

# SHINING PALACE

By  
**CHRISTINE WHITING PARMENTER**

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## 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 showdown. 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 useless 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**—At the height of the heat wave, when Don is finding everything insupportable, Ned speaks of having the goods on him, having seen him give a girl money. When Ned scoffs at the true story of the episode, Don knocks him down, and is through. He calls Nora, who insists on running away with him to get married, realizing it is her job to restore Don's faith in himself. Her good-by to her father is met with complete silence.

## CHAPTER VI

They went to Maine.  
"It's the first time I can remember," Don told his bride, "when I haven't been crazy to get aboard a boat and see things—new things—places I've dreamed of. I don't understand myself, Nora. Is it only because I'm so let down? All I want now is to escape from this heat and turmoil—to lie on my back in the cool woods and look up at the sky, or watch big waves roll in on a hard beach. I've got to do something like that, dear, until this fendish alarm clock stops ringing in my ears. I'll admit it scares me. Let's go to Maine."

"But your hard-saved thousand will melt away so fast at a hotel, Don," objected Nora with new-born caution.

Don glanced at her, so sweet, so young, so infinitely precious, and for the first time in his twenty-seven care-free years, a sense of responsibility crept over him—responsibility for Nora's happiness.

"It's more than a thousand now," he answered gravely. "Have you forgotten that I've been holding down a steady job? And a hotel isn't necessary, is it—even on one's honeymoon? You see, there's a place I can take you—a studio belonging to a New York artist. You've heard me speak of Ven, Nora. He's abroad just now; but I'm always at liberty to go there. Besides—" (a smile sprang into his expressive eyes) "it happens to hold the 'worldly goods' with which I've recently endowed my wife, and perhaps she'd like the chance to look 'em over!"

Nora laughed at the idea; but questioned, not without curiosity: "What sort of worldly goods, Don?"

"Just wait and see, young lady!" he responded. "Honestly, Nora, I couldn't get along without that

shack. When I'm 'over the hills and far away' and happen to stumble on something too beautiful to resist, I simply ship it to Maine (provided I have sufficient cash to buy the thing!) and the—er—retired fisherman who looks after the place for Ven, stores it away."

"I never heard of a retired fisherman before, my dear. I thought those salty specimens kept right on fishing until they drowned! And this studio you mention sounds like a storage warehouse. Have you left a space where your friend the artist can set up his easel?"

Don smiled.  
"He doesn't need it. Three years ago he bought an island farther up the coast, and has a bully place there. If I'd let him, Nora, Ven would give me the shack outright."

"Why should he, Don? Is the man indebted to you?"

"He seems to think so; though it's utter nonsense, of course. I had the luck to save his oldest girl from drowning; but it was all in the day's work and his gratitude was the only reward I wanted. You've seen Ven's work, Nora. He did those marvelous murals in—"

"Not Carl Venable?" gasped Leonora. "Don't tell me the Ven you've talked about so casually is he?"

"The very same, lady." Don grinned at her surprise. "I was coast guard down there one summer. Didn't you know it?"

Nora sighed helplessly.  
"Some day, my dear, I'll ask for a list of the things you haven't been. It would be considerably shorter than one of those you have. And does this shack you mention contain the creature comforts? The subject interests me."

Don closed his eyes a moment trying to see things with Nora's vi-

on. Then he said dubiously "I've always thought it a wonderful place, dear; but you—Well, I can't quite see how it will look to you. There's an oil stove for cooking, and water piped to the back-

used it only for a studio. Originally it was an old fish house, I believe."

Though the girl's heart sank at this description, one wouldn't have guessed it from her instant: "Why that sounds fine, Don! Is it close to the ocean?"

His eyes brightened at this carefully simulated enthusiasm.

"As near as it can be and not get washed away in winter; yet it's far enough from the beach where the summer people bathe to give us privacy. You'll love it, Nora, once you get the hang of things; and I'll do the cooking. Cooking is one of my real accomplishments, as you'll soon find out."

"Which sounds," she laughed, "as if you doubted that it's one of mine!"

Nora never forgot their arrival at "the shack" next afternoon.

It had been raining all day; and though rain was needed to cool the air, it added neither cheer nor comfort to the atmosphere of that one-time fish house, long unoccupied, covered with dust and cobwebs, stifling now with the accumulated heat of weeks.

If James Lambert's pampered daughter needed discipline, she got it in the moment when her new husband unlocked the door and thrust her hurriedly inside out of a driving rain; and it is to Nora's everlasting credit that Don did not suspect the consternation that surged through her loyal heart. The charm of the place which she was to know later, was wholly lost amid the gloom and darkness of that stormy day.

Don having seen the room with sunlight dancing across its worn old floor, never realized just how it looked to Leonora. In that first moment she wanted to cry out: "Oh, Don, we can't stay here! Not now anyway!" To one reared in the soft lap of luxury, such a proceeding seemed well nigh impossible. Indeed, the words of protest were on her lips, when, glancing up quickly in dismay, she saw her hus-

band's face.

And it was a transfigured face. It was the face of a tired small boy who has reached home. It brought a lump into Nora's throat. It brought swift tears into her eyes.

Said Don, throwing open a casement window at the back: "Isn't this wonderful, Nora? The view on a clear day is simply marvelous. Isn't that fireplace a corker? It takes in a four-foot log—not that one wants to consider fires just now! But we'll cool off soon as the air blows through here. Lucky the rain's not coming from all directions as I've seen it do. We'll have things snug long before bedtime, and—"

He turned, caught her close, hungrily. "Oh, Nora, tell me I'm not dreaming! It's so heavenly to be



"Oh! Nora, tell me I'm not dreaming."

away from all that clamor—to be where it's quiet—to be back here, dearest, with you—with you!"

And what could a loving woman say to that?

(Continued Next Week)

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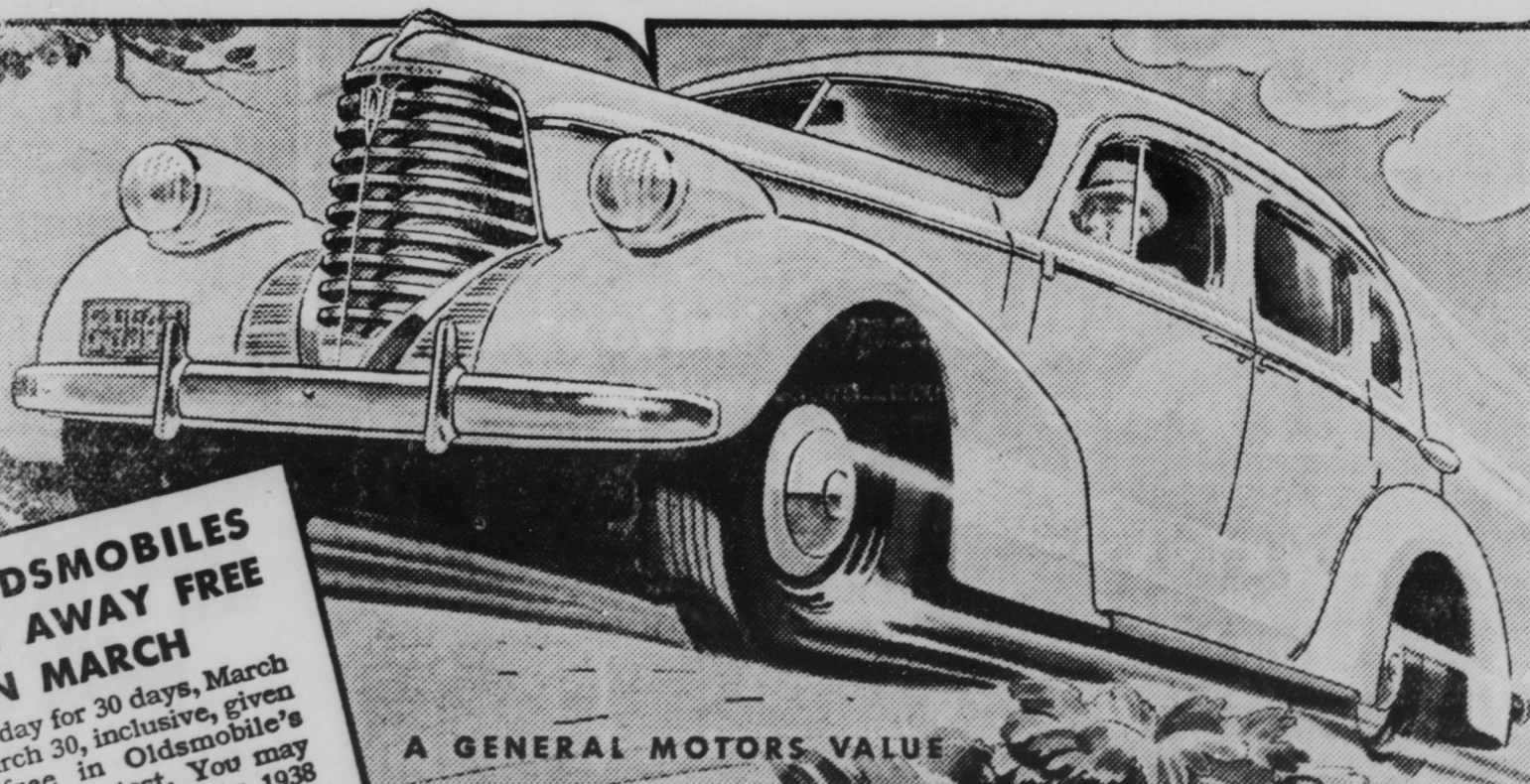
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