

MAN MADE THE TOWN

by RUBY M. AYRES

FIFTEENTH INSTALMENT

Unless the fog lifted it might mean being out all night in the cold and wretchedness.

He turned to retrace his steps to where he had left the trap when suddenly a muffled cry broke the silence. It sounded weird and unearthly, coming, as it did, through the stifling fog blanket, and Jonas felt his skin rise in little pin points as he waited for it to be repeated.

Then it came again—a woman's wailing voice.

For a moment he stood petrified; then he went blindly forward as quickly as the hampering conditions would permit, in the direction from which he thought that cry came.

It was not exactly a call for help—it was more like a frightened wail, but it urged the boy on till suddenly he pulled up sharply, only saving himself with difficulty as he found he was on the river bank.

A sloping, muddy bank, broken away by much rain and weather; but now the cry was nearer—almost at his feet, it seemed—and he answered it with a shout, cupping his hands round his mouth to make it carry further.

"Hullo . . . there!"

His own sense of helplessness was appalling; one might as well have been imprisoned by walls as by this blanket of increasing darkness. He shouted again with all the strength of his young voice, and then, suddenly, as if by a miracle, the fog bank seemed to break for the smallest fraction of a moment, like a curtain being slowly raised by a mocking hand in order to show him the thing he sought.

She was in the river . . . its width away from him . . . a half-drowned, piteous thing, clinging with frail hands to the overhanging bough of a rotting willow, her white face upturned, her flaming dark hair dank and horrible, her mouth wide open as if to give utterance once more to that wailing cry.

Jonas caught his breath; instinctively he began to tear off his coat, when the fog came silently down again shutting her out, leaving him there, shivering and helpless, on the muddy, slippery bank.

It seemed a lifetime before he could nerve himself to fresh action. Everything was unreal, uncanny; the silently flowing river like a half-dead poisonous snake creeping by at his feet, and the strange impenetrable menace of the fog-enwrapped world.

Jonas seemed suddenly to see Diana's face: her blue eyes, her sensitive mobile face . . . "Little head running over with gold . . ."

Diana would be happy again if he left Miss Rosalie to die.

He was shivering from head to foot, as with his whole body strained forward he started and stared into the fog to where she had been.

Of what use was her life? What did her happiness matter that another's, so much more precious, should be sacrificed to it?

In the few seconds of his hesitation it seemed to Jonas that he argued the whole question out with cold calculation before, with an effort that seemed purely physical, he pulled himself together and turned deliberately away.

Let her die . . . nobody would ever know. "I would do anything in the world for you."

He had told Diana that more than once, and he had meant it with every fibre of his being. He was conscious of a queer sense of triumph to think that even though Diana would never know, he was fulfilling his promises.

Then the cry came again: strangled, weaker, more despairing, the cry that might have come from a child or from one of the lost lambs which he and Shurey had sought for together one bitter March month after a heavy fall of snow.

For one second still Jonas hesitated, standing rigid, his head craned forward in strained attention; then he turned back with quiet deliberation, scrambled down the muddy bank, and plunged into the icy river.

CHAPTER XXIII

Anna was perturbed.

Half a dozen times she had been in to Diana, and found her sleeping always in the same position, lying on her side, her face turned against the pillows, an arm flung up above her head.

Half a dozen times since the early morning when Diana had come home, and now it was past five o'clock.

Mrs. Gladwyn had been into the room once before leaving for another bridge evening.

"Has she been asleep all day?" she asked.

"Yes, madam—she seems thoroughly worn out."

She bent a little lower over Diana. "I suppose she's—all right?" she asked uncertainly.

"Oh, yes, madam—just sleeping heavily," Anna said quickly, with a faint feeling of discomfort as she remembered that once in the past she had been severely admonished for administering a sleeping draught to Diana without doctor's orders.

Mrs. Gladwyn sighed.

"She looks very like her mother," she said. "And her mother died when she was quite a girl." She pulled herself together and took up her gloves and handbag. "I should let her sleep it out," she said vaguely. "It will probably do her a lot of good."

When she had gone Anna quietly replenished the fire and went back to take another look at Diana.

She was very pale—even her lips and hair seemed colourless; and in sudden alarm Anna laid a hand on Diana's arm.

It was icy cold.

For a moment she stood petrified with fear; then she turned and ran from the room.

"Miss Diana is ill—you must fetch a doctor at once. Run down and see if Mrs. Gladwyn has gone. If not, bring her back quickly."

The girl ran, returning breathlessly.

"The car has just driven away."

But Anna was not the sort to lose her head in a moment of emergency.

"Tell Markham to call a taxi and to go at once for Dr. Rathbone—I'll give him the address."

She had made a mental note of it yesterday morning when she dispatched Diana's letter to him, and knowing that Rathbone had attended Diana during her illness, she thought he was the most suitable one to summon.

To expedite matters, she went down to interview Markham herself.

But Anna's evident anxiety whipped him to swifter action.

"If Dr. Rathbone is there, bring him back with you. If he is not there, bring the first doctor you can find, but don't come back without someone, or it will be the worse for you." She ran back to Diana and pulled the curtains, opening both windows wide.

The fog was not quite so bad, one could see the lights in the street below now, like bleary yellow eyes, staring upwards.

As Anna turned away her glance fell on the bottle she had left on the dressing table.

She caught it up, holding it to the light; then her face whitened, for it was nearly empty.

Anna permitted herself the luxury of one moment's emotion.

"Oh, poor lamb!" she said pityingly.

She knew a great deal more about Diana than the girl had ever dreamed—knew all about the affair with Waterman, and understood that it had ended with Diana's illness, on his side, at all events, but she had never been able to make up her mind with regard to Diana—until now, when she believed that the girl had done this deliberately in a moment of overwhelming wretchedness.

She lifted her gently, laying her flat on her back, and began to chafe her cold hands.

Anna had only seen Rathbone once, when Mrs. Gladwyn had sent for him after the girl's breakdown; but she had been impressed by his personality and quiet strength, and she found herself almost praying (though Anna considered prayer "old-fashioned rubbish") that he would come.

She had always been rather contemptuous of Diana's weakness, realizing how easily, during her short life, the girl had allowed herself to be bandied about, the victim first of one and then of another, in the vain, unsatisfying search for something real and lasting, but there was only pity in her heart now as she tried by every means in her power to rouse Diana from her dreadful unconsciousness.

One of the maids came presently, with scared eyes, to know if she could do anything to help, but Anna shook her head. She would not admit it, but she believed the time was already past when anyone could help Diana.

"Hasn't Markham come back yet?" she asked.

"Not yet . . . I think that's a taxi now."

More breathless moments. Anna watched the door with strained eyes. If Markham had come back alone . . .

The door opened, and she gave a little sob of relief as Rathbone strode into the room.

He came straight to the bed and bent over the girl lying there.

Anna, watching his face—always watching him, as if she felt he was the only hope left to her—asked a broken question:

"Oh, sir . . . she's not dead, is she?"

Rathbone shook his head.

"No . . . what is it? What have you given her?"

Anna explained as well as she could. "I only gave her four drops; she seemed so worn out, and yet she couldn't sleep; but I left the bottle on the dressing table, and the poor lamb must have taken some more. It's nearly empty now."

Anna turned her face away and wept, and she would not have believed it had she been told that her tears were not so much for herself or for Diana as for the broken-hearted look she had suddenly surprised in Donald Rathbone's eyes.

CHAPTER XXIV

Diana was so used to dreams. Nearly every night lately, half awake and half asleep, she had imagined with one part of her senses, even though the other part knew it could not possibly be true, that she was back at the Creature's cottage, in the little room with its chintz wall paper and muslin-petticoated dressing table, with Rathbone sitting beside her.

It wasn't such a bad dream until one quite woke up!

She wished she could make him smile. Down at the cottage, no matter how cross he had been with her, or how grimly he had looked at her while she hurled her silly little troubles at him, in the end she had always managed to make him smile before he went away.

Diana said, "Thank you," in a little whisper, and closed her eyes. The tears couldn't get through if she kept them tightly closed, and Donald hated to see her cry.

"Things always turn out badly if people take—what you and I might take . . ."

Donald had said that after she had asked if he would let her live with him. She supposed he must have been horribly shocked really, though he had only looked at her with eyes that seemed to understand.

Funny that people, especially those whom the world called good people, should think anything physical such as a deadly sin, much worse than anything else.

She moved restlessly, and Rathbone spoke her name gently:

"Diana!"

Her eyes turned to his face and rested there for a moment.

"I'm so thirsty," she whispered. Her mouth felt all dry and hot.

CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK

"Absence makes the heart grow fonder," murmured the sentimental youth.

"Oh, I don't know," remarked the matter-of-fact girl, "did you try presents?"

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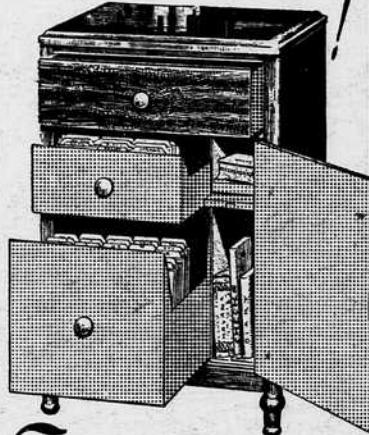
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Greta Garbo as she appears in "As You Desire Me" at the Capitol Theatre, Monday and Tuesday.

The many Garbo fans will be sorry to learn that this is probably her last picture, she is returning to her home in Sweden, according to reports from all Hollywood papers.

Mayor Hedrick Suggests Sale Of City Bonds

At a recent meeting of the city council, Mayor B. V. Hedrick's plan for the relief of property holders delinquent in the paying of their street assessments, was endorsed.

The plan suggested by the mayor is as follows:

"First: Let our property holders, who owe street assessments, buy Salisbury bonds, and the city accept these bonds at par.

"Second: Bonds to be figured on a basis of netting the city 6 per cent interest until date of maturity, as a lower rate of interest can be bought for less, so it will only be fair to figure them to net the city 6 per cent.

"Third: Salisbury bonds can be bought at this time for 50 cents on the \$1.00 up to 70 cents.

"Fourth: Property holders owing less than \$1,000 on street assessments join in with some other property holder owing less than \$1,000, buy \$1,000 bond and the city accept this bond as part payment from the two property holders, and if two property holders do not owe as much as \$1,000 they can get a third or fourth party to join in with them in the purchase of the bond."

Mayor Hedrick wrote to Charles M. Johnson, chairman of the state local government commission at Raleigh, regarding the legality of the proposal. As yet he has not received a reply. According to city attorney, P. S. Carlton, the plan is believed to be entirely legal and will be accepted by the state government commission.

Idle Peace Army Urged In Canada To Build Roads

Winnipeg—A vast peace army, recruited from the ranks of the unemployed to be used in opening the northern bush country, building highways, beautifying parks and playgrounds, was described by James S. Wadsworth, Winnipeg Labor member in the house of commons.

Regulation army pay of \$1.10 a day and "everything found" would be allowed. Creation of this army would not be a cure for unemployment, but at least it would be better than soup kitchens.

The labor leader advocated drastic steps in this day of depression. If Canada decided to hold a gold basis for currency—he did not agree this was advisable—the mines should be confiscated by the state and worked by an army recruited from the ranks of the unemployed.

If gold was so valuable and necessary as a metallic base, he asked, why should the government not reap the profit from the mines?

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