

FOURTEENTH INSTALMENT Jane stopped shaking the cock "Hello, Ellen," said Margie, and tails. She poured one for herself, there was more warmth in her voice with a steady hand. than there had been in Jane's. "I won't offer you a glass, El-

"Call it a pose, if you want to,"

Margie, still draped against the

"Atta, kid," said Margie, almost

mantel, chuckled.

more, to murder him!

"Say, I'm glad you brought your len," she said at last. "I know you boy friend. He's amusing—the one don't drink. Is it—" she paused, with the whiskers, I mean." and the dark girl, whose name El-

Ellen laughed. She didn't dislike len didn't know, went on.

"He thinks you're amusing, too," girl. "Your Elsie Dinsmore attishe said. "He's mad to paint you." tude? If so, it's a good one."
"Nude?" asked Margie. Her voice
"Isa't
Ellen stretched her feet out in that the way artists usually paint of her plain little black slippers. their woman?"

Ellen felt her color rising, but she said, at last. "I'm not the type answered levelly.

"Some do," she answered, "but One has to be dark and dramatic not Sandy. He's a fashion man pri- to get away with that, I fear." marily, although he does stunning illustrations."

"Oh," said Margie. That was all. The other girls were bending for-ward, frosted glasses in hand, cigar-Dinner was again a magnifi ettes held before carefully rouged jumble—all the way from the cav-

"You're the first model I ever carried in ,blazing, by the butler. met," she said. "Do you pose for Ellen didn't sit next to Tonythe figure?"

Again Ellen answered as casually she sat next to Sandy, at the exas she could.

"Only for my mother, years ago sat at Jane's right. -an important artists. You pro- could tell. But it was somebody —an important artists. You pro- could tell. But it was somebody bably wouldn't know . . . I'm with a voice well bred and assured a chance to be with you again. I wonder, said January afraid that even if I wanted to pose like Torris in the altogether I couldn't compete "There's nothing we can wish with some of the models who go in her," said the voice, "she has every-and yoursfor figure work. My own figure—" thing!"
she laughed, apologetically and "Yeah," said Sandy under his had suspected, from Tony's bewild—"

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pose, toward a conservatory tha ned out of the room in which hey danced.

I've got to see you alone," Tony nurmured in her ear. "This is th ueerest situation I've ever been nixed up in."

"That," said Ellen, "goes double' Gosh almighty!" said Tony. Just

"I wonder why I came-" Ellen sked of him, very seriously.

Tony's hands were holding here so tightly that her wedding ring bit

into the two fingers next to it. "Have they been giving you buggy ride?" he asked Ellen. " heard that they looked you over before dinner. Margie told me."

"They tried to," Ellen told him, but I can take care of myself." "It is a pose?" drawled the dark "Sometimes," said Tony, "I wish you couldn't!"

"What was the idea, anyway?" had a slightly rising note. "Isn't front of her, and regarded the toes I mean. If it hadn't been for Sandy, and for the way he precipitated me into it, it would have all the earmarks of being an announcement for you and Jane of something or other. I feel like a guilty secret."

"You may be guilty," said Tony, "but you're no secret- not any more. To tell you the truth, Ellen," he admitted, "I don't quite get the thickened. hang of this thing, myself. Believe salt," Sandy whispered to her. Tony night—I never can remember dates. not even sure it's her birthday, to- when the lights come up." -" she told the dark girl. "She was Somebody was toasting Jane. It Sandy hadn't made her come say it first—she'd say it. I wouldn't have told you this if wouldn't give Tony a chance to arrived back in her own little room. an artist, you see. She was rather wasn't Tony—that was all Ellen through in a big way. When he did told a dozen lies-white ones-asked me?"

So that was that! Ellen all along "it's complicated enough without There was bright sunshine—yelsmoothed the dark silk that shroud- breath, to Ellen, "not quite every- erment on the night of the im- Ellen was smoothing the skirt of Ellen's face when she wakened. promptu meetings. that there had her pretty dress. Ellen wanted to slap him-to do birthday party arrangements. They danced after dinner, in the

same drawing room. When the stomach. But she scareely had time It's you."

for any definite feelings, for she was being whirled off in the arms of "Jane and I," he said, "knocked gram—or what have you. Explain for years. I sup- to your guests that my grandanything better. A short while youths, was an exceptionally good around together for years. I sup- to your guests that my grandpose she'd gotten to sort of taking mother is ill; tell them that a great-And then somebody was cutting me for granted. . . . After all, we uncle has died and left me a legacy. tive for colds and little stomach in—one of the Jacks or Jims or weren't responsible when we met, Tell them I've gone back to pose ailments, and have found it very Charleys who had been in Tony's you and I. We shook all of the for Dick, tomorrow— and tomor-

was the fourth dance before Ellen spoke resentfully.

didn't mean it; that she wouldn't her suitcase. into her eyes.

let go of this-" she told him. She mother. opened her fingers and the huge "I met Tony," Jane's mother said

"Yes, you would!" said Tony can do?" gruffly. All at once he had gathered her so tightly into his arms that her body felt bruised against ou," she said. "To tell you-how the hardness of his body. "I'm sick sorry I am. Yes, there is something. and tired of this stuff," said Tony, I wish, maybe, that I could be "it's time for a showdown. We're taken to the station. I've had a not fencing, you and I we're telegram, you see.' married. It's time we behaved like

human beings, or—" He stopped. For there was a ustle of skirts (skirts do rustle, that she didn't believe in the mythi-

this year) and a voice spoke. a voice. "It always seems as if I that it is bad news." choose the wrong time for my en-

trances, doesn't it?" Of course, it was Jane—it couldn't be anybody else. She stood in "and I love her very much. Maybe the doorway of the conservatory— she's a little spoiled; but she's a the light was behind her. They dear girl. And you must remember couldn't see the outline of her face that she has loved Tony for a long -the expression of her eyes and while." mouth—but somehow Tony's arms

wriggling free of them. how silly I feel!" Tony don't say anything at allperhaps it was because he couldn't trust his voice. Ellen didn't say anything either, for a moment, and

then-

and levelly, "that it's always a big than the trainscene, that it's always a rehearsal:. You and Tony aren't married,

really-



even though it was held so loosely.

left hand, "here's the evidence, and I have my marriage lines some-always so tired."

If Tony had been clever enough he could have read the desperation silently she had closed the door. f her bravado.

for a moment. She'd said nothing street. It's all so silly. It's like there wasn't anyone in the room

"Yes, isn't it?" agreed Ellen. She

about how my friends would feel-Tony spoke at last. "Oh, for crying out loud," he said, one of the emotions!

been something odd in back of the "Yes," she said, "it is-compli-coffee and toast restored to her a cated enough with-without me. certain amount of confidence in

I think," her eyes were so bright herself. Her voice didn't even "I don't get Jane," she said fi- that only tears could have made tremble when she called Dick on dancing began, Jane held out her nally. "What's she playing for, them so, "I think it's just about the phone. hand to Tony with an air so proprietary that it gave Elllen a little Tony? Not that it's very sane to time that I did the conventional "If you're working today," she kicked feeling in the pit of her ask—I know what she's playing for. thing—even though I am a profes-told him, "I'm just the girl that will sional Bohemian. It's about time I help you. Here am I, all alone in There was a seriousness back of told you, Jane, that I've just had town over Sunday.'

world's plans into a cocked hat.' row's Sunday, too. That'll perhaps

"That," she said "makes me feel All at once she was running from vegetable laxative. 25¢ a package. arms—found herself being steered, like a spare tire. If you want an anwith a complete directness of pur- nulment any time, you and Jane through the darker corners of the room. And then she was out of the "You'd drop me as easily as door and racing up the stairs. Now that?" said Tony. "You mean it?" she had gained the haven of her Ellen wanted to say that she room and was tumbling things into

give him up, not for fifty Janes. There was a knock at the door. But instead she made her mouth in- For a moment Ellen didn't answer, to a straight line and lowered her and then with an effort she steadlashes so that Tony couldn't look ied her voice until she could speak. "Come in," she called.

"I'd let you go as easily as I'd The door opened. It was Jane's

chiffon handkerchief that she was without preamble. "He told me carrying fluttered, like a dead but- that you weren't well. That he was terfly, to the conservatory floor. afraid you were going home. Something like that. Is there anything l

Ellen's voice was steady. "I was going to leave a note for

"Poor child," said Jane's mother, "I hope it's not bad news!" Ellen's eyes, meeting hers, knew

is year) and a voice spoke.
"Oh—but I'm intruding!" said "Yes," said Ellen, "I'm afraid

Jane's mother was still standing in the doorway. Swiftly she spoke

"Jane is my daughter," she said,

"Whereas," answered Ellen, " had loosened, somehow Ellen was haven't!"

"Ah," said Jane's mother, "you "You don't know," said Jane, haven't! You'll have to love him a great deal to make up for the time you've missed."

She was turning ,and then-"I'll make your excuses to the rest, at breakfast," she said. "Don't you worry. And if you don't want "It's quite all right," she said, to go down through the crowded we were just rehearsing our big rooms, now, I'll have the car wait for you at the side door. It will Jane took a step into the conser- take you right to your door, of course. Traffic is not heavy-this "It seems to me," she said at last, time of night. It will be quicker

Ellen was looking at her. "My mother's hair," said Ellen, was like your hair. Her eyes were "Well," Ellen extended her slim sweet-like your eyes. But she was



You drop me as easily as that?' said Tony.

"I'm tired, myself, most of the time," said Jane's mother, and then

When Tony arrived ten minutes Jane went on - her voice had later, after locating the room through a certain amount of bri-"You know what I mean," she bery and corruption-when he tapit or not-when the party came up said. "You and Tony don't belong ped at the door of that room there lips. One of them, a dark young iar in its little ice molds to the ishness on Jane's part. Irealized it like Sandy and with that Dick of pushed the door in, even though magnificent birthday cake that was at the time; it took me off my feet yours. Tony — Tony's down my he didnt belong on the floor. But about any party to me, before. She playing hide in the dark, and find- when he entered. There wasn't even just said it to get your goat. I'm ing you with the wrong person the dust of powder on the immaculate top of the vanity table.

It was nearly dawn when Ellen She threw her suitcase, unpacked, "I wonder," said Jane, "why you across a seat, and undressed rapidly and flung herself across her bed "I wonder," said Ellen, "why you And, though she had quite expected to sob herself to sleep, she didn't. Exhaustion is like that—it drains

And, such is the buoyancy of youth,

The taxi seemed to crawl through the door, after the first half hour the quiet Sunday streets, and yet of her posing, when at Dick's biddat last she was with Dick in his old ing he pushed the door wide, she familiar workroom.

did not change her position. Even Ellen, with scarcely more than a though his coming was-just now word of greeting, went behind the -more than a surprise.
accustomed screen and changed "I'm here," Tony said by way into her Indian dress. And then she of greeting, "hunting for my runwas out again and posing, a little away wife!" He didn't address Elkneeling figure once more-once len at all; he spoke to Dick.

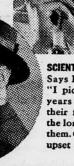
"Yes?" answered Dick, and went When Tony came knocking at (Continued on page six)

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