

SHINING PALACE

By
CHRISTINE WHITING PARMENTER

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WNU SERVICE

THE STORY

CHAPTER I—James Lambert tries in vain to dissuade his beautiful foster-daughter, Leonora, from marrying Don Mason, young "rolling stone," whom he likes but of whom he disapproves according to his conventional business-man standards. He tells her, "Unless a house is founded upon a rock, it will not survive." Leonora suspects the influence of her half-brother, Ned, always jealous of the girl since the day his father brought her home from the deathbed of her mother, abandoned by her Italian baritone lover. Don arrives in the midst of the argument, and Lambert realizes the frank understanding between the two.

CHAPTER II—Sitting up late into the night, Lambert reviews the whole story of Nora as a child, at boarding school, studying music abroad, meeting Don on the return trip. In the morning he delivers his ultimatum, to give Don a job with Ned for a year's show-down. When Nora suggests the possibility of running away with Don, Lambert threatens disinheritance. Don agrees to the job, but before a month is over, his nerves are jumpy, he cannot sleep at night, he is too tired to go out much with Nora, and admits to her that he feels stifled. Nora soothes him with her music. He falls asleep and his face is more peaceful than it has been in many weeks.

CHAPTER III—Nora grows quieter, and broods over Don, complains to her father of Ned's spying on him, and decides that rather than see Don's spirit broken, she will run away. She urges her father to put an end to the futile experiment. James Lambert is obdurate and angry. Lambert tells her that if Don quits she will quit with him; that he will be through with her. He adds that if she tires of her bargain it will be less to come to him for help.

CHAPTER IV—With the coming of spring, Don is full of unrest and wanderlust, and takes long walks at night. One evening a poor girl speaks to him, and in his pity for her, he gives her money. A car passes at that moment, flashes headlights and moves on. A terrific heat wave ushers in the summer, and Nora refuses to go to the country with her father. Ned, meanwhile, insinuates to his father about Don's evenings away from Nora, but Lambert refuses to listen. Meanwhile, Don broods over the undermining of his morale.

CHAPTER V

Despite a refreshing coolness in the air as they rode toward home, the mercury soared next day. Promising though the breeze had seemed, it came to a discouraged end before Don got to sleep, and after a few short hours of restless slumber he awakened to a sense of suffocation. The only window of his small room faced east, and already the sun, streaming across his bed, felt scorching.

The day before on seeing a woman walking the hot pavement with a "summer fur" thrown over her shoulders, Don had judged her "an imbecile." Now, with a glance at his own dark suit hanging neatly across a chair, he called himself something even stronger, and rising, delved into his trunk in search of some long-packed linen trousers, the work of a native tailor in Jamaica. The fact that they needed pressing was immaterial. At least, they would be more bearable than serge. A glance into the hall showed him that miracle of boarding houses: an empty bathroom; and after indulging in a shower and donning the minimum of garments, he left the house, unable to contemplate the inevitable dish of sloppy oatmeal that awaited him in the dining room below.

A roll and glass of milk at the nearest restaurant made life look brighter for a moment; and out of sympathy for the waitress (wilted, even at this early hour) Don's tip was twice the cost of his simple meal. Her surprised question: "Isn't this a mistake, Mister?" brought a glimpse of the engaging grin that had been absent from his countenance for many days.

"It's a feeble attempt to counteract the weather," he responded, rising. "Blow it in on ice cream sodas if you survive," and the girl's spontaneous smile of amazed gratitude stayed with him a while, the one bright spot in the hectic subway jam.

So the day began, a day that was to be of vast importance to Don, to Nora, and to her father also. By ten o'clock the sidewalks swarmed

with shirt-sleeved figures. By noon the ambulance gong was sounding with alarming frequency. When one of the stenographers collapsed and was sent home in a taxicab, Don envied the girl. He found it well nigh impossible to get down to work—to concentrate. Yet there was an error somewhere, which, he thought nervously, must be located before Ned Lambert happened in. And to make things worse his head had begun its infernal hammering. Perhaps when the others were out at lunch and things were quieter, it would clear up.

They were gone at last. The noisy typewriters were silent; and save for the rumble of traffic far below, the room was still. Don stood at a window in an effort to fill his lungs with better air; but it was too hot to be refreshing, and back at his desk again discouragement engulfed him, thick and impenetrable as a London fog.

Four months more! He could never stick it—even for Nora. He was no good—absolutely. That wise old man had certainly shown him up. Nora once said that she wasn't worth all that these months had cost him. Well, he mused bitterly, was she? Was anything worth this terrible inertia? Was anything worth taking the joy from life?

Joy? Don started, raised his head as if awakened rudely from a bad dream. He was a fool—a damn fool not to see things clearer. What joy would he find anywhere—without Nora? What sacrifice was too great—for her? He had been right last evening when he said that his morale was slipping. Why else should he have such thoughts? He must buck up.

It came to him then with a sense of healing, that the opinions of others didn't matter, if Nora understood. And she did—bless her loyal heart! His girl knew that he wasn't a weakling. She didn't scorn him because his nerves were jumpy and he couldn't sleep. She realized the truth, if no one else did: that nothing in life had fitted him for a job of this sort, and that when the damnable year was over and he got away from everything—

Don turned, nerves quivering again; and with a gesture meant to appear casual, covered his open ledger with the morning paper. Ned Lambert, apparently cool, obviously unruffled, stood on the threshold. Something about his smug, immaculate appearance maddened Don, though the older man said pleasantly enough: "Have you been to lunch?"

Don answered, a curious dryness in his throat: "Too hot to go out, not to mention eating."

"I'll say it is! We had ours sent in. But we're likely to get it hotter come July. Father says they're moving to the country on Monday. You can't work without food, Mason. Better skip out and get a bite. I . . ."

His voice trailed off as he came nearer. Now, pausing beside the desk he lifted the newspaper and stared down a while, utterly unconscious of Don's tense attitude. With maddening accuracy his lean white finger found the elusive error.

"You've made a mistake there, Mason." He might have been correcting some small boy. "That six should have been a sixty. See?" He sauntered idly to the window, gazing down at the mass of sweltering humanity below while Don suppressed a murderous impulse to throw him out. But Ned had turned again—was speaking.

"See here, Don. There's something I feel I ought to say to you."

The young man braced himself. "If it's about my work, I can save you the trouble," he replied brusquely. "I know I'm a dumb-bell at this sort of thing—always will be. Suppose you keep those comments for a day when the mercury's somewhere below one hundred. There are limits, you know, to what even a cog in this machine can endure without exploding; and for your sister's sake I prefer to keep my temper."

Ned sat down slowly on the window ledge. He didn't speak for a moment, and regarding him closely Don wondered how many times that morning the man had changed his collar. The thought made him conscious of his own much wrinkled linen trousers, and he slid his long legs under the desk to hide them.

"You happen to be on the wrong track," Ned replied. "My comments have nothing whatever to do with your work here. You do as well

as most beginners, I suppose. What I refer to is a different matter altogether. I've no desire to meddle with your private life, Mason. Get that straight. But Father tells me that Nora sends you home early; and twice I've caught you nodding by three o'clock. It stands to reason that a man who gets to bed before midnight, ought to be able to keep awake through the next day. I can only surmise . . ."

"Well?" Don prodded, ominous quiet in his voice.

"I can only surmise," repeated Ned, "that—well to speak plainly, that you don't go home after you leave Nora."

"I see," said Don. He was desperately angry, but making a brave attempt to hold his temper. "May I ask where your active imagination sees me passing the night hours?"

Ned flushed, looking hot, thought Don, for the first time that stifling day, though he answered calmly: "Sarcasm won't help, Mason, because as it happens, I've got the goods on you. Do you understand?"

"Most certainly I do not! Make yourself clear, please."

"I'll be only too glad to." Ned spoke briskly, as if concluding some successful business deal. "I don't like beating about the bush myself; and you can't deny that you were with another girl late Friday evening, because I saw you."

"The hell you did!" Don's eyes were blazing, while seven thousand imps seemed to be pounding the top of his head with tiny hammers. Where, he was asking himself frantically, had he been on Friday? Of course there was no girl; but he must produce an alibi and he couldn't seem to think. Nora's brother was accusing him of being untrue to her . . . It was beastly, horrible, and . . . Then he heard Ned say, a triumphant ring in his usually level voice: "You don't deny it? Then perhaps you'll admit what Corinne suspected at the time: You were giving her money?"

To the man's complete surprise, instant relief sprang into Don's harassed face. Money! That girl on the bridge, of course! The kid he had talked with! Those blinding headlights that had lingered on him. So Ned Lambert and his wife had been behind them. Gosh! what a situation! Perhaps under the circumstances it wasn't so strange—the thing they'd thought about him. He said, almost laughing in relief: "Yes, I gave her money. She set me back a whole month's board—poor kid! You see . . ."

He told the story, eagerly, excitedly. He told it well. It had seemed a colorful experience—a bit out of the heart of life, to Don. He did not realize how it would seem to Ned, until at its close the man said dryly: "And you really expect to put that over on me, Mason?"

Don stared at him, amazement in his eyes.

"Put it over on you! Do—do you mean to imply . . ."

Anger was surging through him, hot waves of anger. Never had Don felt anything just like them. He arose, slowly, his dazed head pounding. Did Nora's brother actually doubt his word? It was unthinkable—some hideous mistake. He gripped a chair, his nervous fingers tense, as Ned, who had also risen, answered: "I imply nothing. I have no use for implications in such a matter. But for you to expect me to believe that any man in his senses sees a girl for the first time—the first time, mind you, and because she tells him a flimsy sob story, hands over his whole roll—well, it simply won't go down, young fellow. A yarn like that doesn't hold water. People don't meet by chance on bridges and confide their life histories to each other, not in this age. And decent girls don't accept money from complete strangers, anyhow. I hate to say this, Mason, but after all, Nora's my sister, and if you've been double-crossing her—running around till morning with some cheap jane who isn't fit to—"

Ned Lambert never finished that sentence. Something as hard as it was unexpected came in contact with his jaw, and he went down. When, furiously, he regained his feet a moment later, a white-faced Don exploded:

"Will you take that back?" "Damned if I will, you lazy—"

"Take care!" warned Don, "or you'll get the mate to it!" He reached for his hat—set it firmly upon his head. "Well, I'm through here now. I've that to thank you for." He moved toward the door,



Ned Lambert never finished that sentence.

then turned, forcing himself to say: "Look here, Lambert. For Nora's sake I apologize for hitting you, though I'd probably do it again under the same provocation. But you'll do well to remember that I'm not a liar; and if you're unaware that your sister's the sort a fellow doesn't double-cross, I advise you to make her acquaintance."

"And I advise you," Ned thundered, his hand nursing an aching jaw, "to take the first train out of town!"

"Nothing," said Don, with a calm, ironic little bow that enraged his adversary, "would give me greater pleasure. Good afternoon."

(Continued Next Week)

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STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF STATE CERTIFICATE of DISSOLUTION To All To Whom These Presents May Come—Greetings:

Whereas, It appears to my satisfaction, by duly authenticated record of the proceedings for the voluntary dissolution thereof by the unanimous consent of all the stockholders, deposited in my office, that the Zebulon Supply Company, a corporation of this State, whose principal office is situated at Cor. Arendell Ave. and Vance Street, in the town of Zebulon, County of Wake, State of North Carolina (C. V. Whitley being the agent therein and in charge thereof, upon whom process may be served), has complied with the requirements of Chapter 22, Consolidated Statutes, entitled "Corporations," preliminary to the issuing of this Certificate of Dissolution:

Now Therefore, I, Thad Eure, Secretary of State of the State of North Carolina, do hereby certify that the said corporation did, on the 4th day of February, 1938, file in my office a duly executed and attested consent in writing to the dissolution of said corporation, executed by all the stockholders thereof, which said consent and the record of the proceedings aforesaid are now on file in my said office as provided by law.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereto set my hand and affixed my official seal at Raleigh, this 4th day of February, A. D., 1938.

THAD EURE, Secretary of State.

Feb. 11 — March 4.

NOTICE OF SALE OF REAL PROPERTY

Under and by virtue of the power and authority contained in a certain Deed of Trust from Frank L. Bailey to A. R. House, Trustee, which deed of trust is recorded in Book 755, Page 103, Wake County Registry, and default having been made in the payment of the note secured thereby, and upon request of the holder of the note, the undersigned Trustee, will offer for sale to the highest bidder, for cash, at the Courthouse door in the city of Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina, on Saturday, March 19th, 1938, at twelve o'clock, M., the following described lands:

Beginning at a stake in the corner of lot 6 in Sanford Keith's line, thence with said Keith's line E. 210 feet to a pine, said Keith's and A. D. O'Neal's corner, thence with said O'Neal's line S. 86 3-4 degs. E. 490 feet to a poplar on Water Fork Branch; thence down the meanders of said branch, about 960 feet to a stake, corner of lot 1; thence with line of lot 1 W. 720 feet to a stake corner of lot 1 in line of lots 4 and 5; thence with line of lots 4 and 5 N. 16 1-2 W. 957 feet to the beginning, containing 15 acres, being the same however, more or less. Being the same lands conveyed to the party of the first part by L. A. Ray and wife, Carrie Ray, by a deed of date Jan. 2nd, 1926, and recorded in Book 712, page 58, Wake County Registry. Reference to which deed is hereby made for a more perfect description hereof.

This the 14th day of February, 1938.

A. R. HOUSE, Trustee.

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