

The Dollar Bride

by Mary Imlay Taylor

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THIRD INSTALLMENT

It was still in the room. The yellow light flared low in the lamp on the table. There lay the newspaper as it had dropped the night before, and her mother's work-basket was overturned by the hearth. Roddy had knocked it down when he sprang at his father.

Roddy was going to jail! Nancy gasped. On the chair were her furs, her hat and her gloves, just as she had tossed them. She drew a long breath, averting her eyes from her father's gray face and went to the chair. Swiftly and stealthily she put on her hat, her furs, and her gloves. Then she stole out into the hall, dropped the chain-bolt, opened the front door, and slipped silently out of the still house.

It was broad daylight outside now; the morning air touched her hot face gratefully like cold clear water. It was February and the pussy-willows swung over her head. At her feet some yellow crocuses shot up, just opening little yellow eyes in the grass like the yellow eyes of Roddy's siren. Nancy stamped her foot on the

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MAVIS
FACE
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she said weakly. He had her hand now and he led her up the steps. Three times already he had asked her to marry him, and the last time she had tried to be rude to him, tried purposely, to stop him. They both remembered; she saw it in his face, but he was nice about it; he did not look into her eyes just then. He took her into the library. It was big and square and friendly, and the books lined it richly. A log had just been kindled on the brass andirons; in a bowl on the table were some snowdrops and pussy-willows. A tight pain clutched at Nancy's heart, like the closing of a vise. She saw Page Roemer's face as plainly as if he stood there, speaking to her. Then she heard Richard's voice.

"Sit down, Nancy. Here's mother's favorite chair. I'll let you have it."

His mother had been one of the rich Kentucky Weatherills; she had brought her fortune to the little old town and made it wonder over her resources and Dr. Henry Morgan's luck. Her death two years ago had left all the money to her only son. Dr. Henry hadn't any to leave, but he had left a practice and a good name; Richard had those, too. It was called the Morgan luck.

Richard pushed his mother's big winged arm-chair forward now for Nancy. As he did it, the clock on the mantle struck six.

Nancy started. "What can you think of me? I know you haven't breakfasted—I had to come!" She had not accepted the chair, she stood by the fire, pulling at her gloves. She was shaking from head to foot with an ague of fear. "I had to come, Richard!"

"Yes?" his voice was low, "what is it, Nancy?"

She did not answer; she averted her face and he saw her delicate chin trembling. A pang of bitterness shot through him; he knew



He came down the steps holding out his hand.

well enough why his love for her had never reached her, she cared about that Roemer boy. But she was here, at his hearthstone now, and he could let his eyes rest on her. He saw her as no one else in the world could see her, he thought. How little she was, and delicate; he could crush her body up against his with one arm! Her little head too, was so defiant, and the round trembling chin and white throat. He could see it move and quiver as she breathed. The exquisite turn of the cheek, the little ear and the lovely glossy hair. How dear she was. He drew a deep breath and she looked up sharply, met the passion in his eyes and shrank. She shrank so visibly that it pained him again. He thrust the chair nearer.

"Sit down, Nancy," his voice sounded harsh and unnatural.

This time she sank into the chair, a little huddled figure, her head down.

"I don't know how to begin, Richard!"

He became aware suddenly of her anguish. He held himself in check with a strong hand.

"Are you in trouble, Nancy?" "Yes."

He went over to the mantel and stretched out his arms along it, steadying his fingers on the edge. He had the long thin fingers of the artist and the poet, but his hand had strength and power, too. It was the hand of a surgeon. He was watching her with his strange eyes, but he was not helping her.

"Richard, I tried to be rude to you—you know—last time—"

"Last time I asked you to marry me," he said quietly; "yes."

She caught her breath. He was not bitter, but there was something in him that was like granite. There was power in his look, too; it frightened her; he seemed to have himself so well in hand, and yet—She began to feel that his love must be a power; she had always been afraid of it, she knew it now! She cast a

Another Chapter



RENO: . . . Mrs. Thalia Massie, (above), here seeking divorce, will charge cruelty and incompatibility against her husband, Lieut. Thomas Massie, U. S. Navy. It was around Mrs. Massie that the famous Hawaii assault case of more than two years ago developed, Lieut. Massie standing trial as one of the principals for the slaying of a Hawaiian charged with the assault on Mrs. Massie.

frightened look toward the door. Could she get away?

Then suddenly she saw her father's bent gray head and his white face, his mouth hanging open—as if he had died as he slept in the chair by the hearth; he would look that way when he was dead, she was sure of it! She tried to raise her eyes, but her lids seemed to weigh them down. They traveled along the dull blue rug to the fireplace, they reached his feet, and then slowly—up, up to his narrow prominent chin, his tight mouth, his nose—it wasn't quite straight—his green-brown eyes! She started and the blood went up from throat to brow, her own eyes quivered and fell, she gasped.

"I've come to take it back," she whispered. She could not speak aloud.

"What do you mean, Nancy Virginia?"

She twisted her hands in her lap. Her gloves had fallen on the floor at her feet. She couldn't raise her eyes at all.

"I mean my rudeness to you, then. I—I take it back."

"Nancy, you can't mean—"

She straightened herself, clutching at the arms of the big chair. Her dry lips moved but muttered nothing. Then with a frightened effort, she dragged it out, tumbling her words together.

"I've come to you for help—I'm in awful trouble, I've got to borrow money—borrow it today, too! A great deal of money—I've come to ask you to lend me fifteen thousand dollars, Richard."

His eyes held hers now against her will. She did not know what he thought; she felt humiliation, it beat down on her like rain.

"It's a great deal to borrow," she faltered weakly, childishly, "but I've got to have it—today! Richard, can you lend it to me now?"

He seemed her answer with an effort, but his voice had a strange thrill in it. "I'd do anything for you, Nancy—you know that, surely? I'd give you all I've got if I could—if you'd let me!"

She raised her eyes slowly, reluctantly, and met his again. There was a glow in his, as if some hidden fire had leaped up in there like a flame. The sight of it set her heart beating wildly again.

"I want to borrow it, Richard," she said hoarsely. "I'll—return it, I'll—I'll give you a pledge for its return."

He started and changed color. "What did you say, Nancy?"

She rose, trembling, and stood, holding him off with her wide frightened eyes, her very lips, white.

"I even pledge myself—I'll marry you, Richard."

Silence followed, a silence so thick and tangible that it pressed down on Nancy's shaken nerves until she wanted to scream. Her heart began to beat against her side, the throbs were like the heavy strokes of a hammer on an anvil.

"Did you mean that, Nancy?" "Yes."

"You'll marry me?" He drew nearer. She could feel his passion for her, it shook him so she recoiled, sinking again into his mother's chair, hiding her face from him.

"Yes, I—I said so," she faltered in a broken voice. "I meant it, Richard."

He threw himself on one knee beside her chair; she felt his arms around her. "When, Nancy, when?" His arms trembled.

She lifted her head and looked at him, her blue eyes still wide with fear. "On Monday—in Washing-

Byrd Escapes Disaster As Ice Collapses

The Byrd expedition to Antarctica narrowly escaped disaster when a 70-foot-high barrier of ice skirting the Bay of Wales collapsed and almost engulfed the Jacob Ruppert, flagship of the expedition.

A short while before, four members of the expedition making a reconnaissance flight in Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd's seaplane made a risky forced landing on the ice after the skis of the craft had become dislodged at that take-off.

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"I've come to ask you to lend me fifteen thousand dollars, Richard."

She was very glad that he had let her go; she could breathe now and she remembered. She had to save Roddy—she had to save the Gordon family honor.

"On Monday, Richard."

He caught her hands in his drawing her impetuously toward him again. His deep eyes kindled but she shrank, shivering.

"It's a gamble, Nancy, but I'll do it—I'll make you love me! I—"

He lifted her hands and kissed them passionately, first one and then the other. "Don't be afraid of me," he felt them shaking, "I'll do anything for you—you want to borrow money? Listen, Nancy, I know you must have some great need of it, but I shall never ask you, never! You can tell when you're ready, but I shall never ask you one word about it, never question you. I'm going to take you at your word though, and marry you on Monday—because I'll make you love me, I swear I will! It's Monday then in Washington?"

His voice was low still, but it seemed to reach through space and touch some quivering, pulsating spot in her soul. She tried to rise, dashing tears from her blue eyes, and her lips shook, but she answered, dragging out one word, the word he wanted.

"Yes."

(Continued Next Week)

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