almost lorgot it was Ed who was taking her about, that it was Ed who was pulling strings to land her father the Federal Judgeship, that it was Ed her mother had told her to marry. When she remembered at last she felt lonely in the crowds that had once thrilled

when Mother had miraculously found a title for her. Of course, Grace and Gwenn weren't happy but Grace had married money and Gwenn was a Countess and Mother said, "Now Marcia, if I can just get you married to Ed Stafford, I'll feel that my work in this world will be And she began to wonder just why she was trying to marry Ed. She didn't love him. His money? Well—maybe. But, most of all, she thought, it was obedience. No daughter in the history of the family ever disobeyed in the matter of marrying. Grace hadn't disobeyed when Mother had come streak-ing to her with Tony Lee, the wealthy Virginian. Gwenn hadn't disobeyed

to warm the frost that had settled on her heart. Then Ed was sweeping her into the ballroom. And, finally, she was alone in the lofty solarium, hardly know-ing why, except that Ed had claimed the wife of an important attache for a Even dance. The important attache, being not so diplomatic, had led an Ambassador's wife out onto the floor. And Marcia, in her white with her cornflower eyes and her tip-tilted nose and her golden curls, had been overlooked. the admiral's welcoming hand falled SUDDENLY Marcia felt chilly.

Eastern station. She stood there tren fighting a nostalgia for Kentucky; for Mammy, who called her "honey chile" and told her "doan you be no jelly-fish lak dat Grace and Gwenny. Effen you falls in lub, honey chile, grab yo' man. Doan marry no white trash fer money. Marcia gazed absently at a palm Admiral Demarest had found on a Far

Some one was beside Marcia now.

Some one said in a husky voice: "You must be a botanist. You've been staring at that palm for ten minutes."

Marcia looked quickly around. Her thick dark lashes winked excitedly. Her

little

The blond young man was tall and lean, his features alive and sensitive. His was a bronze that comes of following She thought, "Ed would call him a waste of time." For Ed chose his friends not neart but because they were rich, powerful, human steps in the ladder of sucthe sun or from healthy forbears. Marcia looked at the expensive but worn drawn to them by his dress suit. She discredited the sun. heart rolled over with a queer to follow the sun because he was took money thump.

The young man went on grinning.
"And what about dancing? I'm no
Astaire. But I get around."
Marcia said gayly: "So I see." But
her mind eried out, "Careful, Marcia,

Peter's lean face, his solemn eyes, the little muscle twitching on his firm jaw. She remembered suddenly how lonely she had felt for weeks and that with Peter, oddly, she didn't feel lonely at all. She touched his arm, her blue eyes bright. She said: "Peter, let's skip out. There must be a back stairs, an unobservable escape!"

There was, and presently Marcia was in Peter's little roadster at the roadside diner and they were eating their way THE dance ended with a crashing cymbals and Marcia stood looking

Marcia said lightly,

diner and they were eating their way through two thick, pungently fragrant beefers. They were having a swell time Peter talked a lot of nonsense. "You are an idiot!" Marcia laughed. "Your column must be a scream."

a 10-cent tip on the tray. His blue eyes twinkled. "It's the Rockefeller in me." he said soberly and started the car. "Where are we going?" "To the Lincoln Memorial," said Peter, He chuckled, paid the waiter, tossed

gayly. "And don't say I don't know now to show a girl a lavish time."

The memorial was lovely in the moonlight. Peter parked the car and caught Marcia by the hand and led her up the broad white marble steps. As they broad white marble steps. As they passed by the double columns and came up before the giant figure in its colossal chair, Peter stopped and turned and looked at Marcia. He said, even "It's serene, isn't it? And it's a symb ism. It is my Washington - the quife that flows beneath the brittle, feve ish, bubbling city that you know a which so few real Washingtonians do.

"Peter, Washington. Marcia faced him, illumined. I'd like to see your you take me?"

face. It was with an effort that almost hurt that he didn't touch her. He thought: "She has the loveliest mouth in the world. I could kiss it forever." Then he said, aloud: "Great! We'll eyes moved dark and secret over her face. It was with an effort that almost For one second Peter looked at Marcia as a young man looks at a girl wants to kiss for the first time. begin tomorrow."

If Peter took her to have boeuf at L'Escargot one day, Ed took her to a fashionable hotel for cocktails the next. If Marcia and Peter sat on high stools at the Newspaperman's Club on a Mon-THEY did. And Marcia began dividing the days between Ed and Peter day, Marcia and Ed sat at a sm luncheon on a Tuesday. Marcia a a Tuesday. Marcia a moon at midnight fr the steps of the Memorial; Marcia a Ed saw it through the windows of country club, an Embassy, a Legation. Peter saw the

January, February and March Ed had complained about the days when he was not permitted to see Marcia. He had taken her in his arms and said: "Don't use feminine wiles or me, Marcia. I won't get tired of you Let me see you every day."

She had said: "But I can't take Thus passed.

chances. Absence makes the heart ... And that had pleased him. And so yesterday, which was April first, she had gone the rounds with Ed. Today was

browsed around antique shops, fingering hobnail pictures, sitting on rickety Hitchcock chairs. Marcia bought a wigstand dated 1777 and a pot-bellied kettle on a crane. Peter said: "Well, our hopechest is begun." And he bought a biglegged iron skillet for an open fire. He said, grinning: "Very useful in our house, Marcia. Just lie on the floor and hold this over the flame." He grinned again. "Picturesque, too!" They Peter took her to Alexandria.

Peter! Lovely!" Peter smiled. He said: "But the plumbing, Marcia! Did you ever take a bath in a tin tub?" "Mercy, no!" "Don't be superior! George Washing-Georgetown was as Colonial as Alex-andria and Marcia cried: "Oh, lovely,

ton did!"

L street then—a narrow elm-shaded street. They pulled up in front of a rambling brick mansion with tall white pillars. Peter's face became oddly serious. He sat silent for a long while. THEY turned into a deserted cobbled

Finally he said: "Marcia, twelve Blains were born in that house. Lafayette visited the first. A man with a foreclosure visited the last. Blain House went out of our family two generations ago. But I'm going to get it back. I don't know how—or when. Only that I am." He turned then and looked at her. He finished, huskily, "I want to live there, Marcia. I want our sons to live there... yours, Macia... mine. Our descendants."

Marcia's eyes widened, her heart pounded crazily. She said, "Peter take me home!" But Peter didn't move. He just sat there looking deeper into Marcia's wide eyes, his own matching their gravity. And then with a little groan

cia, I'm telling you I love you—and you act—as if it were funny." "Mar-He cried out, he crushed her to him. Peter's face paled. H

her heart was aching and tears were stinging under lids, she laughed again. "But it is funny, Peter." she said, cruelly. "I never dreamed that you thought of me like this." Because it wasn't funny at all, because

eyes. He caught her shoulders in his tight grasp. He looked hard into her face. "You kissed me with your heart on your Did you think I couldn't me." She saw the hurt that sprang into his You love

When he spoke again he was trying desperately to smile. His said: "Darling, if you don't mind, I think I shall go right

on being in love with you. Not that I could stop if I tried. . .. Marcia closed her eyes. Suddenly she

"Try hard, Sandy, darling." And Sandy burped. He nearly took the roof off. Marcia laughed "Well, it may be necessary even if it is not in books on etiquette"

She said: "Take me home now, Peter. Please." felt utterly tired.

A PRIL and half of May came and went white poured into the house. Father's asthma and the humid Spring made it impossible for him to stay in Washington, so he returned to Kentucky, giving up all thought of the Judgeship. Marcia in a blaze of parties for the affi-anced couple. Gifts wrapped in crisp and her mother spent days shopping for

Marcia had seen Peter twice since that afternoon when he had taken her in his arms: in the gallery of the House and at the movies. Both times she had been with Ed, and once Peter had been with a blonde girl who looked enough like him to be his sister. Peter had a sister, she knew. Vasthy happy—married. Peter had said: "You'll like Janet and George. They ooze happiness. On about 150 bucks a month, too." But she hadn't n.et the Randolphs and now she supposed she never would.

It was 3 o'clock on the afternoon that the dressmaker was fitting Marcia's wedding gown that Peter telephoned. When she heard his voice her own became breathless. She said, "Peter!"

Peter said: "Look here, Marcia. Janet and George had to go to Richmond today on business. They left me to take care of the baby. A big story has broken on the Hill. I've got to cover it. Marcia, come down and watch Sandy for an hour

or two, will you?"

Marcia said, "But Peter . . !"

"You won't have to do anything," said Peter. "Sandy's only 3 months old. He's a schedule baby. He won't wake up until 6. I'll be back by then. Please, Marcia." Marcia said all right and when she reached the Randolph apartment lookaing almost like a child Lerself in a little blue knitted suit, Peter waved her into the bedroom. He said, "You were a peach to come." Then he was gone and Marcia was standing there by the crib try-ing not to think how tall and handsome

Sandy was asleep on his stomach and Marcia could see nothing of him above the sheet but little yellow duck tails on the back of his neck. But Sandy smelled good. He smelled like powder and faint indescribably sweet flowers. Marcia sat Jown beside the crib and waited.

At exactly 6 o'clock Sandy began waking up with much stretching of his
chubby arms and his legs and a wide
toothless grin. Skin like a slow-turning
peach, eyes like big blue grapes. Sandy
looked at Marcia gravely. Marcia said: "Sandy, I never saw so many chins. How

I did you do it?" Sandy was getting wide awake now. He was conscious that his stomach was empty, his pants extremely wet. His lower lip began to pucker and Marcia said, softly: "Sandy, don't cry. I wouldn't know what to do!" But Sandy

Peter went straight to the crib. He lifted Sandy up and Sandy grinned as Peter carried him to the bathinette, made an expert change of diapers, a good powdering job. Peter said, "Don't you think I handle him dashingly when his head cried, promptly, loudly. And Peter came through the door.

y basted?" Then: "Marcia, hold I've got to put his bottle in the Marcia's blue eyes widened. I couldn't. He might break!" is only basted?" warmer." hlm.

"Nonsense! Support his back. Here. Like this!" And Marcia had Sandy in her arms and his soft round apple cheek nuzzled against her throat. Tiny dimpled hands pawed at her shoulders and she thought: "A little man in the makshe thought: "A little man in the mak-ing. His life before him—love before him. I wish he were mine."

While Peter fixed the bottle Marcia walked Sandy. Through the living room, the hall, the dinette. She thought: "This is a lovely little apartment. It does coze happiness. And Peter had said on 150 bucks a month."

A T LAST Peter was back with the bottle and had Sandy in his arms, tucking a pink bib of toweling beneath one of his chins. The bib was too much for Sandy He couldn't wait now. He yelled lustily and Peter silenced that howl with a nipple.

Marcia sat across the room in a high winged-back chair. She thought: "It's almost as if Peter and I were married. As if Sandy were ours." It was a dangerous thought, and Marcia got up quickly. She walked toward the kitchen and said lightly: "Sandy gives me an appetite Mind if I raid the pantry?" "Raid ahead," said Peter.

The electric box was full, almost as if the Randolphs expected some one to raid it. A lemon pie, freshly baked chicken, an aspic ring. Marcia began

setting the table. She made coffee. Then suddenly there was a low, strange noise in the living room. She ran in.

'Peter! What?" Peter grinned. He had Sandy on his again he gets the rest of his bottle, and ask when she comes through that door will be, 'Did you burp Sandy well on two and four ounces?" was patting firmly but gently on the back. burped," said Peter. "When I now and shoulder

squigging was burping Sandy well. tiently.

That would wake up Sandy!" They both ran pelimell through the thny apartment. That's at the door stood Ed, meticulous in afternoon formals. He was irritated. Vastly annoyed. He said harshly: "Marcia, didn't you know the Fikes were having a tea in our honor this afternoon? That damned dressmaker of yours couldn't remember this address. I've been to every apart-

ment house on the street!"

Marcia said, "Ed, I'm sorry." And she introduced the two men.

Peter was so handsome or because Peter was a waste of time in his estima-tion. He turned back to Marcia and said: "There's just time to make the general's dinner. I'll have to change. Ed shook hands grimly. diden't know whether it was

Marcia got her hat, she clutched her pocketbook nervously. Peter said, "Thank you, Marcia." And then Marcia was hurrying beside Ed. So will you."

excuse we can give the Fikes. It's unpardonable, you know." They were walking out to Ed's limousine, Ed's canclicking a sharp, angry staccato. He went on: "By the way, Marcia, there will be a man present tonight to whom I want you to be gracious. An English-Ed was saying: "I don't know what man-very influential. . ."

But Marcia didn't hear. She stopped short, her blue eyes on a little patch of a park facing the apartment house. On a bench there a young couple sat, looking up at the third floor, waiting patiently, almost fearfully. Marcia knew who they were. The girl was Peter's sister. The blonde girl who had been with Peter at the movies, man was Sandy's father.

So they hadn't gone to Richmond! They hadn't gone anywhere! No story had broken on the Hill. They had loaned Peter their apartment and their precious baby. Now Marcia knew why. She knew with her heart singing and her blood racing. And she knew, too, what a fool she had been to think she could marry Ed. What a fool she had been to think that she was like Grace and Gwenn—that she could obey her mother in this important matter of he

She turned on Ed, her eyes starry, and said quickly: "Oh, Ed, now I am sorry!" And then she fled and Ed stood there the twilight, puzzled, hardly con-

scious of the diamond in his paim.

The door wasn't locked when Marcia tried it. She tipped in quietly. Peter was sitting by the crib in the sprawling twilight shadows. He was saying softly to the soundly sleeping Sandy: "You she loved me. I was crazy to think she could see happiness here, feel it—want this sort of happiness. With me, Sandy. But it didn't work. I was crazy to think Me. But she doesn't want me, Sandy." did your best, old man.

Sandy slept on, but Marcia, a whisper: want you!" door, said in a Peter, but I do w