

## A SWEETHEART AT THIRTY

The Story of a Woman's Transformation  
BY MARION RUBINCAM

## MORE COMPLICATIONS.

Enid Haines at 35 looks 50 and is considered a hopeless old maid by the people in Henley Falls. She lives with her brother Jim, and his wife Esther; Laura, the oldest daughter, James, and Violet, youngest and prettiest.

Violet's decision to go to the city to college saves Aunt Enid from sinking entirely into hopeless middle age.

For she goes to the city with Vi, and the two, freed from Esther's opposition, suddenly find out what life can hold for them. Vi is in love with Bud, but the affair is not very happy. When they return home for the summer vacation, Enid looks scarcely 30. Mark Upjohn, an old beau, comes around again. Laura marries. Jim quarrels with his son, who, in anger, mentions a woman his father knows in some other town.

## Chapter 55.

The sudden silence that followed James' threat was even more explosive than the conversation before it. It fairly fell upon us. We were stunned by it.

I looked about me, frightened, yet somehow fascinated. Jim sank back, as though the boy had struck him bodily, and the red blood of anger ran from his face. Instead a sickly pallor came over it—but his eyes were more dangerous than before.

James, having been goaded into this outburst, suddenly grew calm. But he would not, or could not, meet his fath-

er's eyes, those little, deep-set eyes pleading.

"James! James!" she cried. "What are you saying? What are you saying? What are you saying? A woman—where? what do you mean?"

"I've said enough," James answered sullenly.

"You've said more than enough," Jim bellowed, and swore at him again. "But he says it ain't so, James; he says—"

"I've said enough," James answered again. "I won't say anything more—and I won't take back what I said."

And he turned and went out of the room.

"I'll kill you for this," Jim swore. I looked at Violet; then, by some mutual flash of intuition, we turned and went out of the room—leaving Esther, dull-eyed, still not comprehending, facing her husband.

"I'm going to find James. Come on," Violet said.

Esther had worked hard that day and her face showed it in every sagging line. I felt suddenly sorry for her—sorry for her narrow life, her lack of any interests outside her family, sorry for the old age that was coming so swiftly over her, and for her frank homelessness.

Finally we went through the barn. There was no one around. Then Vi climbed to the haymow and called his name where he could hear her if he were in the little hidden workshop. The cause of this sudden upheaval in our quiet family.

"Do you suppose he's done anything—anything awful?" she turned to me, her face still pale, her eyes running over with nervous tears.

"It's all right," I told her, though I was far from thinking so. I simply

sighed and looked threateningly at his son.

"On God, my God!" she said. And sat down suddenly on one of the chairs.

We turned, as she did, to Jim. But the red was coming back to his face again, and he found his voice.

"It ain't so," he said loudly, again and looked threateningly at his son.

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