

GUILTY LIPS

by LAURA LOU BROOKMAN

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CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE (Continued)

Chris put her arm around the other girl. "We're all going to stand by you, honey. But Bob's right. You couldn't refuse to go on now."

NORMA turned away. When she saw the face about a moment later she said unsteadily, "I—I'll try to do it!"

Public indignation, manifested by protests from civic groups and women's clubs, denunciations from pulpits and platforms, swelled into a rising tide during the next seven days.

The onrush broke about the heads of certain city officials. It crashed against the Marlboro police department.

The agitation was responsible for unprecedented promptness in launching the official investigation. Late Flynn was not alone among city politicians to see the possibilities of such a scandal.

Apparently Flynn's opposition assured that the affair could not be hushed — wanted it cleared away and forgotten as soon as possible before the fall election.

Norma went back to her desk in Stuart's office on Monday. She evolved the formula of answering all questions with "I have nothing to say." It was a hard and trying week, but she managed to live through it.

"When this is over," Norma told herself repeatedly, "they'll have to let me have Mark!" That was the litany of all her prayers. "They'll have to let me have Mark!"

Thursday evening she and Chris arrived at the apartment at the same time. Chris was ahead and opened the door. She picked up an envelope from the table in the hall. "A letter!" Chris said. "It's for you, Norma."

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

THE address on the envelope had been typed. One swift glance told Norma the letter had been posted in Marlboro. She tore back the flap and drew out a folded sheet.

"Why—there's no signature! Look, Chris!"

There were two paragraphs on the typewritten page. The unsigned letter read:

"Dear Miss Travers: This is to warn you that if you tell any more to the newspapers you will be out of the picture. You are being watched night and day."

"If you go to the Wellington investigation you'll never live to get out of the courtroom. Watch your step and keep your trap shut and nobody will hurt you. If you disregard this warning you'll regret it."

The rest of the page was blank. Norma raised startled eyes as she read the last words. "Who—who in the world—?" she began.

Chris put a hand on the other girl's arm. "Let's go upstairs!" she exclaimed. "Up to the apartment!"

They went up the two flights of stairs. Chris put her key in the lock and turned the knob. It was not yet 6 o'clock, but the apartment was dusky.

Chris pressed the electric light switch at the side of the door before entering. She gave a quick, searching glance about the room.

"There's nobody here," she said.

"I'm alone as though she had suspected there would be."

Norma closed the door and put the packages she had been carrying on the table. She held up the letter again.

"But isn't this strange, Chris?" she asked in a puzzled voice. "Who on earth could have written such a thing?"

"Did you lock the door?" the other girl said sharply.

"Why, of course not! You don't mean—you don't think there's anything to be frightened about?"

Quickly Chris crossed the room, turned the night lock on the door. She turned and faced Norma defensively.

"I don't know what to think," she said, "and anyhow thinking isn't safe! Don't you realize that three-fourths of the time Marlowe is linked in this thing?"

"But, Chris—!"

"I can't stay any longer, honey. I've got to get back. Bob agrees

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12 Half.
13 Flat-bottomed ship.
14 Frozen water.
15 Frost bite.
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