

"COCKTAIL GIRL"

by MAY CHRISTIE

SYNOPSIS

While dancing with Henry Van, the wealthy young bachelor, the nervous Julie tries all the lures of love to get him to propose. She needed money and marriage money would solve her difficulties. Henry is about to weaken Willie Krass, his rich, out-of-control friend, whom Henry calls "Napoleon" in the rough, "interfering" and asks Julie for a dance. Julie thought flashes through her mind that until Henry definitely said "no" to the point, Willie could be useful to her.

CHAPTER II

Julie danced deviously, but just as she was about to let him go, she suggested the red-haired villain to write to Willie some fifteen dollars later. "See the table's vacant later. Go to the bar with Henry. We'll be alone. I'll tell you to tell me all about your wonderful big deal with Henry."

Julie was mighty interested in the "big deal" and "broadly grinned" as Julie settled herself into a chair, unassisted by her escort, who was unversed in social etiquette. "And I don't blame you,

either, for he's a mighty fine chap." "He thinks the same of you," cooed Julie, putting her left elbow on the table and cupping her chin in her hand, the better to gaze soulfully at him. "He says you're a regular Napoleon in business, and everything else that's marvelous!" "Come, come, now, Miss Julie! Quit your kidding! I'm just a plain man, but—" swelling out his chest—"I grant you there aren't any flies on Willie Krass—he knows a thing or two in finance—Why wouldn't he?"

"You're marvelous," said Julie, giving the flattered Willie another long glance, then dropping her eyes so that she might quickly calculate. Here was a find, to hand! She needed money—quickly. She must weave some kind of a spell over this rough diamond from the West—then use him to the limit.

Henry need never know. She would lead Henry on—at the same time, if needs must, and Henry was recalcitrant, "soak" Willie.

It pleased her vanity to observe with what rapidity this undeniably "rough diamond" from the West fell for her. "It's like taking candy from a baby!" whimsically thought Julie. Clever he might be in business matters, but he was as wax in the hands of a beautiful woman.

Willie ordered champagne. "My favorite," she sighed ecstatically. "Only the very best is good enough for you," said Willie fatuously. He had round, light blue eyes—"the color of a dead codfish," thought his vis-a-vis and now they goggled at her, so that their owner looked quainter than ever.

But Julie didn't mind a bit about his looks. She needed cash. She was up to the ears in debt. Card-debts. Baccharat debts. Clothes debts. She even owed her bootlegger two hundred dollars. When they drop-

ped in on her, her beaux must have their highballs and their cocktails. For wasn't there terrific competition in this town? Didn't every unattached woman that she knew—the endless array of divorcees, separated young women, bachelor-girls that flooded Park Avenue as though it were the mecca of solitary females looking for masculine companionship—didn't they all more or less hold open house?

If you didn't serve drinks, the men wouldn't come around at all. Why should they, when they could drop in on their way home from the office at a dozen feminine apartments where the stuff that cheers would make them welcome?

Julie sighed. Life was hard, even if you were comparatively young, and—with the aid of judicious cosmetics and a first-class dressmaker—rather beautiful. The men might buzz around—but she told herself, a good fifty per cent of them were nothing but gigolos! The older women—the unhappily married or unattached older women—WITH MONEY—really spoiled the situation for the younger, hard-up ones! To come, and kiss, and ride away—to someone else's apartment, where the entertainment was even better—that's what those wretched men would do—and the handsomer men were, the more difficult and independent.

The other fifty per cent were either definitely "not the marrying kind," or they were already married. On Julie's list of beaux were at least a dozen alimony-paying men who were perfectly content to have a legal separation from their wives. . . . because it prevents me making a fool of myself a second time!" they would declare when their interest in Julie had cooled a little.

"Are you married?" Julie now asked Willie Krass—not that she cared in the least whether he was or wasn't.

"Not so you'd notice it at this moment," facetiously replied Willie, recklessly splashing champagne into Julie's glass, and ogling her.

She sipped it daintily. "I adore this stuff. It makes me forget my troubles. Makes everything seem rosy."

"A girl like you—"his pudgy hand closed on hers—"shouldn't have a care in the world." With his right hand he lifted his own glass and drained straight Scotch. He poured himself another drink. Here's to you, Miss Julie.

"And here's to you. I hope we become—friends," she said in a soft whisper. She leaned a little forward, so that her face that was translucently pale, with the green shadows around her eyes, was close to his. "I do have troubles. But just to have a good friend—one that you can talk to, now and again—means such a lot to a girl—"

Immensely flattered, for, strange to say, Willie had long wanted to meet a real society girl, he was soon under Julie's spell. In his very ordinary little soul, he had sneaking social ambitions. His plain stout wife in Denver would have been amazed to know this of her "family man." But who of us really knows another?

George and Henry returned, and immediately—seeing Julie the only woman with three men—a couple of her feminine "friends"—the girl nicknamed "Bright Eyes" who had spoken sarcastically of Julie on the floor—and "Precious" Hickson, a little golden-headed piece of fluff, swooped down on them. "Precious" insisted on dancing with Henry, and—to humor her—for she had certainly looked upon the wine when it was red—Henry swung into a waltz with her.

Julie was annoyed. But the night was young yet. She would cultivate Willie, for this might be her sole opportunity.

"You're the prettiest girl I've ever laid eyes on," said Willie daintily, under the influence of added Scotch. His pale blue eyes were snapping excitedly. "Come on, let's celebrate this wonderful meeting. I've got to hand it to your Van Tyle. He certainly picks good lookers!"

He ordered rounds of drinks for everybody. Julie—worried about Henry who was apparently taking as much pleasure in dancing with that asinine little "Precious" as he had done with herself—to reassure herself, and get fresh confidence and illumination for the next important "move" consumed champagne like water.

"That's right. Let's get plastered," said Willie beneficently, his awe of Julie evaporating under her smiles and the constant stimulants.

She danced again with Henry. But his mood was changed. Because the champagne had mounted to her head, she was even more reckless.

"Julie! Careful! People are looking at you—" he warned her.

"I don't care about the people. We're mad about each other, aren't we, Henry? Henry, you're in love with me? Say you love me!" breathed Julie.

"Sh-h, Julie. They'll hear you." Henry was embarrassed. "Come and sit down. I'm ordering coffee." and sit down. I'm ordering coffee."

"I'm not tight. I'm having a

grand time." But she took his arm, and walked a little unsteadily back to the table in the night-club where Willie eagerly jumped up to make way for her, and then seated himself close to her.

"Telephone call for you, sir," said a waiter to Henry, who went off with the man.

"You're a swell girl, Julie, and I'm crazy about you," said Willie Krass. "I'd like to give you come I'll remembrance. Say, can I have your telephone number? Maybe we'll have another little party tomorrow? Maybe I can fix it so's I can stay over another night."

But some shaft of memory seemed to hit the exuberant one at this moment, for he puckered his thick lips in a rueful whistle.

"Darned if it isn't my missus's anniversary—our wedding, y'know." His tone was sheepish. "I'll have to take her a present. Maybe you'd help me choose it."

"So you're married?" said Julie. Her bright mood had fallen a little due to Henry's protracted absence. "I suppose you carry a photo of your wife and kids around in your pocketbook," she added sarcastically—for she was suddenly tired of Willie and his lack of tact.

The sarcasm was lost on him. He beamed. "Sure I do." From his wallet he drew forth several snapshots. "Here's my old woman. Here's Junior and Buddy and Sister—and here's the baby—all of 'em swell kids."

"I don't doubt it if they take after their father." Julie's lips curled. She examined the picture of "the missus." She said, slowly and disagreeably and not noticing that Henry had returned and seated himself directly opposite her—"She must have been a good-looking woman before she had all these children!"

Willie looked nonplussed. "But they're swell kids," he repeated rather helplessly.

"You're fond of them?"

His pale blue eyes widened. "Course I am. Say, what would home be without 'em! Say, I wouldn't give 'em up for a million dollars!"

"For what is home without a mother?" chanted Julie mockingly.

"Say, don't you like kids, Miss Julie? Willie, who was now pretty tight and near the maudlin stage, asked anxiously:

"No—not particularly. And there isn't anything to weep about in that!" she answered him tartly.

The expression on his face irritated her further.

"All this mother-and-child stuff

that you men pull is ridiculous," she said angrily. "Look at yourself tonight—out trying to flirt with me or any other good-looking girl you come across—and then weeping over the children's pictures. You're hypocrites—do you hear?" She was annoyed with Willie Krass, and the champagne was so potent, that she didn't even notice Henry, who couldn't help hearing her.

"But you'd want children yourself when you marry? Every girl wants 'em—I mean, every nice woman does—that's what they're for—why, it's nature!"

"Nature nothing! How can you drag up all that old stuff! Catch ME going through all that annoyance when I marry! Now don't argue with me! I tell you I don't want children. And lots of girls think like me. I won't have them! My husband—"she tossed her head—"will soon find that out!"

So annoyed was Julie that she did not see Henry slip away from the table. How frantic she would have been had she but known that her ill-timed speech was the death-knell to Henry's proposing to her!

Henry Van Tyle leaned back in his swivel chair before his office desk and regarded his friend

Benito Mussolini was abandoned in Derna, in photograph at any rate, and British Tommies enjoy a chuckle at his expense after driving out the Italian garrison in their sweep of northeastern Libya.

Tommies Enjoy a Laugh



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George with a kind of rueful humor. It was the "morning after the night before," and the bright Spring sunshine that spilled itself in a golden flood through the wide glass windows served to accentuate their pallor.

"I've got a head like a balloon," said Henry. "What gosh-darned idiots we are! What's this social life mean, anyway?"

"An infernal hangover next morning," grimly answered George. "And for what? The same old stuff!"

At this moment, the 'phone rang. Julie on the wire! Her tones clear, carrying, and vivacious.

"Hello, old boy! How do you feel? Oh, I'm just grand! I've been up and out and right round the reservoir. I just got in."

Henry made a wry face. It was only quarter past eleven, and this news—recollecting Julie's libations of the night before—seemed incredible.

Had television been installed, he would have had a picture of Julie at that moment in her bed, her maid alongside—with a tray on which rested a bottle of bromo-seltzer. . . . a glass half full of water. . . . some aspirin. . . . a bottle of gin. . . . and another glass with orange juice in it.

At her mistress's statement on the 'phone, the maid's face assumed

Letters To The Editor

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

Editor The Mountaineer:—

My wife has recently returned from a stay at the Haywood County Hospital. Her treatment while she was there left absolutely nothing to be desired and I wish to take this opportunity to thank the superintendent, the office force, the nurses, and everyone who did anything for my wife.

Each one was most kind, considerate, and courteous and missed no chance to do everything possible for my wife's comfort. We are indeed fortunate to have such an institution in our county and to have it operated by such fine people.

March 21, 1941.

R. A. GRAGG.

a look of comic disgust. While Julie was cooing into the instrument, she handed her a bubbling bromo, and then a gin-and-orange-juice.

(To be Continued)

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A REPORT to America

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- 1 A \$21,000,000 Ford airplane engine factory, started only 6 months ago, is nearly completed. Production will start with an initial order for 4,236 eighteen cylinder, air-cooled, double-row, radial engines.
- 2 We are building a new \$800,000 Ford magnesium alloy foundry, one of the few in the country. It is already producing lightweight airplane engine castings.
- 3 Army reconnaissance cars—military vehicles of an entirely new type—are rolling off special Ford assembly lines at the rate of more than 600 a month. We have produced Army staff cars and bomber service trucks.
- 4 The government has given the "go-ahead" and work is now under way for the fast construction of an \$11,000,000 Ford plant to produce bomber airframe assemblies by mass production methods.

Several months ago work was started, on our own initiative, on an entirely new 1500 horsepower airplane engine especially designed for mass production. This engine is now in the test stage and plans are being developed for producing it in large quantities when and if needed.

A Ford aircraft apprentice school has been established, to train 2000 students at a time.

That is a report of progress to date.

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Our way of working, which avoids all possible red tape, enables us to get results and get them fast. This benefits users of our products and workers who produce them.

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