too-large turquoise-blue ostrich feather fan who wickedly emphasized the color which had begun to fade a little from her blue eyes, made large and bright now by mascara.

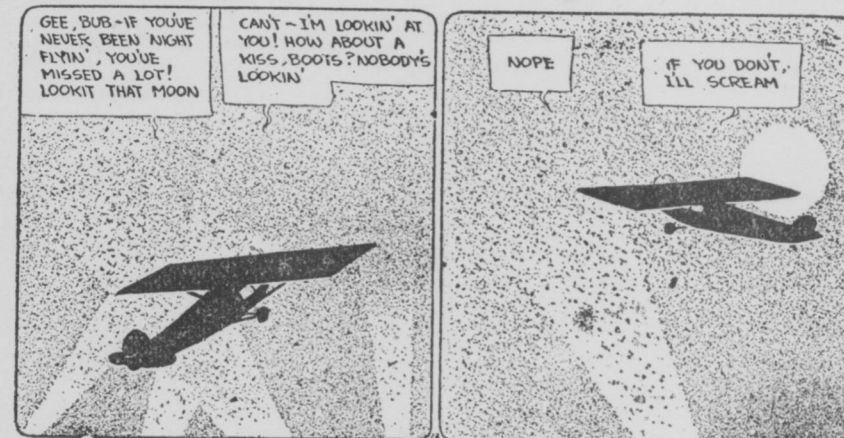
"Oh, here are Peg and Pat—or must I be formal?" Tony cried, hailing her parents' arrival. "Let me present my mother and father, Monsieur and Madame Tarver," she added demurely in French, to her former teacher. "But I keep forgetting!" Tony dropped into English. "You already know my father, don't you?"

Mademoiselle met Pat when he came to see me at Bradley, you know, Peg. Of course he had to meet our beloved mademoiselle! In all the years and years—twenty, wasn't it, Mademoiselle?—that she taught in Bradley, she was the most popular woman teacher.

"All of us girls got crushes on her. A freshman who didn't begin right off to copy Mademoiselle's clothes and hairdress and make-up was given an extra mean hazing at punishment, wasn't she, Crystal? It was simply the thing to be nuts



## BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



## FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



## WASHINGTON TUBES II



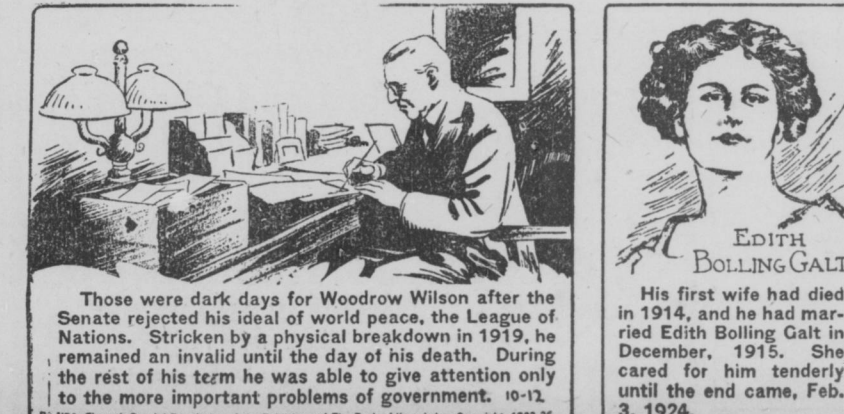
## SALESMAN SAM



## MON'N POI



## THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE



## By Martin



## By Blosser



## By Crane



## By Small



## By Cowan

