

LOVE

by MARGARET E. SANGSTER

Eleventh Instalment

Tony was standing. "Why," he grated, "must you always bring Jane into it, at a time like this? And if you don't care for me, how can you kiss me?" His voice broke, "as you've

just been kissing me? How, in all decency and fairness?"

Ellen answered. And it would have taken a man far cleverer than the badgered, heart-hungry boy, to know that she was answering the first part of his speech—rather than the last!

"Because," said Ellen, "I'm a fool! That's why!"

Tony was laughing, and in his laughter was hurt pride and injured dignity and a black and blue soul bruise.

"Well," he said, "since you think you're a fool, so soon, perhaps I'd better go away from here. I don't doubt that as long as you don't care a hang, Jane would be glad to see me. I've always talked things out with Jane. She—understands me!"

The old, old come-back. She understands me! Ellen, hearing it for the first time, flinched under it, even though she had precipitated it.

"If he loved me," she said to herself, "he couldn't go. It wouldn't be possible for him to leave me. I was right—if he could go, tonight, to see another woman, why then—"

Poor little Ellen. She was right about herself! She was a fool. Being one, she said—

"I'm sure Jane understands you. By all means go to see her." Tony was reaching for his hat.

ZANE GREY THRILLER BRINGS JACKIE COOGAN BACK



Grown into a tall bronzed and handsome young man, Jackie Coogan of "The Kid" fame, returns to the screen for his first adult role in "Home On The Range" which comes to the Liberty Theatre Thursday and Friday of Christmas week.

"Home On The Range," Zane Grey's newest picture has an outstanding cast of well known names such as Jackie Coogan, Randolph Scott, Evelyn Brent, Fuzzy Knight and Joe Harrison who sings "Home On The Range" to perfection.

"I suppose," he said, "that as soon as I'm gone, you'll phone for Alven. I have no doubt that he understands you as well as Jane understands me."

Ellen was blinking to keep back the tears.

"Dick always leaves his receiver off, in the evening," she said. "He likes to work at night—he doesn't like interruptions. I couldn't reach him by phone," she finished. "That ought to be a comfort to you!"

"So it is," said Tony. He had his hat in his hand. He was fussing with the brim of it.

Ellen was speaking. Out of turn again, but she couldn't help it. Mother or no, she couldn't help it.

"Tony," she said, "believe this. You mustn't think that I phone to men—that I have them come up here, alone, with me at night. Dick stayed just once, after a little party. He stayed to talk about work. Then he asked me to marry him—that was the time. But I sent him right home. I—I've never had any of these sessions, Tony, like last night, and this evening. Except with you. I haven't lived in the city very long. Only three years. I'm—I'm not used to the racket, I suppose. But I've always wanted to keep myself, Tony... for—" she paused. But up over her white little face a heavy flush came creeping.

Tony, fascinated, watched that flush. He saw it cover her chin, redden her very ear lobes.

"Keep yourself," he echoed rather stupidly, "keep yourself—for what, Ellen?"

Ellen's whole heart was reaching out, her hands were reaching out. She couldn't help it.

This was love. This desire to give and give and give...

"To keep myself for my husband, Tony," she answered.

The boy was laying down his hat. He wasn't blinking, any more, but he moistened his lips with his tongue, as if they were

dry, before he spoke.

"You don't want me to leave, do you?" he said, and he was whispering, too. "You would feel badly if I went to Jane, now?"

Ellen was retreating, somehow, before his advance—for Tony was advancing. But she had crossed, for the moment at least, her Rubicon.

"Yes, I would mind," she said. "Just as much as you'd mind if you knew that I were going to stay here, with Dick!"

She was back against the wall, now. But her eyes were lost in Tony's gaze. They were bluer than ever, Tony's eyes. Perhaps because they were wet.

"Darling," said Tony huskily, "you do love me!"

Ellen tried to deny it. To say that she didn't love him. She tried to, but the words in her throat. With her eyes lost in his gaze, with the lovely color staining her childish throat, she nodded. Mutely, but vehemently.

She was held tightly in Tony's arms—so tightly that it hurt, that it left her breathless. Or was it the pounding of her heart that made breathing so difficult?

"Darling," Tony was saying, and his voice seemed to come from ever so far away, "I love you. You're my wife."

Automatically Ellen felt her wedding ring with the thumb of her left hand.

"You're my wife!" Tony was saying. But she couldn't answer now, not the way the walls of the room were closing in, not the way the lights were dancing.

And then the lights had ceased to dance. For Tony's hand, feeling along the wall, had found the electric switch, and the world was all darkness—a sweet, warm, throbbing darkness.

Sanity always comes with the morning. Oh, sometimes it would be better, far better, if it didn't! Life can't just be left to slide along by daylight. Sanity brought Ellen back to earth with a thud. Her eyes were sober as she surveyed Tony, across her little breakfast table.

Tony wasn't sober. Tony wasn't sane. His eyes had a deep warm glow that lay back of them. No, Tony wasn't sober, that was why Ellen found it so hard to say that she felt she must.

For Ellen, this morning, had

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many things to say. Ellen had waked this morning a woman, and all of the fears that are woman's heritage lay on her heart.

Always, to almost every bride, comes a moment of terror. A moment when, looking at her new husband, she asks an age-old question.

"Will it always be like this?" she asks. Even though she knows, in her soul, that no fire can burn at fever heat eternally.

Ellen was asking the same question that every bride asks.

was saying the same prayer, but in her case, it wasn't a question—and it wasn't a prayer. It was a cruel fact that she was telling herself, and telling God, too.

(Continued next week)

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It has been a genuine pleasure to meet the new faces that have greeted us in our work during the past year, and may this link of friendship be strengthened through merit as we continue our endeavors of service wherever and whenever called.

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