

The GOOSE WOMAN

by REX BEACH

FOURTH INSTALLMENT

The likeness almost wrenched a cry from her lips. "She's very beautiful, mother, very talented and very fine." The boy's eyes were fixed and shining; a breathless, reverent quality had crept into his voice, and it was plain that when he mentioned this girl his heart bowed in worship and his soul paid homage. "She is infinitely superior to me, of course. That's what makes it so wonderful, so incomprehensible. I want you to—well, to make yourself over into what you were so that she can meet you and know you."

There was a moment of silence. Mrs. Holmes broke it by exclaiming harshly, "Forget it!"

Gerald had hurt her bitterly tonight. He had rubbed salt into her wounds. She had fallen low; she had become ugly and old and contemptible, had she? Instead of sympathy he gave her a sort of supercilious pity and implied that she was unfit to meet his sweetheart until she regenerated herself. Instead of sharing her sorrow he went out and made his own life, made for himself a career such as he had robbed her of. The injustice of it. Well, this would be their hour of reckoning, the hour when she would compel him to take up and share the burden that had bowed her shoulders. Those alcoholic demons in the back of her head were dancing dizzily and it gave her a prodigious, wicked satisfaction to realize that she had the power now to humble his spirit as he had humbled hers.

"Forget it, Jerry," she repeated. "You can't get a girl like that to marry you."

"I can if we stop right here, mother, and if you'll let me help you—er, get back on your feet."

"She wouldn't have you—not the kind of a girl you've been talking about." Mrs. Holmes giggled malevolently. "You see, my boy, you haven't any name to give her," but I'll make one. I'll make it

"Not much of a name, of course, something to be proud of."

Mrs. Holmes rose, walked to the cupboard, opened its door, and took out a thick drinking glass and a square bottle. Slowly she poured the tumbler half full of gin, then drank it, her eyes as they met those of her son were hostile, there was malignity in her gaze. It was an act of deliberate, calculated defiance, for never before had she taken liquor in his presence, for never before had she taken liquor in his presence. Gerald looked on incredulously.

"You don't understand English," she said, harshly. "If you're old enough to run around with women and think about getting married, I guess you're old enough to stand some plain talk. You give me enough, God knows. A little of your own medicine won't hurt you. What I mean to say is this—your father and I were never married."

Gerald gasped; his face whitened; a look of fright, of abject misery, crept over it. "I—should have known better than to talk to you when you've—when you're not serious, mother!"

"Oh, yes I am! I mean exactly what I say. You're forever telling me unpleasant things about myself; now I'll tell you some. I'll have to go back and explain, so you'll understand—Opera singers, in my time, were about what they are now, and the profession was about the same. A girl had to exercise every means at her disposal to get to the top. It was the price. Success in any art must be paid for; every great artist has to make some sort of sacrifice. I made mine, but the reward was worth it. It was worth any price. Art is so much bigger, so much more important than other things—everything else is so small, so trivial, so false and so fleeting. I was young, I had sex appeal, and I had a voice.

I used them all to get ahead. I had temperament, too. I lived every role I played: I put vitality and fire into them. When I was on the stage they used to say I was a flaming genius. Flaming!"

Mrs. Holmes tramped about the room as she talked; beneath her feet the bare floor boards creaked. "I've told you how my big success came abroad. You know all that and how I was anticipating the day when I could come home and achieve my supreme triumph, here in America. How I met your father—in Paris. It wasn't his first affair, nor mine, but it was the first time I had ever been genuinely, madly in love. I didn't know I had it in me. I was a perfect fool. Most women are, by the way, at one time or another. He hadn't a thing—money, I mean—so I gave him what I had earned and what had been given to me. I showed him with gifts, spoiled him, turned his head. He took it all and we lived wildly, extravagantly, drunk with each other's love. That temperament again!"

"I suppose it had begun to pall on him even before we learned that you were coming, but he didn't show it. When we discovered that I was going to have a baby I supposed we talked about marriage—people usually do. Probably that helped to spoil things. Perfect love, perfect romance, was one thing; marriage, squalling children, milk bottles, dirty dishes—that was another. He was an artist. You came between us even before you were born."

"He couldn't bear to see the change in me. My appearance got more and more on his nerves. He quit finally—went away. That was a terrible shock to me; it was enough to kill most of the affection I might have felt for you. Oh, I know it sounds unnatural, incredible! That's because you can't understand how some people are constituted. You're full of story-book sentiment; this was real life. Neither of us was domestic. You won't understand, either, when I tell you that his desertion wouldn't have left any serious results on me; they said as a matter of fact, that it would make me even a great artist—having suffered. But at least you can understand how it turned me back to my work with a more passionate devotion than ever. Since it was all I had left, all that was real and substantial and satisfying. My voice had never been so splendid as it was during that period. My friends told me that a miracle had occurred and that I possessed the most beautiful voice in the world. They worshipped it. They, and I, blessed you as the cause of it."

"Then you were born . . . Again Mrs. Holmes turned her eyes upon her son, and now they were brilliant, feverish; her face was working. "You know what happened! For a while, the doctor encouraged me to believe that my voice would come back. That was to keep me from killing myself. But it didn't come back. It was gone, lost to the world! There were artists in the company who would have strangled you, gladly, and hung for it, if it would have brought back Mary Holmes's voice. That's how much they thought of it. That's what a truly great voice means."

"You wonder why I've never been a real mother to you. God! you've been a living reproach to me; every day of your life you have tortured me, stuck knives in me. As if that weren't enough, you've grown into the very image of your father—you're like him, inside and out. I suppose this girl feels towards you the way I felt towards him—so far as she's capable. But I'll bet she won't marry you. Not now she won't." For a second time the speaker giggled.

Gerald flinched at the sound, but he did not raise his head. "It seems to give you an unholly satisfaction," he said, wretchedly. "I wonder why?"

"Why? Why not?" Mrs. Holmes allowed a hiccup to escape her lips. "Turn about is fair,

play, isn't it? Maybe you'll shed some of your fine airs, now. Maybe you'll quit nagging me, quit this 'holier-than-thou' business. Why shouldn't you help me carry my load? . . . Well, why don't you answer? What have you got to say?"

"Not much"—Gerald rose wearily and took his hat—"except to curse the day you tasted liquor for the first time. If you were in your right senses you would never have told me this. You wouldn't—couldn't take such devilish joy in causing me pain. You would have carried this secret to your grave. I dare say you expect sympathy, but what about me, the fellow who has always cherished an old-fashioned reverence for motherhood and who believes in pure women and such things? You mentioned the hand of God, a while ago. The hand of God is on you, mother: it's on both of us. I—I'm afraid it will destroy us both." Without another word Gerald walked to the door, opened it, and stumbled out into the night.



The time was when Westland had been a first-class theatrical town and most of the good road shows had played it. But conditions had changed. Chicago was only a few hours away, picture palaces had been built, and now the old West Theatre, the city's leading playhouse ran a stock company. It was a good stock company, however; Amos Ethridge, the owner of the property, had prided himself upon being a patron of the drama and he had seen to that; in consequence a number of well-known artists were usually featured upon the West's billing. This season the most popular, if not actually the most prominent, member of the Etheridge players was Hazel Woods, the youthful leading woman. Mr. Ethridge had hired her out of a New York dramatic success and Westland considered itself fortunate in having a real Broadway favorite to worship.

Stock engagements in small cities like Westland are often both profitable and pleasant, for salaries are good, the players form new friendships, they enjoy an agreeable social life, and receive numerous courtesies and advantages not infrequently denied them in larger cities. In Miss Wood's case, for instance, Ethridge had put a charming little house at her disposal, rent free, there being no really first-class residential hotel in Westland; and there she reveled in the unfamiliar joys of housekeeping and entertained as much as her arduous duties, very sprightly young woman, she had quickly made herself popular.

Through Amos Ethridge she had met Gerald Holmes. She and Gerald were about the same age, but in experience he was much younger than she, and this fact, perhaps, as much as his shyness, his modesty, and his undeniable genius had engendered in her a desire to "mother" him and to help him along. Some men awaken in women an impulse to hover them, and Jerry was one. But not many emotional young women with abundant personal charm can successfully maintain a maternal attitude towards an attractive and magnetic young fellow, no matter how humble and how reverent was his regard at the beginning. There was only one possible outcome to this affair. Gerald fell head over heels in love and, having nothing, he magnificently offered to share it all with her. Hazel had astonished him by accepting. Eagerly, and yet with caution, she became engaged to him; she promised to marry him—some time.

Tonight as Gerald parked his car near the stage entrance of the theatre a few minutes after eleven he experienced his first genuine regret at having permitted himself

Mr. and Mrs. Green Now Have a Horse



NEW ORLEANS . . . Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Green, two daughters and a son of Jena, La., were too proud to go on relief. They had a patch of ground but no horse. During 1934 and 1935 they tilled the soil by "human horse" power, taking turns in twos of pulling the plow in the cotton patch. This year the Rural Settlement Administration heard . . . and supplied a horse. Photo shows Mr. Green, wife and one of the daughters with the horse . . . which neighbors say "is treated just like one of the family."

An Eagle Scout Points To World Peace

The great game of Scouting points the way to world peace according to Eagle Scout Owen W. Matthews, 3rd, an able Sea Scout and Divisional Officer of Regional Sea Scout Flagship "Columbia" and member of Troop 83, Portland, Ore. Matthews is the winner of the Eddie Cantor \$5,000 scholarship prize essay contest entitled "How Can America Stay Out of War?"

One of 212,000 entries submitted, Matthews' whole approach to his subject is based on his two weeks experience camping in a foreign country with 30,000 Boy Scouts from 46 different lands plus the friendships with foreign boys in the years that have followed.

The fourth World Scout Jamboree which Matthews attended as one of the 402 Scouts and leaders from the United States was held at Godollo, near Budapest, Hungary. The four judges—Robert M. Mutchins, President of the University of Chicago; Frederick Bertrand Robinson, President, College of the City of New York; Ray Lyman Wilbur, President Leland Stanford University, and Henry Noble MacCracken, President of Vassar College—based their decision on the quality of "the most constructive, sincere and interesting letter, regardless of fancy writing and technical knowledge."

Matthews, a Veteran Scout, has a Scout record reflecting his leadership qualities. Successively he served his troop as Patrol Leader, Senior Patrol Leader and then Junior Assistant Scoutmaster and he has had extensive experience at Camp Meriwether, the camp of the Portland, Ore. Boy Scouts.

Matthews' winning essay follows: "My idea how America can stay out of war is based on my personal experiences."

"I am an Eagle Scout and have been in Scouting for seven years. Through Scouting and other worthwhile youth movements is the way this can be accomplished."

"The spring of 1933 I heard of the coming Fourth International Scout Jamboree to be held in Godollo, Hungary, and made my plans to attend. I went to the Jamboree and there found my solution for future world peace. While a member of this wonderful Jamboree I learned what true brotherly love meant."

"In Europe wherever we met a person in the Scout Uniform we knew he was our loyal friend and

brother. Although unable to converse with some foreign Scouts, their actions always bespoke friendliness.

"All boys at the Jamboree wanted to be friends and we made new ones every day. By actually living for two weeks with thirty thousand foreign Scouts we learned that they thought and acted just as we did, even though their color and creed might be different. We loved these brother Scouts as much as those in America. Throughout the Jamboree encampment covering many square miles was an attitude of friendliness and good will, no thought of enmity, everyone showing their paramount thought of creating world peace for the future."

"The real benefits from this Jamboree are being manifested as time goes on. I am corresponding with eight Scouts I met at the Jamboree who live in the following countries, Estonia, Luxembourg, England, Austria, Paris, Syria, South Africa and Australia. We exchange stamps, songs, literature and various articles pertaining to our respective countries and thereby continuing our worthwhile friendship. After these contacts how could we ever want to go to war against each other?"

"If the United States government sent picked groups of youth to these international gatherings, expenses paid, it would open the eyes of youth the world over as to the futility of war. Upon their return to America they should deliver lectures in schools and to organizations telling the thoughts of youth in regard to war with other countries. If thought in youth the crime of war, as adults these boys will wholeheartedly disfavor war. Peace gatherings and encampments of youth from all countries will do more to further world peace than adult peace conferences held in some castle or other building."

"Stress the movement for intelligent voting at the polls, to see that the only people sent to Congress are those who will do everything humanly possible to always vote to keep us out of war."

"If we teach our youth of today the crime of taking human life, as in war, they will vote in the future to never leave their own shores to fight against other nations. "Thus America can stay out of war."

"Not exactly a 'good time,' Gerald said, with an effort to speak naturally. "I was too much upset by the news of Mr. Ethridge's death. It must have been a terrible shock to Miss Woods and to all of you."

"Yeah!" Jacob nodded. "It caused quite a stir all over town. 'All Judah did Hezekiah honor at his death.' D'you think they'll ever find out who done it?"

"I hope so. I can't bear to think—you see, he did a great deal for me. He was a real friend."

The HEADLINES Say:



NEW DEAL'S NEW "BIG THREE"—(L. to R.) Dr. Luther H. Gullick of New York; Charles E. Merriam of Chicago; and Louis Brownlow of Washington, D. C., have been named by President Roosevelt to the special committee which will survey the multitudinous new deal agencies to ascertain which shall be scrapped.



BRUSH ON YOUR EYE SHADOW with one of the new gold painted Kurlash eye-beauty brushes. Only in this manner can you achieve the smooth even line that beautifies the eyes and eliminates that hard artificial, stagey appearance. Never, never "smear" on your eye shadow with your finger.



BERMUDA IS THE HOME of the loveliest lilies in the world. Field after field of these glorious flowers bloom throughout the season, and it is now lily time in Bermuda.



TOWNSEND PLAN "RIGHT HAND MAN", R. E. CLEMENTS—founder, secretary treasurer, and director of the Townsend Old Age Pension Plan, tossed a bombshell into the pension ranks when he resigned all his offices.

It is now predicted that within ten years we shall be traveling through the air at the rate of 500 miles an hour.

A Neasho Falls, Wis., mail carrier delivers mail in a hearse. He is not supposed to carry dead letters.

"Swing Your Partner" is a new movie. This is a concrete hint to bridge-playing wives whose husbands trump their aces.

Yearly evaporation is so much greater in the South than two rain drops in the Dakotas equal three in Texas.

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