

# TWO CAN SING

by JAMES M. CAIN

W-N-U-RELEASE

### SYNOPSIS

Despite Leonard Borland's protests that his bank account is ample, though the contracting business in New York is dead, his pretty, opera-struck wife Doris resumes her "career," interrupted by her marriage at 19 and the birth of two children. Borland knows her avowed purpose, to bolster the family income, is just another subterfuge. Hugo Lorentz, her teacher, always around, irritates him. After Doris gives a Town Hall recital, Cecil Carver, opera singer, phones Borland. At her hotel, Cecil says Doris has a good voice but lacks style. Cecil is to sing for war veterans but hasn't the words of certain song. He sings it and she says he has a fine baritone voice. Cecil knows of Doris through Lorentz, says Hugo is hopelessly in love with Doris, and that Doris tortures every man she gets in her clutches. Leonard ought to wake her up by giving a recital, she says. "Go get yourself a triumph. Hurt her where it hurts." Cecil demands payment for lessons—kisses. He pays but declares he loves his wife. He spends much time with Cecil, making good progress. Doris tells him Jack Leighton is getting her an engagement in a movie palace. Cecil, on tour, wires him, he sings upstate recitals, makes a hit and she gets him an engagement with an opera company. Again he is scared stiff but manages to hold his own. A performance of "L. Boheme" is on, and Parma, the tenor, is speaking.

### CHAPTER VIII

About eleven o'clock Niles came home. He was the houseman. He had been out taking the children to school, he said, and buying some stuff at a market. He said he was glad to see me back, and I shook hands with him and asked for Christine. Christine is his wife and does the cooking, and in between acts as maid to Doris and nurse to the children. He said Christine had gone with Mrs. Borland. He acted like I must know all about it and I hated to show I didn't, so I said, oh, of course.

About a quarter to twelve the phone rang. It was Lorentz: "Borland, you'd better come down and get your wife."

"What's the matter?"

"I'll tell you."

"Where is she?"

"The Cathedral Theatre. Come to the stage door. I'll meet you."

I had a glimmer, then, of what was going on. I went out, grabbed a cab and hustled down there. He met me outside, took me in, and showed me a dressing room. I rapped on the door and went in. She was crouched on the floor leaning her head against a chair and a theater nurse was with her, and Christine. She was in an awful state. She had on some kind of theatrical-looking dress, and her face was all twisted and her hands were clenched and unclenched, and I didn't need anybody to tell me she was giving everything she had to fight back hysteria.

I went out in the corridor with Lorentz. "What's this about?"

"She got the bird."

There it was again, this thing that Cecil had said if I ever heard I'd never forget "She sang here, then?"

"It didn't get that far. She went out there to sing. Then they let her have it. It was murder."

"Just didn't like her, hey?"

"She got too much of a build-up—in the papers."

"I haven't seen the papers. I've been away."

"Yeah, I know... Socialite embraces stage career—that kind of stuff. It was all wrong and they were ready for her. Just one of those nice mourning crowds."

I began to get sore. "It would seem to me you should have had more sense than to put her on here."

"I didn't."

"Oh, you did your part."

"I pleaded with her not to do it. Listen, Borland, I'm not kidded about Doris, and I don't think you are, either. She can't sing for buttons. I tried my best to head her off. I even went to Leighton. I scared him, but not enough. You try to stop Doris when she gets set on something."

"Couldn't you tell her the truth?"

"Could you?"

That stopped me, but I was still sore. "Maybe not. But you started this, just the same. If you knew all this, what did you egg her on for? You're the one that's been giving her lessons, from 'way back, and telling her how good she is, and—"

"All right, Borland; granted. I'm in love with your wife. And if egging her on is what makes her like me, I'm human. Yeah, I trade on her weakness."

"I've socked guys for less than that."

"Go ahead, if it does you any good. I've about got to the point where a sock would be just one

more thing. If you think being chief lackey to Doris is a little bit of heaven, you try it—or maybe you have tried it... This finishes me with her, if that interests you. Not because I started it. Not because I egged her on. No—but I saw it. I was there, and saw them nail her to the cross, and rip her clothes off, and throw rotten eggs at her, and ask her how the vinegar tasted—and all the rest of it. That's unforgivable."

He walked off and left me. I found a pay phone, put in a call for a private ambulance. When it came I went in the dressing room again. Doris was up and Christine was helping her into her coat. She was over the hysteria, but she looked like something broken and shrunken. I carried her to the ambulance, put her in it, made her lie down. Christine got in. We started off.

At home, I carried her upstairs, undressed her, and put her to bed, and called a doctor. Undressing Doris is like pulling the petals off a flower, and a catch kept coming in my throat over how soft she was and how beautiful she was, and how she wilted into the bed. When the doctor came, he said she had to be absolutely quiet, and gave her some sleeping pills. He left, and I closed the door and sat down beside the bed. She put her hand in mine.

"Leonard?"

"Yes?"

"I'm no good."

"How do you know? They didn't even give you a chance to find out."

"I'm no good."

"A morning show in a picture house—"

"A picture house, a vaudeville house, an opera house—it's all the same. They're out there—and it's up to you. I'm just a punk who's been a headache to everybody she knows and who's got wise to herself at last. I've got voice, figure, looks—everything but what it takes. Isn't that funny?"

"For me, you've got everything it takes."

"You knew, didn't you?"

"How would I know?"

"You knew. You knew all the time I've been just rotten to you, Leonard. All because you opposed my so-called career."

"I didn't oppose it."

"No, but you didn't believe in it. That was what made me so furious. You were willing to let me do whatever I wanted to do, but you would not believe I could sing. I hated you for it."

"Only for that?"

"Only for that... Oh, you mean Hugo and Leighton and all my other official hand-kissers? Don't be silly. I had to tease you a little, didn't I? But that only showed I cared whether you cared."

"Then you do care?"

"What do you think?"

Doris took my head in her hands, and kissed my eyes and my brow and cheeks, as though I were something too holy for her to be worthy to touch, and I was so happy I couldn't even talk. I sat there a long time, my head against hers, while she held my hand against her cheek, and now and then kissed it.

"... The pills are working."

"You want to sleep?"

"No, I don't want to. I could stay this way forever. But I can't help it."

"I'll leave you."

"Kiss me."

I kissed her, and she put her arms around me, and sighed a sleepy little sigh. Then she smiled, and I tiptoed out.

I had a bite to eat, went down to the office, and had a look at what mail there was. Then I sat down at the desk, hooked my heels on the top, and tried to keep my head from swimming till it would be time to go back to Doris. I was so excited I wanted to laugh all the time, but a cold feeling began to creep up my back, and pretty soon I couldn't fight it off any more. It was about Cecil. I had to see her, I knew that. I had to put it on the line how I felt about Doris and how she felt about me, and there could be but one answer to that. Cecil and I, we would have to break. I tried to tell myself she wouldn't expect to see me for a day or so, that if I just let things go along she would make the move anyway. It was no good. I had to see her, and I couldn't stall. I walked around to her hotel.

She had the same suite, the same piano, the same piles of music lying around. She had left the door from the lobby, and when I went in she was lying on the sofa, staring at the wall, and didn't even say hello. I sat down and asked her how she felt after the trip. She said all right. I asked her when her rehearsals started. She said tomorrow. I said that was swell.

"What is it, Leonard?" Her voice sounded dry, and mine was shaky when I answered: "Something happened."

"Yes, I heard."

"It—broke her up."

"It generally does."

"It's made her feel different—about a lot of things. About—quite a few things."

"Go on, Leonard. What did you come here to tell me? Say it."

"She wants me back."

"And you?"

"I want her back, too."

"All right."

She closed her eyes. There was no more to say and I knew it. I ought to have walked out of there then. I couldn't do it. I at least wanted her to know how I felt about her, how much she meant to me. I went over, sat down beside her, took her hand. "Cecil, there's a lot of things I'd like to say."

"Yes, I know."

"About how swell you've been, about how much I—"

"Good-by, Leonard."

"There's only one thing a man ever has to tell a woman. You can't tell me that; I know you can't tell me that; we've been all over it—don't offer me consolation prizes."

"All right, then Good-by."

I bent over and kissed her. She didn't open her eyes, didn't move. "There is only one thing I ask, Leonard."

"The answer is yes, whatever it is."

"Don't come back."

"What?"

"Don't come back... You're going now. You're going with all my best wishes and there's no bitterness. I give you my word on that. You've been decent to me and I've no complaints. You haven't lied to me, and if it hasn't turned out as I thought it would that's not my fault, not yours. But—don't come back. When you go out of that door, you go out of my life. You'll be a memory, nothing more. A sweet, lovely, terrible memory, perhaps—but I'll do my own grieving. Only—don't come back."

"I had sort of hoped—"

"Ah!"

"What's the matter?"

"You had sort of hoped that after this little honeymoon blows up—say, in another week—you could give me a ring, and come on over and start up again just as if nothing had happened."

"No, I hoped we could be friends."

"That's what you think you hoped. You know in your heart it was something else. All right, you're going back to her. She's had a bad morning and been hurt, and you feel sorry for her, and she's wilted at you and you're running back. But remember what I say, Leonard: You are going back on her terms, not yours. You're still her little whimpering lapdog, and if you think she's not going to dump you down on the floor or sell you to the gypsies just as soon as this blows over, you're mistaken. That woman is not licked until you've licked her, and if you think this is licking her it's more than I do."

"No, you're wrong. Doris has had her lesson."

"All right, I'm wrong. For your sake, I hope so. But—don't come back. Don't come running to me again. I'll not be a hot towel—for you or anybody."

"Then friendship's out?"

"It is. I'm sorry."

"All right."

"Come here."

She pulled me down and kissed me, and turned away quick, and motioned me out.

(Continued Next Week)

### NAZIS REPORT 337,342 DEAD IN RUSSIA

Berlin.—Germany's dead and missing in the first full year of the war on the Russian front were placed by the high command today at 337,342, an increase of 147,704 over Adolf Hitler's figures of last December 11.

Nothing was said about wounded, which on the basis of the December 11 tabulation, totaled 571,767.

Most experts agree that tires should be criss-crossed, for maximum wear, about every 4,000 to 5,000 miles.

### What You Buy With WAR BONDS

Aside from the sixty-mile an hour Mosquito Torpedo Boats, the Sub Chasers are the speedsters of our Navy. Light and fast, they are the eyes of the Fleet on the water. They displace approximately 1,500 tons and cost about \$2,400,000 each.

We need many of these powerful, fast little boats to cope with the treacherous submarine type of naval warfare fostered by our enemies. Everybody can help pay for more Sub Chasers by putting at least ten percent of his income into War Bonds. Buy Bonds or Stamps every pay day. Buy them from your bank, your post office, or from your office or factory through the Payroll Savings Plan.

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## TODAY and TOMORROW

By DON ROBINSON

### JOKES . . . . . by Hitler

Did you hear that joke about the Englishman, Dutchman, Frenchman and Greek who were flying toward England in a crippled plane?

It was a story that got wide circulation in this country a few months ago. It went something like this:

It seems that the load needed to be lightened to save the crippled plane. The pilot said some of the occupants would have to jump. Immediately the Frenchman and the Dutchman dove out of the door crying, "For our countries!" The plane still faltered, so the Englishman slowly arose. "For England," he shouted—pushing the Greek overboard.

An amusing story, isn't it? At least it is until you are made aware of the insidious purpose behind it—that the story was created, along with dozens of other similar ones, by Hitler's agents. It was part of a carefully planned campaign to create contempt for England in this country.

ADMIRATION . . . . . raids

When the English sent that gigantic fleet of bombers over Cologne, Essen and other German cities, they not only destroyed quantities of Hitler's munitions, but they also struck a terrific blow at his propaganda machine by practically wiping out all of the underhand work he had done to make Americans lose their respect for the English.

Over a year ago, when England so gallantly withstood the destruction of their own cities by German bombs, we should have realized that our ally has just as much courage and valor as we believe our own people have—but somehow, probably because of the stories Hitler passed around the United States, many of us weren't convicted.

But now, with the English carrying on the greatest aerial invasions in the history of mankind, all doubt on this score has vanished.

The English and the American people have different habits and characteristics. We may "moaner de King's English" and they are apt to "old chap" you to death and clamor for cups of tea, but such differences are so petty that they are not worth a second thought compared with our great common purpose of preserving the free way of life throughout the world.

Hitler will continue to try to divide us, for he knows that is one of his chief remaining hopes for victory, but there is little he can do now that can dim our admiration for the amazing job the RAF is accomplishing.

PROPAGANDA . . . . . battles

With Hitler's hope of creating distrust of one another between English and Americans having been blasted, he is probably now setting some new pattern for winning the war with propaganda.

Already he has attacked on countless propaganda fronts, for he found in France, Norway and other countries that "talk" often proved even more effective than bombs, tanks or planes.

But his propaganda machine has been losing a lot of major battles here lately. It has lost the battle aimed at dividing England and the United States. It has lost the battle to make us fear that our democratic form of government is incapable of waging his kind of total war. It has lost the battle to make us think in terms of defense rather than offense. It has lost the battle to keep us from aiding our allies. It has lost the battle to make our civilians shy away from the sacrifices which war en-

tails. And, as our respect for and co-operation with the Russians increase, it is rapidly losing the battle to make us fear that we will have any difficulties getting along with Stalin.

### GERMANY

About the only place Hitler's propaganda lies are really working these days is in Germany itself—and even there they are not nearly as effective as they used to be.

In our country and in England, where the press is owned by free men, it is a comparatively easy matter to spike false propaganda before it becomes dangerous. But in Germany the people hear only what Hitler wants to tell them—and they are therefore fed on propaganda alone.

When a thousand English planes dropped millions of pounds of bombs on Essen, the Berlin newspapers didn't even mention it. What the German people really think after years of lies and covering up of lies, no one really knows, but it seems only common sense to believe that the German people realize the news they get is in no sense honest news.

The German people were convinced by Hitler that the Russian war would be over long before this. Now, when they hear him talk about sacrifices which must be made to strengthen the Russian front next winter, they realize something has gone very wrong.

The Germans undoubtedly are sick of war and sick of making more and more sacrifices. While they believed in Hitler and his promises of quick victory they lived on hope. But now that hope of victory and their faith in Hitler are rapidly dying.

It looks as though the greatest blow to Hitler's propaganda machine is soon to come—the blow which will be struck when it is evident to him that not even his own people believe him anymore.

### GAS PRICE INCREASE COSTS N. C. DRIVERS \$12,000,000 ANNUALLY

Raleigh.—State Highway Chairman Ben Price suggested that the increased cost of gasoline transportation could be distributed by a small increase in price throughout the nation or by direct federal subsidy to the oil companies. Price made the suggestion in protesting a recent price hike permitted by the office of price administration.

He estimated that the two and a half cent a gallon increase allowed, on the basis of last year's consumption, would cost North Carolina motorists \$12,000,000 annually and the state itself \$450,000 a year.

### NOTICE OF SUMMONS North Carolina, County of Watauga: in the Superior Court, Before the Clerk.

Robert Ward and wife, Eliza Ward, vs. Robert Harmon and others. The defendant above named will take notice that a summons in the above entitled action was issued against the defendant Robert Harmon on the—day of June, 1942, by A. E. South, clerk of the Superior Court of Watauga county, North Carolina, said action having been brought in order to partition the land of Joseph Harmon deceased, and the defendant, Robert Harmon, being adjudged to be a proper party whose interest might be effected, and the defendant will take notice that a petition was filed in said cause by the plaintiffs above named and the defendant will further take notice that he is required to be and appear at the office of the clerk of the Superior Court for Watauga county at his office in the town of Boone, N. C., within thirty days after the 2nd day of July, 1942, and answer or demur to the complaint of petition of the plaintiffs, or the plaintiffs will apply to the court for the relief demanded in said petition. This 29th day of June, 1942.

A. E. SOUTH, Clerk Superior Court.

7-2-4p

### NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE North Carolina, Watauga County.

Pursuant to the power and authority contained in that certain deed of trust dated October 8, 1940, by G. E. Anderson and wife, Edith G. Anderson, to T. E. Bingham, trustee, which said deed of trust is duly recorded in the office of the register of deeds for Watauga county, North Carolina, in Book of Mortgages No. 39, at page 38, and securing a certain note and indebtedness payable to the Northwestern Bank, and default having been made in the payment of said note as provided in said deed of trust, and demand of foreclosure having been made by the Northwestern Bank, and the undersigned trustee, having been substituted as trustee for and in the place of said T. E. Bingham, said substitution by the said Northwestern Bank having been duly recorded in the office of the register of deeds for Watauga county, North Carolina, in Book 55, at page 112, will offer for sale at public auction to the highest bidder for cash at the courthouse door in Watauga county, at Boone, North Carolina, at 12:00 noon, on the 20th day of July, 1942, the following described real estate, to wit:

Beginning on a planted stone in Ed Farthing's line, running south 44 east 6 poles to a stone corner; thence south 84 east 13 1/2 poles to a stake in the old Boone road; thence

J. E. HOLSHOUSE, Substituted Trustee.

6-25-4c

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Two to Twenty-nine Years	.20	.80	100.00
Thirty to Fifty Years	.40	1.60	100.00
Fifty to Sixty-five years	.60	2.40	100.00

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PUT "Style" ON A "Comfort" FOOTING

Natural Bridge has stepped-up style without cutting down on comfort. Special lasts with cushioned arch support and other welcome comfort features... but styled up to the minute! Just try these comfortable shoes with young ideas.

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