

Ninth Installment

The Story so far: Jeyed Ashton, peor stenographer, in a skidling taxonab accident in Chicago, suffered loss of memory. Two years later she woke one meeting after a fall from her horse to find herself, under the name of Frills, merried to find Packard, rich California freit pracker. From letters in her desk she learned a mething about her life in the two-year haterval, and realized that she had been a heart-less, reckless young woman and that she is seriously involved in an affair with a man named Maitland. She decided that at all costs she would end it, but she found Maitland hard to manage. Her troubles were further complicated when she read a letter referring to a baby—was it hers?—that the writer, Sophie, thought Frills ought to have with her. Much to the surprise of Sam, in her busband's employ, she asked for a dog and he got her one. NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

Shortly after ten o'clock Sam brought the car to the front door and stowed away her two spite as. The bank teller at the land greeted

her with a learned state. "Good morning, Mrs. Packar i. Say, that was reast little tumble you to k. How do you teel

"Oh, Um all right," retilied Joyce hastily. She puried her cheek is at him and sto if on tiptor with breathlers impatience while he deliberately counted out the meacy. Then she seized it, thenked him always and almost ran out to the car acqui.

When they were well out of the town, humming swiftly thoughthe arrother reads, layer it have notes us hear typescale under the steaming of an irrestably regrains pictor adventue. This was point to be turn, say reflected

by reselved from Promise chast n Carthaga p Had har San with aled feet to ever be and room As some as she was invalid by the closely the remaining the Y W. C. A building she proceeded invasible by to carry out her plan of acid

The days pissed rapidle. In the structions in driving a co. In these drives, much to bee surprise, she had little trouble in learning to bracile a

day look ' for all to be all will be at greater thatme.

Chinese restaurants, and, her interest aroused, she set out to explore these

ner, pleasanth weary after a day of riding and driving the car. Dreamy and contented, she presently

wandered out of the restaurant, to re-alize a moment later that she had left her book on the table. She retraced her

Joyce sat down, her embarrassment vanishing. She felt at home with this man, as if she already knew him well enough to be casual about the meeting. Why should she feel that with a man at her with such informal friendliness that Joyce thought he must, surely, be a friend of Frills Packard. And yet— and yet—he was so unlike the Manzan-ita men! She stared at him, frankly

He was much taller and looked almost as young as Neil. She guessed his age as about thirty-one or two. A splendid physique undoubtedly, with wide shoulders and strong arms. As for his face, the details of it impressed themselves on Joyce so strongly in the first few minutes of their meeting that she

felt she would never lose the picture.
"I'm afraid I'm not altruistic enough
to give the book to you," laughed Joyce, "Robert Ainsworth is one of my favorite authors, and I've wanted to get hold of this book for years, but never

could. It's out of print, you know—"
The little Chinese waitress, subtly
smiling, approached. "Some tea?" she

Joyce rose hastily. "No, no, I must

"Then I'll go with you," he said at

were largely hers. He agreed eagerly sudden sense that he was making fun of her, and for the first time she felt a slight hostility toward him. She could not bear her admiration for Ainsworth,

whom she considered so gifted a writer,
Hastily getting her bearings, she discovered that they had gone in a circle
and were again near the Y. W. C. A.

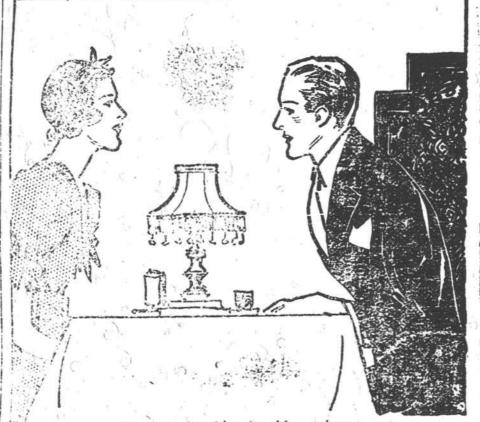
"Good-bye," she said "and it's been said good-bye to her friends, and

great fun talking with you. I'm only | started out for the West of which she sorry you don't-quite-feel as I do had, to be frank, only the vaguest about Robert Ainsworth. Under the general knowledge. circumstances, 1 shall have no compunctions about claiming my book!"

"()); dot 1 do share your enthusiasm!" He bawed somewhat meckingly, and held up the book. "But you will let me sign the little sketch?" He propped it, slowly, meticulously; waved it about with maddening deliberation to blot the ink; then handed it to her, closed.

As she lay in her bed in the Y. W. C. A., Joyce smiled and frowned alter-nately at the thought of how her plan

had turned out. and held up the book. "But you will let me sign the little sketch?" He propped the book up on his knee, and wrote in that ended her solitary campaign to fit herself for taking the position of Frills Packard again. The morning mail enclosed a laconic telegram from Neil: "Arrive Manzanita Mondey evening." "Good-bye, Miss ——?"
"Arrive Manzanta Mondey evening.
"Joyce Ashton," she said without This was Monday morning. Joyce im-



the stored at him, frankly curious.

The reliant this has med the granes. by a constraint of call a liner. the search is the trises " to the etc. The added.

I want all the the was wright, in taken be; there had been a small fire

On the way home she questioned him

mediately got Sam on long distance

and asked him to drive to the city for

with force I interest about all that had schine.

She spinishe effect on ridge and blittle ridge as with the property in the intermediate when news he could be left that at paid the property of the p I'm each by page about Imprened in her absence. Sam obligthe land to be a first every day of the was raring page and Mrs. Packard would find her

roused, she set out to explore these can was inecitable that Joyce should listened with an interest that grew in xotic places.

One evening she went there for diagrams the days that it is used. She Dickie was at the gate to meet them was an emakeral pick of warm, and his joyons welcome filled Joyce stander adhistres and Robert Ains- with a quite disproportionate sense of worth won her in angled admiration; the pleasure of coming home. But when That she should ever acce him ball not entere ther will lest decome. In fact, had she been introduced to him, she

A man was sitting at the table she had occupied, and she was disconcerted to find that he had picked up her book. "I say, is this yours?" He was on his feet in an instant. "Please sit down. I want to talk to you about it. This is really very extraordinary—"

Loves set down, her ambagrasspant. as at least intelligent enough to talk to

It had been such a relief to shed the mantle of Frills Packard and discuss with frankness the things that she, Joyce Ashton, was interested in, that she'd never seen before? He grinned she knew she had been unusually vivacious and lacking in shyness. Apparently, however, Ainsworth had been no more than casually interested. He had left her without protest, and he had made no effort to see her again. He had not despised her intelligence, but he ha-1 been indifferent to her femininity! All at once Joyce found this somewhat

> Days went by and Joyce drifted on until one day she drew her thoughts up sharply. She had allowed herself to grow forgetful of her situation, to visualize Frills Packard as a separate person, and to consider herself as detached from Neil and Mait and the whole life in Manzanita. Little as she had grown used to it, Frills was her-self! Frills' husband was her husband!

> Neil Packard: her husband. Neil, whom she had no more than barely spoken to, but on whose bounty she had been so lavishly living: here was problem enough to occupy her. More and more the subject of his return grew on her as a formidable reality.
>
> Joyce had time during these two weeks to wonder about the friends she

once, thrusting a bill in the hand of the little Chinese girl, and following Joyce, who was a little bewildered but Joyce, who was a little bewildered but think about her? She had been secretary to one of the members of the Lywards firm of advertising agents. glowing with pleasure.

They walked for over an hour, and Joyce discovered that her new friend had read nearly every book that had been written, and that his enthusiasms peared to recognize the fact that she might have a life outside of the office. might have a life outside of the office. At the end of three years of this sort with her opinions of Robert Ainsworth, whom, he said, he "revered above all other moderns." He praised Ainsworth the city and the monotonous routine of so lavishly in fact, that Joyce had a ker days, from the early morning scramble for her turn in the bathroom to the evening crush in the crowded,

stuffy trolley cars. Joyce had made a sudden desperate decision to get out of it all and try some other part of the country. Recklessly she gave up her position, sold her few Liberty Bonds, bought a and she therefore led their steps in that ticket for San Prancisco with stopover privileges at Chicago and Denver. Continued Next Week

One day she overhead some girl in 'to exceed the transited handwriting, 'at the preking plant but almost no dimage had been done; and so on, a list of trivial items to which Joyce

she entered the big luxurious bedroom the was struck for the first time by the would have been tongue-tied, covered with the confusion of awe. Even look-ing lack on their grants are look-ing lack on their grants are look-ing lack on their grants.

She unpacked hurriedly and had a bath, careful to take a negligee in with her and to lock the bathroom door. It was horrible to feel that at any moment a strange man might enter that edroom, and that she could not order

n out! Suppose he came before she nished dressing! In a panic she jumped out of the bathtub and dried herself hastily.

She dressed in the huge closet, thankful that its size made this possible, and was completely ready before seven-

Dickie followed her downstairs and they went through the front door together. Just as they stepped outside a big blue touring car came up the driveway. Joyce felt a curious tightening in her throat as she recognized Neil

"Hullo there, darling, how've you been?" cried Packard, jumping out of the car. "I was hoping you'd write again. It was great to get that letter from you." He came up with a broad, eager smile on his face and bent over her. Joyce forced herself to lift her face obediently for his kiss, but moved away hastily to prevent a second.

"You were lucky to get even one," she said lightly, but her heart thumped so hard it made her breath come short. "Look, who's here! Dickie, speak to

"So that's your new dog, is it? Hullo, feller, you're a cute cuss, all right. Come here, boy!" Dickie was quite ready to make friends, for he appeared to regard every man in the light of a potential playmate. He began now a little eager whining interspersed with short barks.

"That means he wants you to throw a stick for him," she explained, "he has one great passion in life, and that's to be given something to worry and run

away and play tug-of-war with."
Her voice faltered a little at the end when she looked up and met the puzzled expression on Packard's face.

"Dinner's almost ready," she went on hastily, abandoning Dickie as a topic of conversation, "you haven't had any, have you?"

"No, and I'm hungry as a bear. Hope Marcia's got something good for us. Who's here tonight?"

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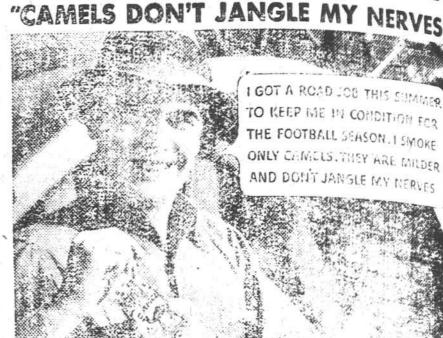
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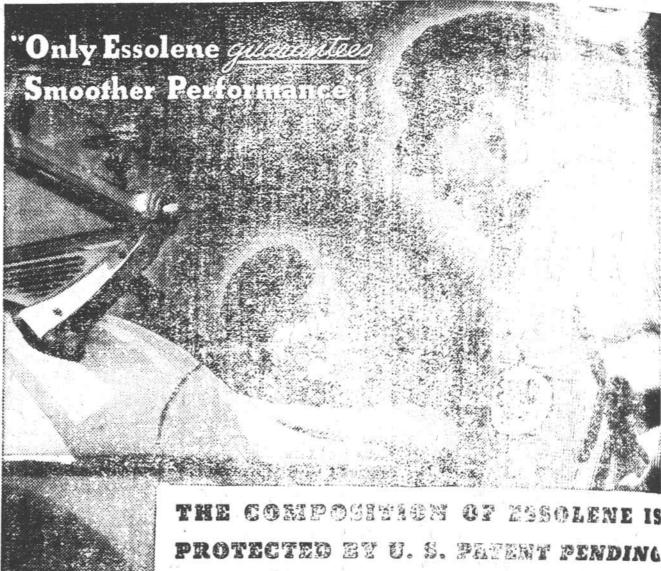
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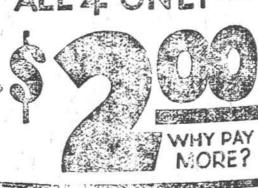
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