

RIVAL WIVES

by Anne Austin
Author of
The Black Pigeon



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THIS HAS HAPPENED
NAN CARROLL is secretary to ATTORNEY JOHN CURTIS MORGAN. His present case is the defense of the former telephone operator of a fashionable country club who has been indicted for blackmailing club members. Nan with a quick, logical mind, is able to make valuable suggestions which Morgan incorporates in his plans for the defense.

While they are working, IRIS MORGAN, haughty and beautiful wife of John Curtis Morgan, enters the office accompanied by little CURTIS MORGAN. She peevishly demands a large check for a shopping expedition and at last departs, leaving Nan to act as nursemaid to little Curtis.

Nan bitterly resents being thus treated as a menial. At 5:30, when WILLIS TODD calls Nan to go to the dining room, she is almost hysterical from the afternoon's strain. After dinner they go to Nan's small apartment where, for the fifth time, Willis proposes marriage to her. She tells him that she is almost ready to take her bar examinations and that she cannot give up her career for marriage. When Willis accuses Morgan of selfishly overlooking Nan, she flies angrily to the defense of her employer.

Willis, stung to the quick by her defense of Morgan, tells her she is in love with Morgan and that it is he who has come between them. Nan blanches at his accusation. To save her life she cannot tell Willis it is he. When he leaves her, she is desperately lonely, afraid, stunned by the force of the discovery she has made about herself.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER III

FOR a long minute Nan Carroll crouched stricken against the door which had closed upon Willis Todd. Then the necessity for action drove her in a frenzy about the room. She swept the cushions from the couch into a big armchair, tore off the cream cover and flung it with none of the loving care and pride which was the usual portion of the pretty thing; turned back the pale yellow, fluffy blanket and the hemstitched sheet; raced to her clothes closet and returned, sobbing, with pillow, nightdress, negligee and slippers.

Willis Todd's crazy—crazy with jealousy! she painted still in that husky, terrified whisper, with which she had tried to call him back. "But I won't think about it! I won't!" she repudiated the subject furiously as she ran to her dressing table and began to undress.

She scurried, as if pursued by devils, into the tiny bathroom, turned on the hot water, and while the tub filled cleansed her face of makeup, savagely massaged it with two-dollar-a-box "skin food" brushed her teeth as violently as if she bore a grudge against their white-gleaming regularity.

When the tub was full of almost unbearably hot water, Nan stretched her small body in it and fiercely courted relaxation. "I will relax!" she told herself angrily. "I won't let that idiot upset me so that I can't sleep. Imagine the nerve of him, saying—but I won't think of it! I hope that Fleming woman hasn't skipped town. I'll bet she knows Mr. Morgan has guessed her secret. Let's do tomorrow. Got to relax and sleep—relax and then sleep and sleep and sleep," she forced herself to repeat slowly, drowsily, as the warm water lapped against her white flesh.

WHEN at last she was ready for bed, negligee thrown to the foot of her couch, a thick volume on a criminal law on her bedside table, to be used shamelessly but somewhat profitably in reading herself to sleep, she suddenly remembered something. "Cream bottle!" she whispered. "I've got to pay him, too. Let's see where's his bill?" And she pattered swiftly in dark-blue satin mules to the secretary-backcase which dominated the best lighted corner of her one-room apartment. "There! That shows I'm not upset, doesn't it?" she triumphed. "I wouldn't remember to set out the cream bottle and pay the old milk company if I was upset by Willis' foolish—oh!" She stopped short as she jerked on the light in the reading lamp upon the opened secretary, for the sudden illumination had forced upon her attention

something which she would have given a week's salary not to have seen that night.

It was just a snapshot framed in beaten silver, but it had the power to break her hard-won control. A of a short, slim girl and a very tall, newspaper photographer's picture thin man, caught in the act of walking down a flight of white marble steps, each carrying a brief case, each grinning triumphantly into the camera. The snapshot was nearly two years old, taken at the successful conclusion of one of Morgan's biggest murder trials. The caption under the picture as it had appeared in the afternoon paper was: "Attorney John Curtis Morgan and his charming secretary, Miss Nan Carroll, leaving the courthouse a few minutes after the lawyer had won freedom for his client, 'Big Joe' Connors, acquitted of the murder of 'Boss' Powers."

Why had she framed and cherished it these two years? Because it was an amusing, even flattering picture of herself, or—because the photographer had happened to catch the John Curtis Morgan that she liked best—a boyish, friendly, eager Morgan, shorn of his courtroom dignity and austerity?

A tiny voice deep within her heart whispered: "You framed it and kept it before you these two years because it shows you and him together. Silly girl! Didn't you know?"

"It's not true!" Nan denied hotly. "I'll tear the thing up—see!" But her fingers refused to obey her. Sobbing, she thrust the framed picture into a little drawer of the secretary, jerked out the light and ran back to bed. She had forgotten the cream bottle and the dairyman's bill.

She made no further pretense then; did not open the heavy book on criminal law; jerked the chain of her bedside lamp and crushed her face into her pillow, to intensify the darkness. For shame had claimed her for its own.

"IN love with a married man!" The ugly phrase leaped at her in the darkness, and other ugly phrases, which had only waited for darkness, came hurtling after it. There was a queer comfort in letting the ugly things claw at her, for the very pain and disgust kept her from complete realization. But when the unequal battle was over and her heart and abjectly accepted every arrow that shame held in its quiver, Nan found that not so easily was she to be let off. The love at which the arrows had been so savagely thrust was still alive and growing with every moment, now that its existence had been acknowledged.

"This can't be me!" She struck her breast sharply, as if to kill the thing that was growing so rapidly in her heart. "Not Nan Carroll! Why, I'm proud! I'm honorable! I've always been as square as a man. Nan Carroll simply can't be in love with another woman's husband—but, oh, I am, I am! Not with Iris Morgan's husband—no, no! She makes him silly and small, calls him Jack—no, no! I don't love him! It's my own John Curtis Morgan that I love, the John Curtis Morgan I've helped to make, the man nobody knows but me."

"Is it such a sin to love him when I helped make him? She doesn't know him at all—my John Curtis Morgan. Three years—three years—and all this time I've been loving him and didn't know it." And then because she couldn't help herself, she thought back over those three years in the new light of knowledge that had been forced upon her tonight. She saw herself again as she had been then—a deadly serious, high-minded girl of 21, just graduated from the state university, where she had learned stenography along with more lofty academic subjects.

A thin little girl, brown eyes shadowed with grief over her father's death, long brown hair wrapped in heavy braids about her small head, a Phi Beta Kappa key shamefacedly hidden away in her trunk along with her diploma. The dean himself had given her a letter of introduction to Morgan, who was just beginning to add luster to the university as district attorney of the state's largest city.

Since she was an alumna of his own university, Morgan had treated her with grave respect and friendliness from the very first;

had quickly made a place for her in his office as a typist, and then, within three months, had promoted her to the post of private secretary to himself.

"I must have been in love with him even then," she whispered against her pillow. "What a ninny I was not to know it! Did I—show it? Do I show it now?" The thought struck her with such sharp new terror that her sobs were stifled in her throat. Shame made her body burn so hotly that she tossed off the blanket.

"And I prided myself so on my interest in law!" she gazed at herself mercilessly. "Worked like a slave, worked till all hours of the night—because I was so interested in my work! Fool! Fool! Running after him all that time, and didn't have sense enough to know it! Hoping he'd pat you on the head and tell you you were a nice little girl, to work so hard! Hoping he'd stay at night and work, too—just you and he! Oh, Oh!"

THE worm turned then, however. Her self-respect reared its bruised head. "You may have been in love with him all this time, Nan Carroll, but you loved your work for its own sake, too. You worked until all hours of the night, not just to please him, but because you were vitally interested because there was work to be done and you'd rather die than shirk. Don't make yourself out worse than you are."

"But that's bad, isn't it?" Nan's shame answered her. "I respect. I've always despised girls who made sentimental fools of themselves over their bosses. And now I'm worse than the worst of them. I love him so terribly that I'd file happy if he would kiss me just once—as he kisses her."

And then she would have given anything to banish the picture which her last words brought up: Iris Morgan, beautiful, arrogant, Iris, casually, even boredly accepting Morgan's passionate adoration. During three years of necessarily intimate contact as the lawyer's private secretary, Nan had been forced to witness Morgan kissing his wife on a number of occasions—leave-takings, arrivals from journeys, and, occasionally, kisses for which there was no extraordinary occasion, except that the man's overwhelming love for his wife made him forget that an office was no place for the demonstration of passion, even though it was marital.

"WHY didn't I realize every time I saw him kiss her that I would have given my life to be in her place?" the girl marveled in her misery. "I thought I flinched because I hate her, but it was because I was jealous! Jealous of a man's love for his wife! she taunted herself, taking a cruel satisfaction in hurting herself.

"Probably she's all right, and I'm the one that's been all wrong. May-

(To Be Continued)

Parking Rules, Ordinance On Garbage Passed

Cars to Park in Center of Newly-paved Streets; Bans Placed on Alley Parking; Assistant Attorney Authorized.

In order that the new paving recently finished in this city shall be properly packed near the curbs, an ordinance providing for parking in the center of the newly-paved streets is expected to be passed at the next city council meeting Tuesday. This ordinance was discussed yesterday's board meeting and the only thing which prevented its passage yesterday was disagreement as to whether parking should be at right angles to the curbs or at a 45 degree angle.

Parking in the alleys will be restricted by an ordinance passed yesterday by the commissioners, as will also parking of cars displaying for-sale signs, and cars from which merchandise is sold.

No cars may park over night in alleys in the business district, the ordinance reads; cars may not park at any time in such manner as to obstruct traffic in alleys. In fact, cars may not be parked in alleys in the business district at any time. To do so is designated a misdemeanor, punishable by fine of \$5 to \$100 or by imprisonment two and a half days to 50 days, or both.

The garbage ordinance brought before the board some time ago was passed yesterday, also, enlarging the scope of garbage collection, providing for payment of \$1 a month by private houses and \$2.50 by duplex homes and business places such as restaurants.

Appointment of an assistant city attorney was authorized by the board, and Dan V. Noland, of the firm Stevens, Henderson and Noland, probably will be appointed to the position without salary, it is stated.

Lewis street was closed between Sixth and Seventh, for the purpose of clearing the land upon which the new high school building will be constructed this summer and fall. Appointment of the city electrical inspector was taken up, but, following dealocks in the vote for this office, the matter was left open for final decision at Tuesday's meeting.

Oakes Moves Studio To New Building

J. L. Oakes' Vegas Studio was moved this week from the location it has occupied for seven years at 121 Fremont to the new Morse building at 107 Fremont, over the new Western Union office.

The new space is 25 by 60 feet, said Oakes yesterday, and will be extremely well adapted to studio use.

The studio will be open regularly during the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Oakes at Brice Canyon for about six weeks, G. A. Davis to be left in charge.

They will leave about July 10, to be gone until early in September, taking pictures in Brice Canyon for tourist trade here.

be she's fine and sweet and gracious, and I've been unable to see her clearly because of my jealousy. But, no, no! She isn't good! She's mean and cruel and selfish. She takes everything from him and gives him nothing, not even respect. She despises him because he loves her so abjectly, but she doesn't hesitate to take advantage of his fame and his big fees. But—she's here. And he loves her. Oh, what am I going to do? Oh, dear God, what am I going to do?"

But even as her heart was torn with the question she knew the answer. Shivering, she drew up the blanket and her resolution at the same time: "I'll have to resign. I can't stay on—now that I know. I—I couldn't bear it. Just another stenographer in love with her boss!"

Then, because her resolution was so firmly made, she permitted herself one indulgence: "Will you miss me, my darling? Oh, John—"

"Probably she's all right, and I'm the one that's been all wrong. May-

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