

Forgotten Sweetheart

by MARY RAYMOND

BEGIN HERE TODAY

BOB WESTON, son of a millionaire, comes to Memphis where his father is building a new textile plant. Bob tries to find a pretty girl he saw on the train and later heard her sing at a Junior League benefit. The girl is JOAN WARREN, member of an impoverished family, with an aristocratic background. Joan's mother loses for her daughters to have the social position of a rich marriage.

Pat meets JERRY FORRESTER, son of her employer. She has a date with him and is late when they return. Joan, waiting up for Pat, sees Jerry kiss her. Joan demonstrates with Pat, who reacts with indifference. "I've had a good time and I mean to have more of them," Pat says.

BARBARA COURTNEY, whom Bob had known in New York, invites him to dinner at her home.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER FOUR (Continued)

What was the matter with her that Dick's obvious devotion should leave her cold? While he talked of plans for the future—hinting somehow that Joan was bound up in them—her thoughts were far away. Thinking of a train trip, thinking of last night, wondering, hoping.

Dick didn't notice Joan's abstraction. He thought she was a perfect audience, exactly the sort of a girl a successful physician should have for a wife.

JOAN had been in bed more than an hour when she heard a car stop in front of the house. That meant Pat was home.

But the minutes dragged and Pat failed to appear. Finally, Joan went into the hall. The light downstairs had been left burning and from where she stood she could see the two below clearly. Pat's laughing face in its frame of golden hair was lifted to meet the gaze of the young man.

Suddenly Joan saw the man's arm go around Pat, pulling her close, and they kissed.

Joan flew to her room, her face burning. Pat kissing a man who was little more than a stranger! It was cheap!

"I'll have to talk to Pat," she thought miserably.

Pat came up the stairs, humming gaily. "Oh, you're awake, Joan," she said, staring resentfully at the slim figure sitting upright in bed.

"I was worried, Pat."

"Look here, Joan! I won't have you sitting up worrying about me. I've gotten along three years without you and I don't have you telling me what to do now."

"Pat, let's not quarrel."

"Well, then, get this straight. I've had a wonderful time tonight and I'm going to have some more of them!"

CHAPTER FIVE

PAT was living in a whirl of gaiety these days, going somewhere with Jerry Forrester almost every night.

But for Joan the time passed uneventfully. The carefree life at Holbrook Hall was fast becoming a distant memory.

Nowadays she spent her time trying to lessen the housekeeping burden for her mother, fixing dainty trays to tempt Benny's flagging appetite, reading aloud to him, taking him for spins on bright days.

Benny selected the drives and once they drove past the big stone house where Jerry Forrester lived, "Pretty soft for Pat's fellow," Benny had said, staring at the ornate home. Even Benny was impressed!

Joan thought there was something pathetic about her mother's eagerness to believe Jerry's interest in her younger daughter was genuine!

Mother could remember days in the nineties when Forrester's was just a tiny place and Mrs. Forrester was the only clerk. But money made such a difference with Mother. Perhaps it was because life had been terribly hard for her.

Then there was Bill, saying too-ally when the nightly telephone call brought Pat flying. "Now talk your hour!"

What was the matter with Bill and Mother and even Benny? Joan felt a little sick but tried to hide her feelings and her dislike of the man she had dubbed privately "spoiled playboy."

She passed him on Union avenue one afternoon so engrossed in the flashily dressed girl with him that he failed to see her. Joan did not tell Pat about this. Pat was so gay and happy. Joan hadn't the heart to dim that radiance.

PERHAPS Jerry Forrester really was more decent than she believed. He might be merely sophisticated and not a philanderer, after all.

"I've said less than half a dozen words to him at any time," Joan thought honestly.

"I'm afraid we misjudged that young man," Mrs. Warren said one day. "He seems very nice and he's evidently in love with Pat. He must be to spend all his time with her!"

She waited a moment. Then, as Joan did not reply, she continued. "Perhaps he isn't the type we would have selected for Pat. But she likes pretty things and comforts, and it would be nice for her to marry a rich man."

"I hate rich men," Joan flared out suddenly. "Nearly always they're spoiled. You know, Mother, men who have to work for what they get are finer and more dependable. I'd rather marry a poor man."

"I always thought you and Dick would marry some day," said her mother.

"Silly!" Joan said, smiling. "No, you didn't Mother. You merely hope we will."

She added after a moment, "Dick's a dear and life with him would always be comfortable and easy. But I don't know that I want an easy, comfortable life."

She answered her mother's amazed look. "I mean, Mother, I want something more than that."

I want to go adventuring with my husband—

"Joan!"

Joan laughed. Mother would never understand!

"I thought you despised adventures, dear."

"Some of them," Joan said.

Nevertheless, she was lonely. And when Dick called that night she accepted his invitation to dinner almost eagerly. It wasn't bad to have some one to go about with who was as nice as Dick and as devoted. It would be safe to marry Dick.

They saw Joan Harlow in her latest picture and then drove by the Green Grill for sandwiches. It was almost 11 o'clock when they returned. Joan told Dick goodnight at the door and prepared to turn the key.

"Pat's not in, honey!" her mother called softly from the head of the stairs.

"Go back to bed, Mother," Joan said. "I'll be awake until she comes."

At 2 o'clock Pat came. Up the stairs and into the room with a little rush. She flung off her coat quickly and stood for a moment, staring at her sister. Joan thought she had never seen Pat so lovely. She was wearing a cherry-colored chiffon. Her eyes were like twin stars and her cheeks were flushed.

She came toward the bed, holding out her arm.

"Joan, look at this perfectly darling wrist watch Jerry gave me. Platinum and diamonds! I wonder how he knew I was having a birthday tomorrow?"

Joan took the soft, slim hand in hers. "It's beautiful, Pat. Do you think you should keep it?"

"Imagine giving it up!" Pat said, happily. "I'd like to see anybody make me!"

She sat down on the bed. "Oh, Joan, I've had a marvelous time. Met a lot of Jerry's friends. They were all nice to me, but there was a married woman, Claire Williams—I simply hated her!"

"Jerry said he didn't care for her either, but he's known her a long time so he had to dance with her. There's a woman, Joan, would give me trouble, if she could!"

"I know he's crazy about me. Simply crazy about me."

Joan couldn't wet-blanket such a mood. Maybe Jerry was all right after all.

About 8 o'clock the next night

"Jerry is Pearly," Pat said. "Tell him I'll be right down, Joan."

But it was not Jerome Forrester who faced Joan in the doorway. The young man, hat in hand, smiled.

"Oh," said Joan, "it's you!"

"Well, yes," said the young man. "It's a little early for ghosts to bob up, isn't it? You're going to invite me in, I hope. You would if you knew what I've gone through finding you."

"But you did find me," Joan said, holding tight to the door, trying to hold on to sanity. It was madness, looking up into the face of a perfect stranger and feeling her heart pound wildly, the color rushing to her face.

"Please come in." She thought that she was acting like a school girl. He came in and stood looking down at her.

"Get your hat and coat," he said. "and let's drive around. How's that?"

"Swell," said Joan with a lump in her throat.

FIVE minutes later she was seated beside him in a low, gray roadster, and Bob Weston was piloting the car surely and swiftly along Central. Now and then she stole a look at him.

Yes, he was just as she remembered him—the finely chiseled nose, firm mouth and slightly dominant chin. She tried to think of stabilizing and familiar things.

"Was mine the last doorbell?" she asked.

"No."

"The first?"

"The second. I ran out on a party with a girl I used to know—"

It was ridiculous to feel that twinge of jealousy.

He told her about Duke pronouncing her name so that it sounded like "Warren," and how he'd finally traced her address through Molly Davis.

Joan was happy again. He had been out with the other girl because he couldn't find her. He had searched for her!

"All I had to go on was your name," Bob said. "I heard your relatives call you Joan."

She gasped.

"Anything wrong?"

"I was thinking that I don't know your name."

"It's Robert Weston. Does that help?"

She nodded.

"Car, you say Bob?"

"Yes."

"Say it."

"Bob."

"It wasn't so hard, was it?"

"No."

Bob had been driving slowly. Now he brought the car to the side of the road and stopped it. Joan, her heart pounding, turned to meet his look—not the teasing expression she had expected, but a steady, thoughtful look.

She smiled a little, uncertainly. And suddenly Bob leaned forward, placing a hand under her chin, tipping it up.

(To Be Continued)

In France drivers of all public vehicles and motor trucks must submit to a physical examination. Drivers of private cars who have caused an accident must also have an examination.

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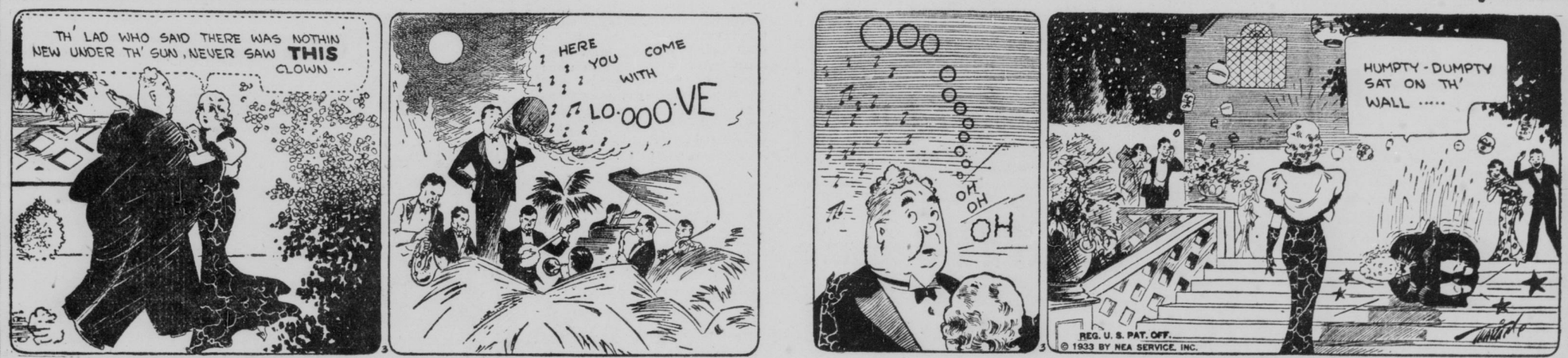
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