

Castle of Contentment

BY LORENA CARLETON

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Ylena's first emotion, when the senior Cromwell exclaimed, "Your houses are on fire!" was one of sympathy for Mr. Cromwell, sympathy so intense that it sickened her. Then, though she fought against it, she experienced guilty feelings of relief. Perhaps now, they would be allowed to build their own places, far she hoped feverishly, from Diane and her pompous husband.

Mr. Cromwell was grief-stricken. "If I never be asked, they are no fire fighting facilities yet." A fresh worry beset him. "Say, the fire will be long business." "I'm glad I'm sick in bed," Tate observed with bitter humor, "for I probably get blamed for setting it on fire with a cigaret."

The despairing ejaculations of the senior Cromwell kept on, with his wife trying to comfort him. Percy and Diane walked around, without purpose, talking frantically about the fire. Davy got out his fire engine and raced it all around the terrace. It was a moment, both hilarious and dreadful. Ylena scarcely knew whether to laugh at the folly or cry over Mr. Cromwell's acute distress. Drawn by morose curiosity, he and Percy left to have over the intervening ten miles and glimpse the death of team edifices. Mrs. Cromwell and Diane remained at home with Ylena and her convalescent fiancé. Sara Cromwell was weeping openly. Diane also looked exceedingly unhappy.

"I don't intend to worry," declared Tate. He turned to Ylena. "You were right. It was too far out all the time. You and I are going to have a place nearer town, something less like a mausoleum. It was then—Ylena's eyes filled with tears—tears of pleasure, not sorrow—over the loss of a home she never had wanted. Tate brushed her hands with his mouth and kissed her with warm fervor. "And we're not going to build for a house to get married. That's positively pre-historic. We're going to be married as soon as I get up from here, which probably will be less than a week. I feel that."

It was nearer a month. Meanwhile Terrence Alkire had returned, Tish also from her Hawaiian jaunt. The nights suddenly were crisp. Ylena realized with astonishment that it was fall again, and wondered dazedly where the over-ripe summer had raced. After the hot weather hill, that interval so dead in a tourist town, the winter rush gathered momentum and was in full sway as the first freezing weather touched the east.

Tate completely recovered and more fascinatingly good looking than ever with the slight shadows beneath his deep blue eyes, made his first visit to the shop at the identical hour that Barker returned. In the keeper's arms were parcels, crammed with material. For a minute interval after her arrival Ylena excused herself for a private word or two, leaving Tate in the workshop with Francis. Without a quail of fear, she convulsed herself. Nevertheless, she hurried back, and her heart beat normally again when she discovered the two completely at ease, Francis still working. Tate looking at a new picture weekly.

It's all over! It's all over! Ylena exclaimed. She leaned to kiss her fiancé. "Oh, darling, I'm so happy to have you well again."

He stretched his arms above her to where she was leaning over the back of his chair. "Ylena, don't think I'm not happy! There's been too much time lost already. I'm glad it's almost the middle of the year for Lord's sake! Let's get a date and stick to it, house or no house, fire or no fire—"

"Sick or no sick," the blond girl inserted gently. "Even if I'm in my wheel chair, I'll be with you. Now, when Ylena thoughtfully she tapped her fingers on the table, she told him that she would have to have some clothes."

Tate groaned. "I sometimes think I'm superhuman the way I can take torture." He gave her a grin, half pleasant and half disgusted. "Hurry it up, Ylena. Then let me know, because Pop and Mom want to stop a big party the night before a big sort of delayed engagement party."

When Ylena realized it was almost the holiday season again before her plans were in readiness, she was astounded. But there had been so many necessary preparations. Not only shoes, dresses, hats, trousseau, but also—small things that were important—visits of congratulation to Aunt Daisy, up to Road Hamilton's ranch, and to Terrence Alkire.

The Cromwell dinner for her son and his young fiancée, a dinner more like a banquet, was given at one of the private dining rooms of the La Madera club and was a fair of flower garlands, elaborate ice-carved centerpieces, and caviar and fruit, a table with towering sugar confections, and musicians playing waltzes and champagne.

"It's more like a wedding than a dinner," Ylena commented to Tate.

"That's what it is, actually, in conception before the wedding. I'm sure this. It's more like a party, and I like parties, but I don't like to have one of these after a wedding. Tomorrow morning, you go to the church for a quiet ceremony, catch the plane for San Francisco, and get on the liner for the Islands." He smiled into her starry green eyes. "At last I can believe it's true." He stared at her for a second. She was wearing pale green velvet and a Juliet cap of pearls. "Have I told you tonight how gorgeous you are?"

"Only once," Ylena said with mocking desperation. The girl on his other side demanded his attention rather forcefully. Ylena heard him condemn tolerantly. "You've had too much champagne, my sweet," before she turned to the man next to her. Someone she did not know. Presumably whom she knew, she sharply questioned, casting her gaze about the several large tables. There must be at least 150 guests, and with the exception of her family-to-be she knew not one of them beyond a casual way. It could be, she thought with a dinner of humor and instantly was ashamed, a small red scar on her cheek. The conversation centered largely of shop talk.

After dinner the evening became more exciting. The string quartet gave way to a dance band. The other dining room was full of

young people, their music and excitement. She leaned to kiss her fiancé. "Oh, darling, I'm so happy to have you well again."

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CHAPTER THIRTY

Ylena promised Vernon Stone she'd come, replaced the receiver, and sat for a short interval lost in brooding thought. Then suddenly she began to tremble. It was her first moment for when she had been waiting. At last she was going to see Charlie. Mrs. Vinton's call by Stone and Stone's answer, her assurance she could mean no harm, she

She hurried to her feet and ran to her bedroom, straggling out of the quilted house coat she must dress, she pulled back, she must make reservations. Instead she walked into Charlie's bedroom, with its circumspect ceiling and white canopy bed with the double ruffled spread. She moved to the fireplace and touched with loving fingers the various dolls perched on the mantel. Happy tears blinded her.

From that room she stumbled back into her closet and rapidly searched her clothes for a travel dress, something warm—that pearl-gray wool jersey. Her hand stopped as if controlled by strings. Her eyes had fallen upon the divetyn and gray squirrel wedding suit. Zipping herself into the warm jersey dress, she sped to the telephone and dialed Tate's private number to the muffled telephone beside his bed, but received no answer. In a few minutes she tried again, unsuccessfully.

Next, she made her reservation, then rushed back and forth, nervously packing her airplane luggage, calling Tate's number at regular intervals. Finally, she called the Cromwell residence and was told by Percy's grumpy voice after he had looked in Tate's room. "He's not here. The bed is still made."

"I must see him as soon as possible," Ylena stressed. The worried note in her voice brought new joy to the life of the sleepy Percy O'Neil. "Tate isn't the sort to leave a good party before he's had his fill. You might as well be learning that. He's probably back at the club."

But she said he wanted to get home. She ceased, realizing that her perturbation was causing Percy entirely too much grief. Briefly she murmured, "Thank you," and rang off. She lost no time putting in a call to the La Madera club. "Please don't call Mr. Cromwell to the telephone just tell me if he is there."

Immediately the waiter reported, "Yes, Mr. Cromwell rejoined his party about an hour ago."

The blond girl thanked him and looked at her jeweled watch. Three o'clock. About an hour ago. Right after he had brought her home and headed, so she had thought, toward his own home. Swiftly she put on a fleecy white robe and wrapped her curls in a white turban. "No, rather, rather drive her home."

the last as it stopped before the club building. On the street far a crowd of people, a large number of which were guests from the Cromwell party; others were early delivery boys and hat-stragglers. All were pushing upward and longing. Ylena quickly stepped from the car and looked upward, but she did not laugh. Even at that distance, from the sidewalk to the roof-top of a ten-story building, she recognized Tate.

From an inconspicuous rope, made of black ties from the men's dinner suits, and several women's silk stockings, he was letting down a bottle of champagne. Someone in the sidewalk party would take a drink, then Tate would yank it out of reach, let it down again teasingly—lower, lower, lower—an inch at a time, until another fortunate person would get his drink. Those maneuvers were repeated several times. Rooting friends stood back of Tate in the wide window, encouragingly showing a second bottle to the people in the street.

"Where are the police?" she inquired of her cab driver, but he did not answer. He was excitedly hopping over, after his own free drink. Ylena made a leap for the building and entered the private elevator, reserved for club members. Upstairs, she had pretty much of a fight getting through the crowd around the window but finally reached Tate and tugged angrily at his arm.

He was quite intoxicated. "Darling," he exclaimed with delight, and threw both arms about her. Ylena had a vivid picture of what had happened to the partially lost bottle of wine he had been hoisting. In a barely audible voice she pleaded, "Let's get out of here, Tate."

Members of the gathering who had given way as she battled to reach Tate, now surged forward again with persistent cries to continue the fun. Ylena felt suffocated. Tate tried to get Tate to leave. If she could get him away from this yelling, howling crowd, perhaps she could make it clear about Vernon Stone's telephone call and how imperative it was that she go to New York immediately. Still Tate might not understand. He, unobviously, was in an extremely foggy condition. She made one more attempt at gentle coercion, but Tate unceremoniously pushed her aside as he accepted in high good humor, the second bottle of champagne.

"Darling," he took time to say, "I'm celebrating my wedding." Gingerly he let the fresh bottle of wine slide over the window ledge. Welcoming cries rose from the street participants. The girl said in a voice of sold granite, "Tate, I have to go to New York in less than six hours and I'd like to tell you why."

He had a hard time focusing his eyes. With a limp pointing finger he motioned a friend to take hold of the bottle string then, both arms free, tried to pull Ylena into his arms. But she wrenched away from him.

They were the only passengers in the elevator. Frazon with rage and humiliation, Ylena remained silent. She wouldn't even look at Tate. When they reached the street, a roar surged inward from the crowd, as if a prize-fighter had made his entrance into the arena. Tate grinned appreciatively. The girl walked in still displeased toward the last.

Before she could step into it, Tate snatched her arm in a firm hold. His handsome face was puffy and swollen. "What are you doing in this rattling taxi cab? Get into my car."

"Oh, no! I'm not riding with you, Tate. You've had too much to drink! She crawled into the cab. Tate got in beside her. "Where's that driver?" he demanded. He stretched one leg across the seat and stepped on the back button, just leaving his toe there until, with enraged and abusive words, the cabman came running toward his vehicle. Tate subsided then, and they started moving.

Ylena gave instructions. "Go back to where you picked me up—drive slowly." Give me time enough, she meant, to force Tate's brain to respond. "I won't stand for it!" he declared with vicious vehemence. His voice was muffled and childishly inarticulate, yet completely hateful. "This is our wedding morning—you can't walk out on me. You've done it before, but this time I won't stand for it!"

No matter what she said his argument was the same. He blazed her for her treachery. No matter what she suggested—that it was a matter of a scant few days—that he go with her—his answer was the same. He was completely mollish, completely unreasonable, completely mean.

At last Ylena left him, still slouching and mauling in the cab, and went up to her apartment. To herself she said, "I don't believe he realizes I'm leaving. I don't believe he heard one word I've said."

In early morning, not wishing to cause Aunt Daisy—Scott also—the alarm she and on her other impromptu New York trip, she telephoned Scott's lovable little plump aunt, telling her all details, asking her to relay the information to Scott.

As the hours went on, she knew with a heavy-hearted certainty that Tate had not understood one word of her plight.

But when she reached the airport she knew better. There he sat in his sport coupe, slum and silent, blue eyes dark as night. When he didn't even get out of the car, the blond girl left Barker, who had driven her out, and walked over to him.

"So you're really gone?" His lashes were knitted over antagonistic eyes. She nodded sheepily. Tate said, "All right. Then get that so help me, Ylena, did a one you sorry!"

(To Be Continued)



Joseph Clark Grew Relations between the United States and Japan reached the breaking point following a long conference between U. S. Ambassador Joseph Clark Grew and Japanese Foreign Minister Admiral Toyoda in Tokyo. Grew is expected to have warned Toyoda that American pressure will be intensified unless Japan makes fundamental changes in her foreign policy.

Explains Oil Crisis



James A. Moffett The oil shortage in the eastern United States is due to British inefficiency, according to James A. Moffett, of New York, who was World War secretary of the National Petroleum War Service Committee. He explained that Britain's failure to send oil at the nearest source of supply was responsible for the tanker shortage that forced her to appeal for U. S. tankers, leaving this country without adequate transport facilities. (Central Press)

For Wider Tax Base



Edward A. O'Neal Appearing before the Senate Finance Committee in Washington, Edward A. O'Neal, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, numbering more than 3,000,000 members, urged lowering income tax exemptions from \$500 to \$100 for single persons and from \$2,000 to \$1,000 for married couples.

Quizzed in Beating



Leila Hyams Near death in San Diego (Cal.) Naval Hospital, Marine Ralph Kolberg told police he was "gagged up on" and beaten into insensibility at a cocktail party in the Hollywood home of Phil Berg, actor's agent, and Berg's actress-wife, Leila Hyams. When he regained consciousness, said Kolberg, he "heard people talking about what to do with the body."

It's Swell, But It Isn't Cricket



C. P. Phonograph Touring the great cities of the United States to see how American fire departments function. District Officer Daniel G. Ivall of the London Fire Brigade is shown (center) as he engaged his first baseball game. With him at Comiskey Park, Chicago, are Deputy Fire Marshal Anthony J. Mullaney (left) of Chicago and Chief Daniel Doug of New York.

Learning How to Stop a Tank



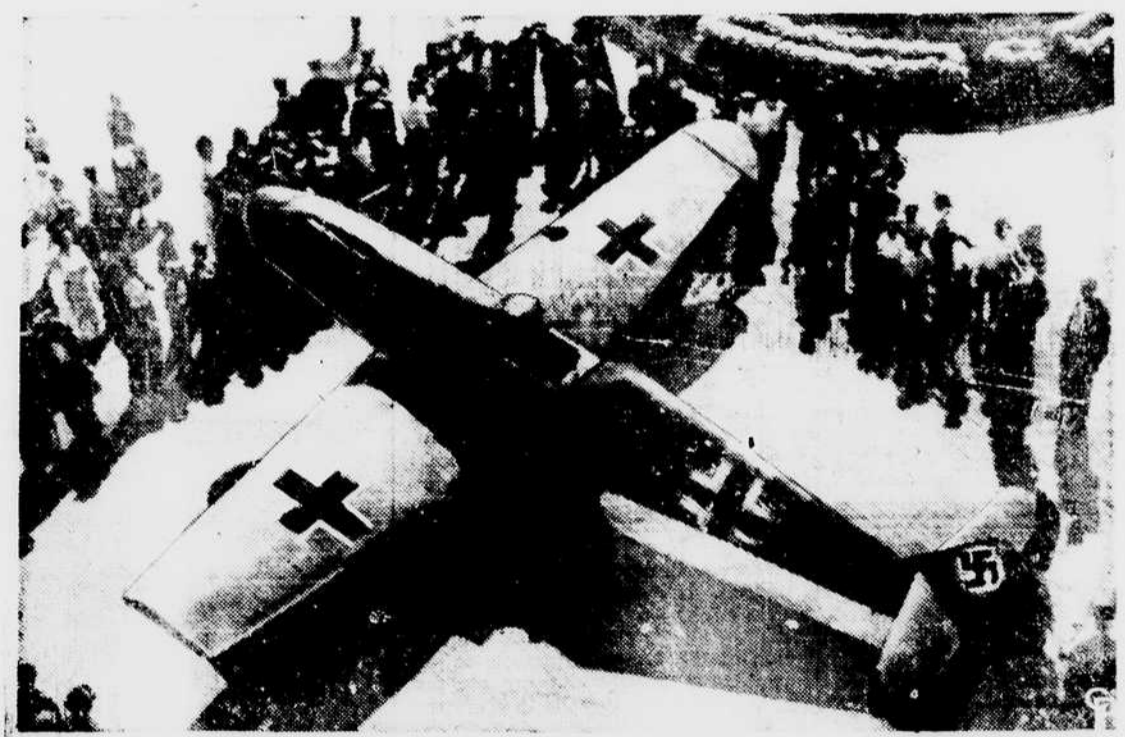
Soldiers of the Third Infantry Division's new Anti-Tank Battalion at Fort Lewis, Wash., learn the art of destroying the mechanical monsters of war with "Molotov cocktails." Emerging from their foxholes, they have hurled fire bombs at the towed tank, setting it ablaze. (Central Press)

Relief Head in U.S.



Bertram Gruger Bertram Gruger, head of the British war relief in Great Britain, arrives by clipper plane at New York. After a short stay in the United States to confer with Aid Britain organizations, he will return to London.

A German Plane Reaches Leningrad



C. P. Radiophoto According to the official Russian caption with this photo, which was flashed by radio from Moscow to New York, residents of Leningrad are shown looking over a captured Nazi plane which has been placed on exhibition in the main square of the city.

NOAH NUMSKULL

IS YEW GREENE I HOPE THIER'S NUTS IN PERIPHERAL IN THE EYE

TIME TAKE OUR SHIRTS LEAVE ON THE HOUR

DEAR NOAH IS YEW GREENE THE YEAR AROUND?

DEAR NOAH IF AN OLD BAT GOES ON A BAT DOES HE USE A BASEBALL BAT?

DEAR NOAH WILL MOTHS EAT THE JACKETS OFF OF POTATOES?

NOAH NUMSKULL

LET THE LOCK SOVEREIGN SEE NOW A GUY

DEAR NOAH WOULD YOU SAY A PERSON LOCKED IN AN ICE-BOX WAS CONFINED IN THE COOLER?

DEAR NOAH IF YOUR WIFE KEEPS YOUR NOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE, IS THAT THE NEXT THING TO WHETTING YOUR APPETITE?

NOAH NUMSKULL

THEY RIDDLED THAT SCREEN

DEAR NOAH DOES THE SCREEN BECOME WORN FROM MOVING PICTURES?

DEAR NOAH IS THE SORENESS OF A SCORE THROAT SORE BECAUSE IT GOT A FAW DEAL?

IT'S JUST FOR FUN-NO BOX TOPS, NO PAY-SEND IN YOUR IDEAS-SEE YOUR NAME IN PRINT-MAIL TO 'DEAR NOAH'