

two keys to a cabin

BY LIDA LARRIMORE

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CHAPTER XIV—Continued

"And with all of those deeds your mother has tied you to her for the rest of your lives, you, John, and Sarah, at least," interrupted Gay. "Oh, of course she's been splendid. I mean that sincerely. But it's a sort of selfishness, too. She resents me because I can do things for you which she can't. She's afraid of me, for you, for your work, for Debby, mainly because she wants to be the source of all giving, like God, like—"

"You're uncharitable, Gay."

"I'm honest. I've seen. If I weren't Gabriella Graham, if I had no money, she would welcome me for your sake. I being who I am, she fears and resents me."

"Lack of security breeds fear. When you are obliged to consider the possible result of every move you make, you are cautious."

"You're afraid, too," she said, barely audibly, as though the words had been forced through her lips. "You don't trust me."

He turned to look at her miserably.

"You needn't tell me. I know." Her voice steadied. "The things I've been thinking are true, the things I thought tonight while I was waiting here for you."

"What things, Gay?"

"That it isn't possible. We hurt each other. Love isn't enough."

"Oh, Gay! I do love you!" His arms reached for her. Passion flamed through the dark misery in his eyes. "I adore you. Since I first met you, when you were fifteen years old, I've worshiped you."

"No! Don't touch me!" She slipped away from the sofa, went to stand, leaning against the wing-chair beside the hearth. He half rose to follow her, dropped back, sat with shoulders drooping, his hands swinging between his knees. "It's just biology, isn't it?" she asked with a little brittle laugh. "I hoped there was more than that. I had the naive notion that biology was only a part of it, that there could be companionship, too, and faith and security."

"Gay—!" He groaned.

"I'm beginning to understand. No, not that. I guess I've known but I wouldn't admit it. Do you remember Christmas Eve in New York when Suki announced callers? You asked me what you should say to them. I think I asked you what you said to me. You said 'I tell you I love you.' That's the only thing we can say to each other without quarreling. What will we talk about when—?"

"But if—when we're together, we won't be here or in New York. There won't be people getting in the way, your family, mine—"

"I've told myself that, but it isn't true. We can't escape our environments. We'll take them with us wherever we go. We'll quarrel and make up and quarrel again, but each quarrel will leave a scar. Let's not spoil it, John."

He started up from the sofa.

"Gay! Do you mean—?" he asked noisily.

She held him off with an instinctive gesture. "Uncle John may have known," she said steadily, her hands grasping the back of the chair. "But he was—dying. We must live, John, you and I. We can't let something that was beautiful become tarnished and scarred. Let's stop hurting each other. Let's end it now, neatly and definitely."

He stood beside her, at a little distance, his lips moving, his eyes searching her face. She glanced away.

"Do you want to do that?" he asked quietly.

"Yes—" Her reply was as controlled as his question had been. "I want to go home tomorrow and start to forget you. It will be difficult but I'll manage it. You forget anything, don't you, in time?"

"Do you mean that? Look at me, Gay."

Her head turned. She looked up at him through a film of tears.

"I mean it—" Her voice faltered. Clinging to the back of the chair, she swayed as though her strength was gone.

He caught her, held her. For an instant they clung together, urgently, despairingly, then she broke away.

"That doesn't change anything, John."

"Doesn't it? Oh, can't we, Gay? I love you so."

His arms held her again. Her face, streaming with tears, lifted to his face. "When I'm with you like this—Darling! How can we? I don't know..."

ing as Gay and Todd came into the room.

"Hello," she said, removing her reading glasses.

"Hello," Gay returned her greeting cheerfully.

"Hello, Kate," Todd said smiling. Kate's keen eyes regarded them speculatively. "Where have you been?" she asked.

"Driving in Connecticut." Gay dropped into the chair opposite Kate's. "It's a heavenly day."

"Grand. Summer at last." Todd stood beside Gay's chair, looking especially handsome, Kate thought, in a light flannel suit and a green shirt with a darker green tie which accented the lights in his hazel eyes. "What are you reading, the dictionary?"

"Anthony Adverse. Since I can no longer get a kick out of telling people I haven't read it, I thought I might as well. But riding in Connecticut." Kate's eyebrow lifted. "Aren't you working these days?"

"This was business." Todd grinned at Kate with a light-hearted air which raised the eyebrow higher. "An estate the bank may risk a mortgage on. We were looking it over."

"Gay must have been a great help," Kate said dryly.

"Moral support," Gay said, smiling.

"I've got to run along," Todd said. "Will eight be too early, Gay?"

"Just about right, I should say." Gay smiled lazily up at Todd. "Tell your Dad I think it's a safe risk, except that the well-sweep, though picturesque, is a fake."

"I'll remember that," Todd started toward the door. "Bye, Kate. Good-by, Gay. See you at eight."

"You should learn to control your voice, Todd."

"What big ears you have, Katie. Bye. Eight o'clock, Gay. Don't move. You look too comfortable. I think I can find my way out."

His footsteps sounded along the hall. The grill of the lift slurred and clicked. Kate looked at Gay leaning back in the chair beside the windows.

"Hats are getting crazier and crazier," she said.

"Yes, aren't they?" Gay pulled off the scrap of straw to which Kate referred.

"That one looks like a fez without the tassel. Are you a Shriner?"

"No, I'm an elk. Didn't you know?" Gay spun the hat on her forefinger. "Any word from Mother?"

"None. You're going out for dinner?"

"Yes. And dancing afterwards."

"Well, thanks for this fleeting glimpse of you."

"Do you mind? I won't go if you do. I know I haven't been home with you much and it was nice of you to come in and stay with me while Kitty and Robert are away."

"Go on. I don't mind. I have Anthony here for company. Quite a lad, too, I've gathered from the portion I've read thus far."

"Do you mind, really? You sound—"

"Oh, go on." Kate regarded Gay in silence for a moment. Then, "I suppose you know what you're doing?" she said.

"What do you mean?" Gay's glance turned to the windows through which showed a glimpse of blue sky and early June sunlight.

"You know what I mean. Don't pretend that you don't."

"Todd understands."

"If he does, it's more than I do. You break your engagement, upset the entire family, and then you proceed to spend a part of every day with him."

"Don't scold me when I'm cheerful. Todd and I are just very good friends."

"Which, I suppose, is the reason he comes in here fairly dripping moonlight and roses. There's nothing like a good friend to put a song in the voice and a shine in the eyes."

"There's no pleasing you." Gay laughed. "When I stayed at home you urged me to go out. Now that I'm following your advice, you scold me."

"You have no sense of proportion. You either act like a hibernating ground-hog or a slightly intoxicated moth. You're going too hard." Kate's brows drew together in a frown. "You're so thin you scarcely cast a shadow and your eyes are too big for your face."

"It makes me interesting looking."

"Oh, nonsense! I don't like what you're doing to Todd."

"That should be Todd's concern, shouldn't it?"

"I know. You needn't tell me. None of my business."

"I'm sorry, Kate. It's all right. Todd has gotten all over being in love with me."

Kate looked at her with an expression of studied derision which

did not conceal the concern in her eyes. "I suppose you think it's charming modesty to pretend that he isn't more in love with you than ever." Kate waited, then burst out. "What has happened? What about John?"

"Nothing." Gay's eyes fell from Kate's anxious face to the hat in her lap.

"Excuse me. I've wondered, but you've been so stately that I haven't dared to ask questions. "Have you—?"

"Nothing, really. I hear from him. He's well and busy. There's a chance of his getting the sort of work he wants in Boston. He isn't particularly interested in general practice and the doctor for whom he has been substituting has returned. I ought to start to dress if I'm going out. We're having dinner at the Heron Club. The food isn't much but the music is good. Denny O'Connor is there again. I adore his songs."

"That's right. Change the subject. Has something happened? I was afraid—"

"You were right. It isn't, it hasn't worked out." Gay lifted shadowed eyes dark with pain which contradicted the half-smile trembling across her lips. "East is east and west is west," as Mr. Kipling pointed out. What's that about the rich young man and the camel and the

"You're so quiet. I thought you enjoyed this afternoon."

"I did." She raised her glass. "Did you tell your Dad that we thought the property was a pretty good risk?"

"You're unhappy, Gay."

"That's very ungrateful of me. When a gentleman takes a lady dancing the least she can do is to be bright and merry."

"I don't care about that." Todd's face above the conventional black and white of his dinner clothes was very grave. "Is there anything I can do?"

She was silent for a moment. Then, "I must do it myself," she said, slowly, listlessly. "I should have made it a clean break three months ago. I've always disliked loose ends."

"Gay—" He bent toward her. "Do you think of what I told you, of what I've been telling you all spring?"

"Very often." Her glance lifted, then fell to the table. Her fingers twirled the slender stem of the glass.

"Will you?" he asked very low.

Her eyes lifted again, met his eyes steadily. "I couldn't do that to you, Todd."

"But if I'm willing to take a chance—"

"We'll neither of us have any peace," she said thoughtfully, "until—He, John—"

She paused, glanced away.

"You know that you can talk of him to me."

"Yes, I know. You've been—" Her voice faltered. "I can't tell you."

"You do—like me, Gay?"

"You are my best and my dearest friend."

"Then why not? You say that he, that John, half expects it. Wouldn't it be the most simple solution? We could go away, now, tonight, down into Maryland. You can't keep on like this. You're making yourself ill. I know you love him. But you love me, too, in a different way. And if he's—"

"It would be a simple solution for him, for me, too, perhaps. But you, Todd? You're too fine to have anything but the best. You'd be sacrificing yourself—"

"To have you, even the part of you that has always belonged to me? That's not a sacrifice. It's pure selfishness, Gay. I'm conceited enough to think that in time—"

"And you're probably right. I don't know—"

"We've always come together again, after either of us has strayed." He smiled. "You remember when I was pretty crazy about Julie? I woke up one morning while visiting her in Charleston, and couldn't wait to get back to you. I had myself all primed for abasements and declarations and when I burst in on you at Southampton all you said was, 'Go change your clothes, Todd. We're sailing in a race this afternoon.'"

"I remember." A faint reflection of his smile curved her lips.

Encouraged by the smile, he went on eagerly, persuasively. "And when you were running a temperature about that aviator—What was his name?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)



"We could go away, now, tonight, down into Maryland."

needle's eye? You, with your rectory training, should understand. It applies to young ladies who have too much money, as well." She sagged down in the chair, her hands falling in a gesture of hopelessness. "I'm so tired, Kate."

"Don't go out. Go to bed. I'll bring you something on a tray."

She sat erect, forcing animation into her gestures, her voice, her smile.

"I want to go. When I'm dancing, where there are people—" She sprang up from the chair. "Oh, how I hate good times!"

"Gay!" Kate rose and went to her. "There's no sense in this, you know. Go to bed. You're as white as chalk."

Gay stood by the windows looking out into the clear atmosphere still bright with the after-glow of the sun.

"June," she said, barely audibly. "It's lovely at the cabin now. There are wild strawberries in the meadow across the road and the ferns are uncurling along the lane."

"I wish you'd never seen the cabin!"

"Do you? I don't. I wouldn't have missed it. I'm grateful—"

"You're half sick, Gay," Kate cried desperately. "Please go to bed."

"I'm going out to dance." She turned from the windows, not looking at Kate.

"If it takes the rain to make the pretty flowers," she sang a little off-key. "Have you heard Denny O'Connor? He's marvelous."

"Well, if that's a sample—"

"Are you criticizing my voice?" She swayed toward Kate, dropped her head against Kate's shoulder.

"It just takes time, doesn't it? Kate, how much time does it take?"

The music stopped. Todd led Gay to the seat against the wall upholstered in peacock-blue leather.

"Are you having fun?" He seated himself beside her. "Has anything happened since this afternoon?"

"I am." She turned to smile at him brightly. "No, nothing has happened. Why do you ask?"

Woman Chief Nominee

Belva Ann Lockwood of Washington, D. C., was the first woman ever nominated for President of the United States. On August 29, 1884, at San Francisco, Calif., the Equal Rights party selected her as its standard party selected her as its standard bearer, with Mrs. Marietta L. B. Stow of San Francisco as her vice presidential running mate. This was done as a protest against the refusal of both the major parties to insert planks in their platforms recommending female suffrage.

Though Mrs. Lockwood received a very small vote that year (Grover Cleveland was elected President), she was nominated and ran once more for President as the Equal Rights party nominee in 1888, again polling a small vote.

Champ Parachute Jumper

According to reports just received from Moscow, the world's champion parachute jumper is Maj. Boris Kharakhonoff, of the Black sea red navy. He is said to have dropped from a height of 40,813 feet, not opening his parachute until he was only 2,100 feet from the ground. This drop of 38,713 feet breaks all previous Russian records, as well as the American record, which was set last August by Willie ("Suicide") Jones, Chicago Negro who jumped 29,400 feet—Pathfinder.

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CHAPTER XV

Kate sat up straight in the chair beside the long triple window in Kitty Cameron's drawing-room and closed the book she had been read-