

The STRANGE CASE of JULIA CRAIG

by Nard Jones

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BEGIN HERE TODAY
Julia Craig, secretary to George Woodford, lawyer, is ambitious to become a night club singer. Julia shares an apartment with Amy Sanders.

Peter Kemp, young lawyer, is in love with Julia, but they quarrel and she tells him everything is over between them.

Woodford gives a yacht party and asks Julia to come as a singer. The guests include Cintra Lee, dancer; Mrs. Joseph, widow; Hugo Nash, and Royal Neat.

Julia goes later regretts it. The yacht lands at Evergreen Island where Woodford has a lodge. Julia meets Tom Payson, camping nearby, who offers to help her get away.

The men go hunting and Nesbitt is injured. Woodford's party leaves immediately to get him to a doctor.

Back home, Julia is hired to sing on Tom Latta's gambling ship. Tom Payson comes to the ship frequently. One night, after winning heavily, Tom is threatened. He and Julia escape in a speedboat.

Woodford telephones Julia and she goes to his office. He warns her not to tell any one about what happened on the yacht trip.

Smith Garland, night club owner, offers Julia a job singing in a new club he is about to open.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER NINETEEN

ATER it was to seem to Julia that from the moment she had met Smith Garland her life had speeded up immeasurably. Sometimes she felt that she must look much like a character in one of those fantastic motion picture reels, where everything moves at erratic top pace.

But she was to learn that every one and everything connected with the dynamic night club owner moved in the same way.

Once he had obtained the idea for his White Club it was a reality to him, and he moved at once to make it a reality for the public.

Within a week after she had signed a contract with Garland, she and Amy were in a larger and much more expensive apartment. That had been Garland's idea, not Julia's—but taking Amy along was Julia's idea. She had protested the move at first, but Garland was adamant.

"You're Nadine White," he told her imperturbably. "Nadine White—and you've got to have an address. I'll sweeten your salary enough so you can afford it."

It was as simple as that, and the next thing Amy and Julia knew they were ensconced on the top floor of a smart tower. There was an elevator with gilt doors and an operator who wore flaming red.

There was a doorman as splendid as an admiral reviewing his fleet. And their apartment was in keeping—even to the black and gold bathroom with mirrored walls.

"I don't mind smothering every time I sit in this furniture," Amy said, "and I don't mind wading up to my knees in the Chinese rug—but I'll be darned if I like to see myself taking a bath. It startles me. There's four of me in that bathroom, and every time I take a shower I feel like I was doing it in a train station."

"Or a nudist colony," suggested Julia, laughing.

A Day's Menu

BREAKFAST:

Baked winter pears, cooked wheat cereal, cream, French toast, syrup, milk, coffee.

LUNCHEON:

Vegetable soup, toasted cheese sandwiches, sliced oranges and bananas, hermits, milk, tea.

DINNER:

Tomato bouillon, toast sticks, grilled Canadian bacon, floating island, milk, coffee.

THE truth was that Julia had little time to let the apartment worry her. She did find it rather silly and disturbing to come down in the gilt elevator and have the operator say, "Good morning, Miss White."

But most of the time she was in Garland's rehearsal hall with the orchestra he had brought together especially for his new night club.

And when she wasn't there she was trying on gowns—all of them white, for she was to wear nothing else. When she wasn't trying on gowns and shoes she was having her hair treated in a shop that Smith Garland had selected.

Soon her hair was white—and yet not white, and Julia wasn't sure she liked it. But Amy thought it was more than becoming; and Tom Payson, who often appeared at rehearsals, told Julia it was nothing less than lovely.

"But it doesn't change you, for me," he said. "You're still Julia."

"Yes— I'm still Julia, and I'm worried."

"Why?"

"All this money that Smith Garland is spending—like water. Of course, if I don't pan out he can get another singer. But I keep thinking that I'm the one to open the club. If I'm not good, then the word will get around and it will give him a triumph of setting."

But the public is critical. Those who had paid good prices for first night tables would be quick to see where Smith Garland had missed.

Garland knew this; and all he had to comfort him was the parallel knowledge that the public is as quick to accept and acclaim.

In Julia's dressing room he told her this. "But I'm not saying it will be easy," he added. "They like the place, and they like the dance music. They like the food—and now they're out there wondering how they'll like you. Yours is the hardest job of all, Nadine. You have to cap the climax."

Julia hardly recognized herself in the advertisements and posters. She hadn't seen profs of the photographs for which she'd sat all one morning. They were sent to Garland for acceptance or rejection—and he had accepted. Julia saw, once the most dashing and provocative ones.

"Nobody would ever dream that was Julia Craig," she told Amy one

morning.

"Just one song," Garland warned. "And an encore if they beg for it. This first night is tough on you—and if you're weak we don't want them to get onto it." Then he left the dressing room in his quick, nervous stride.

Julia laughed. "Don't mind him, Julia. He's so excited he doesn't know he's doing."

"He's excited?" exclaimed Julia. "What do you think I—"

She stopped quickly. A tiny green light flashed on the wall. She stood up, quickly arranged her long white gown. "It's my number," she whispered.

"Good luck, kid. I'll be out there leading the cheering."

As she walked out into the spot-light there was no applause as there was that first night on Tony Latta's gambling ship. Suddenly, Julia realized that Garland's publicity has been so extended as to arouse their skepticism.

In effect, their silence meant, "We know nothing about you, yet, Nadine White. We're waiting to learn if what we've read is true."

Then a queer thing happened. Out of all that crowd, the face of Peter Kemp focused into Julia's gaze. He sat at a small table with a young, dark girl—a quiet, pretty girl whose eyes betrayed her awe for this glittering Nadine White.

The sight gave Julia an odd feeling and she thought, "She is the girl he will marry and she will always think of me as strange—and yet she is no different from me . . ."

And then the music began . . .

" . . . learn to love, if you want me . . .

" . . . learn to trust me if you'd have me . . ."

It was a dragging, plaintive tune—a tune that must have been written for Julia's appealing voice. When she reached the chorus she held her arms out toward the skeptical crowd, dropped her voice to a husky whisper, singing "Learn to love, if you want me . . .". There in the glow of the spotlight, with the sad, mad music drifting around her, she became Astarte—Astarte of old, in a modern gown, singing a siren song in the idiom of today.

Suddenly the crowd could not wait to tell her it was sorry it had doubted. Suddenly it had voice, breaking into the song, making Julia stop for a moment until it had finished.

And when she had finished, the applause began again, louder now and more prolonged.

"I've done it," she thought, making her way unsteadily toward the exit. "I've done it! And they thought I couldn't!"

She passed a long table, lined with a party of guests. Some one said, "She's pretty, isn't she? I can't blame Tom." It was a woman's voice, and it was a woman's voice which answered, too, as Julia went by:

"Of course he can't be serious, even if he did back Garland with money to start this place. Imagine Tom marrying a night club singer!"

Her face flaming, Julia hurried toward her dressing room. Smith Garland was there waiting, a broad smile on his face.

"You were marvelous, Nadine."

But Julia did not hear him. "Is it true that Tom Payson put up the money for all this?"

(To Be Continued)

Lacy Valentines Help Solve Leap Year Problem



BY MARY MARGARET M'BRIDE

NEW YORK, Feb. 11 (NEA)—On the principle, apparently, that on Valentine's Day, men's hearts are to be softer, the girls are to get in their best licks for 1936 Leap Year Friday. The valentines from her to him come right out and say, "Will you marry me?"

Waiters wore white jackets, and the band white evening clothes. But whenever this stunning absence of color threatened to become monotonous, Garland's decorator had inserted a touch of blue. It was indeed a triumph of setting.

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