



"I was driving—my car broke down—her lips, stiff with cold, enunciated the words painfully."
"My dear child, why didn't you take the train? Surely the weather was bad in New York when you left?"
Some one had whisked off Nan's wet hat. Her damp hair clung in little curls to her wet cheeks. And some other girl was slipping the steel-covered coat from the slim body.

"I'm very sorry you had so unpleasant an experience."
"It wasn't so bad," Nan laughed and gave Reed a swift sidelong glance. "We are all strangers to you, but I feel I know you, Sally, for Kay mentions you so often in her letters. It is so nice that you both attend the same art school at Paris." Mrs. Mason murmured.

"The light is dawning," Nan told herself. "This is fun. I'm glad my French is pretty good, but I hope no one asks me to do a sketch. I'd be sunk."
Reed was hovering by her side. She gave him a gamin little smile and an oblique look from her larkspur eyes. She heard lazy talk and laughter at the old fireplace where little flirtations were developing.

How lovely it all was. Such a beautiful home. Such friendly young people. And how grand Reed was. Tall, slim, good looking, with a mouth that loved to laugh.
"I wish Kay had come over with you," Mrs. Mason was saying, "but she insists on remaining six months more. As you, of course, know."
Nan, sipping her tea, was saved a reply.

They lounged around the big hearth, the voice of the fire mingling with the voice of the wind. Soft lamplight, glowing firelight, while outside the storm gods rode their steeds of sleet and wind.
After a time the dressing gong sent its musical notes through the big room, and one by one they rose and drifted upstairs. Bess slipped her arm through Nan's.

"You're fun, Sally," she said. "I'm so glad you came. We're going to have a good time. I love a blizzard, don't you? And this was so unexpected."
"I like blizzards, too," Nan laughed. "When I'm inside looking out. And I adore unexpected things!"
A trim maid was waiting in the upper hall. "This way to your room, Miss," she looked at Nan. "If you will give me your keys I will unpack your bags."

"See you at cocktails," Reed said. She turned and there he was right behind her. He always was near her elbow, so it seemed. "And make it snappy, Sally," he whispered. "I'll be waiting—impatiently."
She wriggled a finger at him, dimples flying, eyes brilliant; then followed the maid, who had preceded her.

"If you'll give me your keys, Miss, I'll unpack while you have your bath."
Nan opened her handbag, took out a

"I could listen to you all my life," Reed declared. "But you aren't going to," Sally grinned as she arose from the piano bench little ring of keys. At the end of the room through an open door, she caught a glimpse of a shining bathroom done in daffodil yellow.
She was glad she had packed her liveliest evening gown. It was new and smart, bought for that last recital she had given for her pupils.
Excitement still lingered in her eyes and colored her cheeks rose-red.

"Such fun! I'll think only of tonight, for tomorrow the butterfly will fold her wings. I'll no longer be Sally, the belle-ess and art student. Tomorrow I must be on my way, but tonight is mine and what I won't do with it!"
SHE heard gay voices in the hall calling to each other. Heard light feet running down the stairs, opened her bedroom door, saw Reed lounging against the opposite wall.

"Of all things! Are you my shadow or something?"
Silently he looked at her, then drew a deep, unsteady breath. "There ought to be a law against you. No girl has any right to be so devastating."
She gave him a side-wise glance from eyes brilliant as jewels. Reed caught her, as she slipped past him, held her and kissed the top of her bright curly head.

"You work fast, Reed." She slipped from his arms, ran down the hall. "Sally, wait. Have a heart." She heard him running behind her. "I've a heart all right and I'm taking care of it," she flashed over her shoulder.
Later the butler brought her cocktail and there was Reed at her shoulder. He lifted his glass. Over its rim his dark eyes held hers.

"To you, imp," he smiled. "How does one get rid of you?" she wanted to know.
"One doesn't," he chuckled. A hot sweet fire ran in her veins and melody beat in her heart. It seemed if she were to bend her head and listen, she could hear its music.
"Don't be an idiot," she told herself swiftly. "Reed is Big Time and you are only a little teacher of piano—"

Reed strolled across the room and Dick took his place. Dinner was announced. Dick took her in but there was Reed on the other side of her.
"You see?" he asked complacently. "Here. Say something nice to me, darling. I'll lap up any little crumb—don't be so stingy."

"What a line he has!" She made her eyes round with admiration.
"I could shake you," he growled. "Listen, you. Don't you know that wind blew you right into my heart?"
Dick said something to her and she turned to him. But he could have talked Chinese for all she knew. She could only hear Reed's words repeating—"Right into my heart—"

DINNER over, they strolled into the lofty drawing room. Nan went to the piano—those keys looked tempting. She seated herself while Dick lounged beside her. She ran her hands over the keys testing the tone, then the room was filled with music.
They fell silent, held by the power and passion in this girl's hands.

"You're a finished musician," Reed said, standing behind her. "I could listen to you all my life."
She rose from the piano bench. "But you aren't going to," she grinned.
She looked up at him. Her breath caught at the dark fire in his eyes. Could it be possible that he really cared!

They clamored for more. Mrs. Mason said: "Kay never mentioned that you are a finished pianist, child. Do give us more."
She played half an hour, the keys singing under her hands, then rose laughing, shaking her head at their noisy applause.

They rolled back the rugs in the big square hall, got a dance program on the radio and drifted together in couples. Reed, of course, was at Nan's elbow. As they floated down the dark polished floor he said: "You heard what I told you at dinner?"
"I'm hard of hearing. You'll have to use pantomime."
He danced her under the wide star-case, stopped and kissed her. A hard, swift, half-angry kiss.

"How do you like that pantomime?" he growled.
"Well—I've been kissed more artistically," she jeered and hoped he did not notice how breathless was her voice.
"Give me the name of this kissing artist and I'll wring his neck," Reed glowered.
"He is giving me," Nan told herself. "A terrific rush because he thinks I am Sally—the heiress. Money marries money."

They put on little peaked caps, musical with bells, that had been dinner favors. Nan looked more like a gay

little elf than ever with a red bell-strung cap perched on her bright hair. During the dance the boys cut in constantly and Reed no longer had things his own way. Nan certainly knew how to dance. When Reed swung her down the hall to a slow romantic waltz, he said softly:
"I love you, you little imp of mischief. What are you going to do about it?" His lips brushed her ear.

"And you love me. You are loving me with your eyes, with that little throb in your voice—"
Dick cut in. She was saved a reply. Two o'clock and Nan stood at her bedroom window, face cupped in her hands, staring out at the silent landscape, starting out at the silent landscape. The clouds were scurrying away as though bent on important missions.

"The storm is over. I'll leave tomorrow after breakfast. I'll tell them at breakfast who I am. I wonder how they'll take it? Reed will be terribly crestfallen. He's given me such a furious whirl, thinking I'm Sally—the heiress."
That thought was so unpleasant that Nan thrust it from her swiftly. But she could not thrust aside the cold hand that held her heart.

TOWARD dawn she fell asleep and in a dream heard Reed's voice: "See here, Sally, if you won't marry me, they can take me out and shoot me at sunrise for all I care."
She woke laughing, found brilliant sunlight filling the room. She heard the dressing gong and the laughter died. No more dreams. But how sweet. Bitter—sweet.

She had packed before she had gone to bed. Everything was ready. She bathed and dressed quickly, ran downstairs.
Reed sat opposite her in the breakfast room. He could look at her here without turning his head.
"I'll explode my bomb right after breakfast," Nan told herself as she listened to them planning the day's amusement.

They had almost finished breakfast when the footman entered the room. "What is it, Sims?" Mrs. Mason asked. "There is a young lady in the hall, Madam, who says she is Miss Sally Evans. She says the storm detained her yesterday. She came by train this morning and taxied from the village."
Dead silence fell. Nan saw the startled faces. The room seemed to be filled with eyes—staring eyes.

"But" Mrs. Mason paused in bewildered ment. She looked swiftly at Nan.

"I won't cry over him. I won't!"
She hurried to the house phone and called the garage, asked the chauffeur to run her car to the front entrance. "It is there, Miss, and it is all right now. I put in a new spark plug."
"Thanks, so much."
The footman called for her bags. "This household moves on oiled hinges," Nan told herself as she pulled on her coat and hat and followed the footman downstairs.

At the foot of the staircase she glanced down the hall. It was there Reed had told her he loved her. A hand caught her heart and twisted it. From the breakfast room voices and laughter drifted to the hall.
"He has the real Sally now and she certainly is easy on the eyes. He will be telling her tonight that he loves her. Reed doesn't let any grass grow under his feet. And—I hate him!"

DESPITE herself, hot tears stung her eyelids and a little sob caught in her throat. Then she thrust out her chin and marched out to the car. She opened the door, stared blankly at Reed, who sat at the wheel. "Hop in, imp," he grinned. "I'm driving you to New Haven. I'll take the train back."

Unable to speak, Nan found herself in the seat beside him. When they were on the highway, he pulled something from his pocket. "Take a look at that and read what is written on the other side," he said chuckling.
Nan stared at a small picture of Sally taken in a fancy dress costume. Slowly Nan turned the picture over and read:
"Sally as Cleopatra at Des Arts ball. Don't let mother see this. Sally's lack of clothes would shock mother."
Fixedly, Nan stared at those words.

After a long silent moment:
"Then you knew all the time that I was not Sally," she said unsteadily.
"Sure I knew. Kay sent me this a month ago. I kept quiet. I wanted to see if you could put it over. Besides—I fell in love with you at first sight, believe it or not."
For a moment he was busy with the car, then he glanced sidewise at the girl's still face. When he saw her eyes, his courage leaped.

"Paris," he said, "is at its best in Spring. Would you like to go there on our honeymoon, darling?"
"Reed!" she whispered.
"Then slip down in your seat and put your head on my shoulder, you little imp," he said adoringly.