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THIS HAS HAPPENED
Helen Page feels hopelessly in love with her handsome guardian, Leonard Brent, who exacts obedience to his wishes. A chance meeting with a dying beggar, Charles Nellin, who tells a strange story, causes Brent to change his plans for Helen's future. On graduating, Helen reminds her guardian that he promised to reveal her parentage and is amazed when he tells her she is heiress of a millionaire, Cyril K. Cunningham, and says the time has come to take her to him. Brent introduces her to Cunningham as his granddaughter and offers as proof a locket containing a picture of Evangeline Cunningham which he had taken from the dying Nellin. Pending investigation, Helen remains with her grandfather who gives her a new car. She accidentally hits a girl, Eva Ennis, who has to be taken to the hospital. Helen meets Eva's brother, Robert, who falls in love with her but she still devoted to Brent. Cunningham gives a party and announces that Helen is his daughter's child and his heiress. Brent's hour of triumph is followed by fear for he finds a lost locket which exactly matches the one he had taken from Nellin. When he finds that Helen is wearing hers, he persuades her to take it off.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY
CHAPTER XXII
With Eva within hearing distance, Brent was compelled to veto Helen's suggestion of an early morning drive.

"Like Miss Ennis, I must be in the city early," he said, "I have an appointment with my dentist." He added the excuse lest Eva might misunderstand and consider that he was trying, under cover, to make an engagement with her. Helen laughed to hide her disappointment and said it was a silly notion anyhow. Her manner completely deceived Eva.

Brent was glad that Bob arrived a few minutes later and broke off his sister's lingering departure. Brent observed the young man and Helen closely when Bob joined them but there was nothing in the greeting to disturb him.

Helen was politely detached and Bob was restrained in his manner. And there was plainly no wish on his part to tarry under the Cunningham roof.

Brent felt certain of Helen at that moment. It remained now for him only to play his cards with skill. Mr. Cunningham was falling fast—no one could reasonably give him very much time to live. Brent weighed the probable date of his death with all the calculating coldness of his nature and decided he must keep his relations with Helen as they were until that event occurred.

For Mr. Cunningham, he was convinced, would not consent to a marriage between him and Helen. But for all his planning when he left her that night, he was a shade warmer toward her than he had been before. They were in the rose garden and there was a soft glow of color in the sky that lent a romantic gloss to the setting. Helen reacted to it with a longing to start a new life with the new day.

If they could take Bob's car, she thought, and drive away—nowhere, everywhere, let their journey's end be what it may—

"Dreaming?" Brent said, taking her hand. Helen sighed. "So many girls would be wildly excited to have had a fairy wand waved over their heads," Brent went on. "Think of it, dear, you will be very rich some day."

"Money!" Helen's voice dripped with contempt for the word. Brent smiled at her unworldliness. "I'm glad to be acknowledged as my mother's daughter," Helen said quickly, "and I couldn't think of leaving my grandfather now. He's so feeble and—"

"I know," Brent said gently. Helen looked up at him. "But you will go away," she said wist-



"If"—He was absorbed in his thoughts when Helen came into the room.

ful. "You will have those wonderful trips we planned together—you have done everything you promised my father you would do for me—you are free now."

Brent hesitated for effect and his own voice when he spoke was vibrant with feeling. "I'm afraid," he said, "that I cannot go away—that I cannot leave you, Helen."

Helen reached up her hands and he clasped them together and rested his forehead upon them. Helen swayed ever so little, yearning to be taken in his arms.

Brent was aware of her desire but he did not satisfy it. "You are so young," he whispered, "I cannot be sure that you know your own heart."

"I know that it is aching," Helen answered.

"My dear," he breathed, "my dear, my dear. You are so sweet and beautiful. Many men will love you. You know nothing of life. I must not take advantage of you. We will wait."

Helen closed her eyes to shut out the world and all but Brent's endearing words.

"Your grandfather would not want to lose you so soon after finding you," Brent continued craftily. "And he is very frail. Anything would be a shock to him if it brought back the memories of his breaking with your mother. I think it would be unwise to tell him of this."

Helen nodded her head against his chest. Brent suppressed a sigh of relief. "We will keep our love a beautiful secret," he said softly and again Helen nodded in assent.

"I know," Brent said gently. Helen looked up at him. "But you will go away," she said wist-

fully she moved as Helen Nellin. There were fewer and fewer trips to town with Brent, owing to her grandfather's increasing feebleness. He wanted her near him, grew to depend upon her for many small services that formerly had been a part of Mark's duties.

But Brent did not allow the time they spent together to be dull. She was always eagerly impatient to be with him again. And as the day seemed to draw near when no one would stand between him and his plan to marry the Cunningham millions, he grew even more ardent in his love making under the guise of giving Helen the sympathy and encouragement she needed.

He drove up one Sunday to call, convinced that he would find Mr. Cunningham greatly on the decline. He was shown to the sick man's room immediately. Much to his surprise he found him sitting in his chair at the window. Brent had expected to find him in bed. He saw at once that the aged man was upset.

He greeted Brent cordially enough and then revealed the cause of his agitation.

"I'm worried about Helen," he exclaimed. "She's been out on the lake with Miss Ennis much longer than she said she would be gone. I was just about to send Marks to see if anything has gone wrong."

Brent, still standing, turned toward the door. "I'll go," he offered. "I wish you would," Mr. Cunningham agreed. "Helen is always prompt about coming to me when I expect her."

Brent hurried downstairs, not in fear that what he considered a sick man's misgivings might have a foundation in fact, but because he wanted to be with Helen. He had but little time to spend at Bramblewood on this occasion and he did not wish to waste it on an invalid. Eva's presence there was a jarring note, but it was not uncommon that they met at Bramblewood and Brent trusted himself to carry off the situation satisfactorily.

He found a situation, however, that he was totally unprepared to meet. Out in the lake the canoe floated bottom side up, and for a few seconds he had a terrifying fear that a fatal accident might have occurred.

Then he saw Helen and Eva on the shore, partly hidden by a clump of flowering shrubs. He rushed over and before he reached them he discovered that they were not alone.

Helen was standing face to face with Bob Ennis, her hands in his in a grasp that filled Brent with cold anger.

Eva saw him before Helen did and Brent thought for a second that she was going to fling herself into his arms. He looked past her at Helen and Bob.

"What has happened?" he demanded, noticing in a flash that the clothing of all three was dripping wet.

Helen turned to him then and for the first time in many weeks she did not give him the impression of restraining herself with difficulty from rushing to his arms.

"We upset the canoe," Eva explained. "Helen and I." Brent lifted an eyebrow. "A rescue?" he said coldly. "But I thought you both could swim. I know Helen can."

Helen said nothing, although Brent looked at her and not at Eva.

"Yes, but Helen was caught under the canoe," Eva told him. "Her scarf got wound round her neck and somehow, when we went under, I caught on the canoe and held her there. I couldn't get her free or

turn the canoe over. I don't know what would have happened if Bob hadn't come along just in time."

"I see. How do you do, Ennis?" Brent said coldly. Helen regarded him with a startled expression. He caught it and instantly got himself in hand.

"Plucky thing. How did you manage it?" he asked Bob. "Don't really know," Bob returned shortly.

"He's a wonderful swimmer," Eva contributed innocently. Brent frowned. "Your grandfather is worried about you," he said to Helen.

"Oh, I forgot how long I've been away from him," she confessed. "Come on Eva, I can let you have some clothes." She paused and turned to Bob, adding: "But I don't know what you will do."

"I'll dry out in the sun while I'm waiting for Eva," Bob told her. "Don't be long, sis."

The two girls hurried away and Brent excused himself to Bob with the plea that he wanted to talk with Mr. Cunningham. Bob was glad to see him go.

"And that's the fellow Eva's always raving about," he thought contemptuously as Brent strode down the path. "Looks like a first-class crook to me."

Eva was not thinking of Brent at the moment. She was concerned with the thought of her dress, a new chiffon that had suffered from the bath in the lake.

"Mother will scold me now," she said to Helen. "She hasn't yet forgiven me for losing her locket the night of your birthday party."

CHAPTER XXIII
"Losing her locket?" Helen repeated. "Here at Bramblewood?"

"It must have been on the way home," Eva replied. "I didn't miss it until I was undressing."

"But my dear, why didn't you tell me so we could make a search for it?"

"Oh, I did look for it the next day. Ashie helped me and we searched everywhere. I'm sure I didn't lose it here."

"Well, of course, if one of the guests had found it it would have been respoed to you," Helen admitted, "but you might have lost it on the lawn."

"I thought of that and we went over every foot of it. The grass was very short. I wouldn't have been hard to find it there. Anyway, Ashie said if we overlooked it the gardener would find it when he cut the grass again."

"Did you tell him about it? The gardener, I mean?"

"Yes, He promised to look out for it. I told him I'd give him a reward."

"Is it a valuable locket?"

"Well, it has a stone that mother says is only a brilliant, but she prized it very highly. I don't know why."

"I'm awfully sorry," Helen declared, "because I asked you to wear old-fashioned things."

"Don't be silly," Eva rejoined. "I shouldn't have worn it if I'd known how much mother thought of it."

"I wish you had told me about it. I could have questioned the servants."

"Ashie did that. I forgot all about it before I saw you again after the party."

"Just the same I'll inquire again," Helen told her.

They were at the western veranda now and just before running up the

steps Helen turned and saw Brent close behind them. She waited for him to join them before going into the house.

"Please go up and tell my grandfather that I'll be there in 10 minutes," she asked him. "He'd be shocked if I walked in with these wet things on."

She went on without stopping to give him one of her customary smiles.

Brent understood. Her mind was filled with Bob Ennis. It could not have been an easy feat to extricate her from her submerged position. Such an act would command the admiration of any girl. And Brent had to admit that Bob had played the role of hero with becoming modesty.

"A damned handsome young brute, too," he conceded. He was wise enough to face any fact or possibility.

He made his way up to Mr. Cunningham's room deep in thought. "The girls had a little trouble," he explained to the highly nervous man who awaited him there.

"Canoe upset. Helen is changing her clothes now."

"She wasn't hurt?" The voice in which Mr. Cunningham put his question shook with alarm and Brent saw that his face was dead white. Apparently he could not poorly withstand excitement and suspense. Brent reflected.

"Oh, no, not at all," he hastened to say. "She will be here in a few minutes."

Mr. Cunningham relaxed in a way that showed the observant watcher how weak he was. Brent said nothing more and presently Mr. Cunningham lifted his head to ask about Eva.

"Quite all right," Brent said indifferently. His mind was engaged with a thought that held no place for Eva Ennis. The danger that Helen might awaken to knowledge of her birthright—the love of youth for youth—was greatly disturbing him. And when Brent was disturbed he immediately began planning some way in which to rid himself of the cause of his disturbance.

He foresaw that he must win Helen soon or lose her. She would not forever turn back to him from something that in time must prove stronger than her infatuation for him. Not many times more would he be able to hold her with his romantic love making.

Almost unconsciously he was staring at Mr. Cunningham, who had summoned his man Marks from an adjoining room to help him to bed, with an evilly contemplative thought in his mind.

"If the old fool would get on with his dying," he remarked to himself, "I'd have no trouble."

"If"—Brent narrowed his eyelids and into his eyes came a calculating gleam.

He turned away and lighted a cigarette, which he allowed to go out after a puff or two.

He was absorbed in his thoughts when Helen came into the room.

"I'll wait for you downstairs," he said to her in an undertone as she stood by while Marks bent over Mr. Cunningham, holding a glass to his lips.

"Don't be long, please. I must return to New York shortly."

If he expected Helen to protest his going he was disappointed. "Do you have to go?" she said more dreamily than wistfully.

"Yes, please come down. I must see you."

Helen nodded and left him to go to her grandfather's side. Brent walked out with thinly compressed lips.

Several times while he waited in the library on the first floor he glanced impatiently at his watch. He would have to leave soon or have a scene when he reached New York. He thought of the possibility (Continued on Page Four)

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