

## MRS. DOC

By TOM HORNER

CAST OF CHARACTERS  
ALAN WARREN — Ambitious young country doctor.  
EMILY WARREN — Alan's wife.  
ERIC KANE — Construction engineer.  
DR. FARRELL — Alan's elderly associate.

Yesterday: Thinking Emily loves Eric, Alan tells her to go with Eric, leaves the house, tells them not to be there when he returns. Emily cries after him. "He's gone—my Alan!"

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

"HE'S gone... He's gone..." Emily repeated through her tears.

Eric took her in his arms, drew her gently from the doorway. Awkwardly, his bandaged hands caressed her, as she wept, her face against his shoulder.

"He's doing it the way he wanted. He wants you to be happy. That's all that matters," Eric said.

"How can I ever be happy...?" Emily wailed.

"Now, now," Eric's voice was soothing. "I'll do my best, if you let me... Come now, we haven't much time. Pack a few things. The girl can send the rest—I'll get your ticket..."

"But Eric, I'm not going with you. I don't love you. I never will."

Emily's eyes, red and filled with tears looked up at him as she pushed him away from her. "I love Alan. I can't leave him. I'm staying here— even if he doesn't want me!"

But Emily, you said... you wanted a divorce. You even said you'd marry me!"

That was a long time ago, Eric. Before I grew up, I'm not a little girl any longer. I'm a doctor's wife. I've work to do here in Summer—with Alan."

Eric took it, smiling. It was too much to hope for, he realized, even to dream that Emily could love him. He had been fooled for a moment, just as Alan had been.

Alan had said she should make the choice. She had. And Eric found no part in it. He tried to tell himself that he was glad—for Alan. That it should be like this. Alan and Emily.

ALAN did not look back as he hurried down the street. People passed him, spoke to him, but he neither saw nor heard them. Others stared wonderingly at him, bunched his face, pale and drawn, as he walked along as if in dream.

He made his way across town, heedless of traffic lights and automobiles. The river drew him as if a magnet. At last he found himself in Summer's little riverside park, sitting on the bank, watching the quiet water. A weaker man might have seen escape in the rippling waves, but the thought did not occur to Alan.

For a long time he sat there, staring dully before him, seeing nothing. Gradually the numbness he had felt began to leave him.

With Emily gone out of his life, only his work remained. He would make that take all of his time, day and night. That free maternity clinic he and Farrell had planned to start—he would begin work on that right now.

He would sell his home—he could never live there without Emily—move in with Farrell. He would move his office into the poorer section of town, across the tracks. Then work—work—work. He would forget money—never worry about collections. Farrell had plenty to keep them both.

But even the thought of his clinic held little joy for him. Without Emily to work for, even medicine held little promise of ever bringing him true happiness.

Maybe Farrell would know the right answer. Slowly, more calm and collected now, Alan left the river and walked toward Farrell's home.

"DO you think Alan will ever forgive me? Will he ever understand?" Emily was saying.

"Of course he will," Eric reassured her. "He was only trying to give you what he thought you wanted. To see you free without hate or bitterness. It was you he was thinking of, not himself."

They stood at the door, waiting for the cab that was to take Eric away.

"I've been such a fool. Eric, I didn't know what I wanted. I thought it was parties and fun. But it wasn't. I want Alan. And if his profession takes him from me most of the time, I'll be content with the few minutes I can be with him. Dr. Farrell was right. I want to be—just as he said—a doctor's wife."

"You'll be the best. You'll find your happiness here, helping Alan. The taxicab's horn sounded from the curb.

"This is goodby, Emily," Eric said. "You'll realize some day, that all of this was for the best. It hasn't been easy, and it won't be easy, even now, but eventually we'll all know that it was better to have things end this way."

"I lose you to Alan again. I lost the first time, and now—He's a grand fellow, Emily. Be happy with him... Goodby!"

He turned abruptly from her, hurried down the walk.

"Mrs. Doc! Mrs. Doc!" The man's shout stopped her as she started to close the door. She came out on the porch, saw a poorly dressed youth, wet, red, and pale, running toward her.

"What is it? What do you want?"

He was beside her, panting.

"My wife! My wife!" he yelled in her ear. "Where's Doc? Tell him to come! My wife's dying. He won't let her die! Don't let her die!"

(To Be Continued)  
(All events and characters in this story are wholly fictitious.)

## Questions and Answers

—What causes decay in wood?

—The attack of wood-destroying fungi. They will not grow and spread if the wood is too dry, and if the wood is thoroughly saturated, the plants may be drowned out. And wood will decay when exposed to fungus attack that is severe and long enough continued. The conditions that bring about decay are briefly, dampness and mild to warm weather.

—What is the Nieman Fellowship?

—The Lucius W. Nieman and Agnes Wahl Nieman Fund, of about one million dollars, bequeathed to

## GRIN AND BEAR IT

By Lighty



Copy 1939 by United Feature Syndicate Inc.

"Alfonse! Pierre! Just taste this new recipe I picked up at the drugstore fountain around the corner!"

By Lighty

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