

MAN MADE THE TOWN

by RUBY M. AYRES



FOURTEENTH INSTALLMENT

Diana had been idly watching the scene before her, her thoughts far away, but at the sound of that name her slender body stiffened, and her face went as white as her gown.

"No . . . no . . . no . . ." Her heart cried out in passionate protest even as her dilated eyes met Rathbone's across the long room.

And she had been afraid that she was beginning to forget him!

Forget him! Forget his big, powerful body against which she had once been held in such perfect happiness and peace? His grave steady eyes, and the mouth that looked as if it rarely smiled?

He did not smile now, though a little flash passed across his sombre eyes before he turned to greet his hostess.

It seemed an eternity to Diana before Rathbone began to make his way across to her. He seemed to know a great many people, many of whom stopped to engage him in conversation.

Rathbone was beside her now, but he made no attempt to take her hand, and she did not offer it.

"Good evening, Miss Gladwyn."

Diana raised eyes that were infinitely pathetic, because they fought so hard for indifference.

"Good evening, Dr. Rathbone."

"A great rock in a weary land . . ."

How silly to think of that now, and yet—oh, how wonderful to feel once again the peace and safety of his presence!

"I hope you are well!" he said formally.

"Yes, thank you."

"Quite well?"

She tried to answer, but now that suffocating feeling had mastered her, and she could only nod silently.

Then someone came and took him away.

At dinner he was a long way from her; he sat on Mrs. Foster's left hand with the great newspaper magazine on her right; evidently Rathbone was the second most important guest.

The dinner was endless; to Diana's overwrought imagination, the long table seemed to grow longer till Rathbone appeared, to be separated from her by miles; course after course followed one another in terrible monotony. How could people go on eating for such hours.

She almost said, "Thank God," when at last the ordeal was ended.

Rathbone would come and talk to her now, she was sure; he would find some way of shaking off all the other people, and he would come to her, and he would say something that would stop this dreadful pain.

He would know what she was suffering; perhaps he was suffering equally himself.

But though she watched the door of the great unfriendly drawing room with strained eyes till the men began to appear, Rathbone was not among them.

Then she learned that Rathbone had been called away suddenly on an urgent call.

He had gone without even saying good-bye to her.

CHAPTER XXI

Anna had been waiting up for her. She said with unusual kindness in her voice:

"I should go to bed and try and get some sleep."

"I couldn't sleep," Diana said.

"Let me give you something to make you sleep—some of that draught you used to take before you were ill. You must sleep, Miss Diana."

Anna came back with the sleeping draught and Diana took it and allowed herself to be put to bed.

"I'll be close by, if you want me," she said.

Something in her tone of voice made Diana think suddenly of Miss Starling, and an almost childish longing for her and for the peace of her little room at the cottage awoke in her heart.

How amazed the Creature would be if she could know.

Diana sat up in bed, rocking herself to and fro.

She wished she could cry, but her eyes felt too hot and burning to allow the relief of tears.

Were other girls made to suffer like this, or were they too wise to

allow themselves to care very much for anyone?

With a terrible feeling of restlessness she got out of bed and began to walk about the room.

If only he had bid her good-bye at Mrs. Foster's. Shown some affection for her.

If only she could sleep! Her head was throbbing so; it reminded her of that night at the Savoy with Dennis, when the world had seemed to be filled with a million demons, all of whom were conspiring together to torment her.

Anna's sleeping draught had been useless; it had only excited her and racked her nerves.

Perhaps if she took some more . . . She looked round the room eagerly; yes, the bottle was there on the dressing table.

Diana crossed the room. She was a childish figure in her white nightgown with bare feet and disordered curly hair.

Her hands shook a little, making the bottle rattle against the glass as she measured out some of the drops. It had a nasty bitter taste.

"That's because I haven't put any water with it," Diana thought vaguely. "I don't care; perhaps it will really make me sleep this time."

She shivered and made a little grimace as she crept back to bed. Why were all the things that were supposed to be good for one so nasty?

CHAPTER XXII

Jonas was putting the pony and trap away in the stable when Mr. Shurey came down the yard, a giant figure looming out of the gray mist.

"Don't 'ee put her away yet," he said. "There's something for Rathbone's."

Jonas turned round.

"It'll be difficult to get so far in this fog," he said rather sullenly.

The farmer frowned.

"When I was your age I didn't argue about things being difficult," he said bluntly. "I did 'em. If you go up to the house the missus'll give you what's to go."

Jonas shrugged his shoulders and obeyed. He did not really object to the fog, but he was in no mood to go. There was a dark spot in his mind whenever he thought of Donald Rathbone.

He felt as if, during the past weeks since he first met her, she had unconsciously been giving him broken pieces of a puzzle, which had slowly and carefully formed themselves into one, until this morning, he suddenly realized that it was complete. And it was Rathbone's face that he saw in the finished picture.

The love Jonas felt for Diana was the kind of love which Dante had felt for Beatrice. He had been content to love on his poet's dreams of her, asking nothing more for himself than that he might be allowed to continue to dream.

But that she should be unhappy was more than he could endure.

It was nearly midday before Jonas reached Rathbone's. The big gates were wide open—a most unusual thing in his experience, and as he neared the house he saw that the front door was wide open also, regardless of the damp fog that swirled in.

He drove round to the side door and got down.

Nobody answered his repeated knock, and presently he turned the handle and looked into the kitchen.

Nobody about. He set his basket of eggs and butter down on the table and had turned to go when Hobson, the chauffeur, suddenly appeared.

Jonas looked at him.

"Where's everybody?" he asked. He indicated the basket. "I've just brought that. Isn't there anybody about?"

"We've got something else to do besides hang round waiting for you to call," Hobson said tartly. He half turned to go, then came back.

"Which way did you come?" he asked, lowering his voice.

"Through the village."

"Oh—well—you didn't see anything of our Miss Rosalie, I suppose?"

"Miss Rosalie? No. Why?"

"Why?" Hobson echoed with the impatience of anxiety. "Why, because she's out somewhere, of course. Been out since nine o'clock this morning, as far as we can make out. Not very nice for a young lady to go wandering off on her own a morning like this, is it?"

"Alone?" Jonas said.

"You mean—she's lost?" Jonas asked.

"No, I don't mean nothing of the sort," Hobson retorted angrily. "You can't get lost round about here. It's just the fog that makes it difficult to find her. If you see anything of her it 'ud be a kindness to let us know or to bring her back."

"All right," Jonas said briefly. He had turned to go when Hobson called to him again.

"Look here," he said more confi-

dentially. "You won't open your mouth all over the village, I know, so I'll tell you."

"Miss Rosalie has been missing ever since it was light. Nobody knows how she managed to get out—it's never happened before, and there'll be hell to pay if the doctor comes home and she isn't here."

"Isn't the doctor at home?"

"No, he isn't, hasn't been home for two nights, lucky for us; but we've got to find her before it gets dark, and that's all there is about it. I've been out myself since seven—haven't had any breakfast yet"

Hobson grumbled, trying to hide his anxiety.

"If I tell Mr. Shurey he'll send some of 'us along to help," Jonas said. "It'll get dark early today, with this fog hanging about."

"If you tell Shurey the whole village'll know," Hobson said lugubriously. "Not but what I don't think you're right. The more of us that looks for her, the sooner she'll be found."

"Have you tried the woods? She used to go there a lot in the summer."

"Tried the woods," Hobson said scornfully. "When you can't see your hand before your face out in the main road, how do you think you're going to see in the woods? Not but what it isn't an idea," he added.

"I could find my way through them in the dark," Jonas said quickly, but Hobson shook his head.

"What I'm afraid of is the river," he admitted reluctantly. "It always had a wonderful fascination for the poor lady. Sit for hours watching it, she would and singing to herself." He broke off with a touch of emotion, then pulled himself together to say gruffly: "I can't

waste my time talking to you; but if you do see anything of her—"

"I'll keep a lookout," Jonas promised.

He went back to the trap and drove slowly away.

The river! . . . It was a disagreeable thought on a morning like this. His imagination was deeply stirred. The river would be icy cold and full of dead weeds.

It seemed to be getting dark already, although it was not yet three o'clock; the grayness of the mist was deepening and intensifying, as if someone were blowing black smoke into it and the two were slowly mingling together.

Before he had gone a mile on the road he was obliged to get down and lead the little pony. It was almost impossible to see the ditch or any turnings. And somewhere, wandering hopelessly about, was Rosalie—a poor "mad" thing, as Diana had called her.

The curious acrid smell of a river was in the air, a mingling of rotting vegetation and dank water. If he was indeed anywhere near the river, then he had wandered very far from the right direction, for the river

would half a mile behind the village in a wide semicircle.

(Continued Next Week)

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE

The undersigned having qualified as administrator of the estate of J. F. Galyean, deceased, this is to notify all persons having claims against this estate to present same to the undersigned within twelve months from date hereof or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to this estate will please make prompt payment to the undersigned.

This the 19th day of May, 1932.
PAUL G. LEWIS,
Administrator.

6-23-p

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