

“COCKTAIL GRIL”

by MAY CHRISTIE

CHAPTER VI

the horse's hoofs thundered... the main race of the Kentucky... Julie Trevor—a disgruntled, snarling creature—was sitting in a... New York speakeasy, the... of her set. She lis... to the description... wood-famous race over the... The announcer, in describ... the event, mentioned the pres... of several notables; an Italian... English racing lord—then... prominent New Yorkers... suddenly galvanized into... by the inclusion of Henry... Trevor—the celebrated... She turned white,

And he... where he is... even let me know.”

lay behind that quick, se... departure. Suspicious as... herself, the telling phrase... to her mind: “Cherchez la...”

over her eyes, she stared... into space. She was vis... Henry—her property—en... surrounded by beautiful

was to hear his explaina... sooner than she expected, for... called Henry and George... to New York.

the next afternoon, Henry... in his downtown office. After... him one or two important... his secretary said, tone... “Miss Trevor called several... and seemed very anxious to

get in touch with you.”

Henry hesitated, frowning a little. Darn it all, hadn't he had some sort of an engagement with Julie yesterday. Better telephone her at once, take her out to dinner, and without further parley or beating about the bush, tell her about his engagement.

Had he realized to what extent Julie had deliberately bruted about among her friends that there was more in her affair with Henry than met the eye, and that they would eventually marry, it would have been a much harder task to face her.

For a different reason, it turned out well-nigh impossible to mention the other girl. Julie had been nervously pacing the floor of her charming living-room, awaiting his arrival—for it had taken longer than he expected to put his telephone call through to Virginia, and no matter whom he kept waiting, that was all-important!

In the interim, Julie had consumed the two stiff cocktails she had mixed for herself and Henry. She needed courage. Lots of it. Sensing by his silence as well as his absence, that he was slipping her, she must bend all her faculties to bring him to the point immediately.

As the doorbell rang, the hard, shrewd expression on her face changed, bringing every charm into play. As she greeted him with a gay comradeship at the door, Henry was relieved. He was no student of feminine psychology.

“Let's go. No, I don't want a cocktail. I'm on the wagon. Sorry I'm late. I've booked a table at the Casino.”

He had not given her the light, friendly kiss to which she had been accustomed on such occasions. Nor had he remarked, as heretofore: “Why, Julie, you look like a million dollars!”

His wish to leave her apartment immediately, too, seemed odd. She wouldn't give in to that! She said: “I'll be frightfully offended if you

don't take just one little cocktail with me for luck?” And with shaking hands she poured drinks into the two glasses she had previously drained, and thrust one on Henry.

“To the kiss I did not get!” She tilted up her glass, approaching him closer, with an attempt at roguishness.

“Good, heavens!” thought he “this isn't an auspicious time to tell her about Virginia!” And he looked sheepish and uncertain.

Her third cocktail down, and noticing Henry's awkwardness, Julie became more the mistress of the situation. She saw that Henry was not wearing the usual white flower in the lapel of his evening coat. Flitting gracefully over to a large bowl of white carnations, she snipped off.

“Darling, let me decorate you! Where is the inevitable pin?” She felt under his coat lapel, then archly attached the flower in place. “You need me to look after you!” Her face was within four inches of his, so what could he do but give her the kiss she so evidently expected? But he did it without enthusiasm—as Julie at once realized.

This confirmed her suspicions! What had happened in the interim of their last meeting to make him so chilly?

Arrived at the Casino, it wasn't any better, for contrary to his former habit with her, he had reserved a table right on the edge of the dance floor. Their entry caused comment, for they made a very striking-looking couple. After bowing to various friends, they sat rather glumly together—which was at once noticed and commented on.

It was an exquisite night in Spring. Julie gazed out at the lamplit trees, the shining grass outside the windows of the terrace.

“Don't you think it's exactly like Monte Carlo, Henry? You know those divine gardens directly outside of the Cafe de Paris and the Casino? Oh, wouldn't you love to be there now? Monte Carlo in the Spring! I'd adore it. I can imagine nothing more heavenly!”

The unsatisfactory evening ended without Henry breaking to her the news of his engagement.

Julie Trevor was on tenter-hooks. The evening with Henry in the Casino had been profitless. That there was a definite change in him

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she knew. But it was hard on her vanity—and on her necessity, too—to really believe that he had slipped away from her.

Running into George Loomis in a restaurant, she did her best to pump him as to what had happened when he and Henry were down South? George proved as close as the proverbial clam. But from other people she heard various disquieting rumors.

There was a second dinner engagement with Henry, principally of Julie's making. She felt balked and disappointed that he brought that fat Willie Kress along with him! Was it her fancy, or didn't Henry seem more pleased than otherwise over Willie's attachment for Julie? He kidded her about it in a brotherly fashion. It almost seemed as if Henry would not be a bit hurt were she to transfer her affections!

The sailing schedule had been set for three days earlier. Eager as a school-boy, Henry telephoned Virginia, begging the marriage day to be set forward.

She consented to this. And in a whirl of happiness Henry departed from New York, entirely forgetting to notify Julie that he would be unable to see her on her birthday—which had been a tacit engagement with them for the past three years.

His marriage was his own business—his own enchanting secret. Why should he tell any of the gang? He dreaded their jokes, their tactless kidding.

In the train he did think uncomfortably about Julie once or twice, for he was far from being heartless. He'd been very weak in not

ed herself at a little table in one corner and ordered a cocktail for herself.

“All alone, darling?” gurgled Bright Eyes, ever inquisitive, undulating across the room with Precious, who also was interested to learn if there were any new developments in the Henry Van Tyle-Julie Trevor affair. Either one of them was more than ready to grab handsome, eligible Henry! Both were convinced that he had no intention of marrying Julie. It might be amusing to bait her a little!

“I'm waiting for someone,” said Julie shortly. Their presence annoyed her. She knew perfectly what was in their minds, and must stall them off.

“I'll buy you a drink,” volunteered Bright Eyes. “I'm in funds. I got ten dollars this morning posing for ads of coats and suits—no less.”

“Not much tax on the brain,” commented Julie. But she accepted the second drink—and one from Precious also. The stimulants overcame her uneasiness about Henry. She told herself that everything would be all right. Tomorrow was her birthday. Henry couldn't possibly forget it. They'd be together. Another little drink and she'd give him a ring at his office.

She ordered a round for herself, for Bright Eyes and Precious. When slightly intoxicated they were much less catty, particularly as no men were about. Precious said to her “I adore Henry Van Tyle, darling. Why do you keep him dangling? Why not let me have an inning?”

Bright Eyes added her quota. She said, quite sweetly: “You look marvelous together! Everybody says so. Julie, why don't you bring him to the point?”

A warm glow through her body from the cocktails, Julie took a decisive step. “He has asked me. You know he's been mad about me for cause—you know—I hated to give

up my freedom. But—well—” she smiled complacently, “You can expect an announcement any day now.”

At that psychological moment, New York's most widely read gossip columnist entered the little restaurant. Precious excitedly waved him over.

“Tell him what you just said about you and Henry, Julie!” she gurgled excitedly. “Say, Arthur, here's a great scoop!”

Thought Julie, quickly: “If I tell him Henry and I are going to be married soon, in honor bound Henry'll have to do something about it!” Yes, it was a good way of bringing matters to a climax, even if a bit desperate. In her sober senses, Julie would have hesitated considerably in this fib, but now she almost convinced herself that Henry's attentions to her were entirely serious.

Within five minutes the columnist had departed to do his daily stint. Almost at the top of his column next morning he announced that Julie Trevor and Henry Van Tyle would shortly be “wedded!”

Julie next morning, in her sober senses, because increasingly uneasy because of the perpetual ringing of the telephone from her friends, repeating the columnist's words and congratulating her!

Why didn't Henry call? Hadn't he seen the columnist's announcement? Was he sick? Was he out of town? Was he annoyed?

It was her birthday, too! No flowers from him. No sign from him! As the hour of eleven struck, her uneasiness increased.

(To be Continued)

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