

# HEARTS WALKING

Mrs. Harry Pugh Smith

**CHAPTER VI**  
**Synopsis**  
 Janet Phillips resents her family's poverty when her wealthier friends come home from college. Friscilla Leigh, whose family has made money, has appropriated the spotlight in Bay City and along with it—Janet's friend, Gordon Key. Jim Phillips, Janet's brother, has brought her to the dance to which Gordon had promised to take her and has fallen in love with rich, red-headed Helen Sanders. Jim is subbing as golf pro at the club and has offered to give Miss Sanders lessons. Janet meets Tony Ryan at the dance and agrees to redecorate her old house which Tony has just bought. In the meantime, Berenice and Bill Carter, Janet's sister and her brother-in-law, have come home from a wild party which Bill hasn't enjoyed. "If I weren't crazy about you I wouldn't care what you did," Bill has just said.

"I don't know why we ever fight," she sighed. "What did you have to tell me?"  
 "The boss had a talk with me today."  
 "Oh!" cried Berenice radiantly. "You've got the raise at last. Now we can have a car like everyone else."  
 Bill swallowed hard. "No," he said. "I didn't get a raise. They're cutting salaries again. We'll have to find some way to get by on ten dollars less a week."  
 She stiffened and drew away from his embrace to stare at him. "You mean we'll have to move?"

Back to cheap housekeeping rooms without a bath or anything?"  
 "If you ask me," said Bill in a grim voice, "we were better off there than here, and a darned sight happier."  
 "When you preach you make me so mad I could die!" cried Berenice in a stifled voice.  
 "You don't sweeten my disposition any," remarked Bill savagely, snapping off the light.

Driving out to the club in his battered flivver early the next morning, Jim Phillips, after a nearly sleepless night, had arrived at a decision, not a happy one, but one from which he was determined not to swerve. He had made a complete idiot of himself the night before, he did not propose to repeat the performance.

By every standard on which he had painstakingly built his life he could not afford to fall in love with Miss Helen Sanders.

He succeeded so well in convincing himself that Miss Helen Sanders was merely a shooting star which had flashed across his horizon only to disappear, he considered it extremely unlikely that she would keep her promise and appear for the promised golf lesson.

Nevertheless, knocking golf balls idly against the side of the caddy house, he kept his eyes steadily on the drive leading down to the gates and when the Leighs' scarlet and white coupe turned in at the club entrance Jim's heart gave an agonized bound.

"Hio!" murmured Miss Sanders, bringing the machine to an abrupt stop with a scream of brakes and a flurry of gravel.

"Hello," said Jim in a voice that did not sound like his.

She was alone in the coupe except for the elaborate bag of clubs which Howard had procured for her the day before. She was wearing a backless blue silk blouse with a halter neck tied under her chin and a pair of blue shorts. A blue silk bandana handkerchief caught her bronze hair back from her face. Her slender golden limbs were bare. She looked disgruntled and sleepy and she smothered a yawn as she climbed out of the car.

"Of all the ungodly hours to

get up!" she complained. "I left everybody else fast asleep."  
 "That's why I didn't expect you," said Jim.  
 She gave him a sultry glance. "Maybe that's why I came, to prove you can't be right all the time."  
 Jim led the way without comment toward the big canvas curtain tacked up at the end of a wire enclosure behind the caddy house.

"You're a long way from being ready to hit a ball yet," said Jim. "Let's see you swing. No, no! That isn't a baseball bat. Hold it this way, and for heaven's sake cut out the debutante slouch and get some backbone into your stance."  
 Jim ignored the black glances she gave him from time to time. He went on quietly showing her where she was doing everything wrong. It was tedious work.

He had to confess that she had proved an apt pupil. She backslid occasionally, but in the main she seemed to have acquired a surprising grasp of the essentials in the time allotted.

"All right," said Jim when the hour was up, "that will do for today."  
 She flexed the muscles of her left arm. "I seem to be sorer than I realized."  
 Jim grinned. "Wait until tomorrow. You'll know all about Charley-horses then."  
 Her glance smoldered. "Maybe I'm not so soft as you think. Anyway, I'm going to play a round this afternoon. Charley-horses or not," she announced defiantly.

"I don't want you to set foot on the course until you've had four more lessons," he said. "If you continue to pick up you can play Saturday."  
 "I'll play when I like."  
 "That's up to you," said Jim. "Only if you do've lost a pupil."  
 Their glances tangled and her eyes fell first. "All right," she said. "You win. I'll play Saturday." She gave him a rueful glance from under her lashes. "No one was ever mean to me before. I ought to hate you."  
 Jim could feel himself going white. "Don't you?" he asked unsteadily.

She had come nearer, so near he could not get his breath.

"Maybe it's because you're different," she whispered, "but I wish you didn't despise me."  
 Jim could think of nothing except her seductive face lifted alluringly to his.

"I don't despise you," he said hoarsely. "I think you're the prettiest thing I ever looked at."  
 "Honestly?"  
 "Honestly," repeated Jim with a painful flush.

"I have a feeling, given a proper chance, we could go for each other in a large way," she murmured, then turned abruptly toward the car. "See you tomorrow morning, Professor," she said and drove rapidly away.

The grounds of the old Radcliffe place took up an entire block. A rough stone wall enclosed the property on all sides. Janet's grandfather had made a gallant effort to retrieve the family fortunes, but he was more statesman than politician and while he made an excellent governor, he was too honest to manufacture capital from a political career. When he died he left barely enough to settle his debts.

Tony Ryan drew a large key from his pocket. In fuming silence Janet followed him up the wide steps to the great brass-studded front door with its delicate fanlight overhead. In the same oppressive silence they made a tour of the old mansion and returned to the double parlors on the south.

"There's nothing wrong which a crew of high-priced carpenters can not put right in a hurry. The real estate agency advises me that Busby is the best carpenter in town. You'll work directly with him."  
 "I'll not be able to get out here often," he continued. "I have a number of loose ends to tie off now that I've finally decided to retire. I'll tell Busby I want everything in this house put back exactly as it was. You will be the judge of what's what. When he's finished we'll take up the question of furnishings."  
 "I still feel as if I'd be taking money under false pretenses," she murmured uncertainly.

"I never allow myself to be cheated," said Tony Ryan, leading the way back to the car.

By five o'clock that afternoon it was raining and the golf course was deserted. Jim Phillips had no desire to hang around with the crowd which was having cocktails in the clubhouse, a crowd that included Howard and Friscilla Leigh, also Tony Ryan and Miss Helen Sanders.

When Jim entered the flat Janet was stretched out on the day-bed in the dining room, staring at the streaming window panes with an expression as lugubrious as the weather, and Cathy Wood was sitting on the floor beside Danny who had fallen asleep and was curled up under a faded crocheted afghan like a little bug in a rug.

"Hello, everybody," said Jim, sounding more cheerful than he felt.

"Hio," murmured Janet in a listless voice.

Cathy looked up quickly and

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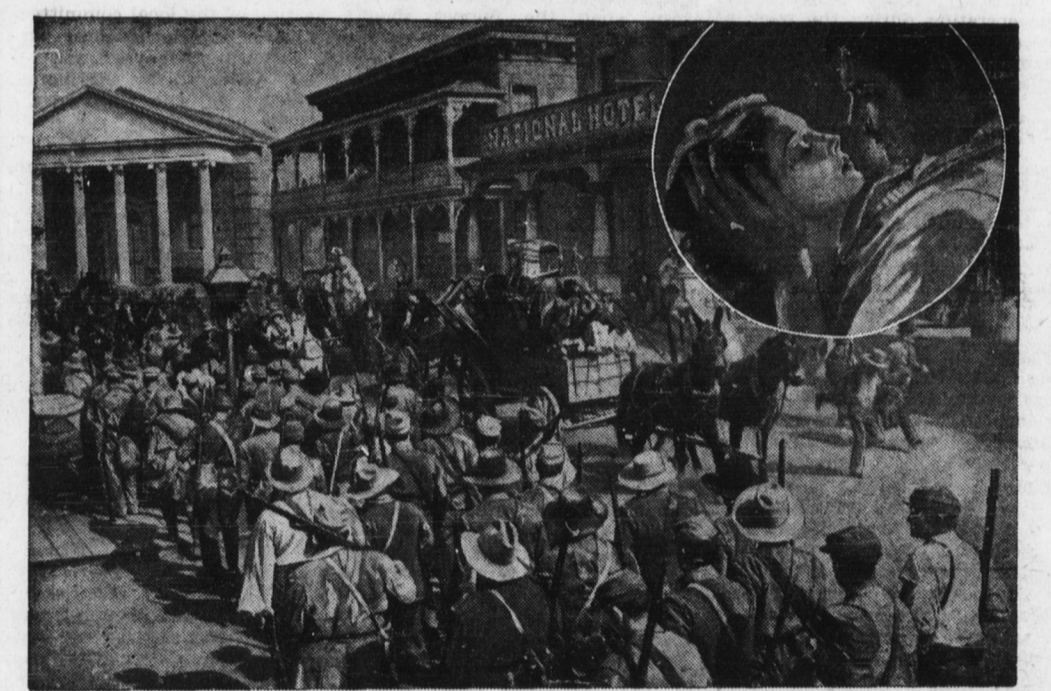
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