

HEARTS WALKING

Mrs. Harry Pugh Smith

CHAPTER II

Synopsis
Janet Phillips has no car of her own or well-to-do father, like her friends in Bay City. But now that her crowd has finished high school and been away at finishing school or college, Janet finds that she is left out of much of their gaiety. Priscilla Leigh—at the moment interested in Janet's old friend Gordon Key—is making herself disagreeable. Gordon, having asked Janet to a dance one evening, tells her he cannot take her as he is going with the crowd to a dinner at Priscilla's. Janet has not been invited to the dinner. Jim Phillips, Janet's brother, is about to play golf with Ruth Hetchcote.

She smiled again and Jim smiled back. He could not have told of which he was fonder, the Judge, or the Judge's gentle, dark-haired daughter.

Ruth looked up into Jim's intent face and sighed. "You'll never be arrested for going back on your friends, will you, Jim?"

"Not on you and the Judge."

"Father did well for himself when he filled you into the legal profession."

Jim grinned. "You mean it was my lucky day when he decided to lend me the money for law school."

"You're already worth your weight in gold to him at the office."

"If he hadn't taken me into partnership I'd probably be waiting yet for my first client."

"You'll have to admit that it isn't everybody who'd spend his vacation doing somebody else's work."

"I couldn't let Jock down, Ruth. He gave me my first job."

"You couldn't let anybody down," she said and sighed again.

Jim knew she was thinking of Howard Leigh of whom the same thing could never be said. Howard and Priscilla were the spoiled and pampered children of one of the town's leading citizens. They were not altogether to blame for being selfish and inconsiderate. Only how Ruth Hetchcote could care for Howard was something Jim had never understood.

"Jock didn't mind an emergency operation for appendicitis half so much as having to be away from the club in the height of the season," Jim explained.

"The minute I said I'd take over

his duties here, his fever dropped. He called me a blithering idiot to give up the fishing trip I'd planned, but he squeezed my hand, the old curmudgeon."

The foursome ahead of them moved on. Jim and Ruth had no caddy. He stopped and made a tee of soft wet sand for her ball, but before she could drive off a couple came toward them from the clubhouse. Jim did not need to look around. He knew who it was by the painful flush which washed into Ruth's sensitive face.

"Oh, hello, Ruth, how are you?" murmured Howard Leigh. "You haven't met Miss Sanders, have you? Helen, this is Miss Hetchcote."

Jim stared steadily at a point far down the fairway. He always felt like committing mayhem around Howard Leigh, and never more so than when he was turning the thumb-screws on Ruth Hetchcote. She had been in love with him for years. It was agreed that they would marry eventually, only Howard was forever flying off after other girls.

Until each of his affairs ran its hectic course Ruth suffered exquisite torture. For a week Howard had been devoting himself to his sister's visitor from New York, but Ruth Hetchcote was a thoroughbred. Nothing of her unhappiness was in her even voice.

"How do you do, Miss Sanders?" she murmured and put out her hand.

"How do you do?" murmured the other girl.

"And this is Red, our club pro." Howard went on in an off-hand manner.

Jim glanced at her, muttered an acknowledgement, and then glanced quickly away. She was as pretty a girl as he had ever seen, with a pointed face and exquisite golden skin and long bronze hair knotted on her neck. She had sultry dark eyes and a petulant red mouth, and she was beautifully dressed in a wine-colored sports ensemble with white accessories.

"We were just starting a round," said Ruth hesitatingly. "Would you care to join us?"

"Why not?" asked Miss Sanders. "I've never played golf, but Howard's going to take fifteen minutes off and show me how."

"Really?" murmured Ruth.

Howard frowned again and started to speak, only to be forestalled for the second time by his companion. "I've never had a

driver in my hand, but if Howard's as good as he says he is, we should be able to interest you two," she remarked.

Jim grinned. Howard's handsome face was crimson. It occurred to Jim that in the arrogant young heiress from New York Howard had met his match.

"All right," said Jim. "Let's go." Ruth drove first and it was a pleasure to see her ball wing straight down the fairway.

"It looks idiotically simple," murmured Miss Helen Sanders. "You're supposed to hold your club like this," said Jim when she grasped the driver which Howard handed her as if it were a baseball bat.

Jim attempted to demonstrate the interlocking grip but Miss Sanders made it plain that she neither desired nor required instruction.

She took a stance, more reminiscent of Babe Ruth than of Walter Hagen. She narrowed her eyes, bit her lip, gave her club head a peculiarly vicious glare and flailed the air. "This time she dug up a divot of turf from behind the tee and lost a hairpin, but the ball remained undisturbed."

"It looks as if there's more to this than buying the latest thing in sports clothes," she announced morosely.

"Don't be silly," said Miss Helen Sanders peevishly. "I'll hit the darned pill or burst."

In Jim's opinion she had a rotten temper, nevertheless he found it impossible to watch her without a tingle in his pulses. Every move she made was graceful.

"There!" she cried. "I've done it!"

She had indeed connected with the ball, although she topped it and it weakly trickled less than thirty feet from the tee.

"Success!" murmured Jim with an ironical grin.

"Lead on," she said curtly. "I'm in this up to the neck."

In spite of her potent conviction that it was less majestic for fate to permit her to play less than the leading role, Miss Helen Sanders made every blunder possible to the beginner. When distance was necessary, she chopped her ball about twenty feet if she moved it at all. Where only a gentle stroke was needed, she whaled into the branches of a tree in the next fairway. She lost ten balls in the rough, burst three rubber tees, and took from fifteen

to thirty strokes on every hole. By the time they completed the first nine holes Howard was in a black rage. He, too, had reached the point where a decent putt was beyond him and his last three drives hooked into the ravine.

"Don't you think this has gone far enough?" he demanded furiously.

"I'll finish if they have to carry me in on a stretcher," she said.

It began to look to Jim as if they might have to do just that, provided that the sun did not set in the meanwhile.

She and Howard Leigh were of a pattern, Jim thought, except that where the Leighs counted their fortune by thousands, Helen's father reckoned his in millions. She had all of Howard's objectionable traits magnified to the nth degree, and Jim never had any patience with that brand of arrogance.

Nevertheless her glance had an effect upon his heartbeats which disturbed him. He had never had the time or the money to play around with girls. He knew very little about any except his two sisters and Ruth Hetchcote, for whom he had a big-brotherly affection. But he was no fool and he distrusted from the beginning the mixed emotion with which Miss Helen Sanders inspired him.

"If you want golf lessons I'm here for that purpose," he said briefly. "Only I think I should warn you it is likely to be a waste of your money and my time."

She was making one more attempt to put her ball into the cup. "You really mean you don't like me, don't you?"

Jim's eyes were fascinated by her rounded throat where she had turned her collar in. "Yes," he said a little hoarsely.

She smothered a yawn, swung her putter and sighed with satisfaction when her ball flirted with the cup and finally rolled cooly in.

"Don't let me worry you," she remarked composedly.

"God forbid!" cried Jim.

Janet had said she had to pick up her brother at the club, which happened to be true, but not the whole truth. When she borrowed Jim's roadster for the afternoon she promised to collect him later. However, it was useless to call for Jim before dark.

"But I couldn't stay on at Priscilla's as if I were trying to sneak in on the dinner party," she muttered.

It was pure coincidence that she happened to be passing the smart apartment building in which her sister had been living for a year and a half.

"I'll go up and trade my tale of woe for Berenice's," Janet decided with a rueful grin.

Berenice was twenty-two. She had fallen desperately in love with Bill Carter when she was nineteen and married him two months later. Bill had just secured his first job, selling radio advertising. His salary was small. At first they had had to live in two housekeeping rooms and Berenice was compelled to budget rigidly, but they had been tremendously in love. Janet's heart ached when she remembered how radiantly happy Berenice and Bill had been that first year before Bill had a raise in salary and they moved to the new efficiency apartment on Wilshire Boulevard.

"Who is it?" asked Berenice sharply when Janet knocked.

"Do I have to give a counter-sign?" inquired Janet.

"Oh, it's you," murmured Berenice not too graciously.

"You'd think you were afraid of the police," remarked Janet.

She knew quite well of what Berenice was afraid. There was a bridge table set up in the middle of the living room. Appended to each corner were chromium trays in which stood bedewed and partially emptied highball glasses. The three women jolling back in their chairs held lighted cigarettes. Janet had met them all at various times. They also lived in the apartment building and, like her sister, had more leisure than anything else.

"Berenice never draws an easy breath when we're up here for fear friend husband will walk in," May Shelton explained to Janet. "You'd think it was the dark ages the way she lets that guy cramp her style."

"There's just enough ginger ale for another highball, Janet, if you want one," she suggested.

"Janet doesn't indulge," put in Berenice quickly.

May Shelton tittered. "Don't tell me you have scruples like Berenice's Bill."

"It's partly that," admitted Janet with a shrug, "and partly that I have more expensive habits now than I can afford."

Berenice scowled and glanced at the score pad on the table. "Speaking of expensive habits," she said, "total up and give us the bad news."

"But we haven't finished the last rubber," protested Sue Berry.

Berenice glanced at the small electric clock on the slender console table in the entry. "Bill will be home in half an hour. Sorry, here're your hats."

May Shelton laughed. "Thank goodness I'm not hitched to a flat tire."

"Bill's all right," she said loyally, "only he has old ideas."

"Sue's high," announced Lou Fletcher. "You owe her sixty-five cents, Berenice. I'm a quarter loser. Here it is."

Berenice fished a handful of coins from her purse. "The Berry family will have steak for supper," announced Sue, gleefully pocketing her winnings.

"And here's where I set Bill down to another can of pork and beans," said Berenice.

(Continued Next Week)



Announcement

In accordance with the law, I have filed my name as a candidate for the House of Representatives from Surry County. I wish to express my thanks to those many friends all over the county who have asked me to place my name before the voters of Surry County.

If nominated and elected, I expect to serve, to the best of my ability, all of the people of this county. I was born and raised on a Surry County farm, an interest in which I still own and operate. I have spent my whole business life with a concern in Surry County. Through training and experience I feel that I know the problems of the County and State.

I pledge my best efforts to the upbuilding of Surry County, and the State of North Carolina. My record at Raleigh, where I have served two terms, is an open one. My fellow workers in business, and my neighbors at home, are my best references. I know that Surry County is moving forward in farming, business and education. I am proud of our County, and pledge my whole efforts to advancement. Your problems are my problems; I feel that the hard working, serious-minded men and women of the County will be with me.

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