

LOVE

by MARGARET E. SANGSTER

TENTH INSTALMENT

She raised her hand, holding the glass, toward her lips, but when the hand reached her lips there wasn't any glass in it. For Dick very firmly, indeed, had taken it from her fingers.

"You'll not drink to that toast, Ellen," he said, and he wasn't, now, the same man who had kissed her a moment before. "In fact, you'll not drink to any toast. In fact, you'll not drink at all!"

Tony set down his glass so carefully, upon a table, that it might have been a bomb. He walked across the room rather slowly, and as he came the crowd fell away from him. The man who made the music put his accordion behind him—it was a good accordion, he never risked it!

Tony came across the floor—he came so slowly that it seemed as if he must be tired, and he didn't speak until he was so close to Dick that their coats were almost touching.

"After all," he said, and his chin had an ugly line to it, "taking it by and large, Ellen is married to me, not to you. Whether she drinks, or not, is no business of yours. It concerns us, Ellen and me."

Dick had set Ellen's glass upon a nearby table. It bubbled, all by itself, and where the light struck it, it was golden.

"I should say so, too, old man," he said. "All of the worthwhile things in the world concern only you two, at this moment. But, good God, boy—I'm older than you are, and I'm very fond of Ellen, and when I see you making fools of yourselves—"

"You wouldn't consider it being foolish," Tony asked, "this business of kissing a married woman when her husband was right here? When he'd scarcely had the time—the boy's voice shook suddenly, "to kiss her himself—"

"I'd say it was darn foolish," Dick answered. "I'd say it was a completely dreadful lapse. I'm ashamed of myself, Brander, and I apologize to you and to Ellen. It's only that I'm so fond of Ellen—"

The girl in the white satin frock, who leaned so nonchalantly against the bar, was interrupting.

"Besides," she drawled, "kissing doesn't mean quite so much to you folk who are Bohemians. Love isn't such a staple thing with you. With us—people like Tony and me—it's more important. We don't take sex as a matter of course—"

Ellen's eyes were filling. It was twenty-four hours since she had met Tony, since she had first met him—it was twenty-four lifetimes. She couldn't speak. Neither could Dick, but a white rage possessed him. But Gay, coming forward with an empty, slim stemmed glass in her hand, was protesting.

"I'd like you to know," said Gay, and her face was a saucy gamin's face, "that some of us take sex as it comes, and kisses

as they come. In studios or in front parlors—call 'em drawing rooms, if you like—have it your own way! I've done my kissing early—and so've you, if I can tell anything about it—but Ellen hasn't. Ellen's different from the rest of us. She—her name was Church before she married your boy friend—and the name suited her! Ellen hasn't gone around kissing. She's kept away from that sort of thing. She's the kind that always leaves the party, and goes home early—"

Jane slipped very daintily from her glass. It might have been molten fire that she sipped.

"Still," she said, "it does seem strange, doesn't it? I mean another man giving orders to a girl on her wedding day. Kissing her—on her wedding day!"

"That's the way I feel about it myself," growled Tony.

"Of course, I couldn't have expected that you'd understand," Dick said. He turned on his heel, and then swiftly he turned back again.

"I wonder if you'll agree with me, Brander," he said, "in this, at least! I'd like to tell you that I think Ellen's all in. You know, yourself, that she was crying when you came to my studio, to call for her. She was crying because she was nervously exhausted. That's why I didn't want her to do any drinking—she's never had a drink, you see, in the whole of her life. The poor kid's shot quite to pieces. I think, Brander, that I'd better take her home—"

Claire hadn't said anything for a long time. But she spoke, now. "I told you, Dick," she said, "a while back, that this wasn't your scrap. I'm saying it again. For heaven's sake, lay off this butting in!"

Ellen was sobbing. Round tears were creeping down her cheeks.

"Dick's right," she was sobbing. "I don't want champagne—and I don't want to stay at this party, either. I want to go away from here! Jane, she's right, too. We're different—"

"Thank goodness for that!" said Gay.

Tony was staring at Ellen. She was conscious of the stare, although she wasn't looking at him.

"I want to go away from here," she repeated wildly. "I want to go home."

"After all, if there's any seeing home to be done, I'll do it! After all Ellen's married to me!" said Tony.

"But," Dick's tone was flat, "but man, she acts as if she scarcely knows you!"

Tony's face was an ugly mask. "Whether she acts that way or not," he said, "I'm her husband!" And—

"No matter how I act," said Ellen, "and no matter whether we've been foolish or not—that's beyond the point. Tony's right—he's my husband. He'll take me home."

With her head erect, she walked past Claire, past Gay who had been kind, and Sandy, and even

Jane. She didn't even glance Dick's way as Tony helped her into her coat, and opened the door that led from the Sans Souci to the street.

The streets were quiet. It was later than they, either of them, had thought. Tony drove carefully, until he reached the broad glittering avenue that bisected the city.

"Where to?" he questioned, then.

Ellen's eyes, which were almost inclined to droop with fatigue, opened very wide.

"Why, you know my address," she said. "Take me there."

Tony's voice was cold and hard.

"I suppose you're too innocent to realize," he said, "that people usually go to hotels on their wedding night. This is supposed, you know, to be our honeymoon."

"But," Ellen's voice was neither cold nor hard, "but—how can it be, Tony? We—all evening it's been so strange—all day! We can't be married, just because I'm wearing a ring. I can't be your wife just because—"

"I thought," said Tony, "that my ring was supposed to be enough, as long as my worldly goods went with it—that seems to be the consensus of opinion. And this evening—beginning at the moment I found you in Alven's arms, ending when he kissed you (oh, hang his feeling that you're a little sister!)—seems to prove that you were being as honest, about your emotions, as you said you were!"

Ellen's jaw was clamping down hard.

"As far as Dick goes," she said, "I don't think he acted very much less like a brother than your Jane acted like a sister. I don't see that you've got any special license to talk as you do!"

Tony's jaw, also, was set.

"I guess," he said, "that we'd better go to your room, at that. We've got to talk this thing out, you and I."

They reached her room. It was such a cool, sweet little room that the tears rushed to Ellen's eyes as she switched on the light. She'd bought everything in that room, herself—she'd made the curtains and the daybed cover, she'd painted the furniture. It was such a prim little room—it was virginal, almost. A man like Tony could never understand how much it stood for.

Tony sank down into a deep chair. He sighed, again. This time, however, it was an appreciative sigh.

"It's nice," he said, "when you get here!"

Ellen was removing her hat, and the jacket that she wore. She ran her fingers through her hair.

"Do you know," he said at last, stretching his legs out in front of him, "there's been a lot of excitement and drinking and smoking, but we haven't had anything to eat since luncheon. Maybe we're hungry. Maybe that's what's wrong with us."

Life was like that. It caught you up to the heights of hysteria. It lowered you gently into the calm of homely things.

I could make us fried egg sandwiches," said Ellen. "Behind that screen there is a kitchenette sort of arrangement. I often cook my own supper, and always my own breakfast. There's milk, too!"

Tony wiggled his toes, in their shiny brown shoes.

"That sounds swell," he said. So Ellen retired behind the screen, and it wasn't long before the pleasant sputter of frying—and the even more pleasant odor of melting butter and toasting bread, began to drift from around the screen. Tony sniffed appreciatively.

"We're keeping house already," he called out, to Ellen. It was as if there had never been any melodramatic, ugly scenes.

Ellen called back: "I like this a lot better than the Sans Souci."

And Tony answered: "I'll say I do, too!"

They ate their sandwiches eagerly, and drank their milk, from gayly painted five and ten cent store trays. There were olives, too, and cookies, and preserved peaches. It was like a party—a juvenile sort of a party. Ellen, as she bit into her sandwich, knew that she had been ravenous. Maybe that was what was the matter with them—maybe they had been hungry. Many a truce has been declared over a fried egg sandwich! Many a home has been reunited across preserved peaches and a dish of little cakes.

But even so, there were things to be said—this pleasant interlude couldn't go on forever. As she ate her second cookie, slowly, Ellen wished that the argument might start, so that it would the sooner be over.

Ellen precipitated the crisis. She was always saying things she didn't intend to say.

"Could Jane cook?" she asked. Tony shrugged.

"I wish," she said, "that we might have liked each other, Jane and I. But I'm afraid it isn't possible—"

"That," said Tony, "is the way I feel about Alven. He's a nice guy, and I don't doubt a good artist—but I'm afraid he's out. So far as I'm concerned."

"Dick," Ellen rose and carried her tray away to the kitchenette place, "Dick is so regular, Tony, you must understand that. He'd asked me to marry him, yes. But never—never—has he ever missed me, before this day—you've got to believe that! And he'll never kiss me again, I'm sure—unless I tell him to. You can count on Dick, Tony. Dick is a gentleman."

"And Jane," said Tony shortly, "is a gentlewoman. You can count on her!"

Ellen could have killed herself for saying it, but she couldn't help herself.

"Jane didn't make it very easy for me, tonight," she said. "I didn't think she acted like a gentlewoman, exactly. She gave me a rotten time."

Tony was flushing, but oddly enough, he held his peace.

"I don't think she behaved very well, either," he said. "And I don't know whether or not she was in love with me. Our families were friends—our summer places were adjoining. I'm fond of Jane, too. She rides well and plays a swell game of golf, and tennis, and she can dance."

"I can dance," said Ellen. She offered it babyishly, as an apology because she couldn't ride or play golf or play tennis—

Tony agreed.

"I'll say you can dance," he agreed. All at once he was coming across the little prim room—and then he was on the arm of Ellen's chair, and his arm was around her.

"I'll never forget our first dance together," he said. "Will you—my darling?"

But even as their lips met, Ellen found, herself wondering whether her father had said that.

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE

Having qualified as executor of the estate of E. F. Spainhower, deceased, all persons holding claims against said estate are hereby notified to present the same to the undersigned executor on or before December 10th, 1935, or this notice will be plead in bar of recovery. All persons owing said estate are notified to make prompt payment.

This December 8th, 1934.
A. E. SPAINHOWER.
Executor Estate E. F. Spainhower, Dec'd. 1-14-61.

There will be no more of this sort of thing, and they are all to remember that, Tony. Fifty years—Jane.

(Continued Next Week.)

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North Wilkesboro, Lenoir, Morganton and Asheville Bus Effective December 10, 1934, One Hour Quicker Service to Asheville, N. C.

Lv. 8:00 a. m.	Winston-Salem	Ar. 9:00 p. m.
Lv. 9:30 a. m.	North Wilkesboro	Ar. 6:30 p. m.
Lv. 9:40 a. m.	Moravian Falls	Ar. 6:20 p. m.
Lv. 9:50 a. m.	Boomer	Ar. 6:10 p. m.
Lv. 10:05 a. m.	Kings Creek	Ar. 5:50 p. m.
Lv. 10:30	Lenoir	Ar. 5:35 p. m.
Ar. 11:00 a. m.	Hickory	
Ar. 12:00 m.	Blowing Rock	Ar. 8:45 p. m.
	Boone	Ar. 7:45 p. m.
Ar. 10:45 a. m.	Hartland	Ar. 5:15 p. m.
Ar. 11:00 a. m.	Morganton	Lv. 2:00 p. m.
Ar. 11:40 p. m.	Marion	Lv. 2:00 p. m.
Ar. 1:00 p. m.	Asheville	Lv. 12:45 p. m.

Notice!

1935 License Plates for the Town of North Wilkesboro are now on sale at the Carolina Motor Club office at the Yadkin Valley Motor Company.

Resident owners of automobiles are required to purchase and display the City Plates on their cars along with the State License by January 1, 1935.

W. P. KELLY, Clerk

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