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THIS HAS HAPPENED

Helen Page feels hopelessly in love with her guardian, Leonard Brent. After meeting a dying beggar, Charles Nellin, Brent changes his plans for Helen's future. Soon after he tells her that she is the only grandchild of a millionaire, Cyril K. Cunningham. Brent takes her to Cunningham and offers proofs which the lonely old man accepts, as he had been searching for the child.

Among Helen's new friends are Eva Ennis and her brother Robert, who falls in love with her. Brent finds another locket like the one he had taken from Nellin to prove Helen the heiress. He also becomes jealous of Bob and plots to win Helen quickly. Hearing the doctor say that a sudden shock would kill the old man, Brent gets the servants out of the way and rushes into the sick room shouting wildly that Helen has been killed. His plan works and Cunningham is found dead. Then acting as sympathizer and appealing to her loyalty, Brent secures Helen's promise to marry him.

A chance meeting between Helen and Bob reveals their love for each other, but she tells him she is promised to another. Helen goes to ask Brent to release her and Bob Carmel Segro in his apartment. Carmel throws herself in Brent's arms before he sees Helen. This makes it easier for her to demand that their engagement be broken, but Brent refuses to release her, saying that he had given up marriage earlier and devoted his life to her so that now she has no right to reject him.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XXXII

Helen stared at Brent like a helpless creature caught in a net. Her face drained white while he held her gaze with his own, seeming to force his will upon her.

Then something very strange happened to her. A warm flood purely mental but with actual physical sensation, rushed to her heart, and filled it with courage.

She thought of Bob — of his kisses — of the blissful joy of lying in his arms, of the divinely happy knowledge that she belonged there — that he would shelter her, love her, protect her always.

Brent's face became satanic. Helen shuddered with a slight tremor. Had she ever really thought him attractive?

Suddenly she hated him. What had he done? He had let a young girl remain madly infatuated with him when with a word he could have ended it. Why? Because he wanted to live his life for her? She could not believe it.

A smile of disillusion caught at her lips and contorted their lovely lines into an unfamiliar shape. It worried Brent a trifle. He had seen that expression on other feminine lips. And always it had presaged the beginning of an end.

Words would follow — he knew that too — waited. They came sooner than he expected. He had lighted one of his fat Turkish cigarettes. From behind the smoke screen he manufactured with it he surveyed the girl seated across the table from him with the coldly calculating eyes of a fox.

She leaned over and opened her denunciation rather softly. "I hate you," she said tensely. "You're like a poison weed that has fastened itself upon a young tree and is gradually strangling it. You thought you could do that with me. Rob me of my life — rob me to grow up stunted and dwarfed."

"You're wrong," Brent broke in sharply. "I wanted you to be a real girl — not an empty-headed flapper."

"You wanted me to be a characterless rag," Helen retorted. "One who would overlook your weaknesses and come to heel at your whistle. Can't you see what you say when you tell me that you sacrificed yourself for me? Was it fair? Did I have anything to say about it? Did I promise you a reward? You have no right to do anything for which you mean to make someone else pay a price unless you make your bargain first. Everyone has a right to grow up free — and not be saddled with a debt they've had no voice in acquiring."

"You were quite willing to have me love you," Brent reminded her. "But you knew I was just a kid. Helen protested. "You should know you weren't always kind to me, but you fascinated me, and it wasn't — it wasn't cricket. You must have realized that some day I would meet the right man — that I couldn't stay in love with you. It would have been so much better if you'd lived your life for yourself."

"Well," Brent agreed a bit tactically. "I didn't, and that's that. What are you going to do about it? Be a quitter just because you think you care for a young upstart? A bum too. Why, you poor foolish girl. Don't you know that any man in Ennis position who aspires to marry a girl as wealthy as you are is open to the charge of being a fortune hunter?"

"No matter what you say, I love him," Helen declared. "How can you think of marrying me when I tell you that?"

"That's just another one of those things you wouldn't understand. It was Brent's unsatisfactory answer. "Well," Helen said, and her voice was vibrant with sincerity. "I am sure you can understand me when I say that I cannot marry you."

Brent contented himself with raising an eyebrow, knowing that she would go on.

"I was wrong to think of it after I knew that I loved Bob," she said hurriedly; "but I did believe I owed you something. All that is changed now. You will be able to console yourself readily enough. And if I had not seen what I did and you had told me you meant to make me pay your price for the care you've given me I should feel just as I do now about marrying you. You've cured me of believing in sacrifices. If I sacrificed myself and Bob now I couldn't make you happy — it would be a useless gesture."

Brent smiled inwardly. "Let me be the judge of that," he contributed. Helen shook her head. "No," she said firmly. "I'm going to make my own decisions — and stick to them."

"Are you?" Brent drawled, beginning to be amused. After all, he thought, she might be more interesting as an unwilling bride. It would be a diversion to spend a little time in conquering her. And it suited his mood, which had lost all gravity — in the certainty that he held the whip hand over her — to let her have the reins and pull and champ at the bit.

There was always his ace card to be played. She had nothing in her hand to play against it. He was absolutely safe — as safe as such a game as his could be, he amended. Damn it, why hadn't he been able to discover the owner of that second locket?

As his mind swept back over the night he had picked it up in the hall at Bramblewood he remembered that no one present had appeared to have lost anything.

And he hadn't dared ask about it. Even a few tentative questions put to Helen had elicited no knowledge of the locket, or of any loss among the guests.

Brent had found himself up against a blank wall in regard to his discovery. His inability to place the ownership was the one genuine worry he had in the matter of acquiring the Cunningham fortune. Carmel was a nuisance. He knew he should probably always have to keep her at a distance with the payment of a reasonable amount of blackmail, but she did not greatly trouble him. Eva he dismissed with a shrug.

Helen was gathering her fur about her neck preparatory to leaving the table. Brent saw that she meant to end their luncheon abruptly.

He stood up and assisted her by drawing back her chair when she rose. His manner was perfect. "Allow me to pay the check and go with you," he said pleasantly.

The Innocent Cheat

By Ruth Dewey Groves

AUTHOR OF "RICH GIRL — POOR GIRL," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIII
Shallimar Morris had come to a sudden decision. He was looking at the girl with her luggage well packed with a killing wardrobe.

"But if you don't want me, old maullflower, I'll dash along on my way to Canada. Would stop a moment with you, however, should you urge me."

She was laughing and different. Her laughter was louder, but it faded musically. Helen puzzled over the change in her. She seemed restless, stirred, unhappy. There was pain in her eyes. Her dark beauty was somehow more brilliant, yet somehow clouded.

"To marriage," was the cryptic toast she offered when refreshments were brought.

Helen's silence repeated the word with unmistakable inquiry. "This is his wedding day," Shallimar went on, and drained her glass. "Let's go up to my room and you can tell me about it," Helen said, sensing a confidence. To listen to another's story might make her own a little less important, she thought. For it had appeared to her that nothing in the world mattered but her love for Bob Ennis.

Shallimar motioned to the tray. "Have it sent up too," she requested and Helen nodded in assent.

A minute or two later they had made themselves comfortable in Helen's room and Shallimar plunged into her story without preliminaries.

"I fell in love," she confessed "with an engaged man. He wouldn't break it off, and today he's saying I will to a lot of nonsense he probably isn't even listening to. No, that it makes any difference — mean about his being married now — but I can't forgive him for not refusing to give it up. He said if I was any kind of Diana I could get my man against any odds. We quarreled about it — and, here I am."

"And here you'll stay," Helen told her abruptly. Then, her voice softening with a note of sympathy. "I'm glad you came, Shallie, darling. I've been awfully lonesome for some of the girls."

"But you never invited me," Shallimar complained. "My grandfather was ill," Helen explained, "and —"

"Never mind," Shallimar broke in. "Are there any men about?"

"I'm afraid you won't stay," Helen laughed.

"At least until morning," Shallimar promised.

But by morning she had decided to postpone her stay indefinitely. Any man was game for her now. She was going to be reckless, ruthless and revengeful where the male of the species was concerned. And she had met Bob Ennis.

Helen had telephoned Eva and invited her to dinner to meet Shallimar, knowing that her guest would prefer company and a later hour for intimate talk.

Eva had had an interesting 45 minutes at table — Shallimar simply remained there any longer — with the restless guest feeding her bossiest tidbits of gossip about school friends in return for a delicious dinner.

Eva was fascinated with her, a fascination in which Shallimar took keen delight. She saw that her occasional remarks about men were received by the younger girl with great respect. "Some fella has tried a masculine trick or two on her and she's snowed under," Shallimar declared the while she smiled and curled her fine red lips contemptuously.

Helen felt impelled to remark that she didn't believe Shallimar was so bitter as she sounded.

"My dear, I love men," Shallimar answered with flippant ease; "but I think they ought to suffer for the good of their souls."

"Oh," Eva said softly, and envied Shallimar less. Her hate seemed so of the surface. And in her own heart Eva thought that hate should be respected as a cardinal emotion. It was not a thing to be taken lightly.

As the evening wore on she grew exceedingly pensive and when Helen asked her to play and sing for them — she had a charming voice — and Shallimar insisted upon jazz, she refused, rather impatiently, Shallimar thought.

"I will not be made to cry," Shallimar objected when Helen urged Eva to choose her selections to please herself. "If I heard one note of a wedding march I'd howl like a calf."

"Or bellow like a wolf, I suppose," Helen teased.

"Just the same —" Shallimar said, and seated herself at the piano, leaving her sentence unfinished.

A ripple of keys — Eva caught by her technique, on the verge of being intrigued, when Helen whispered in her ear.

"Where is Bob?" she asked swiftly.

"I wish I knew," Eva answered. "He's been like a crazy man today. Helen. Whatever did you do to him last night?"

"Is he miserable?" Helen pressed with a touch of exultation that provoked Eva a bit — until she saw that it was followed by tender concern and was in no way inspired by disregard of her brother's feelings.

"Thoroughly," she replied. "He ought to be," Helen amazed her saying. "He called me a rotter, Eva. Think of it!"

COPS CALLED TO EXECUTE MAD ROOSTER

PORTLAND, Ore., Oct. 28 (U.P.)— "Send a cop up here quick! I want him to execute a mad rooster!" Such was the exclamation police headquarters received over the phone the other day from Mrs. Ina Ojala, who had been pecked on the nose by a buff orpington rooster.

Mrs. Ojala and members of her family succeeded in getting the rooster in the basement after it had flown in through a kitchen window and made its asserted attack.

Patrolmen Hacker and Longstaff answered the emergency call. Averse to taking a life, the patrolmen sought to placate Mrs. Ojala, but she demanded the "scalp" of the intrepid fowl.

A court-martial was held by the "cops" at which the owner of the bird testified that she was unaware of the warlike propensities of the bad man of her henery. Finally the rooster was executed by the coppers and the bird taken home to be later put in the pot for dinner.

The world is making progress. An international conference has been held in Europe which did not result in some suggestions as to how more of the European war costs could be shouldered on Uncle Sam.

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Jim Londos Defeats Daviscourt on Mat

PHOENIX, Ariz., Oct. 28 (U.P.) Jim Londos, Greek heavyweight wrestler, won two out of three falls from Dick Daviscourt, giant Texas headlocker, at the Phoenix Madison Garden tonight. It was the second meeting of the two grapplers here, Londos having won another match from the Texan a short time ago.

The Graf Zeppelin officers have discovered the proper way to discourage stowaways, and that is to cut off their publicity.

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